



## NEW MEXICO HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

# HIGHER EDUCATION'S PLAN FOR REOPENING CAMPUSES Updated July 2020

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's exceptional leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic has enabled New Mexico to plan for a safe and careful reopening of the state including businesses, public schools and higher education. This plan outlines how higher education will participate in that reopening.

New Mexico's higher education institutions responded quickly to the pandemic. They served students with online, remote and alternative instruction; managed campus operations; and provided essential support, expertise, equipment and facilities to their communities and state. Virtual graduations took place throughout the state and online classes at all institutions took precedence throughout the summer.

New Mexico's higher education institutions are planning to provide a mix of in-person and remote classes, operations and expand research and service efforts by the fall term. Be assured, higher education will take a measured approach to reopening campus facilities and protocols will be deployed to reduce virus transmissions. Future decisions will depend on the epidemiological data, public health models, COVID Safe Practices (CSPs), mass gathering limits and other directives from Governor Lujan Grisham. Recommendations from the *New Mexico Reopening Plan* drafted by the Economic Recovery Council will also inform higher education's work.

The primary message is this: Opening campuses safely is the number one goal for higher education. This document provides guidelines that higher education will use to achieve that goal. Developing the specific plans for each institution is the responsibility of the leaders at that institution. New Mexico's colleges and universities differ in mission, location and governance structure, and one plan will not fit all institutions. While the presidents all urged flexibility for their unique situations, all are deeply committed to remaining agile, responsive, and vigilant if quick modifications are necessary.

**New Mexico Higher Education Department  
In Collaboration with New Mexico Higher Education Leaders**

*Please be advised that this document serves as living document that will be adjusted as needed during this time.*

# Executive Summary: Reopening Campuses

## Why is it important to reopen higher education institutions?

Higher education encompasses New Mexico's future. The people who provide health care, conduct medical and scientific research, take care of vulnerable populations, teach our children, keep our communities safe, drive trucks across America, farm and ranch the land, run large and small businesses, create the arts, grow the next generation of tribal leaders and run the vital services of government - all of these people get their education at community colleges and universities. Our culture, commerce and the future fiscal success of the state depend on a vibrant system of higher education. Higher education provides a public benefit to New Mexico and is critical to New Mexico's economic and social recovery.

## Why do specific college and university plans differ?

Colleges and universities throughout New Mexico have different missions and serve different students (e.g. graduate students, career technical students, adult basic education students, etc.). Colleges and universities also are located in various regions across the state. Higher education institutions also have unique governance structures. Although each campus will follow the Governor's state-wide directives, including executive orders and public health orders, it is important to note that each college and university will design plans with protocols, guidelines and schedules that address the diverse safety needs and issues for their students, faculty, staff and community members.

## What does Governor Lujan Grisham expect to see in the higher education institution plans?

Although specific college and university plans are likely to differ, Governor Lujan Grisham expects that all plans will include detailed information about opening the campus in a phased process with specific protocols for residence halls and foodservice; monitoring health conditions to ensure the detection of infection; containment strategies to prevent the spread of the virus if detected; and a shutdown plan in the event of short- or long-term closure of a campus or a resurgence resulting in a statewide executive order from the Governor.

## What will campus leaders need to reopen campuses safely and quickly?

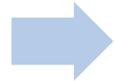
A strong network among institutional leaders is critical to ensure idea and resource sharing occurs to strengthen reopening strategies. Additionally, campus leaders will rely heavily on clear communication by state agencies and officials, specifically relaying updates about how the virus acts, changes to symptoms and detections measures; guidance on how the public health order and executive health orders intersect with campus operations; and resources available to ensure the safety of students, staff and faculty. The New Mexico Higher Education Department is committed to playing a leadership role ensuring campus leaders receive timely communication and updates that strengthen reopening efforts.

