

University of Santo Tomas
Collective Institutional Guidelines for the Prevention and
Control of the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)
February 6, 2020

Supplemental to Circular 26 released by the Office of the Secretary-General on February 3, 2020, and consistent with government efforts to contain and neutralize the spread of the 2019-nCoV ARD, we hereby provide the collective guidelines in line with the health advisory on the 2019-Novel Corona Virus (nCoV). These guidelines include literature and policy references which will help enlighten the Thomasian community on the guiding principles in contributing to our collective efforts to prevent and control the transmission of 2019-nCoV.

The whole Thomasian community is strongly advised to adhere to these guidelines and to educate others to do the same. Academic units are strongly encouraged to train faculty members, who in turn should dedicate time during their classes to educate students, on practice standards for prevention and control of the spread of disease. If needed, assistance may be sought from the Health Service in the conduct of these trainings.

Everyone is encouraged to exercise due diligence and take precautionary measures to minimize exposure to risks associated with the 2019-nCoV ARD and support government efforts to contain the spread of the virus.

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Policy Bases

The following documents were used as bases for drafting these guidelines:

1. World Health Organization (WHO) Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Situation Reports (World Health Organization, 2020) and Advice for the Public (World Health Organization, 2020)
2. Department of Health (DOH) Updates and Advisories on Wuhan Coronavirus Acute Respiratory Disease (2019-nCoV ARD) (Department of Health, 2020)
3. Department of Education (DepEd) Memorandum 15, s2020, "First Set of Policy Directives of the DepEd Task Force nCoV" (Department of Education, 2020)

Key events that merit release of this updated and more comprehensive guidelines:

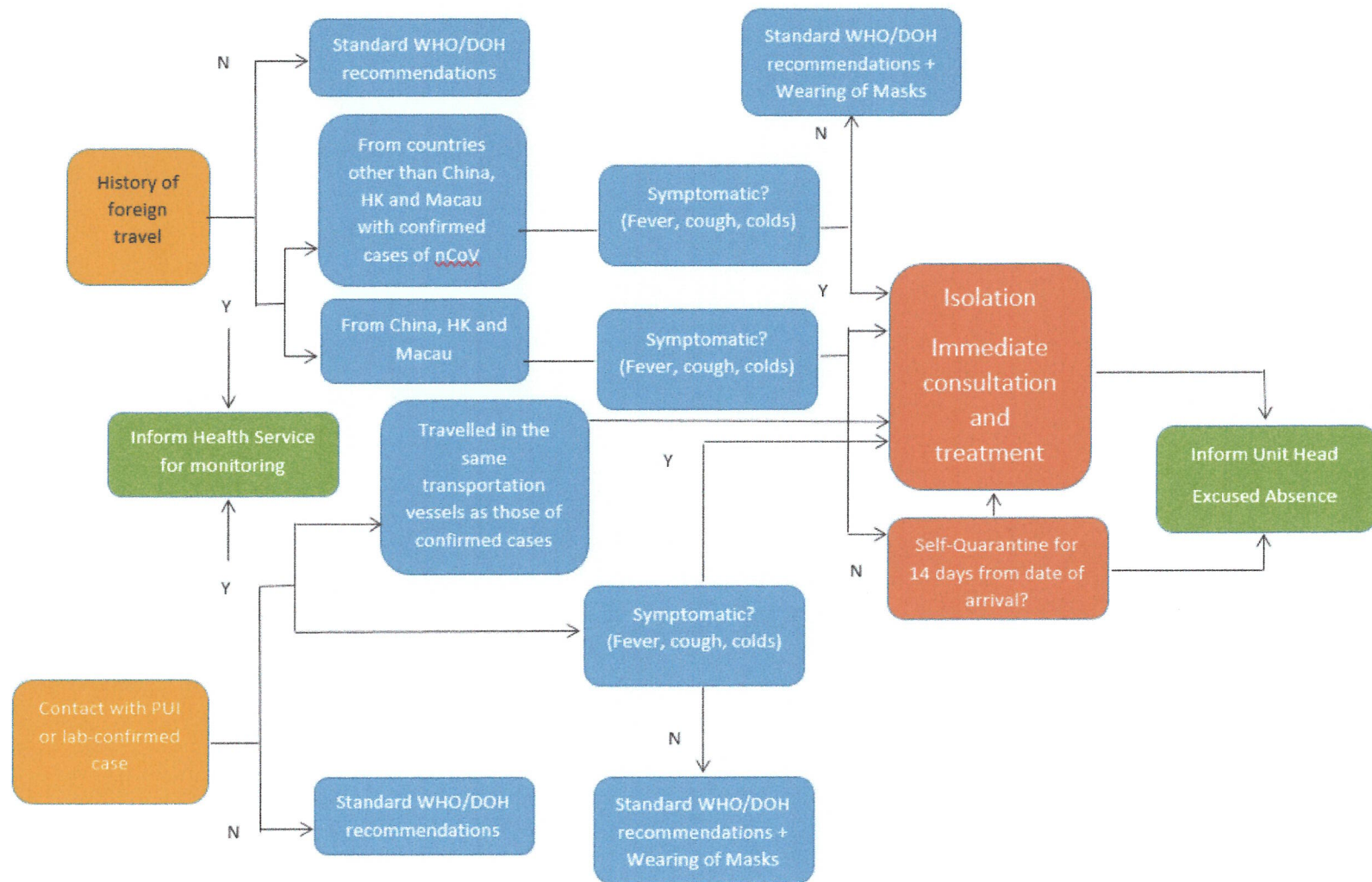
1. On January 30, 2020, WHO declared the 2019-nCoV as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) (World Health Organization, 2020).
2. On February 2, 2020, the Office of the President of the Philippines, through a statement by Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, approved the following recommendations of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases in the Philippines (IATF-EID) (Department of Education, 2020):
 - a. Temporarily banning the entry of any person, regardless of nationality, except Filipino citizens and holders of Permanent Resident Visa issued by the Philippine Government, directly coming from China and its Special Administrative Regions;
 - b. Temporarily banning the entry of any person, regardless of nationality, except Filipino citizens and holders of Permanent Resident Visa issued by the Philippine Government, who, within fourteen (14) days immediately preceding arrival in the Philippines, has been to China and its Special Administrative Regions;
 - c. A mandatory fourteen (14) day quarantine for Filipinos and Permanent Resident Visa holders coming from any place in China and its Special Administrative Regions;
 - d. Temporary ban on Filipinos from travel to China and its Special Administrative Regions; and
 - e. Establishment of a repatriation and quarantine facility.
3. As of February 3, 2020, there are 20,630 confirmed cases of nCoV in 24 countries around the world, majority located in China (including Hong Kong, Macau and Taipei) (World Health Organization, 2020).
4. As of February 5, 2020, DOH confirms the third 2019-nCoV ARD case in the Philippines (Department of Health, 2020)

