

**From:** [Robert V Ferrara](#)  
**To:** [Robert V Ferrara](#)  
**Subject:** FSILG IAP Isolation Planning and Follow-up  
**Date:** Thursday, December 23, 2021 12:54:23 PM

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From: **Brad Badgley** <[bbadgley@mit.edu](mailto:bbadgley@mit.edu)>

Date: Wed, Dec 22, 2021 at 5:43 PM

Subject: FSILG IAP Isolation Planning and Follow-up

Dear FSILG Student Leadership,

On December 22, 2021, MIT announced that in the event of a significant COVID-19 outbreak, students who test positive for Covid-19 will isolate in place in both residence halls and FSILGs.

Updated information is posted on [MIT NOW](#). If you have any questions about MIT Covid policies as they relate to the FSILGs, please contact the FSILG Office at [fsilg-office@mit.edu](mailto:fsilg-office@mit.edu).

Given this new information, the FSILG Office requests each FSILG submit a plan addressing the following for residents who test positive:

- Accessing meals
- Accessing bathrooms
- Living with roommates
- Communication plans

**Alumni and student leadership should work together in the development of these plans, and submit them at [this link](#)** no later than January 4, 2022. Should Covid-positive students be out of their room for an additional reason, such as trash removal or laundry, they must wear a mask and be brief in the time spent outside of their room for these tasks (KN95/94 masks will be provided for every house). In developing your plans, please keep in mind that our goal is that all members of the MIT and FSILG community should be treated with respect and empathy.

**Please see the attached for information on MIT's updated policies, and recommendations for plans that FSILGs can adopt for Covid-positive students isolating in place.**

If you have questions or need more information, please contact the FSILG Office at [fsilg-office@mit.edu](mailto:fsilg-office@mit.edu).

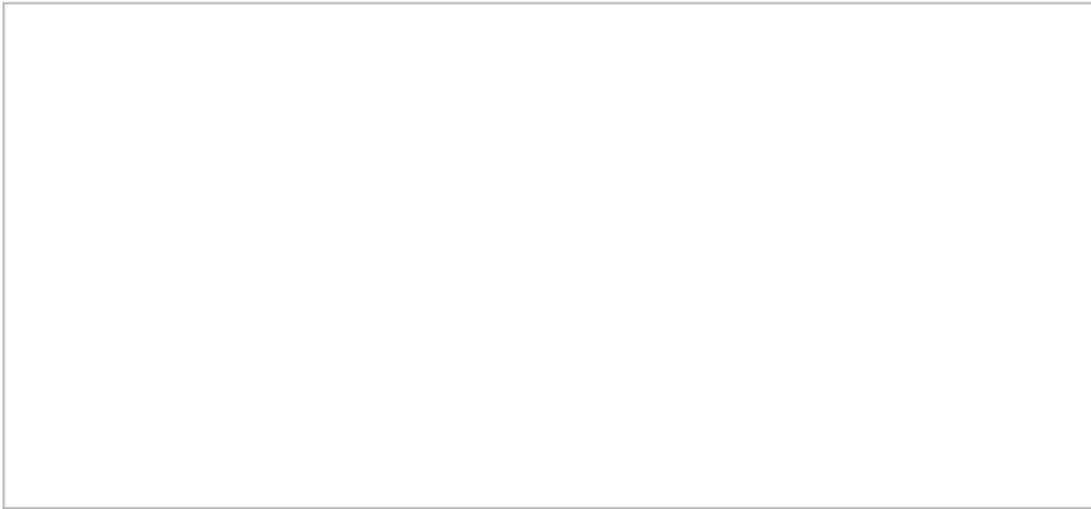
Sincerely,  
FSILG Office

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**From:** Suzy Nelson and Cecilia Stuopis

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 22, 2021

**Subject:** Action Required by 12/27: Make an informed decision about IAP and complete the registry form



*TL;DR: Action required by 12/27; Read this long email carefully and all the way through; Consider risks and downsides before planning to return for IAP; Understand changes to COVID support; Complete the registry form; Get boosted ASAP if you're eligible.*

Dear students,

If you haven't seen yesterday's email to the community about modifying IAP and the [highly contagious Omicron variant](#)'s impact on our COVID-19 management plans, [please take a moment and read it now](#). Much like the fall term in 2020, MIT's campus will be closely managed in January, with policies and practices designed to respond to Omicron and to prioritize maintaining our academic and research mission. For more context on these plans, watch the [video](#) and [slides](#) from the 8 a.m. community call on Tuesday, December 21.

We are writing to give you a sense of the requirements for, and expectations of, students who return for IAP. **Importantly, we expect COVID cases on campus to increase sharply in the coming days, and we must assume that you are more likely to contract COVID than this past fall if you return to campus for IAP.**

### **MAKING HARD CHOICES**

This is probably not how you envisioned IAP – neither did we. MIT leaders have been working around the clock to develop plans that balance the importance of IAP to students with the challenges of living with Omicron. The good news is that our community is well prepared, and while we learn more about Omicron every day, early reports suggest that people who are fully vaccinated and boosted [have milder symptoms with Omicron than with other COVID strains and are less likely to experience serious illness](#).

