Guide for Resuming On–Campus Operations

In these unprecedented times, schools and colleges continue to struggle with how to provide educational services during the COVID-19 pandemic. When it comes to decisions about returning to full campus operations, every institution will ultimately assess its ability to resume subject to state and local health department recommendations and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) guidance for educational institutions. Based on current recommendations, this guide provides risk management recommendations to inform the decision on whether to resume on-campus operations and the process for resumption.

Liability

In addition to the numerous health and safety considerations, the potential for liability makes resuming on-campus operations a daunting task. Schools are now on notice of risks related to COVID-19, triggering a duty to take reasonable preventive actions.

A recent note from the National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA) identified the three likeliest avenues for a court to find an institutional duty related to COVID-19:

Landowner Liability
The landowner liability duty comes from the institution's ownership or control of property. Because schools own land and should know about the risk of COVID-19 harm to invitees on the land, if invitees fail to protect themselves and the school fails to exercise reasonable care to protect invitees against the danger, schools may be held liable.

Negligence Per Se
If the state passes a law saying that every landowner must take specific actions to protect against the risk of virus transmission, and the school does not take those actions, anyone harmed can argue that the school is responsible under the theory of negligence per se.

Affirmative or Gratuitous Undertaking
The gratuitous undertaking rule applies to institutions that take steps to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 but do not implement those steps properly. People who contract it on campus can then argue the school increased their risk of getting sick because they relied on measures the institution gratuitously took and the measures failed, causing harm.

In addition to these potential negligence claims, schools also may face constitutional and privacy claims, disability and accommodations claims, and contract claims related to the pandemic response.[1]

Yet not all of the risks COVID-19 poses in K-12 and higher educational settings are known or foreseeable, making "reasonable behavior" unclear for institutions. To date, no vaccine or cure for COVID-19 exists, and the risk of subsequent waves of infection remains. Institutions choosing to resume operations must implement sound public health prevention practices and collaborate with local public health departments to mitigate the risks of transmission.

Overview of Resources

This publication relies on CDC guidelines released in May 2020, especially Considerations for Institutes of Higher Education and Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs. Other useful CDC resources are referenced throughout and linked at the end of this guide. The CDC continues to release and update resources; refer to the CDC website for the most recent guidance.

The other central resource for this publication is the American College Health Association (ACHA) Considerations for Reopening Institutions of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era released in May 2020. Go to www.acha.org for the most recent COVID-19 guidance.

---

[1] James Keller. Liability Considerations for Return to Campus in the Age of COVID-19. *NACUANOTES Vol. 18, No. 7* (May 27, 2020) (NACUA login required).

How to Use This Guide

Part I: Foundational Issues provides recommendations to implement before resuming operations. Schools considering whether to start a resumption process should first review the Gating Questions section. Then, UE strongly recommends that all six foundational issues detailed below are considered before resuming operations.

Once your institution feels it has met the foundational issues, move to **Part II: Practical Considerations**. Part II provides ways to increase the safety of school operations. The practical considerations provided are a starting point. Not all these operational considerations are feasible for all institutions, and schools may devise additional safety protocols to support operations.

By implementing pertinent risk management recommendations and considerations contained in this piece, institutions that choose to resume operations can do so in a way that best promotes safety and reduces liability.

Part I: Foundational Issues

❶ Gating Questions: Public and Campus Health Considerations

❷ Oversight Team

❸ Remote Options

❹ Communications

❺ Education and Training

❻ Assumption of Risk Forms and Waivers

Part II: Practical Considerations

❶ Phased Return

❷ Facilities

❸ Faculty and Staff

❹ Students

❺ Activities

> By implementing pertinent risk management recommendations and considerations contained in this piece, institutions that choose to resume on-campus operations can do so in a way that best promotes safety and reduces liability.

Part I: Foundational Issues

Institutions considering resuming operations at their physical campuses during the pandemic must first ensure they and their region are safe to resume operations. Institutions can then establish an overview team to oversee the creation and execution of a resumption plan. Due to regional and institutional differences, each resumption plan will vary greatly. Use the foundational issues below to start building your institution's resumption plan.

Gating Questions: Public and Campus Health Considerations

Administrators should work with state and local public health officials to identify recommended practices. When deciding whether to resume on-campus operations, consider the following gating questions compiled from the CDC, ACHA, White House, and state reopening guidance.

