



University of Iceland emergency response plan for the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) epidemic 2020



4th. edition
24.09.2020

1 Activation and deactivation

The Department of Civil Protection will announce emergency levels and changes to these.

Date	Category	Description
27th January 2020	Uncertainty phase	Announcement from the Directorate of Health
28th January 2020	Alert phase	Announcement from the Directorate of Health
6th March 2020	Distress phase	Announcement from the Directorate of Health

1.1 Preparedness at the University of Iceland.

If the Department of Civil Protection announces a change of emergency level, the response will be immediate.

It may be that the University of Iceland needs to make changes to operations and teaching arrangements without a new emergency level being announced, e.g. due to significant numbers of absences.

The Rector and school deans are responsible for making such decisions in the conventional manner.

1.2 Deactivation

The University of Iceland emergency response plan will not be deactivated until a formal notification is issued by the authorities (the Chief Epidemiologist at the Directorate of Health or the Department of Civil Protection).

1.3 Project management team

The Rector has appointed a project management team to create an emergency response plan based on guidelines from the Department of Civil Protection and the Chief Epidemiologist at the Directorate of Health.

The project management team comprises:

Eva Benediktsdóttir, microbiologist

Jón Örn Guðbjartsson, Director of the Division of Marketing and Public Relations

Sigríður Klara Böðvarsdóttir, Director of the Biomedical Centre, member of the Health and Safety Committee

Snorri Páll Davíðsson, employee of the Health and Safety Committee

Sveinbjörn Gizurarson, Chair of the Health and Safety Committee

1.4 Information acquisition and dissemination

- The Emergency Response Board shall follow announcements from the authorities, i.e. the Chief Epidemiologist and/or the Department of Civil Protection.
- If new information emerges regarding disease transmission, incubation period or other information relevant to the University, it will be published on the Directorate of Health website. The emergency response plan shall be based on and refer to this information.

- The Division of Marketing and Public Relations shall add suggestions and guidelines to the University website.

2 Emergency response plan

2.1 Uncertainty phase

Contingency plan created. The University will keep staff, students and other stakeholders informed of preparation efforts and the planned response, should we enter an alert phase or distress phase.

The Division of Marketing and Public Relations will prepare an announcement in consultation with the University of Iceland Emergency Response Board:

Students and staff will be kept informed about the epidemic by email. Banners will also be added to the UI website and Ugla, linking to the Directorate of Health website:

<https://www.landlaeknir.is/>

2.1.1 Message to service desk managers and Icelandic Student Services.

- Emergency response plan is in effect – Uncertainty phase.
- They will consider how to respond if the emergency level is raised.
- Service desks are likely places for disease transmission. There is contact between service workers and customers and documents are exchanged.
- Information from the Directorate of Health: Guidance document for frontline service staff:
 - Available in four languages: Icelandic, English, Polish and Spanish.
 - <https://www.landlaeknir.is/koronaveira/upplýsingar-vegna-ferdalaga/>
- Staff will be asked to familiarise themselves with the questions and answers on the World Health Organization website:
 - <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

2.1.2 Message to building managers

- They distribute posters.
- They distribute hand sanitisers.

2.1.3 Message to everyone, staff and students

- Emergency response plan is in effect – Uncertainty phase.
- People urged to keep abreast of information from the World Health Organization:
 - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

- People are urged to wash their hands more often than usual.
- Posters:
 - "5 ways to stop the spread of flue", same applies to Corona virus

2.1.4 Message to school deans and faculty heads

- Emergency response plan is in effect – Uncertainty phase.
- School deans and faculty heads are urged to talk to their staff about how to respond if the emergency level is raised.
- Ask teaching staff to familiarise themselves with distance teaching technology if they have not already done so (see section 2.4).
- Ask teaching staff to determine how to address eligibility to sit exams for courses where attendance is mandatory. Teaching staff shall offer alternative solutions for students who cannot attend practical classes due to illness or if classes are cancelled.
- Should any services be closed in an alert phase?
 - e.g. offices or service desks?

2.2 Alert phase

In addition to the uncertainty phase:

The University of Iceland Emergency Response Board will convene and review the next steps and actions that may need to be taken.

It is important that the University's response is well considered and based on instructions from the Department of Civil Protection. All information and suggestions issued at the uncertainty phase will be repeated.

- The Division of Marketing and Public Relations will prepare information in collaboration with the Emergency Response Board and publish this information on the website.
- Social media will be used to disseminate material.
- Special posters will be distributed.
 - "Reduce risk of infection" from the Directorate of Health.

2.2.1 Message to everyone, staff and students

- Follow instructions from the Department of Civil Protection.
- Do not take unnecessary trips.
- Stay at home if you experience symptoms; do not attend University if you are ill.

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- Remain at home until you have fully recovered.
 - Ask colleagues to look after specimens/cultures etc.
 - Look out for one another, send people home if they appear to be ill.
 - Take particular care to look out for people who have no support network in Iceland.
 - Absences due to illness reported as normal.

