

University of St. Thomas

Guide to conducting Meetings, Activities and Events.

Opening of Campus

As the University of St. Thomas campus begins to reopen for some in-person academic instruction. Effective: **January 11, 2021** the University will approving some in-person events and activities if it meets the following the recommended stated criteria. It is paramount that as we strive to provide a safe campus environment, there is a complete awareness and thoughtful management of every event that occurs across our campus. The University will follow any and all CDC, City, County and State recommended guidelines for holding indoor and outdoor events.

Note: *Please check with the University Events Department if you have questions on reserving event space. Ext.713-525-3118*

Reserving Space

To ensure that there is adequate space for academic courses while adhering to proper physical distancing, space for meetings/events will be limited. Occupancy limits throughout campus have been lowered to **25-50%** of normal capacity. These temporary occupancy limits will not be reflected on the University Events **“Request for Space”** form but will be taken into consideration by the University Events Department before approving a request. To assist with this, requestors must provide the exact number of participants during the reservation process. It is essential for requestors to reserve spaces in a timely manner.

Note: *Do not move or rearrange tables, chairs, equipment, etc. In a reserved space, everything is arranged to ensure physical distancing.*

The University Events Department has put together this guide to help assist individuals, departments and organizations in the event planning process. The University has created guidance, which has been informed by evidence-based science and/or expert opinions. Events (defined below) will be extremely limited on campus this fall. This is true for departments, programs, units, organizations and external events across the University.

Note: *This includes events like, development and fund-raising events, recruitment and admissions events, career-placement focused events for students, and formal University ceremonies such as Commencement and Homecoming.*

Events / Activities / Meetings

Central to building a cohesive student community and the in-person experience, informal gatherings defined below are crucial to campus life. While the University of St. Thomas has restrictions on formal meetings and events, informal activities and gatherings are happening on campus all the time. They may be scheduled or impromptu. Below are examples of types of events, activities and meetings and recommended guidelines for conducting these safely.

In-person events are currently limited to 25%-50% capacity. Exceptions are as follows:

1. Events taking place in UST venues with prior university approval.
2. Mass gathering events that has been reviewed by the University’s Events Committee.

3. A Student-sponsored event/activity of more than 50 participants organized with the approval of the Office of the Dean of Students.

A **Campus Event** is defined as any in-person event on the UST campus that is not part of the scheduled University academic courses. Campus events include indoor and outdoor events, including meetings, conferences and extracurricular activities.

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES:

- **Outdoor Events:**

Outdoor Event means an event held at a location generally without a permanent structure and may include organized sports games, campus tours, picnics, concerts, festivals, fairs, or any other similar event.

Standard Guide for Outdoor Events:

- Request for space must be made with the University Events Department.
- Events are restricted to 50% of outdoor space capacity.
(This requirement may change according to current COVID restrictions).
 - Event must not exceed estimated attendance.
 - Event Attendees must maintain social distancing of 6 feet or greater.
- Mask wearing is mandatory by all attendees. ***(Mask guidelines below)***
- Event attendees must have temperature checked at event.
- Event attendees must wear required wristbands.
- University personnel managed to assure safety standards are followed.
- Outdoor space must have the following items nearby:
 - Hand washing station or facility
 - (1) bottle of hand sanitizer per 15 people in attendance.
 - Paper towels for wiping hands / lined trash can nearby.

Note: Please check with the University Events Department for reservation and spacing information.

- **Indoor Events:**

In-person gatherings on University property must follow all recommended guidelines in order to ensure a safe and secure event. These recommendations are in conjunction with all CDC, City, County and State guidelines when conducting events.

Standard Guide for Indoor Events:

- Request for space must be made with the University Events Department.
- Events are restricted to 25% of indoor space capacity.
(This requirement may change according to current COVID restrictions).
 - Event must not exceed estimated attendance.
 - Event Attendees must maintain social distancing of 6 feet or greater.
- Mask wearing is mandatory by all attendees. ***(Mask guidelines below)***
- Event attendees must have temperature checked at event.
- Event attendees must wear required wristbands.
- Event must be UST personnel-managed to assure safety standards are followed.

- Indoor space must have the following items nearby:
 - Hand washing station or facility
 - (1) bottle of hand sanitizer per 15 people in attendance.
 - Paper towels for wiping hands / lined trash can nearby.
- **Managed Venues**

Managed venues are those buildings managed by University staff and may require additional restrictions and guidelines for using the facility.

For example: Jerabeck Activity and Athletic Center and Guinan Hall are managed venues which houses meetings rooms, staff offices recreation and/or athletic areas. These venues may have posted areas that may be prohibited or must be scheduled before being accessed.
- **Meetings:**

Consistent with the University's policies, departments and organizations will be permitted to hold in-person meetings and are highly encouraged to hold meetings virtually whenever possible. However; whereas formal meetings among staff and faculty are typically held indoors, the following guidance is intended to help your scheduled meeting meet all University policies to be conducted safely.