Pathways of Assessment and Intervention for Persons at Risk

People with 2019-nCoV infection, the flu, or a cold typically develop respiratory symptoms such as fever, cough, and runny nose. WHO recommends that people who have cough, fever and difficulty breathing should seek medical care early. Patients should inform health care providers if they have travelled in the 14 days before they developed symptoms, or if they have been in

close contact with someone with who has been sick with respiratory symptoms. (World Health Organization, 2020)

The following diagram summarizes the pathways for appropriate action to be undertaken based on the presence of potential risk factors:



An updated list of countries with confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV may be acquired through the WHO Situation Reports (World Health Organization, 2020). DOH has released the list of flights taken by the 3 confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV in the Philippines to facilitate contact-tracing (Department of Health, 2020).

Members of the Thomasian community, including visiting faculty and students, who feel sick while in University premises should immediately proceed to the Health Service. The following diagrams show the management process to be followed by the Health Service in addressing potential cases of 2019-nCoV:

A.) Patients with the following history:

(+) travel to China, Macau
& Hongkong for the past
14 days

and/or

Close contact to confirmed
case of nCoV



If without symptoms (Person under Monitoring)

- **Mandatory Isolation/home quarantine for 14 days**
- Monitor for body temperature and observe for any signs & symptoms of respiratory infection
- Practice standard WHO/DOH recommendation
- Wear face mask

If with symptoms of fever, cough & colds (Person under Investigation)

- Isolation
- Wear face mask
- Immediately notify Health Care Provider for consultation and provide travel history



Upon consultation
at the Health
Service

- Proceed to Triage area and fill up the medical referral form
- Placed in an Isolation room for medical evaluation
- Patient is **STABLE** with no signs of respiratory distress (difficulty of breathing, shortness of breath, cyanosis)- REFER TO RESU for reporting
- If **UNSTABLE**- ADMIT TO DOH recommended health facility (San Lazaro Hospital, RITM, Lung Center)

B.) Patients with the following history:

(+) Travel to nCoV confirmed countries* for the past 14 days

Close contact to probable nCoV case within 14 days of illness onset



If without symptoms (Person under Monitoring)

- Wear face mask for 14 days
- Monitor for body temperature and observe for any signs & symptoms of respiratory infection
- Practice standard WHO/DOH recommendation

If with symptoms (Person under Investigation)

- Isolation/Home quarantine
- Wear face mask
- Immediately notify Health Care Provider for consultation and provide travel history