If the answer to any of these questions is "No," institutions should consider keeping operations remote or identify strong justification based on individual circumstances for their decision to resume operations. If the answers are all "Yes," your institution should consider the other foundational recommendations to create a structure for resuming operations.

Health and Safety

■ Have local, state, and federal governments removed relevant stay-at-home orders and recommendations?

■ Have state or local health departments retracted any orders or mandates related to physical distancing or communal living that made resuming operations impracticable?

■ Have public health officials recommended that schools and nonessential businesses return to work?

■ Has the institution confirmed that the local municipality has sufficient public services to support the resumption of operations at all its educational institutions?

■ Is the institution ready to identify and protect students and employees at higher risk for severe illness as the CDC defined, such as people who are immunocompromised and older adults, by continuing to provide telework and virtual learning options?

■ Are cleaning products and personal protective equipment (PPE), such as cloth face covers, gloves, soap, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol, paper towels, and disinfectant wipes, available in sufficient supply to protect students and staff? (This may require checking with your institution's third-party providers of cleaning products and PPE to understand if they anticipate any supply issues during the semester.)

■ Has the institution developed a relationship with area health care systems for treating students and community members?

■ Has the region experienced a 14-day period of downward trajectory of documented cases or positive tests as a percentage of total tests?

Containment and Surveillance

■ Is the institution able to screen students and employees for symptoms and exposure history prior to arrival?

■ Has the institution identified the potential population of students and employees that, as the CDC defined, is at a higher risk of severe illness?

■ Is the institution prepared to conduct ongoing surveillance for COVID-19 symptoms?

■ Is COVID-19 testing widely available for staff and students?

■ Does the institution have the capability to contain a potential outbreak on campus by conducting contact tracing (trace and monitor contacts of infected people) and quarantine for all people exposed to COVID-19? (See the Faculty and Staff and Students sections below for recommended actions when students or employees report exposure.)

Since there is no definitive timeline for an effectively and widely available COVID-19 vaccine, resumption plans should assume that the pandemic may last into the 2021-22 school year.

Oversight Team

Establish a team to oversee the process of resuming operations and develop a resumption plan. Team members should have defined roles and responsibilities for planning the resumption. Larger institutions may create several resumption teams dedicated to discrete issues, such as human resources or logistics, with these smaller teams reporting to the oversight team that coordinates the overall plan.

The central resumption plan should contemplate the need for and include plans to quickly close campus, temporarily or permanently, in the event of a sustained resurgence of COVID-19. Since there is no definitive timeline for an effectively and widely available COVID-19 vaccine, *resumption plans should assume that the pandemic may last into the 2021-22 school year.*

Create an interdepartmental oversight team with representatives from departments with pertinent expertise, such as:

- Executive leadership for leading meetings, planning the resumption of operations, and coordinating with trustees

- Health services for advising on public health considerations, providing physical and mental health services in a changed landscape, and coordinating COVID-19 screening, testing, containment, and surveillance

- Housing for modifying residential practices and policies

- Facilities for coordinating building updates, updating emergency plans, and advising on cleaning and disinfecting

- Academic affairs for creating a new in-person and online model that meets academic needs

- Security for handling new threats to health and safety

- Communications for advising on or creating internal and external messaging

- Food services for modifying food practices and policies

- Risk management for liability issues and insurance requirements

- Legal counsel for liability issues and contract creation, review, and negotiation

- Information technology (IT) to assess technological resources and applications and assist with integration

> **Schools should continue to provide a robust online offering throughout the pandemic.**

Remote Options

Offering an online option has important liability-reducing benefits. For example, students or employees who are not offered a remote option to pursue their work or studies may be owed a higher duty of care from the institution, to keep them safe. However, if students or employees are offered meaningful choice but select to come on campus, they may be deemed to assume the risks. (See Assumption of Risk Forms and Waivers section below.)

Online options may be a useful component of plans to put physical distancing into place. They also allow schools to better transition all students to virtual learning if there is a resurgence of cases or an outbreak on campus. Schools should continue to provide a robust online offering throughout the pandemic.

