

# RICE GRADUATE STUDENT CULTURE OF CARE AGREEMENT 2020-2021

I understand, as a member of the Rice community during the 2020-2021 academic year that I play a vital role in upholding and promoting Rice's Culture of Care in all of the various ways that students interact not only with each other but also with faculty and staff at the university. I especially understand that this participation is essential to protecting the health and safety of others during a global pandemic. I agree to abide by all federal, state, city, and university mandates, policies, protocols, and procedures related to COVID-19, and I agree to participate in any required training, testing, and contact tracing.

I understand that violations of this Culture of Care Agreement can be reported by anyone in the Rice community and will be handled by Student Judicial Programs and the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. These offices will gather the information needed to assess whether a violation of the Culture of Care Agreement has occurred, the seriousness of the violation, whether prior violations have taken place, and other relevant circumstances to determine the appropriate public health response in the form of an educational measure and/or sanction.

I agree that, should these offices determine that my behavior jeopardized the health and safety of others in the Rice community, I may be required to participate in an educational training or program related to public health, be subject to restrictions on graduate student privileges and campus access, or be subject to other disciplinary action.

## Health and Wellness

### I AGREE:

- To participate, as part of my obligation to protect my fellow Rice community members, in any daily wellness checks required by Rice (e.g. monitoring temperature and observing symptoms prior to coming to campus), and to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms.
- I also agree to take part in COVID-19 testing as recommended by health professionals or required by Rice University, and to assist in the tracking of my contacts should I test positive.
- To immediately report for COVID-19 testing or contact Student Health Services if I have any symptoms or known exposures related to COVID-19, as soon as they are discovered.
- If I am selected, to report as instructed, for COVID-19 screening testing that will occur for a random sample of Rice community members each week or based on an assessment of the risk to the campus.
- To wash my hands frequently for at least 20 seconds throughout each day and before and after interactions with others.
- To receive and provide proof of an influenza vaccine on or before October 30, 2020, obtainable later this fall through Student Health Services
- To monitor any changes to the Rice COVID-19 policy and communications for modifications to campus rules (<https://coronavirus.rice.edu/policies>Links to an external site.).

# Campus Movement and Physical Distancing

## I AGREE:

- To maintain appropriate (at least six feet) physical distance from others whenever possible.
- To wear a facial covering when I am in any on-campus indoor space other than my apartment or when I am alone in my office, except when I am eating or drinking six feet away from others.
- To wear a facial covering whenever I am outdoors, except when I am alone in my vehicle or when I am eating or drinking, at least six feet away from others.
- To follow procedures for entering and exiting classrooms and for entering and exiting rows of seating in classrooms, which will be clearly marked on signs in and around classrooms.
- To follow all research and environmental health and safety protocols developed by my adviser, department chair, Environmental Health and Safety, and as described in return to research plans.
- To follow all clearly marked office protocols within academic, recreational, and other campus buildings.
- To sit only in seats designated and clearly marked as available in classrooms and other campus spaces.
- To use alcohol-based disinfectant wipes provided throughout campus buildings to clean surfaces with which I come into contact, including but not limited to desks and seats in classrooms.
- To abide by Community Rules within the Rice Village and Rice Graduate Apartments when in those facilities.
- To congregate only in designated outdoor and indoor areas of campus, wearing a facial covering, maintaining adequate physical distance, and complying with all signage and posted COVID-19 occupancy limits.
- To monitor any changes to the Rice COVID-19 policy and communications for modifications to campus rules (<https://coronavirus.rice.edu/policies>Links to an external site.).

# Travel

## I AGREE:

- To limit all unnecessary personal travel and adhere to the University's most current guidance on Rice-affiliated travel, found here: <https://coronavirus.rice.edu>.
- To comply, if I must travel, with quarantine and testing requirements based on guidance of the state and local health departments in Houston and the travel destination.

# Social Life and Recreation

## I AGREE:

- To model behavior that embodies my commitment to upholding the Culture of Care at Rice and my priority for protecting the members of our community.

- To observe physical distancing guidelines and other COVID-19-related safety protocols adopted by the University when participating in any Rice affiliated activities.
- To comply with all posted COVID-19 occupancy limitations in public spaces around campus and in graduate student housing.
- To follow federal, state, county, and city guidelines and orders and to practice physical distancing and wear face coverings when engaging in activities off-campus in order to reduce the spread of coronavirus in our community.
- To monitor any changes to the Rice COVID-19 policy and communications for modifications to campus rules (<https://coronavirus.rice.edu/policies>[Links to an external site.](#)).

