

COVID-19 – Information for Students and Staff of Universities or other Tertiary Education Institutions

An outbreak of a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus (COVID-19) was detected in the Hubei Province, China in late December 2019

Exclusion from Universities or other Tertiary Education Institutions

There is an outbreak of a new strain of coronavirus that has not previously been detected in humans. The outbreak started in Hubei Province in China and has spread to a number of countries outside China.

On Tuesday 11 February 2020, the World Health Organization announced the official name for the new coronavirus disease as “COVID-19”. The CO stands for corona, the VI for virus and the D for disease.

The Australian government has placed entry restrictions on foreign nationals who have recently been in mainland China, Iran or South Korea, to protect Australians from the risk of coronavirus. In addition, there are quarantine requirements in place for Australian citizens and permanent residents returning from these countries.

This means:

- Students or staff who travelled in or transited through mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) or Iran must quarantine themselves at home for 14 days after leaving China or Iran.
- Students or staff who travelled in or transited through South Korea on or after 5 March must quarantine themselves at home for 14 days after leaving South Korea.
- Students or staff who have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 must quarantine themselves at home for 14 days from the date of last exposure to the case.

Being quarantined at home means that you need to stay at home, except if you are unwell and need medical attention. You cannot go to work, school, or public areas (such as shops or cafes/ restaurants) and should not use public transport, ride share or taxis. You also need to tell people not to visit you while you are in self-quarantine.

Students who live on campus at university should contact their halls of residence for information.

What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can affect humans and animals. In humans, coronaviruses can cause mild illness, such as the common cold and gastrointestinal infections, as well as more severe illness, such as that caused by SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome).

There is emerging information that some people may be infectious for a short period before they develop symptoms. While this is believed to be uncommon, this is the reason that the Australian Government is taking precautionary steps in asking some returned travellers and contacts of cases to self-quarantine at home for 14 days.

The Australian Government is closely monitoring the situation and this advice will be updated as necessary.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include, but are not limited to, fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath. Other early symptoms can include runny nose, chills, body aches and headache.

What if I become unwell with these symptoms?

If you are a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or if you travelled to mainland China, Iran or South Korea in the 14 days before the start of the symptoms

Contact Communicable Disease Control (CDC), ACT Health on (02) 5124 9213 during business hours, or by calling (02) 9962 4155 after hours. CDC will assess and advise on what to do next.

If you can't contact CDC, see a doctor for an assessment. Phone the doctor before attending and tell them that you are a contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or that you have been in mainland China, Iran or South Korea in the 14 days before the start of your symptoms, so that they can be prepared for your visit.

How can we all help prevent the spread of the virus?

Practising good hand and general hygiene is the best defence against the spread of the virus:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if your hands are not visibly dirty. Do this before handling food, before eating, as well as after using the toilet. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with others.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or directly into a tissue.

Where can I get more information?

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/public-health-alert/information-about-novel-coronavirus>

<https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus>

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