



COVID-19 College, University, and System Office Decisions and Responses Related to Positive Campus COVID-19 Cases and Changes in Community Spread

Updated December 9, 2020

This document was originally shared on August 19, 2020, and has been updated to reflect current executive orders and guidance from Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

Colleges and universities may need to scale back in-person operations if transmission increases, by reducing or cancelling campus events; suspending in-person classes; or moving to remote-only operations as a result of a significant outbreak on campus or in the surrounding community, or if directed by public health authorities. The mitigation strategies included below are “stackable”: the yellow (Scenario 2) strategies assume that the green (Scenario 1) strategies remain in place, and so on. In addition to ongoing communication with public health officials, changes in two or more of the indicators in each level will initiate conversations between colleges and universities and the system office to determine additional mitigation measures.

This document was updated in response to executive order 20-99, issued on November 18, 2020, and in response to updates to the Minnesota Department of Health’s (MDH) “Recommendations for Different Levels of COVID-19 Transmission Among Higher Education Institutions” (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/iherecs.pdf>). The primary changes were to update the guidance under scenario 4 and to add a scenario 5. Per the MDH guidance, **colleges and universities must implement Scenario 4 mitigation efforts for the four weeks from Friday, Nov. 20, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. through Friday, Dec. 18, 2020, at 11:59 p.m.**

The actions below include a set of **assumed practices**, as outlined by the COVID-19 preparedness plans and other guidance:

- Adherence to facial covering requirements as described in executive order 20-84 and in “Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Face Mask Operating Instructions,” July 24, 2020
- Using the symptom screening tool as required by COVID-19 Preparedness Plans under executive order 20-74 and Chancellor’s July 16, 2020, memo (“Re: Updated COVID-19 safety requirements”)
- Communication strategies to establish and enforce new norms around mitigation strategies
- Physical distancing implemented in campus spaces
- Size limits on in-person classes, campus activities, and events, per applicable executive orders and MDH Guidance (“Guidance for Mitigating COVID-19 at Higher Education

Institutions,”

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/guideihe.pdf>)

- Additional guidance documents as published by the MDH for Institutes of Higher Education (IHE)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/ihe.html>)