Ending June 1, 2020

*Mass Gathering Limit: Less than five*

**COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

- Stay-at-home order
- Online classes only
- Essential services only
- No events

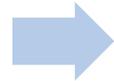


Duration: TBD

*Follow mass gathering and maximum group size per the public health order*

**PHASE 1**

- Mostly online and remote classes
- Essential only staff for non-remote lab and in-person instruction with stringent protocols
- Campus visits by appointment only
- Limited operations and services
- No events

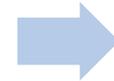


Duration: TBD

*Follow mass gathering and maximum group size per the public health order*

**PHASE 2**

- Online and remote classes, limited hybrid options
- Essential labs and small classes
- Limited campus services
- Small gatherings if allowed by the public health order
- Prepare campus for Fall Semester with protocols and policies
- Protocols for residence halls and food service
- Campus visitors limited



Plans will evolve and phases may be added or return to prior phases as necessary

**PHASE 3**

- Mix of in-person and remote classes and operations
- Capacity of class sizes, labs limited
- Protocols for residence halls, food service and retail operations
- Follow National Associations, Conferences, state orders and guidelines for activities and athletics

## Detailed Overview of Campus Reopening Phases

**Failure to minimize impacts of COVID-19 will result in institutions returning to previous phases as necessary**

*Note: Guidelines and protocols were developed and approved by each institution*

ACTIVITIES	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
Gathering Size: Less than five	<i>Follow Maximum Group Size Set by Governor</i>		
Social distancing and face coverings	<i>Follow Executive Orders and Public Health Orders</i>		
<b>Opening Campus to Employees</b>			
Tier I Employees: Essential Operations	Staff members operate with social distancing and required face mask requirements. Other necessary protocols are put in place to safely complete essential work		
Tier II Employees: Essential Operation and Services for Students and Critical Campus Operations	Remote work continues for most, essential services only, staggered schedules, vulnerable workers remain home	Remote work continues, social distance and face mask protocols required, vulnerable workers remain home	Return to work but maintain remote work when possible, social distance and face mask protocols required, vulnerable workers remain home
Tier III Employees: Other Operations and Services for Students and Employees	No change - remote work	Remote work continues, social distance and face mask protocols required, vulnerable workers remain home	Return to work but maintain remote work when possible, social distance and face mask protocols required, vulnerable workers remain home
Work Study Students, Graduate Students and Other Student Employees	Remote work, social distance, special protocols and only essential work (research)	Remote work continues social distance protocols required, vulnerable workers remain home	Return to work but maintain remote work when possible, social distance protocols required, vulnerable workers remain home

<b>Opening Classes to Students</b>			
Classes - Online Only	No change - online, remote classes will continue	No change - online, remote classes will continue	No change - online, remote classes will continue
Classes - Flex/Hybrid <i>Online, remote classes with some lab component, hands-on work or small class time</i>	Online with limited hands-on and face-to-face classes <i>Note: With exceptions for essential workforce training</i>	Online with limited hands-on and face-to-face classes <i>Note: With exceptions for essential workforce training</i>	Social distance and face mask protocols required
Classes - Classroom, Face-to-Face Instruction	No change - closed	Very limited, determined by data and directives, size restrictions for social distancing and maximum gathering and group size, and other strict protocols required	Follow maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor, social distance protocols required
Labs/Hands-On Instruction and Career Technical Education Classes	Only for essential programs with strict protocols	Only for essential programs with social distancing and other strict protocols	Social distance protocols required
Research Labs Open to Students	Only critical faculty and students following social distance protocols in addition to strict protocols	Limited faculty and students following social distance protocols and other strict protocols	Social distance protocols required
Apprenticeships, Clinical, Service Learning, etc.	No change - essential programs only with strict guidelines and protocols	No change - essential programs only with strict guidelines and protocols	Strict guidelines and protocols
<b>Opening Campus Support Systems to Students</b>			
Residence Halls and Required Food Service	No change - limited occupancy, additional cleaning protocols	No change - limited occupancy	Well defined protocols and strict guidelines
Cafeteria and Food Service	No change - services for students in residence halls only, additional cleaning protocols	No change - services for students in residence halls only	Strictly limited protocols required, follow maximum group size set by the Governor