Communication

Good communication with students, employees, and other relevant constituents is critical for maintaining a sense of calm and reducing potential liability. The resumption planning period is a good time to re-evaluate ad-hoc communications teams or practices previously created during the crisis. Review your institution's communications practices and make changes as necessary.

Team

- Identify a central supervisory team to vet all pandemic communications. To ensure the communications team is properly informed and informing the resumption process, members of the communications team should report to, and include members from, the oversight team.

- Include representatives from the president's office, communications, health services, IT, and legal counsel.

Practices

- Establish a protocol requiring that school leaders, such as the president or head of school, send all campus-wide pandemic-related communications.

- Work with legal counsel to ensure all communications follow privacy laws including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Messaging

- Describe COVID-19 mitigation efforts broadly across campus communications, including employee handbooks, student handbooks, codes of conduct, and residential housing contracts.

- Emphasize the need for all community members to contribute and do their part to assist in efforts to mitigate the virus.

Education and Training

Implement online COVID-19 awareness and prevention training to help faculty and students adjust to the new reality before arriving on campus. Many online trainings are available, including brief instructional videos on the CDC's YouTube channel. Other free trainings

incorporating CDC information are also widely available. If training is conducted in person, ensure physical distancing and face coverings are strictly enforced.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and CDC recommend that COVID-19 prevention training include these concepts:

- Physical distancing (maintaining at least a 6-foot distance from people outside your household, avoiding large crowds, not touching people if you do not need to)

- Good health behaviors such as cough and sneeze etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes with the elbow) and hand hygiene (washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and water)

- How germs can spread

- Proper use and maintenance of cloth face coverings and other relevant PPE

- The benefits and limitations of wearing PPE (for example, cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms)

- High-risk behaviors, such as coming to school with a cold, and modifying behaviors, such as staying home when sick

- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and how to conduct a self-assessment

- What to do if you are sick (using CDC guidance)

- What to do if you recently had a close contact with a person with COVID-19 (using CDC guidance)

The CDC also recommends publicizing the national Disaster Distress Hotline, a mental health resource that provides crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.

Supplement general prevention and control training with content on institution-specific COVID-19 policies and procedures. Reinforce the new policies and procedures through campus signage, social media posts, and school communications.

Assumption of Risk Forms and Waivers

To help limit liability, institutions are considering waiver and assumption of risk language specific to the current pandemic. When used with meaningful education about preventing the spread of the virus, the risks of contracting it, and the institution's own policies for reducing its prevalence,

Consult with legal counsel before implementing assumption of risk or waiver language.

waiver or assumption of risk language makes injured signors less likely to bring a claim. It can act as leverage for negotiating the settlement of a claim, can persuade a court to dismiss a negligence lawsuit, and can serve as powerful evidence at trial. **Consult with legal counsel before implementing assumption of risk or waiver language.**

Assumption of Risk

Consider using informational letters or modifying current documents with assumption of risk language to inform students and parents of the risks involved with returning to campus during a pandemic.

Examples of assumption of risk language:

- The student is aware that returning to campus for the [Fall 2020] semester is voluntary.

- The student acknowledges that COVID-19 is a public health risk, and [the institution] cannot guarantee safety or immunity from infection, and that the student is electing to return to campus despite the risks.

- The student voluntarily assumes all risks associated with returning to campus including the risk of exposure or infection with COVID-19.

Additional examples of assumption of risk and waiver language are included in the Additional Resources section below.

Require students (and all parents, if minor students) to sign the document, acknowledging that they understand and voluntarily assume the risks described. When issuing the document, provide the signing parties time to review and consider the document.

Waivers

Whether to implement a waiver for students returning to school is a business decision for each institution to make in consultation with legal counsel. Although waivers may release institutions from potential liability, enforcement varies greatly by jurisdiction and the waiver's underlying subject matter. Additionally, when dealing with students who are minors, courts are traditionally reluctant to enforce a waiver. In fact, most benefits from a waiver do not hinge on a court's determination that the document is an enforceable waiving of rights, but on the signor's acknowledgment of the risk assumed, created through a clear communication of risk in the document. (For additional guidance on assumption of risk language, see below and see UE's Checklist: Drafting Effective Releases.)

Educate Before Issuing the Assumption of Risk or Waiver

Provide students and parents with the waiver and assumption of risk language as part of your institution's COVID-19 training and education. Explain what the language means, describe each risk, and describe how campus life will be impacted. Give students and parents time to review and consider the document before signing.

