

## UPC protocol of action regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19) health alert

### Objective

The Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC), at a meeting of the Governing Council held on 27 February 2020, approved the action plan for emergencies affecting the university community.

The plan included setting up an emergency management committee, which is formed by:

The rector

The general manager

The head of the Rector's Bureau

The head of the Legal Services and Risk Assessment Area

The vice-rectors, school directors or members of the Office of the General Manager appointed by the rector and the general manager depending on the kind of emergency.

One of the duties of the committee is:

*To issue instructions regarding academic activities, the use of facilities and any specific measures that are deemed appropriate in accordance with health authorities' advice.*

This protocol describes the actions that the University has taken and plans to take regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19) health alert.

The protocol will be kept under permanent review based on the evolution of the outbreak, the latest information on the disease and health authorities' advice.

### General lines of action

The UPC will act in line with health authorities' advice at all times. It will take any proportionate measures regarding its academic, work and extracurricular activities with the main objective of protecting the health and safety of its community and potential visitors.

Every person involved in the decision-making process will endeavour not to unnecessarily cause alarm and to keep the members of the university community informed with the greatest possible degree of transparency. The UPC now has a dedicated section on its website (<https://www.upc.edu/en/press-room/news/statement-regarding-covid-19-1>) that will be home to the latest guidelines and information on the actions taken.

### Temporarily suspended academic and extracurricular activities

Given the unique nature of the situation and the risk of infection due to close contact with people from outside the university community, the following activities are hereby suspended:

### **Academic activities**

- Student placements and other curricular activities at hospitals and health centres.
- Placements dealing with external patients at the University Vision Centre. During the period of suspension, the only patients will be students from the School.

### **Extracurricular activities**

- Student parties, both indoors and outdoors.
- Hackathons and company forums.

These activities are suspended until at least 13 April. Prior to 8 April, based on health authorities' advice, the University will decide whether to keep the suspension in place or end it on the scheduled date.

### **Conferences and mass gatherings**

Although we do not have explicit advice from the health authorities to suspend conferences and gatherings with people from outside the university community, the units and groups in charge are hereby encouraged to consider postponing them whenever such gatherings entail the concentration of people indoors and do not allow for a safety distance of at least 1.5 metres per person.

According to the principles and criteria described in this protocol, schools must inform the Rector's Bureau every week of any extracurricular activities planned in any school or area of the campuses.

### **Travel advice for staff and students**

The UPC advises all its staff AGAINST travel to affected areas and countries. Those who deem their travel essential must notify the International Relations Service in advance using [this form](#).

UPC students who are away on a mobility programme at a university located in an affected area or country must follow local health authorities' advice. In the event that the Spanish health authorities advise students on a mobility programme to cancel their mobility stay and return immediately, the UPC school of origin, with the support and coordination of the International Relations Service, will be in charge of helping students return to Spain. Students who return home voluntarily or following health authorities' advice will be given support to continue their studies and sit their exams at UPC schools. Click on the following links for further information:

<https://www.mscbs.gob.es/> (in Spanish)

<https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/areas.htm> (in Spanish)

<http://canalsalut.gencat.cat/ca/detalls/article/coronavirus> (in Catalan)



### **What to do if a COVID-19 case is confirmed among members of the community**

If you suspect you might have coronavirus, you must first contact CatSalut, the Catalan Health Service, by calling 061 and strictly follow their advice. If after following CatSalut's advice you are told to self-isolate or are diagnosed with coronavirus, contact the University in the first instance through your school director or the head of your service. They will report this to the Rector's Bureau and the Occupational Health and Safety Service in order to properly monitor the situation with health authorities and discuss with them whether special restriction measures should be taken.

### **Actions regarding academic activities**

The UPC is in constant contact with the Secretariat for Universities and Research, the Secretariat for Public Health, other Catalan public universities (through the Interuniversity Council of Catalonia), the Spanish Ministry of Health and the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities.

They will act in a coordinated fashion to agree on which academic activities should be suspended following health authorities' advice and in accordance with the principles of prevention and proportionality herein described.

Should any activity need to be suspended, the emergency management committee will meet to make decisions and give instructions. The meeting must be attended by the directors of affected schools and the competent vice-rectors.

### **Actions regarding physical presence in the workplace**

The measures to be taken will be determined by the rector and communicated by the vice-rector for Academic Staff or the general manager, as appropriate. When the measures concern university services, they must meet the following criteria:

- Service should be guaranteed through alternative forms of work such as telework, if necessary.
- Heads of services and management and support units will ensure that, whenever there are more than 10 workers, there is a safety distance of at least 1.5 metres between people. They will also ensure that windows are regularly opened for ventilation and that staff are reminded to follow strict standards of hygiene and to avoid close contact.
- For pregnant women, arrangements should be made to allow them to work in alternative work spaces or remotely.

As long as this situation persists, heads of services and management and support units should exceptionally, if they deem it appropriate, authorise longer periods of telework provided that this does not interfere with the normal operation of services and that processes for monitoring the fulfilment of tasks are established. To do so, they must first notify and receive the authorisation of the head of the Staff and Organisation Area.



## In the event of building closures

**This measure is not being considered at the moment given the current situation and in accordance with health authorities' advice.**

In the hypothetical scenario of extraordinary measures, such as closing one or several buildings:

- If such measures affect face-to-face academic activities, the affected school must establish independent learning and alternative assessment methods for students, coordinate this with the Office of the Vice-Rector for Academic Policy and ensure adequate provision of information.
- The general manager and the vice-rector for Academic Staff must inform workers' representatives and the health and safety committee of any extraordinary measures to be taken to maintain essential services as long as activities are restricted or buildings remain closed.
- The head of Infrastructure and General Services and the head of ICT Services must coordinate any necessary actions with the maintenance and security companies involved to guarantee effective operation during building closures.

The rector  
9 March 2020