



**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRPERSON
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Guidelines for the Prevention, Control and Mitigation of the Spread of
the 2019-Novel Coronavirus Acute Respiratory Disease (2019-nCoV ARD)
in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)**

In response to the growing concerns over the 2019-nCoV ARD, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) enjoins all higher education institutions (HEIs) to observe the following guidelines based on the current issuances by the Department of Health (DOH) and the World Health Organization (WHO). It is imperative that the following be read in conjunction with the guidelines from DOH and WHO:

<https://www.doh.gov.ph/sites/default/files/basic-page/DC-2020-0042-Schools-and-Higher-Education-Institutions.pdf>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

As the situation is subject to change, CHED guidelines will be updated regularly to ensure that they remain consistent with expert advice. HEIs are advised to monitor and adopt new advisories issued by CHED.

INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

The WHO recently reported that "The 2019-nCoV outbreak and response has been accompanied by an over-abundance of information — some accurate and some not".

HEIs are encouraged to only rely on and disseminate relevant information obtained from DOH and WHO via their official website, specifically the links provided above. It is also recommended that updates and guidance from the DOH and WHO be made available to all students, faculty and staff via a link to these pages on your school's website.

HEIs must create a trustworthy portal of information within their schools and ensure that official advisories from the WHO and DOH remain visible across multiple communication channels.

Students, faculty and staff must be advised to stop reading, liking and sharing fake news and unverified and misleading information from social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

While gathering information online may be the easiest initial option, HEIs should advise everyone experiencing symptoms of an infection, such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath to contact a doctor or if available, a specialist at the nearest medical center who is likely to have the most recent information about a previously unknown infectious illness like this one.

PREVENTION & CONTROL

Currently there is no vaccine to prevent 2019-nCoV ARD. CHED recommends the following everyday preventive actions to avoid being exposed to the virus and to prevent its spread. HEIs should refer to the DOH website for health advice and for more detailed guidance on preventive measures

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick
- Staying home when sick
- Covering mouth & nose when coughing or sneezing with a tissue or elbow
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

SCREENING

All HEIs are encouraged to establish screening protocols based on the WHO guidelines for screening and response. These protocols do not include restricting travel or quarantining/isolating individuals who are asymptomatic (i.e., without symptoms), simply based on their travel history or home address. Furthermore, the response protocols must be aligned with the most recent recommendations from health expert.

ATHLETIC & OTHER CONCERNS

Following the recent recommendation by the DOH to “avoid attending, participating in, and organizing events that draw a huge number of attendees”, HEIs should discuss and review any planned events with their DOH regional office and with all participating schools and groups for decision on whether to push through with or postpone the planned activity.

TRAVEL

1. As per the Presidential directive on the 2019-nCov on February 2, 2020, all travel to the People’s Republic of China and its special administrative regions are temporarily banned.
2. HEI personnel and students coming from travel abroad shall comply with the prescribed quarantine procedures of proper government authorities before returning to work or school.
3. Travel to areas with confirmed 2019-nCov cases should also be limited.

4. If students are unable to return to school as a result of the travel ban, HEIs are encouraged to provide appropriate accommodations or alternate arrangements.

IN-HOUSE RESOURCE

As there is much fear, stigma and misinformation circulating, HEIs are advised, to the extent that resources are available, to have a central contact for the university (via dedicated phone, email or in person visit) for 2019-nCoV ARD to provide students with information as sourced from health expert advice, as well as to provide counsel to students, faculty and staff who are experiencing anxiety over the 2019-nCoV ARD outbreak.



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