Retain the Waiver or Assumption of Risk

Record the receipt of all waiver and assumption of risk language. In the event of a lawsuit, this record may show that the student was warned of the risks and voluntarily returned to campus.

Part II: Practical Considerations

Institutions that can resume on-campus operations will need to modify regular policies and practices to create a safe campus. After institutions decide to resume, the oversight team should consider implementing these recommendations. The team also should identify and document any recommendations it does not implement due to the institution's particular circumstances.

Phased Return

Many institutions should implement a hybrid academic model, providing both on-campus and online learning, for the foreseeable future. The on-campus learning portion of the hybrid model should be implemented using a phased approach. Consider the following ACHA guidance in creating your institution's phased approach.

Faculty and Staff

▪ Limit the return to employees who volunteer. Prioritize those with the greatest ability and desire.

▪ Return no more than 30% of the workforce at a time, staggering every two to four weeks for full return.

▪ Stagger employee schedules to promote social distancing practices.

Academics

▪ To limit the number of students on campus at any one time, have students attend alternate days or semesters, or adopt a half-day model.

▪ Limit the number of attendees for in-person courses and programs. In most cases, in-person courses should be limited to fewer than 30 participants and use physical distancing measures.

▪ Create multiple sections or shifts to reduce numbers of students in a shared space.

▪ Prioritize in-person instruction for courses with academic outcomes that cannot be measured or achieved virtually, such as performance, laboratory, and clinical experiences.

▪ Keep a fully remote option ready in the event of a rebound in local infections necessitating continued physical distancing.

Facilities

Educational facilities were not built with the intention of keeping people physically distanced. For more detailed facilities recommendations, see APPA's Recently Asked Questions. To best prepare facilities to resume operations, consider the following cleaning, occupancy, and configuration recommendations.

▪ At least once a day, clean and disinfect school buildings, classrooms, sanitation facilities, residences, and other regularly used buildings and rooms. Follow CDC cleaning and disinfecting recommendations.

▪ Use of shared objects (lab equipment, computer equipment, desks) should be limited when possible, or cleaned between use.

▪ Maintain at least 6 feet between workstations. Place barriers in shared workspaces.

▪ Space chairs and desks to ensure physical distancing. For lecture halls, consider taping off seats and rows.

▪ Turn desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other).
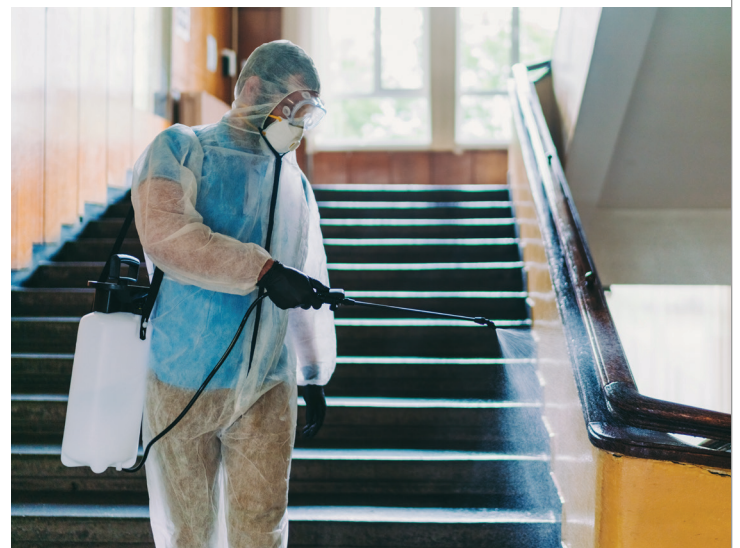
- Place signage at entrances indicating how to proceed. (For example, should visitors wait at the entrance before proceeding to limit the number of people waiting in an enclosed space?)

- Post and enforce maximum allowed occupancy in shared spaces such as conference rooms, waiting rooms, and break rooms.

- Provide hand sanitizer or hand-washing stations at all entrances and high-traffic areas.

- Provide touchless door options such as door removal, card access, foot-operated door pulls or pedals, or sensor-triggered doors.