Upon consultation
at the Health
Service

* nCoV confirmed countries as of Feb. 4, 2020:

China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Australia
Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Nepal, Sri Lanka,
India, USA, Canada, France, Finland, Germany, Italy,
Russia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, UAE,
Philippines

- Proceed to Triage area and fill up the medical referral form
- Placed in an isolation room for medical evaluation
- Patient is STABLE with no signs of respiratory distress (difficulty of breathing, shortness of breath, cyanosis)- **REFER TO RESU** for reporting
- If UNSTABLE- **ADMIT TO DOH** recommended health facility (San Lazaro Hospital, RITM, Lung Center)

Those with history of travel to China, Hong Kong, and Macau shall comply with the mandatory fourteen (14) day quarantine for Filipinos and Permanent Resident Visa holders (Department of Education, 2020), even if they do not present with symptoms.

Absences arising from mandatory quarantine and treatment shall be considered as excused absence for students, subject to submission of supporting documents (i.e., airline ticket, passport), and will allow them to make-up for any missed gradable requirement. On the other hand, these absences for administrators, faculty members, and support staff, shall be chargeable to their sick leave and/or vacation leave credits (Department of Labor and Employment, 2020). As much as possible, continuity of teaching and learning activities shall be ensured by maximizing UST Cloud Campus or conducting make-up classes upon return. Faculty members are highly encouraged to closely monitor students who are absent from their classes and provide them with alternative activities to help them cope with the lessons that they missed.

Affected administrators, faculty members, support staff and students shall immediately inform their unit heads of their status so that they may be given the necessary assistance, granted flexible work arrangements, or referred to appropriate support services.

WHO and DOH Health Advisory for the General Public

WHO provides standard recommendations to the general public (World Health Organization, 2020) to reduce exposure to and transmission of a range of illnesses, to protect self and others from getting sick, and to stay healthy while travelling.

- 1. Wash your hands frequently**

Wash your hands frequently with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

Why? Washing your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water kills the virus if it is on your hands.

- 2. Practice respiratory hygiene**

When coughing and sneezing, cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – discard tissue immediately into a closed bin and clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

Why? Covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing prevent the spread of germs and viruses. If you sneeze or cough into your hands, you may contaminate objects or people that you touch.

- 3. Maintain social distancing**

Maintain at least 1 meter (3 feet) distance between yourself and other people, particularly those who are coughing, sneezing and have a fever.

Why? When someone who is infected with a respiratory disease, like 2019-nCoV, coughs or sneezes they project small droplets containing the virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the virus.

- 4. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth**

Why? Hands touch many surfaces which can be contaminated with the virus. If you touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your contaminated hands, you can transfer the virus from the surface to yourself.

5. If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early

Tell your health care provider if you have traveled in an area in China where 2019-nCoV has been reported, or if you have been in close contact with someone with who has traveled from China and has respiratory symptoms.

Why? Whenever you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing it's important to seek medical attention promptly as this may be due to a respiratory infection or other serious condition. Respiratory symptoms with fever can have a range of causes, and depending on your personal travel history and circumstances, 2019-nCoV could be one of them.

6. If you have mild respiratory symptoms and no travel history to or within China

If you have mild respiratory symptoms and no travel history to or within China, carefully practice basic respiratory and hand hygiene and stay home until you are recovered, if possible.

7. As a general precaution, practice general hygiene measures when visiting live animal markets, wet markets or animal product markets

Ensure regular hand washing with soap and potable water after touching animals and animal products; avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth with hands; and avoid contact with sick animals or spoiled animal products. Strictly avoid any contact with other animals in the market (e.g., stray cats and dogs, rodents, birds, bats). Avoid contact with potentially contaminated animal waste or fluids on the soil or structures of shops and market facilities.

8. Avoid consumption of raw or undercooked animal products

Handle raw meat, milk or animal organs with care, to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices.

DOH likewise provides additional details on prevention steps to take for people who may have the 2019-nCoV infection, for caregivers and household members, and those who may had contact with persons under investigation (PUI) (Department of Health, 2020).

WHO Advise on the Use of Masks

WHO provides advice on the use of medical masks in communities, at home and at health care facilities in areas that have reported outbreaks caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) (World Health Organization, 2020).

Wearing a medical mask is one of the prevention measures to limit spread of certain respiratory diseases, including 2019-nCoV, in affected areas. However, the use of a mask alone is insufficient to provide the adequate level of protection and other equally relevant measures should be adopted. If masks are to be used, this measure must be combined with hand hygiene and other

infection, prevention, and control (IPC) measures to prevent the human-to-human transmission of 2019-nCoV.

