

SIUE Launches Mandatory Re-entry COVID-19 Testing in New Year

by Megan Wieser
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EDWARDSVILLE – Southern Illinois University Edwardsville launched its re-entry COVID-19 testing initiative on Monday, Jan. 4. The mandatory testing runs through Thursday, Jan. 21.

By end of day Thursday, Jan. 7, more than 2,600 faculty, staff and students had been tested. The average turnaround time for results is approximately 65 hours. Of the first 1,668 re-entry test results received, the positivity rate is 0.11% with 15 positive, 1,652 negative and one inconclusive outcome.

“We are pleased with the scheduling response we’re experiencing for this mandatory re-entry testing, as it is imperative for preserving the health and safety of our community,” said SIUE COVID-19 Response Coordinator Michael Schultz. “Our strategy aligns with the campus commitment to health and safety, and new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).”

SIUE’s program requires that all employees and students who will be on campus complete a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) COVID-19 test within 48 hours of visiting any SIUE campus, including Alton, East St. Louis or Edwardsville.

Testing on the Edwardsville campus is taking place in the Student Fitness Center. The School of Dental Medicine site is in the Science Building, and the East St. Louis Center multi-function room in Building D serves as the testing site for that campus.

University Housing residents returning to on-campus housing in January will be required to sign up for a time to return to campus and also submit proof of a negative COVID-19 test result prior to their return. Full details on University Housing requirements are available at siue.edu/housing/about/operation-updates.

Students and employees who are learning or working remotely and are not otherwise planning to be on campus do not need to participate in this mandatory testing. However, anyone who re-engages in on-ground activity during the Jan. 4-21 period, regardless how brief or intermittent the campus contact, is expected to get a screening test within 48 hours of arrival to campus.

Surveillance testing will be ongoing beginning January 25 through Wednesday, April 28. After the initial January re-entry mandatory screening test period, the continuing screening tests will be on a voluntary basis with incentives to participate.

To encourage participation, approximately 600 employees and students will be selected through a random sample and be invited to be tested each week. Those participants will be eligible for a variety of incentives, including Cougar Bucks, parking hang-tag raffles and an end-of-semester raffle for a Fall FY22 tuition waiver. Individuals do not need to be invited to be tested, however they will not be eligible for the aforementioned incentives.

For further details, including reporting forms, campus updates and the University's testing policy, please visit siue.edu/coronavirus.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River's rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of nearly 13,000.