



## COVID-19 Guidance: Information, Guidance, and Resources for Community College Leadership

### Introduction

*Continuously monitor the Iowa Department of Public Health's website for updates, guidance, and directives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Iowa Department of Education, in consultation with Governor Kim Reynolds' office and Iowa Department of Public Health, will update and re-issue guidance as the situation evolves.*

The Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) is prompting education institutions across the state to consider implementing policies that slow the transfer of the virus while maintaining a certain level of service to avoid complete disruption of student learning and on-going operation of the key campus services. Ultimately, the authority to close a campus or center and/or alter the provision of college operations ultimately resides with the institution's administration, in consultation with the institution's board of directors and state and local public health officials.

This guidance document is intended to assist college leadership in conducting institution-level planning exercises. These points are intended to prompt conversations around key facets of the college's operations and are not to be viewed as formal directives.

In general, public health officials are suggesting the implementation of "social distancing" practices to slow the spread of COVID-19 within communities, and institutions should implement measures that reduce the congregating of students, staff, and the general public. Be particularly cognizant of how COVID-19 impacts certain populations, and how your local decisions will impact these various population groups (e.g., understand how the virus impacts age groups differently; consider whether all students have equitable access to housing, food service, technology, etc.).

### College and Program Operations

#### Course Delivery

Many higher education institutions are moving to online delivery of coursework for the remainder of the spring semester. Some courses or portions of courses, however, are not conducive to this delivery format—including career and technical education and lab-portions of coursework.

#### Online Delivery

If moving to online delivery, each college should use the learning management system in place for online courses. It may be possible to conduct synchronous delivery through online platforms such as Zoom, WebEx, Google Hangouts, or Skype. In either case, consider the following:

1. Capacity and access issues for students.
2. Issuance of equipment to faculty and students who may not have remote access to technology to continue course offerings and learning. Allow computer labs to stay open but consider more frequent cleaning of computer labs or other measures to maintain sanitized facilities.

3. Accessibility of IT professionals to faculty and staff so that everyone understands available resources, institutional IT policies, et cetera; and to assist both students and faculty in addressing any technical issues with accessing services delivered online or remotely.

### On-Campus Lab

If the college continues to offer on-campus lab, career and technical education, or other offerings that cannot be offered through an alternative online format, consider measures to maintain “social distance” between faculty and students.

1. Within labs, try to create space between students at work stations. Consider whether alternative scheduling is possible to reduce the number of students in each lab section.
2. Ensure all facilities are equipped with hand sanitation and increase the frequency of cleaning of facilities and shared equipment that the college will continue to utilize.

### Assigning Pass/Fail Grades and Impact on Transfer

Information forthcoming.

### Extending vs. Shortening Semester or Quarter

According to the National Association of School Financial Aid Administrators’ (NASFAA) “COVID-19 and Federal Student Aid: What We Know” webinar on March 17, a semester can now be extended even if there is overlap with the next semester (spring semester into summer). If your institution has shortened or extended the current term, you will need to contact the U.S. Department of Education School Participation Division and request permission to have a shortened academic year (e.g., less than 30 weeks) or extended term (e.g., more than 30 weeks). If you do not ask for this approval, your college will be out of compliance.

### Impact on College Financial Aid

According to the NASFAA March 17 webinar mentioned above, the COVID-19 impact on financial aid is as follows:

1. If the institution makes a change due to COVID-19, cost of attendance change reporting is waived.
2. Institutions who extend a term are not required to change the loan period end dates.
3. Federal work study students can be paid for work that was part of their plan but was interrupted due to COVID-19. The community service requirement of 7% shouldn't be an issue if students continue to be paid. Students are allowed to work remotely if they have the necessary resources. The institution can pay the full work study allotment if that was in the work plan for the student.

### Questions and Memo

Questions regarding student financial aid should be directed to the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (ICSAC; see the [staff directory](#)). ICSAC has released a [memo](#) on the impact of COVID-19 on college financial aid.

### Registration and Advising, Recruitment, Commencement, and Food and Meal Services

#### Registration and Advising

Practices and policies for registration may need adjustment. This includes for existing students registering for fall courses and newly admitted students.

1. Certain admissions requirements and deadlines may need to be changed, some of which may be driven by external factors (e.g., testing providers, centers postponing examinations).
2. Advisor meetings and course registration may be impacted if the social distance practices implemented by the college. Meetings may need to be rescheduled or postponed or moved to a different format.

## Recruitment

Postpone college visit days for potential students and families along with any social events, fundraisers, and other events that would constitute a large gathering. Remember that all face-to-face gatherings are to be limited to no more than 10 individuals, with social distancing practices in place.

## Commencement

Depending on the progression of the pandemic, colleges may need to consider alterations to commencement ceremonies. Begin thinking about deadlines in terms of contracts or communications that will need to be sent out if commencement ceremonies are altered.

## Food and Meal Services

**New (03-31-20):** Community colleges may continue to provide food and meal services to students, but with certain restrictions. Under Section 3 of the State of Public Health Disaster Emergency proclamation issued by Governor Reynolds on March 17, 2020, food service providers are permitted to continue serving clientele through carry-out and delivery service. Iowa's community colleges that operate food services may continue to provide these services to students under the restrictions imposed by the March 17 proclamation. When serving students, the community colleges are to implement social distancing practices, ensuring that no more than 10 individuals are within the food service facilities at one time.