Specific Student Centers, i.e. Student Resource Centers, Veterans Student Center, etc.	No change - closed	Limited services - based on capacity and safety limits	Follow maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor, social distance protocols required
Student Food Courts	Follow state guidelines for businesses, pick-up only	Follow state guidelines for businesses and maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor	Follow state guidelines for businesses, very limited with social distance protocols, reduced capacity, maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor
Libraries	No Change - closed	Limited services based on capacity, follow maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor, social distance protocols required, set safety limits	Follow maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor, social distance protocols required
Testing Centers	Online, remote when possible, limited services based on capacity and safety limits	Limited services based on capacity, follow maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor, social distance protocols required, set safety limits	Social distance protocols required
Computer Labs	Only essential staff use with strict protocols, additional cleaning protocols	Limited services based on capacity, follow maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor, social distance protocols required, set safety limits	Follow maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor, social distance protocols required
Gyms/Fitness Centers	No change - closed	Follow state guidelines for businesses, social distance protocols and reduced capacity, follow maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor	Follow state guidelines for businesses, very limited with social distance protocols and reduced capacity
Bookstores	Follow state guidelines for businesses, curbside pick-up	Follow state guidelines for businesses, very limited with social distance and reduced capacity, follow maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor	Follow state guidelines for businesses, very limited with social distance protocols and reduced capacity

Recruitment Visits	None	Limited with social distance and other protocols, all out-of-state visitors must follow public health order and executive orders for isolation and self-quarantine	Social distance protocols required
Student Group and Club Meetings	Online/virtual	Online/virtual	Social distance protocols required
<b>Opening Campus to the Community</b>			
Events, Lectures and Other Non-Classroom Activities	Online and virtual where possible	Online and virtual where possible	Not likely, only when institutions are confident protocols keep all people safe, follow maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor
Conferences	None	Online conferences only	Not likely, only when institutions are confident protocols keep all people safe, follow maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor
Meeting with Businesses, Organizations or Individuals	Online when possible, critical meetings with social distancing and all safety protocols, follow maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor	Online when possible, critical meetings with all social distancing and protocols	Online when possible, critical meetings with social distancing and protocols, follow maximum gathering and group size set by the Governor
<b>Other</b>			
<i>Note: Guidelines and protocols will be developed as situations present themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic and the reopening phases. All guidelines will proceed through normal approval processes and communicated broadly.</i>			
Businesses or Organizations Located on Campus	Follow Governor's directives	Follow Governor's directives	Open with social distancing
Business Travel for Students and Employees	No change - no travel	No change - no travel	Travel only approved for essential purposes and under strict guidelines, follow public health order and executive orders for isolation and self-quarantine for traveling to New Mexico

## Commitments

- Higher education leaders, regents and board members are keenly aware that students and their families count on them to create safe an environment. Students and their families have choices, and leaders understand they will only choose to return or start courses on a campus if they are confident that the college or university has made every attempt possible to keep them safe.
- There is not one plan for higher education, but multiple plans under one overarching strategy: keep our students, faculty, staff and communities healthy and safe. The Higher Education institutions serve unique groups of students and are in communities with distinctive needs and risk factors. Therefore, all higher education institutions will continue to work with their regents and boards and will document their COVID-19 plans, policies and decisions in addition to providing on-going communication with their constituents.
- The colleges and universities are all planning varying options to provide classes, student support services and campus operations. In each situation, the focus will be on providing high-quality and safe experiences throughout the remainder of this pandemic.
- All colleges and universities will be prepared to return to a prior phase if the situation on their campus or in their community worsens based on epidemiological data and public health directives from the Governor and New Mexico Department of Health.
- Higher education institutions will also be guided by and responsive to directives, regulations, policies and protocols mandated by national, state and programmatic specific accrediting bodies, oversight commissions and organizations as well as state-wide public health orders and executive orders throughout this pandemic.
- Colleges and Universities are committed to working together in unique and positive ways to create solutions for higher education and help solve some of the state's greatest issues.

## Issues

Some of the issues higher education will face:

- Financial challenges to manage increased and changed expenses related to student and employee safety and specific employee training on protocols and new working expectations
- Reducing Workers' Risk of Exposure, i.e. rearranging offices, classrooms, open spaces and installing barriers where appropriate; cleaning protocols, hand-washing protocols, personnel and leave policies encouraging students and regular employees to stay home if they are sick or experiencing symptoms, encouraging respiratory etiquette, providing tissues and additional trash receptacles, discouraging joint use of phones, desks, and other work equipment, etc.
- Steps to Address Absenteeism - employees could be absent if they are sick, caregivers for sick family members, or caregivers for children if schools or day care centers are closed; live with high-risk individuals within their household, or are afraid to come to work because they are fearful they will be exposed (CDC guidance linked at the end of this document)
- Changes in student and employee expectations - online, remote work and classes will change students' expectations creating a need for more technology and bandwidth
- Interrupted supply or equipment delivery for cleaning supplies, personal protection equipment (PPE), teaching equipment in healthcare, etc.
- Training for employees on new and specific protocols as well as new working expectations
- Many students, employees and communities have been impacted or have experienced trauma caused by COVID-19, will there be support to your campus to help with the healing process?
- Financial concerns also exist due to the uncertainty surrounding local tax dollars in addition to revenue from residence halls, food service, parking and other auxiliaries needed to fund debt service on bonds, potential reduction in grant and contract support, and anticipated drop in land and permanent fund allocations
- Broadband limitations are problematic for many of our students, schools and colleges. This was especially true for New Mexico's Tribal Colleges who are asking for assistance in extending the federal broadband waivers

