



**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
CAVE HILL CAMPUS**

**POLICY ON REOPENING AND OPERATING UNDER
COVID-19**

Office of Campus Registrar
June 5, 2020

1. Introduction

As part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cave Hill Campus temporarily suspended operations at the physical plant and began to operate remotely on March 24th, 2020. There has been presence of employees at the Campus; mainly Campus Security Services and personnel on the Halls of Residence. However, the return of employees on a wide-scale will present a number of challenges which must be considered and effectively addressed.

The Campus must foremost ensure that it complies with Government's protocols for the reopening of businesses. These include ensuring the health security of the institution through temperature screening; provisions for promoting public health; provisions for maintaining physical distance and putting in place measures which will minimize any potential spread of the virus. In addition to these clear cut imperatives a number of issues, including psychological ones, are likely to arise. A responsive Campus, in terms of adequate preparation and anticipation of challenges, as well as an empathetic approach can be a significant input to allaying some of these fears.

This policy aims to assure Campus' compliance with government's existing directives related to reopening. This is a dynamic process however, and revisions may be required as national protocols change. This framework is supplemented by detailed guideline documents including, Guidelines for Managers/Senior Staff/Deans/Heads, as well as Employees at the Campus. This is towards ensuring that all parties know what is required of them in promotion of a healthy work environment within the COVID-19 context.

2. Reoccupation of Spaces

Following preparations in each Department, a walk through will be conducted by an assessment team to declare the space fit for reoccupation. The assessment team will include representatives of Office of INPLAIS, the HSE Officer and Department representative(s).

3. Employee Sensitization

It is important that employees are aware of what to expect when they return to work. The Office of Marketing and Communications should also circulate standard information via the various forms of internal media.

Sensitization sessions have been held with custodial and grounds staff from Departments across the Campus; including the Halls of Residence, the Office of INPLAIS and the Academy of Sport.

Additional training is also being organized for all custodial staff.

4. Guidance for Deans, Heads of Departments/Units

Departments should conduct an assessment of their processes to identify risks and determine what adjustments/controls may be required. The guidance document for Deans/Heads of Departments will provide details of these assessments. It also outlines the assistance which will be provided by Departments such as the Human Resources Section, the Office of INPLAIS and Health Safety and Environmental Officer (Office of the Campus Registrar) during this process.

5. Vulnerable Employees

During this time, some employees with pre-existing medical conditions may have concerns about their ability to return to work and safely conduct their duties. Employees should highlight any challenges to their Head of Department so that they can be made aware of the options available to them.

6. Psychological Support

The psychological impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been discussed worldwide. Employees returning to work during this time may have some degree of anxiety and concern. In addition to circulation of information on maintaining good mental health, an avenue for employees to access psychological services is essential. Staff can access psychological support services by contacting the Human Resources Section.

7. Remote Work (Working from Home)

A number of organizations are encouraging staff who can work from home to do so. This reduces numbers in the workplace, and provides a practical option for some employees who may have challenges returning to work as a result of medical conditions, lack of child care etc. Employees should contact their supervisor or Head of Department to discuss the option of working remotely.

8. Temperature Screening

In compliance with national directive, the Campus should conduct temperature checks of employees. Campus Security Officers should conduct screening at the main access points to the facility. Persons with elevated temperatures (above 37.5 °C) should not be allowed to enter the premises. They should be advised to contact their health care professional or the Barbados National COVID-19 Hotline ([Tel: 536-4500](tel:536-4500)) for advice.

9. Recording Employee Attendance

Departments should maintain a record of the dates and times that employees are in the workplace. In addition to assisting with scheduling of staff, this information will facilitate contact tracing (by the Ministry of Health) if there is a suspected or confirmed case involving an employee.

10. Cleaning of Workspaces

All spaces should be cleaned and disinfected in preparation for reopening. Special attention should be paid to frequently touched surfaces such as handrails, door knobs, countertops etc.

Employees should be required to clear their work stations at the end of the work day/shift to facilitate proper cleaning. Desks should be clear of clutter and personal effects etc. Eating at workstations should be discouraged.

The Office of INPLAIS and the HSE Officer have developed procedures for this cleaning, as well as routine cleaning which will be conducted once spaces are reoccupied.

Cleaning and disinfecting of general of offices and workstations should be conducted once daily. Washrooms, high traffic common areas and frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily.

11. General Hygiene

Practicing good hygiene is the best way to prevent the spread of germs.

- Information on good hygiene practices should be circulated through the Office of Marketing and Communication
- Signs highlighting proper hand washing techniques should be posted in washrooms across campus.
- Washrooms supplies should be checked routinely and replenished as necessary
- Hand sanitizer units have been installed in Campus buildings.

The posting of approved signs, replenishing hand soap and hand sanitizer will be conducted by the Office of INPLAIS.

12. Wearing of Face Covering

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centre for Disease Control (WHO) have both recommended that persons wear masks or face covering. The Government of Barbados has followed this guidance and recommended that masks or face covering be worn by both employees and customers.

- All campus employees should be required to wear masks whilst at work. All persons conducting business on the campus should also be required to wear masks.
- Persons who chose to wear other forms of protection e.g. a face shield, should still be required to wear a mask.
- Wearing a mask does not eliminate or reduce the need to follow strict hygiene and physical distancing practices.
- Face coverings (cloth masks) or non-medical masks are not regarded as personal protective equipment (PPE) and do not replace equipment which is usually required for particular tasks e.g. use of certain chemicals.
- Cloth masks will be provided to all uniformed staff.
- The Health, Safety and Environmental Officer can be consulted on types of protective equipment which may be required.