## I UNDERSTAND THAT:

- Engaging in activities on or off campus that are not in accordance with physical distancing and public health guidelines endangers all individuals at that event, as well as all individuals that I come in contact with following the event.
- Engaging in on and off campus activities not in accordance with physical distancing and public health guidelines, and then later coming to campus puts the health and safety of the Rice community at risk -- including potentially spreading COVID-19 to those at Rice.
- Drinking alcohol and using other drugs may increase my risk of engaging in behavior that is contrary to public health measures and may increase the need for medical treatment if that behavior results in higher-risk contact with others.
- Alcohol consumption and recreational drug use will not be considered an excuse for behavior inconsistent with Rice's COVID-19 public health related restrictions and guidance.
- The [Rice University Alcohol Policy](#)[Links to an external site.](#) remains in effect, but new health and safety regulations related to COVID-19 (e.g., physical distancing, space occupancy limits, max gathering size) supersede any such references in the Alcohol Policy.
- Large public parties on campus are not permitted. For smaller public events (below 50 people), consumption of alcohol in any public or shared space (indoors or outdoors) must be registered through the same risk management process as in the past.

## Rice Core Values

The expectations for Rice students in this Agreement are guided by the values essential to every member of the Rice community in the 2020-21 academic year. The values we cherish at Rice are embodied in the Culture of Care, and these values are more important to uphold now than ever before. Rice University's value statement includes: "Rice faculty, staff and students share values that are essential to our success as a healthy community. Those values guide our decisions and behaviors and shape Rice's culture. They come through in the way we treat each other and the welcome we extend to our visitors."

We recognize that these difficult and unparalleled times call for changes in how we conduct both our University operations and our own lives in order to uphold those values that we have always held dear. Rice's values remain constant, but these values call for temporary adjustments to our way of being together, which are necessary to protect everyone—our students, faculty, staff, visitors, and community—to the best of our abilities. To provide everyone on campus with a reasonable, equitable environment to enhance safety, we must all agree—and have assurance that everyone else on campus has consented—to abide by certain behavioral guidelines. Please note that these guidelines

may be changed or provided with more specificity at any time as changes in public health guidance or our experience require. Rice students agree to monitor their own behavior to conform and comply with these expectations, and will comply with directions from the University for the safety of the community. In addition, by embracing the Culture of Care, Rice students should recognize that all members of our community have a shared responsibility to care for one another. This extends to holding one another accountable.

**Rice is committed to the health, safety and well-being of our students, staff, faculty, and surrounding community.** Therefore, all members of the Rice community and visitors will wear facial coverings and will maintain appropriate physical distance in campus buildings and outdoors, and in the broader Houston community. These spaces include: administrative, academic, and recreational buildings; and common spaces on campus. This also includes outside green spaces and quadrangles, spaces between and around all buildings including graduate student housing, the “outer loop” surrounding campus, and the Bioscience Research Collaborative (BRC). Individuals experiencing symptoms of illness (fever, coughing, shortness of breath, etc.) will be required to follow recommendations of Student Health Services or other health professionals.

**Rice is committed to excellence in higher education.** Enrolled students will certainly be challenged and experience academic growth in all of the ways that Rice University has offered since its beginnings. Faculty will remain available for support, engaging in academic dialogue, and consultation related to coursework. Some of our faculty will be able to offer in-person instruction in classrooms and academic buildings. Rice will provide supplies for disinfecting the chairs, desks and tables in each classroom and students participating in classroom instruction will be responsible for sanitizing and cleaning their workspaces upon entry and departure of the classroom, office, and lab. Everyone using classroom spaces will do their part to maintain a clean and safe educational environment. For more information related to coursework delivery logistics and scheduling, please visit the websites of the Academic Restart Committee: <https://coronavirus.rice.edu/academic-restart-committee>[Links to an external site.](#), or the Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.rice.edu/preparing-for-fall-2020#overview>[Links to an external site.](#)

**Rice recognizes the importance of extra-curricular, social, and recreational activities as part of our educational experience, as long as these activities can be conducted safely both for their participants and for those with whom they may come into contact during and after those activities.** In order to be as safe as possible, these activities must follow Rice safety protocols, including guidelines for physical distancing. All campus buildings will have signage with further information for students, faculty and staff, including occupancy limits in the rooms in academic and public buildings. Outdoor furniture in the public areas around campus will be designed and arranged to maximize social connectivity while maintaining physical distance. Rice students have the responsibility to follow the directions provided in these and any modified guidelines, and to seek clarity if confusion arises.

## **MY PLEDGE TO UPHOLD THE CULTURE OF CARE AND AFFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE**

I affirm that I have read the entirety of this Culture of Care Agreement and pledge to comply with the expectations detailed above in order to keep our community safe and healthy.

I understand that taking these measures is intended to reduce the risk to my health and the health of others, but I also understand that Rice cannot completely eliminate my risk of contracting COVID-19.

I also understand that noncompliance with the expectations listed above may result in penalties or sanctions, including my removal from campus without delay.