- Install Plexiglas barriers at high-traffic areas such as reception desks.

- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times.

- Increase air flow and ventilation where climate allows (open windows, use air conditioning).

- Install touchless trash cans.

- Ensure trash is removed daily and disposed of safely.

- To ensure the safety of water systems, follow CDC guidance for reopening buildings after prolonged shutdown.

Campus Residences

Because traditional student housing limits physical distancing, consider discontinuing or limiting on-campus housing. For institutions that choose to reopen residences, consider the following recommendations.

- Provide all live-in professionals and other residential staff, including custodial, with:
  - Access to PPE
  - Appropriate break opportunities
  - Defined work schedules with time off as appropriate
  - Access to mental health services, such as counseling
  - Specific training and education

- Educate residential staff on CDC recommendations including:
  - Consider special needs or accommodations for high-risk residents, such as people with disabilities, people with underlying medical conditions, and older adults.
  - Limit staff entering residents' rooms or living quarters unless it is necessary. Use virtual communications and check-ins as appropriate.
  - Consider any special communications and assistance needs of the residents, including people with disabilities.
  - Suggest residents keep up-to-date lists of medical conditions and medications, and periodically check to ensure they have a sufficient supply of their prescription and over-the-counter medications (at higher ed institutions).

- Where feasible, limit housing to a single resident per room and bathroom.

- When shared bathrooms are used, create guidelines listing maximum occupancy and cleaning procedures that include the following CDC guidelines:
  - Clean at least twice per day using EPA-registered disinfectants.
  - Continuously stock bathrooms with soap and paper towels or automated hand dryers.
  - Empty trash cans regularly.
  - Provide signage on proper hand-washing or use of hand sanitizer.
  - Instruct residents to avoid placing toothbrushes directly on sinks and counters, as both can be sources of infection.

- Create CDC-conformant cleaning plans for residences and bathrooms that state how and how often surfaces will be disinfected. Periodically review the plans based upon appropriate disinfectant and PPE availability.

- Require personal face coverings in common areas.

- Close non-essential common areas (lounges, game rooms).

- Reconfigure seating in common areas (computer rooms, entrance halls) to ensure physical distancing.

- Establish and enforce allowable occupancy in essential common areas. Clean and disinfect between use.

- Minimize traffic in elevators and stairwells by limiting the number of individuals in an elevator at one time and designating one-direction stairwells. Create floor markings in the elevator where users should stand.

- Prohibit building access by non-residents, except as required by law. For example, do not prohibit access by personal care attendants who are helping residents with disabilities.

- Identify isolation and quarantine rooms with private bathroom facilities that are physically separated from other residential student rooms. With the help of legal counsel, provide signage restricting access without violating HIPAA/FERPA.

- In isolation or quarantine rooms, follow the CDC's guidance for cleaning and disinfecting households with suspected or confirmed coronavirus cases. This includes focusing on cleaning and disinfecting common areas where staff and others providing services may come into contact with ill people, but reducing cleaning and disinfection of bedrooms and bathrooms used by ill people (so they are only cleaned as needed).

Dining Services

- Require all dining facility staff to wear cloth face covers and gloves while working and interacting with the public.

- Require diners to wear cloth face covers while in the facility, except when eating.

- Identify maximum allowable occupancy in a single dining facility at one time, with a goal of achieving appropriate physical distance.

- Establish dining times for all community members.

- Place visual cues, such as 6-foot floor markers for waiting lines, inside and outside the facility.

- Space tables and limit numbers of chairs per table.

- Eliminate buffet and self-serve food or beverage stations.

- Provide a bagged take-out meal option. Consider kosher, vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free options as requested or appropriate.

- Consider serving meals in classrooms (for K-12 schools).

- Arrange food delivery to students in isolation or quarantine.

Faculty and Staff

As previously noted, faculty and staff who can do their jobs remotely still should have that option. For those who return to campus, consider the following policies and practices. Additionally, create and publicize a reporting mechanism allowing faculty and staff to report safety violations.

- Create a culture where employees who develop COVID-19 symptoms stay home or leave the workplace. Consider what policies your institution can implement that will encourage sick employees to stay home for the duration of their illness.

- Cross-train staff and create a roster of trained backup staff to allow for increased absenteeism.