Whether you are on campus or elsewhere over IAP, your best defenses against the virus remain [vaccines and boosters](#), [well-fitting masks](#), hand-washing and cough-covering, and keeping a distance from others, [especially when eating](#). That said, the [experience of other institutions](#) shows that identifying and immediately containing Omicron may be impossible. We have developed the following plans so IAP can continue even if case numbers increase.

## **NEW APPROACH AND EXPECTATIONS FOR IAP**

**Modified IAP.** [As stated in yesterday's community email](#), "Undergraduate students who are taking for-credit academic classes that are important for their academic progression; participating in research and internships, athletics, and professional development activities; or who otherwise would not have appropriate living or learning environments, are invited to return in January for IAP." Assuming you meet these criteria, you must also understand and accept that there are risks in returning to campus during the anticipated surge. With this in mind, and even if your plans are tentative, [complete the IAP Plans Registry by December 27](#). Note this is not an application, and you can update your responses if your plans change.

If you do change your mind and decide not to participate in IAP, you can drop IAP classes and should reach out to your advisor to discuss options. Also, you can cancel your already purchased IAP meal plan at the last minute at no cost if you decide not to return.

**Vaccination & Boosters.** If you are eligible to get boosted now, do it as soon as possible: all students are required to [get a COVID booster shot and upload proof by January 14](#) or within 14 days after they become eligible for a booster shot if that date is after January 14. Vaccinated individuals who have recently tested positive for COVID are eligible to get a booster at the completion of their 10-day isolation period. Students who do not meet this requirement will lose access to all campus facilities except their residence.

**Pre-Arrival Testing.** All undergraduates must test before returning to campus for IAP or the start of the spring term. MIT is facilitating this process by working with a lab that will allow those currently in the US to test at a retail location or to be shipped a mail-in kit. **You must get tested immediately before you plan to travel back to campus.** The lab will send your results to you and MIT Medical. Students arriving from international destinations are required by the CDC to have a negative COVID test within 24 hours of departure to the US and are exempted from this requirement. More information about the pre-arrival testing process will be emailed directly to you before the end of this week.

**If You Test Positive.** You may not come to campus if you test positive pre-arrival, even if you have filled out the registry form indicating you are returning for IAP. Please notify MIT Medical of your positive test through COVID Pass. Once your isolation period is concluded, MIT Medical will advise you when you can return to campus. Also note that if you test positive at any point over the break or IAP while away from MIT, report it to MIT Medical through COVID Pass so you can be entered into the 90-day testing exemption period.

**Arrival, Testing & The Quiet Period.** If you test negative and come back to campus, you will need to observe a “quiet period” – generally keep to your room except for essential needs like getting food or cooking for yourself, using the bathroom, or exercising. Do not attend events or gatherings, and wear your mask at all times when you are outside your room for any reason until you receive two negative tests (one upon arrival to campus and another three or four days later).

**Attesting & Ongoing Testing.** On-campus and FSILG residents and off-campus students who are eligible and register for IAP will **continue to test twice a week on their usual cadence (when testing is available) and attest every day using COVID Pass**. If you are in campus housing or an FSILG through winter break, please note that COVID testing will be operating on a [reduced schedule](#). [Make sure testing is open](#) before you head to the MIT Medical Trailer or a drop-off location.

## **AFTER A POSITIVE TEST**

**Self-Isolation, Meals & Personal Isolation Kits.** Students in campus housing or an FSILG who test positive and who don't require hospitalization or who are not immunocompromised will be asked to **isolate in their rooms for the duration of their ten-day isolation period**. Alternatively, if you have reasonable and supportive off-campus accommodations available to you in the region, we ask that you move there for your isolation period. We want to preserve beds and campus resources for others who don't have that flexibility.

If you test positive for COVID – you will see your test result in COVID Pass – you must immediately return to your room and stay there. You will then receive information by email about how to treat symptoms, how to prevent spreading the virus to others (e.g., when using the bathroom or getting meals), and medical contact information should your symptoms get worse and you need to seek assistance. You will also be contacted by the Covid Support Team, who will help to support you during your isolation.

Please note that students living in residence halls who test positive may not cook for

themselves during their isolation. Grab-and-go meals will be available for isolating students to pick up from a designated spot in their residence and to take to their room.

To make isolation easier on you, we strongly encourage you to pack a ten-day personal isolation kit before you leave to return to campus. It should contain any prescription medications you take as well as preferred non-prescription cold-fighting medications and pain killers/fever reducers. Also include personal care items like tissues, cough drops, and contact lens fluid, your favorite snacks, and anything else you think you'll need to be comfortable for ten days in isolation.

Some details of these plans are being finalized. We will release more information to students once they are fully developed.

**Roommates.** As you may have seen, [Omicron is now the dominant strain of COVID in the U.S.](#) less than a month after it was first reported to the World Health Organization. It moves very fast, and it is highly transmissible. As a result, if a student tests positive, it's likely that their roommates have COVID, too. If that is the case, they will be required to isolate together in their room so that we can preserve isolation beds and campus resources for others.