## Expectations

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham has consistently focused on enabling a safe and careful reopening of the State of New Mexico including higher education. This plan includes information surrounding the best practices the Governor Lujan Grisham expects higher education institutions to include in their plans, policies, procedures and protocols.

### **Best Practices for Repopulation of the Campus:**

- Social distancing of at least six (6) feet
- Require face coverings that cover both the mouth and nose, i.e. face mask or face shield
- Install hand sanitizer stations throughout campus
- Restrict on campus visitors, including limiting family members
- Reconfigured classrooms and other spaces, both indoors and outdoors, to ensure social distancing
- Barriers (i.e. plexiglass) installed where necessary such as shared office spaces, between bathroom sinks, etc.
- Guidelines for shared equipment use (i.e. copiers, printers, computer keyboards, telephones)
- One direction flow signage for appropriate high-traffic areas on campus and within building facilities
- Signage to remind employees and students about respiratory etiquette, social distancing, required face coverings and one-way directional pathways where appropriate
- Adhere to state directives, both the public health orders and executive orders, for gyms, pools, retail, childcare centers and event venues

### **Specific Best Practices for Housing and Dining When Repopulated Campus:**

- Residence halls may open but capacity must be driven by social distancing requirements
- Shared spaces like lounges, common areas, shared kitchens, etc. should be closed unless monitored closely to guarantee cleanliness, social distancing and adherence to group size regulations

- Dining halls may also open but must be reconfigured; capacity will be driven by the public health order and executive orders for social distancing, guidelines for restaurant occupancy and group size regulations
- No self-serve options for food services, rather provide grab-and-go and carry-out options and provide delivery services to students who may need to be isolated or quarantined
- Follow CDC-specific protocols for frequent cleaning and disinfecting of housing and dining locations
- Signage to remind employees and students about respiratory etiquette, social distancing, required face coverings and one-way directional pathways where appropriate
- Adequate supplies including soap, hand sanitizer, tissues, face coverings, no-touch foot pedal garbage cans, disinfectant wipes will be available as necessary
- A shutdown plan as well as a temporary closure plan to clean and disinfect a facility will be communicated to all students, but especially to students living in the residence halls
- Isolation or quarantine rooms in the residence halls or an alternative location must be identified in advance of students returning to campus

#### **Best Practices for Monitoring Health Conditions:**

- Screening of employees and students for COVID-19 risk factors prior to stepping on campus
- Employees or students should monitor their own symptoms and report them to a health care provider or professional if they are experiencing symptoms
- Students with immune deficiencies or other pre-existing conditions should be offered online learning options
- Staff with higher likelihood of serious illness from infection might be asked to take on other duties or work remotely
- Faculty with higher likelihood of serious illness from infection might be given options to teach remotely
- Require employees and students to stay home or self-isolate if experiencing symptoms or if they recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 or believe they have been exposed to the virus.
- Each institution should work with public health officials and local hospitals to discuss surge capacity and protocols for handling a campus outbreak

### Best Practices for Containment:

- Require the quarantining of a COVID-19 positive employee or student for 14 days, trace contacts and consider quarantining others who had close contact
- Provide adequate space and meal service to accommodate isolated and quarantined students
- Residence halls should plan for medical care for infected students (e.g. daily video calls with a nurse)
- Consider having protocols for restricting social contact and mobility when limited infection occurs such as green, yellow and red days which would determine social distancing and group sizes on campus
- Protocol and systems for sending mass notification alerts to the campus community

### Best Practices for Closing:

- Campuses should consider in advance the circumstances that might warrant a campus closure
- Plans should be in place for closing specific facilities for a specific timeframe in order to clean and disinfect contaminated spaces
- A statewide resurgence plan as well as a temporary closure plan for a campus outbreak should be in place
- Plans should provide directions to employees or students about removal of personal property if a campus closes