- Ensure that housekeeping receives PPE and guidelines on appropriate techniques (as per CDC guidelines) for cleaning and disinfecting workspaces and common spaces.

- Create new policies in the handbook or contract including:

  o Maintain a 6-foot distance from others during work.

  o Wear CDC-conformant cloth face covers while on campus. Employees may remove their face covers while conducting business (teaching, sitting at their desk, etc.) as long as they remain 6 feet from others.

  o Conduct meetings electronically, even when working on campus.

  o Avoid office gatherings, break rooms, and unnecessary visitors.

- Encourage staff and faculty at higher risk for severe illness to self-identify so they can receive accommodations such as telework and remote classes.

- Develop policies and procedures for employees to report when they are sick or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Ensure that people who have signs or symptoms immediately isolate or leave campus and seek medical advice.

- Follow Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines for investigating an employee's COVID-19 illness by doing the following:

  o Ask employees how they believe they contracted COVID-19.

  o While respecting employees' privacy, discuss their work and out-of-work activities that may have led to the COVID-19 illness.

  o Review an employee's work environment for potential COVID-19 exposure.

- Stagger shifts to reduce the number of people in the workplace at the same time.

- Encourage single occupancy in work rooms and offices.

- Issue personal teaching supplies (microphones, markers, electronic pointers) to avoid sharing of supplies between faculty members.

- Issue employees personal office supplies to avoid sharing.

- Provide and strongly encourage flu vaccinations to limit additional viruses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Travel

- Prohibit all nonessential international travel while the State Department maintains a Level 4 Global Do Not Travel Advisory and the CDC maintains a Level 3 Global Health Travel Notice.

- Because pandemic experts predict a future COVID-19 surge, discourage or consider prohibiting nonessential international and domestic travel until a vaccine is widely available.

Students

Where possible, continue to provide students with a remote learning option even as in-person classes resume. For students who return to campus, consider the following considerations.

- Develop attendance and excuse policies that support students who become ill, without requiring unnecessary visits to health facilities for documentation of illness.

- Incorporate COVID-19 policies into the student handbook. Policies may include:

  - When possible, maintain a 6-foot distance from others while on campus.

  - When possible, wear CDC-conformant cloth face covers while on campus. Consider whether students may remove their face covers while sitting in class so long as they remain 6 feet from others.

  - Avoid grouping at tables and common spaces.

  - Avoid holding or attending events and social activities that violate physical distancing guidance.

- Encourage students at higher risk for severe illness to consult with their primary care provider or the student health service and have a medical plan in place. Encourage high-risk students to request accommodations such as remote learning.

- Develop procedures and resources for students to report when they are sick or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Ensure people with signs or symptoms of COVID-19 immediately isolate or leave campus and seek medical advice.

- When students report illness, student health services should:

  - Ask how they believe they contracted COVID-19.

  - Ask students — while respecting student privacy — to discuss their on- and off-campus activities that may have led to the COVID-19 illness.

  - Review the student's learning and living environments for potential COVID-19 exposure.

- Develop physical distancing plans for each student course, taking into account:
  - Number of students and faculty present in each session
  - Length of session
  - Nature of activities
- Create enhanced physical distancing plans for:
  - Occupational students (such as external internships, externships, and health professional students)
  - Courses and activities that do not typically permit physical distancing, such as performing arts and athletics
- Provide adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible or disinfect materials between use.
- Ensure that student and staff groupings in K-12 schools are as static as possible by having the same group of students stay with the same staff as much as possible.
- Stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations at K-12 schools to limit close contact with caregivers.
- Provide and require flu vaccinations to limit additional viruses during the pandemic.

Events

- Prohibit events that violate state or local regulatory agency policies related to group gatherings.
- Pursue virtual group events, if possible.

- Limit group size to the extent possible.
- Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible — especially with individuals who are not from the local geographic area.

