Graduate School Student FAQs about Surveillance Testing
Last updated September 21, 2020

What is the difference between baseline testing and surveillance testing?

**Baseline testing:** All graduate students who plan to be on campus had to undergo baseline arrival testing for the coronavirus at the beginning of the semester. This baseline testing was conducted August 17-30.

**Surveillance testing:** In addition to the baseline arrival testing, throughout the fall semester, Duke is conducting surveillance testing of students and other campus community members who are in the Triangle area and not exhibiting any COVID symptoms. This is to help with early detection of asymptomatic COVID cases and thus to reduce viral spread.

Am I in the surveillance testing pool?

The only graduate students explicitly excluded from surveillance testing are:

- Graduate students who are taking all remote classes AND reside outside the Triangle area
- Graduate students who reside in the Triangle AND did NOT attest to the COVID student policy plan because they were not planning to come to campus at all (Note that the student policy plan attestation is separate from the Duke Compact attestation, which all members of the Duke community had to sign, regardless of whether they plan to participate on campus or remotely)
- Graduate students in programs that meet only episodically and only for short periods of time (e.g., a weekend, a week or two), and where the students are not reasonably expected to be on campus or to be active or living in the local community

Students who do not meet the above exemptions are part of the graduate student pool for surveillance testing. This includes all of the following:

- Graduate students who live in the Triangle area AND signed the attestation for the student COVID policy plan, stating that they plan to participate on campus at some point in the semester
- Graduate students who received a baseline test
- Graduate students who were explicitly exempt from baseline testing because they were approved to work on campus this summer
- Graduate students who arrived in the Triangle area late and thus were not included in the initial baseline testing
If I have already participated in one surveillance test, does that mean I don’t have to do it again?

Having participated in a surveillance test does NOT mean you are exempt from subsequent surveillance tests. A student may be asked to participate in surveillance testing multiple times, potentially even in a single week.

Can I get my surveillance test done at a location not on Duke’s list of designated sites (e.g., a local pharmacy)?

If you are selected for surveillance testing, you must take the test at one of the Duke testing sites. You cannot get tested at a non-designated location and submit the results. If you are driving in from off campus, the Washington Duke Inn and JB Duke Hotel might be the most convenient sites.

Can I have a longer time period for participating in the testing, or take the test by appointment?

We have heard concerns from some students about the 24-hour turnaround between receiving notification and completing the surveillance testing. While that timeframe seems to be working well for undergraduates, graduate students might need more time to rearrange their schedules and are usually coming from off campus.

We have communicated with university leaders about the challenges this presents to graduate students. The surveillance testing process requires continuous adjustments to the testing pool based on recent results to target potential problem areas. That unfortunately limits the testing team’s ability to provide longer turnarounds or to offer the test by appointment. If you absolutely cannot make it to a testing site on the day you are assigned to be tested, please contact Helene McAdams (helene.mcadams@duke.edu) in The Graduate School.

Can I change my attestations for the Duke Compact and/or the associated student policy plan?

Before the start of the semester, all students were required to review and sign the Duke Compact and the associated student policy plan, which lay out COVID-related expectations and requirements. As part of that process, students had to attest to whether they plan to be on campus or participate only remotely. If a student attests that they will participate only remotely but then comes to campus, it would be a violation of the Duke Compact and the Duke Community Standard.

Some students have asked about changing their attestations. Here are the options, based on information from the Provost’s Office:

- The Duke Compact attestation cannot be changed because all members of the Duke community, even those participating remotely, must agree to follow it.
• Active Duke students may change their student policy plan attestation in very limited circumstances at this time.

To change your policy plan attestation from “on campus” to “remote only,” you must submit an endorsement from your faculty advisor and director of graduate studies, conveying that you have left the North Carolina Triangle area for the semester. Graduate School students should send this endorsement to Helene McAdams (helene.mcadams@duke.edu). Note that once your request is accepted, your DukeCard will be deactivated, and you will not be able to access campus, parking, libraries, and other university facilities for the remainder of the fall 2020 semester.

To change your policy plan attestation from “remote only” to “on campus,” please contact Helene McAdams (helene.mcadams@duke.edu). Note that signing the COVID-19 student policies document and the Duke Compact means that you will now be subject to Duke’s COVID surveillance testing program.