### Other:

- Encourage innovative and creative ways to reduce density on campus, such as course and semester scheduling and sequencing of the return of students
- Some extracurricular events (i.e. student newspapers, clubs) should be encouraged to use virtual means when possible and social distancing when not
- Communicate often with employees and students (awareness campaigns, sharing new social norms)
- Travel should be limited, and all travelers must follow the public health order or executive orders

# Critical Considerations for Institutions

## Monitoring Progress:

- Each higher education institution will provide monitoring processes and ensure the individuals on their campuses are following protocols and guidelines.
- Institutions must work with their regents and boards to identify in advance, where possible, the trigger points that will cause their campuses to revert to a prior phase or to return to the stay-at-home requirements New Mexico experienced during the COVID-19 emergency.
- Each campus must also have a plan to respond to statewide triggers that respond to governmental directives and data that may return the whole state to a prior phase.
- Each higher education institution will collect data to document student and employee impacts due to transitions between phases, particularly focused on matters of equity and access.

## Screening, Testing and Tracing:

- Institutional plans shall include an established partnership with a local or regional healthcare or public health agency partner that will perform rapid response testing for employees and students in the event of COVID-19 exposure on campus.
  - This is especially important for individuals in high-risk situations, such as collegiate athletes or healthcare employees or students, and for individuals experiencing symptoms.
- Institutions are encouraged to develop strategies for enhancing contact tracing efforts in partnership with the New Mexico Department of Health.
  - Plans shall include:
    - A protocol for reporting potential COVID-19 spread and confirmed cases to state health officials
    - A protocol for notifying the New Mexico Higher Education Department officials of confirmed cases on campus
    - A point of contact on each campus that can advance tracing efforts on campus by providing officials with necessary classroom and residence halls rosters, campus access and other information pertinent to contact tracing protocols
  - Institutions may consider the following which can occur in partnership with state agencies:
    - Hiring contact tracers for their campus

- Incorporating contact tracing activities into programs of study
- Where allowable, utilizing work study resources to support contact tracing positions on campus
- All campuses must collaborate and communicate with state officials to ensure contact tracing capabilities in order to minimize and address potential outbreaks.

#### **Communication:**

- Recognizing that constituent confidence is key to effectively serving students, each campus is encouraged to establish a point of contact that can answer questions and address concerns related to reopening plans and protocols.

#### **Athletics:**

Active public health orders include provisions that require out-of-state visitors to quarantine for 14 days. This provision will make competition with visiting teams difficult. Similarly, provisions that limit the size of group gatherings and public events will further impact the ability for institutions to sustain athletic activities.

- Higher education institutions are asked to consider postponing athletics activities and developing a timeline for when activities can safely resume.
- State health officials can provide institutions with guidance on conducting practices in a manner that keeps students and athletics staff safe.

# Links and Information

## State of New Mexico

- [NewMexico.gov](https://www.newmexico.gov)
- [COVID Safe Practices](#)
  - [Guidance for All Employers](#)
  - [Guidance Document - English](#)
  - [Documento de Orientación - Español](#)
- [State Assistance Programs](#)
- [Report Non-Compliance](#)

## New Mexico Higher Education Department

- [HED.State.NM.us](https://hed.state.nm.us)
- Telephone: 505-476-8400

## New Mexico Department of Health

- [CV.NMHealth.gov](https://cv.nmhealth.gov)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [COVID-19 Public Dashboard](#)
- [COVID-19 Prevention Sign](#)

## Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- [Considerations for Institutions of Higher Education](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)
- [High-Risk Groups](#)
- [Individuals Living with High-Risk Groups](#)

## COVID-19 Statewide Response Referral Numbers

1. Coronavirus Information Hotline  
1-833-551-0518  
Purpose: General questions
2. Coronavirus Health Hotline  
1-855-600-3453  
Purpose: Health related questions
3. Crisis and Access Hotline  
1-855-662-7474  
Purpose: Emotional crisis, mental health and substance abuse support

## Watch for symptoms of COVID-19

Living in a COVID-positive world requires discipline from all of us. In order for the rate of spread of COVID-19 to decrease enough for businesses to safely reopen, it is imperative that New Mexicans stay home as much as possible.

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Loss of taste or smell