WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)
- Information, resources, and guidance for SAIC students, faculty, and staff -

**What is COVID-19?**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), COVID-19 is a virus (more specifically, a coronavirus) identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China.

**Are there any cases of COVID-19 on campus?**

There are no known cases in the campus community.

SAIC is closely monitoring the outbreak of COVID-19, and we are following guidance from the CDC and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH).

**What is SAIC doing to protect the campus community?**

SAIC is following guidelines from CDC, World Health Organization, and CDPH on our screening and response protocols. Additionally, we have taken the following actions:

- SAIC’s Campus Health and Safety Team is closely monitoring the situation and assessing the impact to campus operations;
- We are providing regular updates and are keeping the campus informed of risks and what to do if they present with concerns;
- We provided guidance and information to all students studying abroad;
- For the time being, travel sponsored by SAIC has been suspended for all faculty, staff, and students to those countries with [CDC travel health notices] at level 2 or 3;
- Study abroad programs in countries with CDC travel health notices at level 3 have been suspended; and
- We are able to deploy a campus emergency operations plan in the event of a local outbreak.

**What are symptoms of COVID-19?**

Symptoms related to this coronavirus strain include fever, cough, or shortness of breath. In severe cases, the infection can cause pneumonia or other complications. CDC believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear between two to 14 days after exposure.

Any students who have health-related questions or concerns, who are not feeling well, or who need emotional or psychological support are encouraged to contact SAIC Health Services at 312.499.4288 or healthservices@saic.edu, or their healthcare provider immediately. Additionally, here is a list of nearby clinics and a 24-hour free nurse advice line available to all students at 877.924.7758.
Staff and faculty with questions about their health are encouraged to reach out to their primary care provider for medical concerns or the employee assistance program for mental health support. Additionally, for questions regarding benefits and coverage, benefits-eligible faculty and staff may contact Cigna at 800.244.6224. Benefits-eligible faculty and staff may also reach out to Telehealth at 855.667.9722 or MDLIVE at 888.726.3171 for questions about their health.

**How is COVID-19 spread?**

According to CDC, current understanding of how COVID-19 is based on what is known about similar coronaviruses. Spreading from person-to-person can happen among close contacts (about six feet) when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how the flu spreads. It may be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

**What is the risk to me?**

CDC considers this a serious public health threat, however, the immediate health risk to the general public is still considered low. Additionally, according to the CDPH, the immediate health risk to the general public from the virus causing COVID-19 remains low both in the U.S. and in Chicago.

We recommend visiting the [CDC’s](https://www.cdc.gov) and [CDPH’s](https://www.chicago.gov) websites for the latest updates.

**What happens if there is a confirmed case on campus?**

SAIC’s Campus Health and Safety Team is working closely on this issue to assess and address COVID-19’s impact to campus. If a case of the virus is confirmed on campus, we will work closely with the CDC and CDPH, and all CDC protocols will be followed. Those who have had close contact with an infected individual will be contacted and monitored by the CDPH. SAIC will support the efforts of CDC and the CDPH.

**Will commencement still be held?**

The health and safety of our community is our highest priority, and this is a fast-developing situation that we’re monitoring very closely. As we’ve done every year, we’ll livestream the event at [saic.edu/commencement](http://saic.edu/commencement) for those who are unable to attend in person. At this time, the Commencement Ceremony is moving forward as planned. We are following guidance from the CDPH and CDC, and SAIC’s Campus Health and Safety Team is meeting regularly to discuss and address the impact on our operations. We will communicate any updates to our community via email, and we will post the latest information on [saic.edu/alerts](http://saic.edu/alerts).

**What if I have concerns that I’ve been exposed to COVID-19?**

Symptoms related to this coronavirus strain include fever, cough, or shortness of breath. In severe cases, the infection can cause pneumonia or other complications. CDC believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear between two to 14 days after exposure.

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**What preventive actions can I take at this time?**

As with any virus, CDPH recommends taking the following measures to help prevent the spread of viruses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth;
- Cover your nose and mouth with tissue when you cough or sneeze; remember to wash your hands afterward;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs; and
- If you are sick, stay home from school or work for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities.

Students, faculty, and staff currently traveling and returning to campus from a country with a level 3 designation from the CDC should inform the Dean’s Office or their supervisor immediately, stay home, and monitor their health for 14 days before returning to campus.

**Should I attend class?**

CDPH says that at this time, the risk to Chicago students, residents, workers, and visitors is low, so if you are not ill and do not have symptoms, we recommend going to class and participating in your normal activities.

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healthservices@saic.edu or 312.499.4288, or your healthcare provider.

**Should I wear a mask?**

CDPH does not recommend that people who are well wear a face mask. They advise that only those showing symptoms of COVID-19, healthcare workers, and those taking care of someone in close settings such as a home or healthcare facility should wear one. However, if you typically wear a mask, feel free to continue wearing it.

**Can I host guests from abroad at SAIC?**

Visiting artists, designers, and scholars play an integral role in deepening our academic experience at SAIC. However, guidelines for travel to the US are rapidly changing, and there are restrictions on entry to the US from certain locations. Those who have been in an area with a level 3 designation from the CDC should monitor their health for 14 days before they will be allowed on campus.

**Key points from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
For more information on symptoms, guidance for traveling, available treatments, testing information, and more please visit CDC’s [coronavirus page](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

**Where can I find updated information?**

For additional information and updates, please visit:

- [Centers for Disease Control: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)
- [Illinois Department of Public Health: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)](https://www.idph.gov/Coronavirus/)
- [Chicago Department of Public Health: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)](https://www.chicago.gov/health/coronavirus)

**Guidance for SAIC faculty.**

Students who miss class because of illness, or who are experiencing elevated levels of anxiety, should receive excused absences. Ask for email notification from those individual students and refer them to SAIC Health Services or their primary healthcare provider. A note from a doctor or SAIC Health Services is not required for an excused absence. Faculty should work with students on an individual basis to help them make up missed class work due to illness. Please reach out to the Office of the Dean of Faculty if you have additional questions.

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