

What to Expect in Campus Housing for 2020-2021

Each student interested in living on the UC Merced campus for the 2020-2021 school year should have an idea of what life in the residence halls will be like this year. We realize the list of areas below don't represent all the questions you might have, but we chose these areas to help highlight the major differences between what campus housing is traditionally like and how the student experience will be affected with COVID-19 mitigation measures in place. As you consider applying, hopefully this information and the information provided in other housing FAQs will help you make decisions about if campus housing meets your needs this year.

Risk Reduction

UC Merced will take a lot of steps to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission on campus but can't guaranteed a COVID-free environment.

Campus Interactions

The housing experience during the pandemic will be different than what you might have expected. A major difference is the need to physically distance. To keep a campus housing community healthy and safe, you and other students will mostly engage with classes, clubs and other students online. In-person interactions will be small and very limited. Most campus services, like the health center, counseling center and other offices will be accessible to support you remotely, with alternatives and other services scheduled as needed.

Gyms, outdoor recreational areas, dance rooms and other common gathering spaces may be closed or open, depending on guidance from Merced County and the University.

Face Coverings

Within the residence halls, all Bobcats will play a big role in helping stop the spread of COVID-19. You and all residents and staff will be expected to wear face coverings when leaving your room, including when walking around the building, using the common areas and entering and exiting the building. Kitchens and common spaces will have strict limits on the number of people who can use them at once.

Guests

Each student will be assigned to a single room. You can visit with guests outside, but students will be limited to entering only their own residence halls to help limit the risk of transmissions and you can't host guests inside your room. Outside guests will be prohibited within the residence halls, with the exception of those people who are actively helping you move in or move out. With masks and distancing, students are encouraged to socialize outside.

Quiet Hours

With most classes being offered remotely, the halls will need a level of quiet conducive to academic work and class attendance. Our quiet hours times when headphones should be used and other noise kept to a minimum, will be in effect every day, with the exception of 5-9 p.m. Each resident plays a role in making sure their fellow students can be successful.

Staff

There will be Resident Assistants and full-time Residence Education Coordinators to help students with the transition to campus housing. There won't be traditional group events and indoor gatherings, but RAs will still work with their students to building community with those in their floors. Much of this will be done through mobile apps, like Microsoft Teams, Zoom or other channels.

Dining

Dining will operate in "grab-and-go" fashion, featuring a selection of pre-packaged meals at each station. There won't be any indoor seating, but students can take their food to their room or other locations on campus to eat. Sitting at a table with friends or studying inside the dining hall will not be a part of the experience this year.

If I Get Sick

If you don't feel well, you'll first contact the Student Health Center by phone. During the day, you'll be connected to UC Merced staff; outside business hours and on weekends, a nurse will conduct an assessment over the phone. If the health center feels your symptoms might be COVID related, you'll be temporarily moved to a designated isolation room. You'll take the essentials you'll need for class and entertainment for 14 days. The university will provide linens, pillows, towels, snacks, soap and other items for the room so you don't have to pack as much.

Each day, university staff will bring meals to you and check in with you by phone or text to see how you're doing. If your COVID test comes back negative, you'll work with the health center on a plan to leave quarantine. If you test positive, you may need to stay for up to another 14 days.

Should You Come?

To stop the spread at UC Merced and keep our residence halls open both fall and spring semesters will take a group effort from everyone. Life on campus will look different, and it may not be for everyone this year. No one can guarantee a COVID-free living environment in a university residence hall, and if you have risk factors that might make COVID more dangerous, you should know that an open campus doesn't equal a COVID-free campus.

Talk with your family and trusted friends, consider your options and really give it some consideration. There won't be a lot of sanctioned, in-person interaction. If those kinds of connections are important or you're a person who doesn't really enjoy socializing through social media or Zoom, the campus housing experience might not be for you. If you need campus housing and are approved, we'll be here to welcome you and help you make the most of your time on our beautiful campus.

[2020-2021 Housing Handbook](#)

[UC Merced temporary policies for physical distancing](#)