## Higher Learning Commission

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is temporarily waiving certain distance learning review requirements for institutions moving to alternative delivery formats in response to COVID-19. Colleges may request a temporary waiver through the [HLC website](#). In addition, colleges that implement changes to institutional practices in response to COVID-19 are also asked to complete a notification form, also available on the [HLC website](#).

## Concurrent Enrollment

A concurrent enrollment course is a community college course, and concurrent enrollment instructors are community college faculty. All concurrent enrollment coursework should adhere to the policies and practices set by the community college. Courses should also continue to adhere to state, institutional, and programmatic accreditation requirements unless specific exemptions are issued. Ultimately, courses delivered through concurrent enrollment must satisfy all criteria for the course as specified by the community college, and students enrolled in a concurrent enrollment course must satisfactorily complete the course. Colleges, in consultation with school district partners, are to determine locally how to ensure students enrolled in a concurrent enrollment course complete the course. This may involve transitioning students to another course section, continuing to have the high school teacher instruct the course online, or other locally-developed arrangements.

Each institution should ensure that concurrent enrollment instructors are informed of changes to academic programming and should be provided with the same support and resources as regular college faculty. Similarly, students enrolled in concurrent enrollment courses should be provided with similar support and resources as on-campus students. At a minimum, concurrent enrollment students should understand what services will be accessible through the community college (either on-campus or online).

The National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) released a [memo](#) regarding the impact of COVID-19 on program accreditation, particularly programs seeking accreditation with evidence based on academic year 2019-20 offerings and practices. The memo can be viewed on NACEP's website.

## Questions and Additional Guidance

For specific questions regarding concurrent enrollment, contact Eric St Clair at the Iowa Department of Education ([eric.stclair@iowa.gov](mailto:eric.stclair@iowa.gov); 515-326-0274) and/or review the [COVID-19 Concurrent Enrollment Guidance](#).

*Iowa Department of Education guidance should be viewed as advisory unless it's specifically authorized by state statute, according to Iowa Code section 256.9A as enacted by Senate File 475. This does not apply to administrative rules, declaratory orders, or materials required by federal law or courts.*

## Adult Education and Literacy Program

Adult Education/ESL/noncredit courses and program offerings should consider how distance education and formal learning activities, may be used to supplement instruction affected by interruption. Distance learning materials may be delivered through a variety of media including, but not limited to, print, audio recording, videotape, television broadcasts, computer software, web-based interaction, and other online technologies. Instructors support distance learners through communication via mail, telephone, email, or other web-based technologies or software. The Department has identified a listing of approved curriculum posted in Appendix O in the [Assessment Policy Guidelines](#), these are software programs that track proxy hours by clock-time. Individual programs may also calculate proxy hours using Instructor Verification as outlined in the guidelines and report those hours in the data management system. Teachers may continue to be paid from the grant while serving students remotely through such activities as advising, developing curriculum, recruitment, and intake.

### Questions

For specific questions, please contact the Iowa Department of Education Adult Education and Literacy Team (Alex Harris at [alex.harris@iowa.gov](mailto:alex.harris@iowa.gov); 515-281-3640).

## GI-Bill Eligibility and Department of Veterans Affairs

If your institution has moved to online delivery, and you have students enrolled who are receiving GI benefits, you must have permission from the state ED veterans' education division to have those programs delivered online; otherwise, the student will lose their GI benefits.

### Questions

Contact the Iowa Department of Education Veteran's Education team with questions regarding GI-Bill eligibility:

- Michael Dommer, [michael.dommer@iowa.gov](mailto:michael.dommer@iowa.gov) or 515-281-3516 and/or
- Monte Burroughs, [monte.burroughs@iowa.gov](mailto:monte.burroughs@iowa.gov) or 515-725-2865.

## Work-Based Learning

Certain work-based learning experiences, in particular those delivered at a work-site location, may be impacted by precautionary procedures put in place by schools, colleges, and businesses. Work-based learning should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Institutions should consult with the individual business and public health officials when making decisions on whether to continue providing the work-based learning experience. Institutions may also wish to consult with insurance providers regarding student and institutional liability should a student contract COVID-19 through the work-based learning experience.

Given the rapidly changing nature of this pandemic, institutions should consider proactive measures and consider suspending or postponing any non-course work-based learning experience. Course-based work-based learning experiences should adhere to practices put in place by the institution for other academic coursework.

## Stigma and False Information

Take action against stigma and non-factual/false information that arise on campus or through social media. Be a voice of reason and respond with factual and, if necessary, forceful statements that condemn such behavior and/or dissemination of non-factual/false information, particularly those that impact the health, well-being, and safety of your students, faculty, and staff.

## Online Learning Resources

How-to guides and resources for educators on delivering coursework through distance learning platforms. Check with IT administrators at your institution prior to using online platforms to ensure compliance with institutional policies, additional resources, and/or assistance with online platforms.

- Blackboard - [Preparing to Scale Teaching and Learning Online](#)
- Canvas - [User Guides and Resources](#)
- Google G Suite - [Helping Businesses and Schools Stay Connected in Response to Coronavirus](#)
- Microsoft Office - [Making Remote Learning Effective and Engaging with Microsoft Education Resources](#)
- WebEx - [Supporting Customers During this Unprecedented Time](#)
- YouTube - [Upload Videos, Share Videos, Add Subtitles and Closed Captions](#)
- Zoom - [How to Use Zoom for Online Learning](#)