

Guidance for IHE with identified cases of COVID-19 in their community

If local health officials report that there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, IHE need to take additional steps in **response** to prevent further spread of the disease. The first step for IHE in this situation is to talk with local health officials.

Determine if, when, and for how long the IHE may need to suspend classes and postpone or cancel events and activities.

Temporarily suspending classes is a strategy to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19 in communities. When classes are suspended, IHE may stay open for staff or faculty (unless ill) while students temporarily stop attending in-person classes. Keeping the IHE facilities open a) allows faculty to develop and deliver lessons and materials electronically, thus maintaining continuity of teaching and learning; and b) allows other staff members to continue to provide services and help with additional response efforts.

IHE administrators should work in close collaboration with local health officials and the IHE's university system to make class suspension and event and activity cancellation decisions. IHE are not expected to make decisions about suspending classes or canceling events on their own. IHE can seek specific guidance from local health officials to determine if, when, and for how long to take these steps. Class suspension and event and activity (e.g., on-campus sporting, theater, and music events) cancellation may be recommended for at least 14 days, or possibly longer if advised by local health officials. The nature of these actions (e.g., geographic scope, duration) may change as the local outbreak situation evolves.

If a student, staff, or faculty member attended class or was active on campus prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case:

- **Local health officials may recommend temporary class suspension and event or activity cancellation.** Individuals may be considered active on campus if they had attended class, work, work-study, or some other type of gathering or event (e.g., student meetings, recreational activities) on campus. Local health officials' recommendations for the scope (e.g., all campuses in a university system or only select campuses) and duration of school dismissals will be made on a case-by-case basis using the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific cases in the impacted community.
- **IHE should work with the local health department and other relevant leadership to communicate the possible COVID-19 exposure.** This communication to the IHE community should align with the communication plan in the IHE's emergency operations plan. In such a circumstance, it is critical to maintain confidentiality of the student, staff member, or faculty member as required by the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#)^{external icon} and the [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act](#)^{external icon}.
- **IHE administrators should seek guidance from local health officials to determine when students, staff, and faculty should return to campus and what additional steps**

are needed for the IHE community. In addition, students, staff, and faculty who are well but are taking care of or share a home with someone with a case of COVID-19 should follow instructions from local health officials to determine when to return to campus.

If classes are suspended, IHE can consider the following steps:

- **Temporarily cancel extracurricular group activities and large events.**
 - Cancel or postpone events such as club meetings, performances, social events, athletic team practices, and sporting events.
- **Discourage students, staff, and faculty from gathering or socializing anywhere.**
 - Discourage gatherings at places like at a friend's house, a favorite restaurant, or a local coffee shop.
- **Ensure continuity of education and research.**
 - Review continuity plans, including plans for the continuity of teaching, learning, and research. Implement e-learning plans and distance learning options as feasible and appropriate.
 - Ensure continuity plans address how to temporarily postpone, limit, or adapt research-related activities (e.g., study recruitment or participation, access to labs) in a manner that protects the safety of researchers, participants, facilities, and equipment.
 - Consider the following approaches:
 - Use of existing infrastructure and services (e.g., Blackboard, Skype, Zoom) to support efficient transition of classes from in-person to distance-based formats. This may include using strategies such as faculty check-ins, recorded class meetings or lectures, and live class meetings.
 - Other student support services such as online library services, print materials available online, phone- or internet-based counseling support, or study groups enabled through digital media.
 - IHE will need to determine, in consultation with their university system:
 - How to convert face-to-face lessons into online lessons and how to train faculty to do so.
 - How to triage technical issues if faced with limited IT support and staff
 - How to deal with the potential lack of students' access to computers and the Internet at home or in temporary housing.
 - **Ensure continuity of safe housing.**
 - **Work in close collaboration with local health officials to make all decisions related to on-campus housing.**
 - **If cases of COVID-19 have not been identified among residents of on-campus community housing,** students may be allowed to remain in on-campus housing. In this situation, educate housing residents on the precautions they should take to help protect themselves when there is community spread of COVID-19. Residents should follow any more specific recommendations provided by local health officials.
 - **If cases of COVID-19 have been identified among residents of on-campus community housing, work with local health officials to take**

additional precautions. Individuals with COVID-19 may need to be moved to temporary housing locations. These individuals will need to self-isolate and monitor for worsening symptoms according to the guidance of local health officials. [Close contacts](#) of the individuals with COVID-19 may also need temporary housing so that they can self-quarantine and monitor for symptoms. Consult with local health officials to determine when, how, and where to move ill residents. Information on providing home care to individuals with COVID-19 who do not require hospitalization is available on CDC's [website](#).

- Residents identified with COVID-19 or identified as contacts of individuals with COVID-19 should not necessarily be sent to their permanent homes off-campus. Sending sick residents to their permanent homes could be unfeasible, pose logistical challenges, or pose risk of transmission to others either on the way to the home or once there. IHEs should work with local health officials to determine appropriate housing for the period in which they need to self-isolate and monitor for symptoms or worsening symptoms.
- Remember to consider all types of IHE-affiliated housing when making response plans. Distinct housing types (e.g., residence halls, apartments, fraternity and sorority houses) and situations (e.g., housing owned and run by the IHE, housing on the IHE campus but not run by the IHE) may require tailored approaches.
- Ensure any staff remaining to support students in on-campus housing receive necessary training to protect themselves and residents from spread of COVID-19. Staff should also be trained on how to respond if a resident becomes ill.
- **Ensure continuity of meal programs.**
 - Consult with local health officials to determine strategies for modifying food service offerings to the IHE community.
 - Consider ways to distribute food to students, particularly those who may remain on campus, while classes or other events and activities are dismissed.
 - If there is community spread of COVID-19, design strategies to avoid food distribution in settings where people might gather in a group or crowd. Consider options such as “grab-and-go” bagged lunches or meal delivery.
 - Consider if and how existing dining services should be scaled back or adapted. For example, an IHE may close some of or all its cafeterias/cafes to discourage students, staff, and faculty from gathering in group settings.
 - If on-campus housing residents have been relocated to temporary alternative housing, consider how meals can be provided to these students. Work with local health officials to determine strategies for providing meals to residents with COVID-19 or who are being monitored because of contact with persons with COVID-19.

- Ensure any staff remaining on campus to support food services receive necessary training. to protect themselves and those they serve from spread of COVID-19.
- **Consider if and when to stop, scale back, or modify other support services on campus.**
 - Consider alternatives for providing students with essential medical and social services. Identify ways to ensure these services are provided while classes are dismissed or students are in temporary housing.
 - Identify other types of services provided to students, staff, and faculty (e.g., library services, cleaning services). Consider ways to adapt these to minimize risk of COVID-19 transmission while maintaining services deemed necessary.
 - **Help counter stigma and promote resilience on campus.**
 - Share facts about COVID-19 through trusted dissemination channels to counter the spread of misinformation and mitigate fear.
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- Speak out against negative behaviors, including negative statements on social media about groups of people.
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- Develop plans to support students, staff, and faculty who may feel overwhelmed by COVID-19 and associated events on campus.
 - Ensure continuity of mental health services, such as offering remote counseling. Encourage students to call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) if they are feeling overwhelmed with emotions such as sadness, depression, anxiety, or feel like wanting to harm themselves or others