Masks should be worn by individuals with respiratory symptoms, individuals with suspected 2019-nCoV infection with respiratory symptoms, relatives or caregivers to individuals with suspected 2019-nCoV infection with mild respiratory symptoms, and health care workers.

In the community setting, a medical mask is not required for individuals without respiratory symptoms, as no evidence is available on its usefulness to protect non-sick persons. If masks are used, best practices should be followed on how to wear, remove, and dispose of them and on hand hygiene action after removal, as follows:

- place mask carefully to cover mouth and nose and tie securely to minimize any gaps between the face and the mask;
- while in use, avoid touching the mask;
- remove the mask by using appropriate technique (i.e. do not touch the front but remove the lace from behind);
- after removal or whenever you inadvertently touch a used mask, clean hands by using an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water if visibly soiled
- replace masks with a new clean, dry mask as soon as they become damp/humid;
- do not re-use single-use masks;
- discard single-use masks after their use and dispose of them immediately upon removal.

University Guidelines on the Conduct of In-Campus and Local Off-Campus Activities

Consistent with efforts to control the spread of 2019-nCoV, in-campus and local off-campus activities which meet the following criteria are hereby suspended, until further notice:

- Non-curricular and non-graded student activities, the suspension of which will not significantly affect attainment of intended learning outcomes;
- Unit or departmental activities that are not crucial to the standard operations and performance targets of the concerned unit/department;
- Those that will be conducted in crowded places or enclosed venues which will not comply with the acceptable 1 meter (3 feet) social distance between individuals (World Health Organization, 2020);
- High risk activities which may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Activities that place students as front-liners in attending to infected or potentially infected persons without prior triage (i.e., sorting of or allocation of treatment to patients) performed by trained healthcare professionals;
 - Activities that expose students to greater health risks compared to what is inherent to the activity or task in the absence of the 2019-nCoV (e.g., industry or community immersions in areas with confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV); and
 - Activities that are supervised by instructors who do not have the necessary training to evaluate health risks and implement appropriate protective measures for students.

Considering differences in the context of each academic unit, office or department, administrative and academic officials are advised to conduct a thorough risk assessment of scheduled activities, especially those involving students, in order to make informed decisions on which institutionally-sanctioned activities should be suspended and which may be allowed to push through.

Junior High School, Education High School, and Senior High School shall comply with DepEd Memorandum Order No. 15, s2020, "First Set of Policy Directives of the DepEd Task Force nCoV" (Department of Education, 2020).

Academic units are directed to engage faculty members in drafting alternative activities that will still achieve the intended learning outcomes.

University Guidelines on the Conduct of International Off-Campus (Outbound) Student Activities

Consistent with government directive to temporarily ban Filipinos from travel to China and its Special Administrative Regions (Hong Kong and Macau) (Department of Education, 2020), all international off-campus student activities to China, Hong Kong, and Macau are suspended until further notice.

In consideration of the increasing number of countries with confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV (World Health Organization, 2020), as a precautionary measure, all international off-campus student activities to other countries scheduled until March 2020 are likewise suspended. For the tertiary level, the University shall release regular updates to allow enough time for academic units to submit the documents required by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for international off-campus activities (Commission on Higher Education, 2015).

Junior High School, Education High School, and Senior High School shall comply with DepEd Memorandum Order No. 15, s2020, "First Set of Policy Directives of the DepEd Task Force nCoV" (Department of Education, 2020).

Academic units are directed to engage faculty members in drafting alternative activities that will still achieve the intended learning outcomes.

University Guidelines on the Conduct of International Inbound Student and Faculty Activities

Inbound internationalization activities may proceed as scheduled, depending on the existing guidelines of foreign partner institutions and the governments of their countries. If these inbound students and faculty will be coming from countries with confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV, took flights with layovers in airports of these countries, or have potential contact with PUI or lab-confirmed cases, they shall likewise follow the pathways for assessment and intervention for persons at risk, as indicated in the diagram above. They shall also be covered by the guidelines for engagement in in-campus and local off-campus activities.

Host academic units should also undertake the following:

1. Conduct an orientation of the students and/or academic staff which includes precautionary measures for detection and control of the spread of infection;
2. Provide guidelines in case they fell ill:
 - a. If any student/academic staff experiences fever and any lower respiratory illness such as cough, colds, throat pain, difficulty in breathing, and shortness of breath,

that person will have to be placed in isolation, and immediately be reported to the academic unit so they can be assisted in seeking medical attention at the UST Health Service.

- b. If the Health Service deems it appropriate to refer the student or faculty to an epidemiological unit identified by the Department of Health, further assessment and/or treatment may incur cost on the part of the patient.
- c. Communicate the status of infected students/staff with their foreign partner institution.
- d. Provide the needed assistance to ensure effective isolation in order to prevent the spread of infection.

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