



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

**Guidelines for the Prevention, Control and Mitigation of the Spread of
Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)**

**CHED ADVISORY NO. 4
14 March 2020**

This refers to Joint Resolutions Nos. 11 and 12 (s. 2020) of the Inter-agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (Task Force) established under Executive Order No. 168 (s. 2014), relative to the recommendations for the management of the COVID-19 situation and, in light of the decision of our health officials to raise the Code Alert System for the COVID-19 in the country to Code Red Sublevel 2, following the sharp increase in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases throughout the country.

Pursuant to the Memorandum from the Executive Secretary dated 13 March 2020 which provides stringent social distancing measures and further guidelines for the management of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) situation, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) hereby provides the terms of the Resolution that directly affect all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and issues this advisory to all HEIs. This advisory should be read in conjunction with CHED's previous COVID-19 advisories (Nos. 1, 2 and 3):

- Classes in Metro Manila shall continue to be suspended until April 14, 2020.
- A community quarantine is imposed over the entire NCR beginning March 15, 2020 to April 14, 2020. HEIs should abide by the directives of the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in the imposition of general and enhanced community quarantine in their respective jurisdictions.
- HEIs in Metro Manila that are still using the old academic calendar (i.e. school year ends in March or April) will be required to move or cancel their graduation ceremonies to comply with the restriction on mass gatherings.
- HEIs that have shifted their academic calendar (i.e. school semester starts in January) do not need to postpone or cancel graduation but may need to adjust their semester as needed, adopt different delivery modes of teaching, and provide make up classes to compensate for the 30-day class suspension.
- HEIs should ensure that employees who are part of the skeletal force observe social distancing and practice precautionary measures directed by the DOH.

- Domestic travel (air, sea and land) to and from Metro Manila will be restricted during the community quarantine period. HEIs should immediately instruct students, faculty, and staff currently in Metro Manila to go home if their primary residence is outside of Metro Manila. HEIs should exercise leniency on their policies concerning student absences and student leaves. Students who are absent for 30 days as a result of the community quarantine should not be dropped from their classes.
- Students who are sick of respiratory symptoms, should contact a health professional. Students who may have close contact with persons with COVID-19 must do self-quarantine at home for 14 days. Any student who will go outside of his or her home is advised to wear a mask.
- Outside of the National Capital Region, depending on the threat posed by COVID-19, local government units have the discretion to suspend classes within its respective jurisdiction provided that, measures and arrangements are in place to allow the students to continue fulfilling their requirements. Whenever a class suspension is ordered, HEIs should inform the students of the importance in remaining in their homes during class suspension.
- HEIs must work and coordinate with their local governments if they need to suspend classes, adjust their semesters or cancel other events within their universities and colleges.

There may be changes and additions to the President's directive, as the IATF will be meeting on a regular basis to assess the pandemic situation. In the meantime, CHED advises all HEIs especially those outside of the National Capital Region to:

- Urgently develop contingency plans in case their localities will be declared under quarantine.
- Perform environmental cleaning and disinfection procedures for all buildings with emphasis on frequently touched surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, light switches, desktops or countertops etc.).
- Mass gathering is discouraged. Consider cancelling or postponing big group activities and events. If the HEI is unable to cancel or postpone the event, the organizer should guarantee strict compliance with Department of Health (DOH) guidelines on space limitation and social distancing. The organizer must take full responsibility for the event.
- HEIs with students scheduled to go abroad for internship or OJT programs are enjoined to suspend the students' departure and negotiate with their partner institutions to adjust their program until the situation is under better control.
- Suspend participation of students, staff and faculty in seminars, workshops and other events, especially those that involve travel outside the province.
- Continue to remind students, staff, faculty and administrators to practice personal preventive measures such as proper hand hygiene, cough etiquette, and social distancing. Everyone should avoid visiting public places and/or attending big gatherings at this critical time.

- Regularly inform and update the CHED Regional Office (CHEDRO) in their area on activities and developments in their campuses to ensure that the CHEDRO and CHED Central Office can give any advice and support as needed

CHED continues to monitor the situation in coordination with DOH and the IATF and will provide updates as information and directives become available.



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