

RECOMMENDED HEALTH PROTOCOLS FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION – SUMMER 2020

The following health protocols are recommended for institutions of higher education (IHE) for reopening various campus operations for summer 2020. This checklist is based on health protocols included in The Governor’s Report to Open Texas¹ and COVID-19 *Considerations for Institutes of Higher Education* (Updated May 19, 2020) provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.²

The practices specified in this protocol are recommended to assure a safe and measured reopening of in-person campus operations. The virus that causes COVID-19 is still circulating in our communities. We need to continue to observe practices that protect everyone, including those who are most vulnerable.

Public health guidance cannot anticipate every unique situation. Institutional leaders should make every effort to stay informed and take actions based on common sense and wise judgment to protect the health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors.

The duration of the COVID-19 pandemic remains unclear and the situation continues to evolve. COVID-19 will impact each IHE differently, as public health guidance, scientific knowledge, and clinical best practices will change. These guidelines are offered **as a resource** to assist in making informed decisions when deciding whether to reopen various campus operations, including instructional services. IHE leaders may consider adopting additional protocols consistent with their specific needs and circumstances to help protect the health and safety of all students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors.

Recommended health protocols for students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors:

- At least through the end of the first summer session (late June for most institutions), continue to deliver as many services and as much instructional content as possible via remote, online, or distance education, particularly for vulnerable student populations.
- Provide training for all students, faculty, and staff on appropriate cleaning and disinfection, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.
- Post [signs](#) in highly visible locations that promote [everyday protective measures](#) and describe how to [stop the spread of germs](#) (such as [properly washing hands](#) and [properly wearing a cloth face covering](#)).
- Screen all individuals before coming into any reopened campus operation.
 - Isolate any student, faculty, staff, or campus visitor exhibiting new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19 and contact the local health department.
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea
 - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
 - Known close contact with a person who has been lab confirmed within the past 14 days to have COVID-19

¹ <https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/opentexas/OpenTexas-Report.pdf>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html>

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Recommended health protocols for students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors (*continued*):

- Consider designating an administrator or staff member to be the primary COVID-19 liaison responsible for communicating and coordinating with the local health department, local emergency services, and local health care providers. This coordination should be ongoing and should include prompt, coordinated responses to COVID 19 and other emergencies. Faculty, staff, and students should receive notice about who the institution’s primary COVID-19 liaison is and how to contact them.
- Do not allow any student, faculty, staff, or campus visitor with new or worsening signs (or any symptoms listed at the bottom of Page 1) to return to any reopened campus operation until:
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); and,
 - The individual has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and,
 - At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.
 - In the case of a student, faculty, staff, or campus visitor who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 who has not been evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual should be assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual *may not* return to the reopened campus operation until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above; or
 - If the student, faculty, staff, or campus visitor has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to a reopened campus operation before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional’s note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis.
- Do not allow a student, faculty, staff, or campus visitor with known close contact³ to a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 to return to the reopened campus operation until the end of the 14-day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure.
- Recommend all individuals wash or sanitize their hands upon entering the reopened campus operation.
- Recommend all individuals maintain at least [6 feet separation](#) from other individuals. Modified classroom and auditorium seating arrangements are recommended to facilitate appropriate distancing. Where feasible, consider alternating rows in auditorium seating (every other row left empty) and keeping at least two empty seats (or 6 feet separation) between students in any row. Additional measures such as face covering, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, sneeze guards, other physical dividers, and sanitation are encouraged, particularly in smaller air spaces in which a number of individuals will be spending time together.
- If the IHE provides a meal for students, faculty, staff, or campus visitors, it is highly recommended to have the meal individually packed for everyone.

³ For additional information, consult the CDC [Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure](#).

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- Consistent with actions taken across the state, consider having all individuals wear cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), especially when physical distancing is difficult. If available, students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors should consider wearing non-medical grade face masks.
- Recommend that campuses make disposable non-medical grade face masks available to students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors, to the extent possible, in smaller air spaces.
- Consistent with applicable law and privacy policies, have students, faculty, and staff report if they have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days in accordance with [health information sharing regulations for COVID-19](#) and other applicable federal and state privacy and confidentiality laws, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Notify faculty, staff, students, families, and the public of campus closures and any restrictions in place to limit COVID-19 exposure (e.g., limited hours of operation).
- Have a policy in place for how the institution will respond if a student, faculty, staff, or campus visitor begins to show symptoms of COVID-19 (see bottom of Page 1 of this document) while in class or on campus.

Additional Recommended Health Protocols for Reopened Campus Operations:

- Regularly and frequently clean and disinfect any touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, and restrooms and have sufficient disinfecting supplies to maintain hygienic standards.
- Thoroughly disinfect (after each use, class period, or end of day) items (e.g. desk or workspace) that come into contact with students, faculty, staff, or campus visitors.
- Make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available to all individuals.
- Develop specific policies for “high” close quarter spaces, such as elevators.
- Consider breaking large lecture courses into smaller sections and using staggered or rotating class schedules to minimize contact among students who are arriving and/or leaving classroom buildings and the campus.
- Consider eliminating exposure in common areas by closing drinking fountains, utilizing door stops, or removing furniture in gathering spaces.

Recommendations on Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick:

Advise Sick Individuals of Home Isolation Criteria

- Sick faculty, staff, or students should not return to in-person classes or campus facilities, or end isolation until they have met CDC’s [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).

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Isolate and Transport Those Who are Sick

- Provide notice that faculty, staff, and students should not come to the campus if they are sick, and should notify institution officials (e.g., designated COVID-19 liaison) if they become sick with COVID-19 [symptoms](#), test positive for COVID-19, or have been [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 symptoms.
- Separate faculty, staff, and students with COVID-19 [symptoms](#) (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath). Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on how severe their symptoms are, and follow [CDC Guidance for caring for oneself and others](#) who are sick. Institutions may follow [CDC's Guidance for Shared or Congregate Housing](#) for those that live in IHE housing.
- Consult with healthcare providers to identify a temporary space for isolation to separate anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive but does not have symptoms. IHE healthcare providers should use [Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions](#) when caring for sick people. See: [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know About Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection](#).
- Establish procedures to allow for safely transporting anyone who is sick to their home or to a healthcare facility. If you are calling an ambulance or bringing someone to the hospital, try to call first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19.

Clean and Disinfect

- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after [cleaning and disinfecting](#).
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of [cleaning and disinfection](#) supplies, including storing products securely away from children.

Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts

- In accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, the IHE should notify [local health officials](#), faculty, staff, and students immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#), FERPA, and other applicable laws and regulations.
- Inform those who have had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home or in their living quarters and [self-monitor for symptoms](#), and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.

Questions related to the phased and gradual reopening of campus operations can be directed to Ray Martinez, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Workforce Education, at ray.martinez@theccb.state.tx.us.