Travel and Study Abroad

- Prohibit all nonessential domestic and international travel while the State Department maintains a Level 4 Global Do Not Travel Advisory and the CDC maintains a Level 3 Global Health Travel Notice.
- Because pandemic experts predict a future COVID-19 surge, discourage or consider prohibiting nonessential domestic and international travel until a vaccine is widely available.
- When the State Department lifts the Global Do Not Travel Advisory and the CDC lifts the Global Health Travel Notice, continue to prohibit travel to regions where a CDC Level 3 Travel Alert is in effect. Deciding whether to allow students to travel to regions that do not have a CDC Level 3 Travel Alert is a business decision of the institution. Before resuming international study abroad, take the following actions:
  - Consult with legal counsel and international travel service providers (such as International SOS) regarding the potential standard of care in your school's jurisdiction and about what other institutions are doing.
  - Review any CDC guidance on international travel.
  - State in writing that going to these regions is voluntary and that a student's program does not depend on it. Draft a release specific to the pandemic and its potential effects. (See above section on Assumption of Risk Forms and Waivers.)
  - Read UE's Preparing for Medical Evacuations Abroad and Heightened Vigilance Required in Study Abroad Risk Management for waiver and insurance recommendations.
  - Conduct ongoing monitoring of the coronavirus pandemic, and update travelers on any change. When CDC levels advance, offer travelers within the region transportation options back to the U.S.

Activities

Institutions resuming on-campus academics may still choose to postpone in-person activities, such as student clubs, until a COVID-19 vaccine is available. Each institution must weigh the activity's importance to students' personal growth and educational experience against the health, safety, and liability risks. At many institutions, some activities may resume in person while others continue online. Consider a phased return of student activities based upon potential risk of transmission in each activity.

After completing the education and training requirements listed in Foundational Issues, activity leaders should consider the following recommendations:

- Create a resumption plan detailing planned modifications to meet campus safety requirements.

- Meet with the resumption oversight team to present the activity resumption plan and request input.

- Work with the resumption oversight team and legal counsel to create waiver language specific to the applicable risks of COVID-19 specific to this activity.

- Share the final resumption plan with all activity participants and parents as applicable. Consult with legal counsel to determine whether to collect a signed acknowledgement that they read and understood the plan.

- Inform participants that in-person participation is voluntary, and whether they choose to participate virtually or in-person during the pandemic will not affect their future ability to participate in-person.

Activity Resumption Plan

Offer virtual options for continuing participation in the activity. For in-person components:

- Before starting the activity, screen each participant for COVID-19 exposure.

- For physical activities that require an in-person health screening, consider staggering screening to ensure physical distancing during waiting and examinations and allow cleaning of exam spaces between participants.

- Require the use of cloth face covers by instructors and participants.

- Employ physical distancing measures in all shared spaces.

- Follow resumption guidance provided by the activity's international, national, or regional governing body (if applicable).

Athletics

Institutions and athletic governing bodies, such as the NCAA, are allowing students to voluntarily participate in athletics. When restarting athletics programs, consider the following ACHA recommendations.

- Educate students and staff on the high risk of COVID-19 transmission in athletic settings due to frequent physical contact, potential for aerosol transmission during exercise, and the potential physical effects of over-training and dehydration on disease resistance.

- Create an athletics COVID-19 action team to create an action plan. Include the following participants:
  - Athletic director
  - Head athletic trainer
  - Head team physician
  - Coaches and trainers
  - Student health services representative
  - Counseling services representatives
  - Student-athletes

For more detailed guidance on restarting athletics programs, review the athletics portion of the ACHA guidance and the recent NCAA guidance.

More From UE

- Coronavirus FAQs: Employment Practices
- Coronavirus FAQs: Return to Campus
- How UE is Responding to the Coronavirus

Additional Resources

Federal Guidance

- CDC: Considerations for Institutes of Higher Education
- CDC: Public Health Considerations for Reopening Schools During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- CDC: Activities and Initiatives Supporting the COVID-19 Response and the President's Plan for Opening America Up Again (Interim Guidance for Schools and Day Camps, p. 45-48)
- CDC: Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes

State Guidance

- State Policy Responses to the Coronavirus in Public Schools
- Reopen Connecticut
- Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education
- Ohio Draft Education Planning Guide

Waivers/Assumption of Risk

- Purdue University: COVID-19 Response and Guidelines
- The University of Mississippi: Internship Waiver
- San Diego State University: Nursing Student Clinical Training Release of Liability

General

- ACHA: Considerations for Reopening Institutions of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era
- WHO: Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools
- NetAssets: Considerations for Reopening Independent School Campuses (Login Required)
- American Enterprise Institute: A Blueprint for Back to School