If one or more roommates test negative, they may be offered temporary accommodations by MIT as available. The negative-testing roommates will move back to their room if they test positive or when the original positive student's ten-day isolation is over. Keep in mind that it takes about three days after exposure for the virus to show up in tests, so a negative-testing student who moves into another friend's room may be carrying COVID and could unwittingly spread the virus. Also, if your roommate tests positive, you should test every day for five days.

Housing assignments for the spring term are complete and cannot be changed as we are at capacity in undergraduate residences.

**FSILG Residents.** Students living in an FSILG who test positive and are isolating in their room should follow guidance from their organization. Information is being sent to FSILGs by the end of this week that will guide each organization's development of an in-house isolation plan.

## **OTHER HEALTH SUPPORTS**

**Immunocompromised Students & Special Medical Needs.** MIT recognizes that there may be students on campus for whom this isolation-in-place plan raises health concerns, such as those who are immunocompromised. If you have a disability or health condition

that poses an increased risk to you by living with a COVID-positive individual, please reach out to your healthcare provider for documentation. MIT Medical and [Disability and Access Services](#) can assist if you need to request a disability accommodation and will work together with you to see what options may be available.

**Masks.** Each person moving into a living community or FSILG for IAP will be expected to wear a well-fitting, high-quality mask when outside their room. Cloth masks when worn without another mask are less effective at preventing COVID-19.

MIT has a supply of high-quality masks that will be made available at test drop-off points. FSILGs will have a supply of masks delivered to their houses. The masks are to be worn any time students are outside of their private rooms, suite, or apartment, except when outdoors or actively eating. **Unvaccinated students must wear masks when outdoors if they are unable to be physically distant from others by three feet.** [See these instructions](#) on how to use high-quality masks for best results.

**Dining & Food.** For IAP meal plan holders, dining hall seating will not be available, so students should get meals from their dining hall or designated pickup spot and eat them elsewhere inside or outside. Limit groups eating together to no more than four people. Students in cook-for-yourself communities can continue to cook for themselves while wearing a mask and may eat together in groups of four people or fewer. Students in cook-for-yourself communities who test positive may not cook until their isolation period ends. As mentioned above, meals will be provided to students in isolation.

All campus housing residents can have take-out delivered to their residence so long as they wear their mask when they leave their room to pick up deliveries. See [this list of food resources](#) if you need assistance getting enough nutrition. Please note that most retail eateries on campus will be closed during winter break and IAP, so check out the [retail dining page for eatery hours](#).

## **KNOW BEFORE YOU DECIDE TO RETURN**

If you indicate you meet the criteria for being on campus during IAP, please keep the following information in mind:

**Academic Support.** Automatic notices to instructors will be discontinued during IAP, so if you test positive or have attested to symptoms, you will need to reach out to your instructors immediately and let them know generally about your situation. [Student Support Services can also help](#). It's important to note that, if you are enrolled in an IAP class that has an in-person component, you won't be able to attend in-person instruction during your isolation period if you test positive for COVID.

Instructors have been asked to develop plans to help ensure academic continuity to the extent they are able (which may involve teaching the class entirely over Zoom for all or part of IAP, or providing recordings or other class materials asynchronously for students who miss class). There is limited time for instructors to develop these ways of assisting students, so we have recommended that they focus on the simplest solutions. These may enable you to keep up with a class if you are required to isolate.

However, for hands-on/in-person intensive subjects, it may not be feasible to develop effective learning resources for students who miss class. In those cases, it is important to recognize that a likely academic outcome of contracting COVID is that you will have to drop the class. It is also possible that instructors and teaching staff for some of these classes will test positive and be required to isolate, which may impact the class up to and including cancellation of the class if appropriate substitute teaching cannot be arranged.

If you need additional academic assistance, please contact your [Student Support Services dean](#). Also see the [email to instructors](#) from Vice Chancellor Ian Waitz and Professor Lily Tsai, chair of the MIT faculty, for more details.

**Events.** More information will be forthcoming on events.

**Guests in Undergraduate Residences.** [The policy on guests remains in effect.](#)

However, guests from outside MIT cannot stay overnight in undergraduate residence halls or FSILGs until further notice.

**Travel.** Please use caution and think carefully about holiday travel plans and activities. All members of the MIT community are encouraged to register their personal travel through [COVID Travel](#). If your return date is uncertain, enter an approximate date. International travelers should be aware of [recent changes to U.S. federal travel requirements](#) as well as the requirements for countries they visit. Please review the Institute's [travel policy](#) for reporting requirements.

## **WE CAN GET THROUGH THIS**

COVID conditions are changing very rapidly. By managing mild COVID symptoms on our own, we can ensure that limited support resources are going to community members who need them most. This will also be an important learning period for us all as we plan for an in-person spring semester. There will be more information to share in the short time before IAP begins, so please watch out for additional emails from MIT.

For now, we wish you a very happy, healthy, and restful break.

Best regards,

Cecilia Stuopis, MD  
Medical Director, MIT Medical

Suzy Nelson  
Vice Chancellor and Dean for Student Life