13. Maintaining Physical Distance

A physical distance of 6 ft. (2m) must be maintained in the workplace. Where possible, this should be achieved by scheduling and promoting remote work. Managers should consult with the Office of INPLAIS for advice on any structural modifications or changes to the physical layout of work areas.

Meetings should be held virtually where possible. Face-to-face meetings should only be considered where it is possible to observe a physical distance of 6ft. between participants, and face covering should be worn at all times.

14. Ventilation

All air conditioning and ventilation systems should be assessed, serviced and cleaned prior to reoccupation of the spaces which they serve. Where possible, spaces should be naturally ventilated for at least an hour (on the first day) when cleaning staff return to prepare spaces for reopening.

For central systems:

- Fresh air supplies should be inspected to ensure that provisions are made for the maximum quantity (as allowed by the system) of outdoor air to be supplied
- All central systems are fitted with high efficiency filters. New filters should be installed during servicing.

All ventilation and air conditioning systems should be routinely maintained following reoccupation of the Campus.

The Office of INPLAIS and HSE Officer will be responsible for conducting any assessments of ventilation systems.

15. Potable Water

The Office of INPLAIS should make all arrangements for the flushing and necessary treatment of all water storage tanks to ensure that water meets the required standards.

At this time, the use of water dispensers and water coolers should be restricted. Employees should be encouraged to bring their own water and beverages

16. Signage

The Office of INPALIS will be responsible for the distribution and erection of approved signage across Campus. The signs to be installed include:

- Please stand here (Floor decals) – high-traffic customer service areas
- Proper hand washing techniques – washrooms in occupied buildings
- Elevator capacity – interior and exterior of all campus elevators

17. Common Spaces (lobbies, corridors, elevators etc.)

- To comply with the physical distance rule, elevators should be limited to one (1) person, at a time, unless persons are from the same household. Signs should be posted with the new rules for elevator use. Persons must continue to wear their face mask while in the elevator.
- Persons should not congregate in common spaces.

18. Welfare Facilities (lunchrooms, changing rooms etc.)

- Coffee stations and similar areas within offices should be removed. The use of vending, ice and coffee machines should be restricted at the time. Employees should be encouraged to bring their own food, beverages and cutlery.
- Lunch/break times should be staggered to avoid congestion in lunchrooms. Other administrative controls such as shorter work days, will also reduce the need to utilize these spaces.
- If necessary, excess furniture in lunchrooms should be removed to ensure the required physical distance between employees
- The number of persons allowed in changing rooms should be limited so that the physical distance rules can be observed. Signs should be posted outside and within changing rooms so that employees are aware of the rules

19. Use of Campus Vehicles

Management of the use and cleaning of campus vehicles is critical during this time. Procedures for the cleaning and disinfecting of vehicles, along with a schedule for daily cleaning have been developed by the Office of INPLAIS in collaboration with the HSE Officer.

- The name of the driver, vehicle registration number, and if possible the name(s) of the passengers, should be logged for each trip. Hand sanitizer should also be provided for the driver.
- Frequent rotation of drivers should be avoided.
- Specific rules related to physical distance and the wearing of face masks should be followed by all passengers.
- Departments should adhere to the cleaning schedule developed by the Office of INPLAIS.

20. Customer Service Areas

All efforts should be made to reduce face-to-face interactions. The HSE Officer and the Office of INPLAIS will assist with the assessment of relevant spaces to determine where the installation of physical separation (e.g. sneeze guards) between employees and customers may be required.

In these service areas:

- The number of persons should be restricted
- Seating capacity should be reduced and chairs positioned six feet apart
- Displays with magazines, brochures and similar materials should be removed
- All customers must wear face covering

Floor markers will be distributed by the Office of INPLAIS to ensure that in high traffic areas physical distancing is practiced by all persons waiting in queue.

21. Visitors, Contractors and Service Providers

During this period, non-essential visitors (including children) should not be allowed into campus facilities. Visits by contractors and service providers should also be scheduled.

Departments should also record the name and contact information for visitors.

Business partners should be provided with the document, *Campus Guidelines for Contractors and Service Providers during COVID-19*.

22. Response to Suspected Case on Campus

Employees who feel unwell, have a fever or have flu-like symptoms should contact their supervisor or Head of Department. They should not come to the campus.

Employees who feel ill while at work should inform their supervisor and may call the Student Health Clinic for guidance. Persons should not go directly to the clinic.

Full details will be outlined in the Campus Response Plan.

23. References

1. American Society of Heating and Refrigeration Engineers (ASHRAE) 2020, Guidance for Building Operations During the Covid-19 Pandemic
2. CDC NIOSH (2015) Hierarchy of Controls. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hierarchy/default.html>
3. Government Information Service Barbados (2020), <https://gisbarbados.gov.bb/>
4. Health and Safety Protocol Subcommittee of Steering Committee (2020), Health and Safety Protocols for Covid-19 for Phased Reopening of UWI Cave Hill Campus (draft)
5. International Labour Organization (2020), Safe Return to Work. Guide for Employers on COVID-19 Prevention. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---act_emp/documents/publication/wcms_744033.pdf
6. McKinsey and Company (2020) Workplace Return. https://www.azcommerce.com/media/1544966/mckinsey-company_workplace-return-report.pdf
7. UWI St. Augustine Campus (2020), Post Covid-19 Guidance for Heads of Departments