

The spring semester is quickly approaching and GCU is continually monitoring the COVID pandemic. The new Omicron variant is now the most dominant strain across the United States and the [CDC is reporting](#) this variant is spreading faster than the original coronavirus. However, [early data from other countries](#) suggests that symptoms are less severe for Omicron, resulting in a 40% to 70% reduced need in hospitalizations. There is still more to learn. We want to continue our fall semester success of manageable COVID-19 cases through the spring semester. GCU's campus is still scheduled to be open for full in-person instruction and campus activities with no restrictions.

Safe return to campus

GCU is not requiring students to report a negative test before they return to campus. However, if you feel ill, have come in contact with someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself during the Christmas break, please consider the following in order to ensure a safe return and support a successful spring launch.

- GCU is encouraging all students who are not feeling well to be tested for COVID-19 before returning to campus.
- If you do test positive or are waiting on test results, call the COVID Hotline at 602-639-7300 opt#1.
- If you have a known exposure to a COVID positive person, please consider returning to campus at the end of your quarantine or with a negative test five days after the initial exposure. Call the COVID Hotline at 602-639-7300 option #1.

The COVID Hotline is available seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Spring semester policies/new isolation protocols

We are closely monitoring the current rise in COVID cases across the country and the status of the new Omicron variant, but have no immediate plans to alter our current campus policies regarding COVID-19. That means continued in-person instruction and activities without restrictions. Continue monitoring the GCU [COVID web page](#) for updates.

During the spring semester, students who test positive for COVID-19 will have a choice to isolate off campus (at home or a relative's house), within their residence hall suite (depending on suitemate circumstances) or in a designated campus suite. Students isolating on campus, no matter location, will be monitored by the Quarantine and Isolation Team and have necessities such as food and hygiene supplies delivered to their rooms. If there are questions on isolation protocols, call the COVID Hotline at 602-639-7300 option #4.

Booster shots

The CDC, state and local public health authorities still highly recommend vaccinations and booster shots and recently extended the booster recommendation to anyone age 16 and over. GCU also encourages vaccinations and boosters but they are not mandatory for students or employees. Vaccines offer protections against severe illness, hospitalization and death.

If you would like to receive a vaccine or booster, call or email the health center at 602-639-6215 or healthcenter@gcu.edu to make an appointment.

Testing site

GCU encourages all symptomatic students to see a medical provider or take a COVID test at the walk-up Premier Labs testing site at the Trails parking lot on campus (near the former First Southern Baptist Church). Testing hours at Premier Labs are as follows.

- Dec. 25-26: Closed
- Dec. 27-31: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Jan. 1-2: Closed
- Regular hours resume Jan. 3 (8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday)

Both antigen and PCR tests are available, with antigen test results available within 30 minutes and PCR results taking 24-48 hours.

We hope you have a safe and happy Christmas break and look forward to seeing everyone again in January, 2022!