2.2.2 Message to school deans and faculty heads

- The dean of each school shall ensure that all staff know to follow the University's emergency response plan regarding operations during an alert phase.

2.2.3 Message to teaching staff

- Same as to all other staff.
- In addition:
 - Instructors are urged to make provisions for distance teaching.
 - Instructors are urged to find ways for students to remain eligible to sit exams.
 - Instructors shall report absences due to illness that linked to this virus.

2.3 Distress phase

In addition to the alert phase:

- The University of Iceland Emergency Response Board will convene and formulate a plan. The Rector and school deans will assign staff members the tasks described in the University's emergency response plan for operations during a distress phase.
- The Rector will take the formal decision whether to cease normal operations based on directions from The Department of Civil Protection.
 - If a ban of gatherings is declared
 - * All teaching classes are suspended in university buildings
 - * Teaching will be continued online where possible
 - * Student reading rooms will be closed
 - * Staff members that have access to buildings can work in their offices
 - * Service desks will be open
 - If the university is declared closed
 - * Buildings will be closed
 - * Only certain staff members will be authorised to be present
 - Emergency Response Board.

- Others: The building manager on shift will be able to lock buildings which are otherwise open during the day, between 7 am and 4 pm. The building manager will also be able to disable electronic access cards, if necessary. If people need to get into a locked building in order to save a specimen or cell culture from damage, they must contact the building manager on shift: 834-6512.
 - * Teaching will be continued online where possible
 - * Safety regarding buildings and equipment during a closure.
 - House managers will work according to a plan set up by the Facilities Management
 - Öryggismiðstöðin keeps a 24 hour watch - 530 2400
 - The Division of Marketing and Public Relations will be responsible for distributing information.
 - * The decision will be announced on the University website and through social media.
 - * An announcement will be broadcast on the radio.
 - * Conspicuous notices will be put up at the entrances to buildings.
 - The coordinator for distance teaching may need to be contactable online in order to provide guidance to instructors who want to continue to teach.
- The Division of Information Technology will ensure that the IT system is in order.

2.4 Response to COVID-19 infection

2.4.1 Suspected infection

Staff: If an employee experiences symptoms that they think are similar to Covid-19, they should stay at home and contact their local health clinic (or call 1700) immediately for advice on the next steps to take. They should not visit a health clinic before receiving specific instructions to do so by a healthcare professional. The employee should also inform his supervisor and colleagues, that he has been in close contact with, of his suspicions.

Students: If a student experiences symptoms of Covid-19, they should contact their local health clinic (or call 1700) immediately for advice on the next steps to take. They should not visit a hospital or health clinic before receiving specific instructions to do so by a healthcare professional. Similarly, students are asked to not come to the university at all if they suspect they might be infected.

The Directorate of Health has issued excellent guidelines on responses that everyone should be familiar with, especially supervisors: [See here](#).

2.4.2 Confirmed infection

If infection is confirmed, infection tracking begins under the direction of the Civil Protection Infection Tracking Team. The tracking team will contact the infected person and after that colleagues if necessary.

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- Employees should notify their supervisor or colleagues if they receive confirmation of infection and students should notify their department or school office.
 - Supervisors or offices that receive a notification:
 - Notify the Emergency Response Board by email: neydarstjorn@hi.is
 - Notify employees in the building where the infected person works.
Note. The name of the infected person may not be disclosed without their informed consent.
 - Measures will be taken to disinfect the infected person's work area and common contact areas in the building.

The infected person's colleagues discuss the matter and assess the situation. Those who have been in close contact with the infected person should self-isolate while the infection tracking team completes their process. If they have not received a message from the tracking team on that same day or the day after, they are free to return to the workplace. The process of transmission is described [here](#).

2.4.3 Considered response

It is very important that the university and its staff respond in a calm and collected manner. The infected person stays at home to recover and we follow the instructions of the Civil Defense and trust their advice. Only the tracking team sends people to quarantine or isolation.

2.5 Electronic teaching methods

Instructors are encouraged to adopt electronic teaching methods if they or their students are quarantined or if gatherings are banned. Instructors may determine whether they use distance teaching, e.g. using teleconferencing technology, in order to continue teaching in accordance with the course catalogue.

Further instructions on distance teaching can be found in Ugla under "Learning and Teaching" <https://ugla.hi.is/cms/milli.php?sid=4980>

2.6 Organisation of University operations after reopening.

- The Emergency Response Board shall convene and determine the steps to be taken and preparedness required.
- Consideration shall be given to the health and safety of students and staff.
- The Rector and school deans shall create a plan for continuing University operations in accordance with the situation.
- The Division of Marketing and Public Relations will inform students, teaching staff and other stakeholders of the University's plan for continuing operations in consultation with the Emergency Response Board.

- Prepare buildings and classrooms.
- Review emergency response plan in light of experience.

3 Alterations history

Date	Chapter	Explanation/Alterations
1st. edition	March 4th. 2020	1. edition published
2nd. edition	March 7th. 2020	Distress phase revised
3rd. edition	March 10th. 2020	Distance teaching moved to ugla
4th. edition	September 24th. 2020	Response to infection added