Transmission Levels and Decision Points

Scenario	Campus Actions	MDH/Local Public Health (LPH) Actions	Chancellor and Cabinet Actions
<p>Green (Scenario 1): Low Transmission</p> <p><i>Transmission levels seen as manageable</i></p> <p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacts can be identified at the time of interview • Isolation and quarantine <50% full • K-12 indicators <10 cases per 10,000 over two week period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign a designated point of contact and contact tracing support roles • Follow COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, including the identification of those counties for which the campus will actively track transmission trends • Implement social distancing • Work with MDH/LPH on contact tracing, as needed • Additional scenario 1 actions as recommended by MDH guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate test results • Coordinate contact tracing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed of campus COVID-19 positive tests and incidence trends • Informed of campus mitigation efforts • Track and monitor risk indicators
<p>Yellow (Scenario 2): Medium Transmission</p> <p><i>Transmission levels are beginning to tax campus resources.</i></p> <p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infections continue increasing over 14-day period in the county(ies) as identified in local Preparedness Plan • >1% of campus students infected within 14-day period • >5% of campus cases have unknown links to another case over 7-day period • 50-75% of your isolation and quarantine beds are full • Routine testing capacity starting to be a concern • Less than 14 days of PPE remaining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If two or more indicators are met, consult with the chancellor on changes in campus mitigation efforts • Consider extra communication and precautions for high risk individuals • Consider cancelling events and activities that bring larger groups of students together • Consider roll back measures limiting social and activity gatherings to no more than 10 individuals, indoors and outdoors • Ramp up capacity for isolation and quarantine options • Additional scenario 2 actions as recommended by MDH guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate test results • Coordinate contact tracing • Recommend additional mitigation and testing strategies • Provide testing and PPE consultation and support • Recommend and coordinate supplemental isolation and quarantine capacity in community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with campus president on changes in campus mitigation efforts • Informed of campus COVID-19 positive tests and incidence trends • Communicate with Leadership Council; Board of Trustees; state officials; state and federal legislative delegations; bargaining unit leadership; and student association leadership.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other internal metrics are of concern (e.g. increase in employees out sick) • K-12 indicators 10-30 cases per 10,000 over a 14-day period 			
<p>Orange (Scenario 3): High Transmission <i>Transmission levels have further depleted or exhausted institutional resources.</i> Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infections continue to increase over two-week period after Yellow/Scenario 2 mitigation efforts put in place • > 3% of campus students are infected within a 14 day period, considering where spread is occurring • > 75% of isolation and quarantine beds are full • Lack of adherence to mitigation strategies • Other internal metrics of capacity and staffing suggest additional mitigation is needed • K-12 indicators >_30 cases per 10,000 over a 14-day period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If two or more indicators are met, consult with the chancellor about suspending additional in-person activities and shifting to remote-only operations. • Cancel all extracurricular activities for at least two weeks. • Consider cancelling classes for two weeks • Work with MDH/LPH on testing and PPE support, as needed • Impose a campus curfew • Additional scenario 3 actions as recommended by MDH guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate test results • Coordinate contact tracing • Recommend additional mitigation and testing strategies • Provide testing and PPE consultation and support • Recommend and coordinate supplemental isolation and quarantine capacity in community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with campus president about suspending in-person activities and shifting to remote-only operations • Communicate with Leadership Council; Board of Trustees; state officials; state and federal legislative delegations; bargaining unit leadership; and student association leadership.
<p>Deep Orange (Scenario 4): Sustained High Level of Community Transmission <i>Transmission levels have seriously depleted or exhausted institutional, community or state resources, or the state is experiencing extensive community wide spread.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If mitigation efforts do not improve, consult with the chancellor about suspending additional in-person activities and shifting to remote-only operations. • Implement a campus wide “lay low” period and direct students to stay at home and limit movement to attend courses when needed, study areas, work, or other essential services like healthcare, mental health, food service take out/pick up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend suspending in-person activities and shifting to remote-only operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with campus president about suspending in-person activities and shifting to remote-only operations • Communicate with Leadership Council; Board of Trustees; state officials; state and federal legislative

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extracurricular activities/clubs/organizations should be significantly scaled back in terms of attendance, frequency of meeting, and moved to virtual wherever possible; consider postponing or canceling where feasible. • MDH strongly recommends imposing a campus curfew of 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. • Additional scenario 4 actions as recommended by MDH guidance. 		<p>delegations; bargaining unit leadership; and student association leadership.</p>
<p>Red (Scenario 5): Sustained High Level of Transmission at Institution</p> <p><i>Transmission levels have exhausted institutional resources.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the above mitigation efforts have not resulted in an improvement over a two- to three-week period after Scenario 3 or 4 has been put in place, consult with the chancellor about moving to online only until the next semester or after break. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with campus president about suspending in-person activities and shifting to remote-only operations • Communicate with Leadership Council; Board of Trustees; state officials; state and federal legislative delegations; bargaining unit leadership; and student association leadership.

Communication Procedures and Expectations

Campuses are expected to actively monitor transmission levels on a weekly basis, and to take appropriate action as outlined above. If two or more of the indicators in the yellow, orange, or deep orange scenarios are met or if the indicator in the red scenario is met, or if MDH or local public health authorities have expressed concern about transmission on a campus, **colleges and universities must contact Chief of Staff Jaime Simonsen to coordinate consultation with the chancellor and other staff to discuss implementing additional mitigation strategies as recommended by MDH.** The system office may also contact colleges and universities if trends in key indicators that may warrant additional mitigation efforts are identified or if contacted by MDH.

Colleges and universities should be regularly engaged with local bargaining units and student associations through existing communication and shared governance structures and/or additional COVID-19 communication structures, particularly if indicators suggest that additional mitigation measures are needed. The system office and the chancellor will regularly consult with and inform Leadership Council, the Board of Trustees, state officials, statewide bargaining unit leadership, statewide student association leadership, state officials, and state and federal legislative delegations.