Standard Guide for Meetings:

- Outside of staff and department meetings being held in department conference rooms all other meetings must be requested through the University Events Department.
- Meetings are restricted to 25% of space capacity.
 - Meeting must not exceed listed attendance.
 - Meeting attendees must maintain social distancing of 6 feet or greater.
- Mask wearing is mandatory by all attendees. ***(Mask guidelines below)***
- Meeting attendees must have temperature checked before meeting can begin.
- Meeting attendees must wear required wristbands.
- Meeting coordinator must manage these steps to assure safety standards are followed.
- Meetings must have the following items nearby:
 - Hand washing station or restroom facilities open and nearby.
 - (1) bottle of hand sanitizer per 15 people in attendance.
 - Paper towels for wiping hands / lined trash can nearby.
- **Virtual Meetings:**

Consistent with the University of St. Thomas policies, virtual meetings are highly encouraged over in-person meetings, due to public health requirements and the resulting reduction in available indoor meeting spaces. While many students, faculty and staff are working and learning remotely this fall, others are not comfortable attending in-person meetings. Therefore, UST is highly encouraged to consider the potential inequities and impact on all students when deciding between in-person and virtual meetings for organization business.

The [University Events Department](#) can help with a variety of virtual event ideas and options to better reach your audience.

Food and Beverages

When considering offering food and beverage at meetings, events and activities it is the requestors responsibility to continue to practice physical distancing, and adherence to the proper usage of facial coverings during such time.

Note: *Requestor cannot offer self-service food or beverage options at meetings, events, and activities that are not individually packaged.*

Also Note: *Requestor assumes responsibility of adherence to the consumption of food and beverage during meetings, events and activities when catering has been ordered or individual packaged items are distributed.*

Below are items that should be considering when incorporating food and beverage.

- Is food and beverage service an essential factor in the success of your event or meeting?
- Can you meet your desired goals or intent of this event if food or drinks are not available?
- Can you provide individually, prepackaged items?
- Does your location allow for appropriate distancing for attendees to remove face coverings to ingest food/beverage?

General Safety Guidelines:

- **Wear a mask**
 - Mask must cover the **nose and mouth at all times** and tie behind the head or have ear loops.
 - Gaiters and masks with exhalation valves are prohibited.
 - The **only** exceptions are in your residence **alone**, in your residence with **only** your roommate (and only if your roommate agrees), while actively eating, or when you are outside, and you can predictably maintain at least 6 feet of distance between you and others at all times.
- **Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between individuals**
 - It's not face masks **or** distancing; it's face masks **and** distancing.
 - When eating with others (both indoors and outdoors), **be sure to stay 6 feet apart**. The distancing requirement is especially important when eating, since eating with others increases the risk of COVID-19 spread because you won't have a mask on while eating.
 - In spaces that do not allow you to continuously maintain 6 feet of distance (e.g., elevators, hallways, and stairwells): stand as far apart as possible and spread out to 6 feet as soon as you can.
 - In indoor spaces with posted COVID-19 occupancy limits: comply with the restrictions. If the space already has the posted number of occupants, find an alternative.
 - In indoor spaces without posted COVID-19 occupancy limits: stay at least 6 feet away from others; leave chairs/tables vacant if they are within 6 feet of someone

else; and ask the owners of the space to calculate and post the COVID-19 occupancy limit.

Additional General Safety Guidelines:

- Drink only from your own cup or bottle and avoid self-serve beverage dispensers.
- Eat only foods that are served to you in a safe manner, come from pre-packaged sources, or that you make. Sharing pizza, doughnuts, bagels, etc. from a common source, where all individuals serve themselves, increases the risk of infection.
- When participating in group activities (whether informal or formal), know the identities of individuals who are closest to you (within 6 feet or closer). In the event that you or someone close to you tests positive for COVID-19, University **contact tracers** will be able to quickly identify whether you/anyone near you needs to be notified of a potential exposure.
- For formal meetings and events, maintain an accurate attendance list.
- Encourage each other to honor our public health safeguards and respond politely when someone encourages you to do so.
- Whenever possible, opt for outdoor activities. We acknowledge that outdoor activities and gatherings will only be possible when the weather is nice enough to allow them. As the seasons change, certain types of activities will become more limited. Our hope is that public health conditions improve, and some restrictions on indoor gatherings may be eased.

Violation of Temporary Policies

Requestor's found in violation of these policies could have their meeting or event closed immediately and lose the privilege to host in-person events.

References:

CDC. Considerations for Events and Gatherings. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>

City of Houston COVID 19: <https://houstonemergency.org/covid19/>

Harris COVID 19: https://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Resources/2019-Novel-Coronavirus?_ga=2.17943289.1963920242.1599835858-1342664804.1599835858

State of Texas COVID 19: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>