NMSU READY
A systemwide return-to-campus plan
Better days are on the horizon

As the state’s land-grant and space-grant university, and as a designated Minority-Serving and Hispanic-Serving Institution, the New Mexico State University system fosters learning, inquiry, diversity and inclusion, social mobility, and service to the broader community. Our mission is to serve the diverse needs of the state through comprehensive programs of education, research, extension and outreach, and public service.

In the face of an ever-changing COVID-19 pandemic landscape, one principle guides our planning, and has from the start: Our highest priority is the health and safety of our students, our employees, our local communities, and our state as we serve our land-grant mission.

It is critical to the success of NMSU in these times that everyone understands the facts about COVID-19 and their own role in protecting the health and safety of our NMSU community. To aid that understanding, we’ve developed this comprehensive document to help you confidently plan for the road ahead.

This plan is a living document, informed by plans from our colleges and service units, and we know that updates will be needed as the knowledge about this disease advances and best practices evolve. Our plan applies to all of our community college campuses throughout the state, and is also subject to changing guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, New Mexico Department of Health, and our own NMSU experts. We also expect to hear from you about ways that it can be refined and improved. Please visit ready.nmsu.edu and submit questions or ideas about the plan – or anything else that’s on your mind as you prepare for the return to campus.

The NMSU system will be open and ready for students in August as planned. NMSU Housing move-in begins August 14, and system-wide classes start August 19. Our academic calendar is unchanged.

The return to our campuses is guided by a COVID-19 Rapid Response Team led by NMSU’s vice chancellor and strategic chief financial officer, Ruth A. Johnston. The team is charged with creating a welcoming and functional campus environment, and doing so in a way that honors our LEADS 2025 goals and the continuation of academic progress.

We look forward to the coming academic year with optimism and confidence, knowing that we are #NMSUReady.

Sincerely,

Dan E. Arvizu
Chancellor

John D. Floros
President
# Table of Contents

COVID-19: What everyone should know .......................................................................................... 5
  Personal Responsibility .................................................................................................................. 6
  New Mexico State University COVID-19 Safety Commitment ..................................................... 6
  Do Your Part: Personal accountability and COVID-19 ................................................................. 7
  Approval for an Exception ............................................................................................................ 7
  Travel Guidelines ......................................................................................................................... 8

When to come back to campus ..................................................................................................... 8
  Faculty and Staff ......................................................................................................................... 8
  Research and Creativity .............................................................................................................. 9
  Students ....................................................................................................................................... 9
  Workspaces ................................................................................................................................. 9
  Using data to understand COVID-19 in our community ............................................................ 10
  Responding to a surge in COVID-19 cases ............................................................................... 11
  Maintaining flexibility .................................................................................................................. 12

Facility Readiness ......................................................................................................................... 12
  Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems .................................................... 13

Instructional Readiness ................................................................................................................ 13
  Classroom Spaces ....................................................................................................................... 13
  Classroom Technology .............................................................................................................. 14
  Instructional Delivery Methods ................................................................................................. 15
  NMSU-Main Online Classes ...................................................................................................... 15
  NMSU-Online (UO) Classes ....................................................................................................... 16
  Special Note for Students in Clinical Programs and Operations .............................................. 16

Student Life .................................................................................................................................. 16
  Aggie Student Life ....................................................................................................................... 16
  Athletics Readiness ...................................................................................................................... 16
  Aggie Health and Wellness ......................................................................................................... 17
  Housing & Residential Life Readiness ....................................................................................... 17
  Dining Readiness ....................................................................................................................... 18

Protecting Your Health & Safety .................................................................................................. 19
  Cleaning for Prevention .............................................................................................................. 19
  COVID-19 Supplies .................................................................................................................... 20
  Departmental Supplies and Facility Modifications .................................................................... 21
  Signs and Informational Posters .............................................................................................. 21
  Face Coverings ........................................................................................................................... 21

Reporting COVID-19 at NMSU .................................................................................................... 22
  Cleaning After a Positive Test Notification .............................................................................. 22

Ready for our community ............................................................................................................ 23
  Cooperative Extension Service .................................................................................................. 23
  Guidelines for Campus Visitors ............................................................................................... 23
  Guidelines for Events and Gatherings ..................................................................................... 23

Documenting our planning & decisions ....................................................................................... 25

We’ll be ready for you .................................................................................................................... 26
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version date</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Revision Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06.23.20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Added information about how students will access the Return to Campus training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.23.20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Added and clarified details about screening, testing, and tracking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.23.20</td>
<td>17</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.23.20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Added early move-in guidelines for resident students traveling to the Las Cruces campus from out of state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.23.20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Added information about reusable masks being available for students to purchase from vending machines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.23.20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Added details about the new Alternative Work Arrangement policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.23.20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Added more information about face coverings for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.30.20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Added info on guidelines for printing and displaying signs and notices in classrooms and offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.07.20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Added language to clarify that the NMSU system is both a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution and, by extension, a Minority-Serving Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.07.20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Added information about personal accountability and COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.07.20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Added details about how the NMSU system plans to respond to a surge in COVID-19 cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.07.20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Added clarification on how students are encouraged to report a positive test for COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.14.20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Updated the section on Instructional Readiness to provide more details about classroom technology and instructional delivery methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.14.20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Clarified that supplies available through vending machines using a departmental PIN code will be paid for by CARES Act funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.14.20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Added information about the resources we have available to help facilitate change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.21.20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Clarified that students and employees commuting daily from communities outside of New Mexico don’t need to quarantine, but must follow other guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.21.20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Added details of NMSU’s collaboration with NMDOH on testing and tracing, along with contact points for reporting positive cases at our community college campuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.21.20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Clarified that modifications to the seating configurations set by F&amp;S in our classroom are not permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.21.20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Explained that the 14-day quarantine requirement for our resident students applies to students from nearby communities outside New Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.21.20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Added more details about the custodial team’s daily and weekly cleaning schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.21.20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Clarified that Aggie Health and Wellness Center is the first place supervisors and department heads should report a positive case to start the response protocols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.21.20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Added detailed guidelines on events and gatherings in campus spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.28.20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Added info on the Crimson Commitment to COVID-19 Safety, a video for students</td>
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COVID-19: What everyone should know

COVID-19 has been circulating among humans since late 2019, and during that time we have learned much about the virus and how it is transmitted. This knowledge allows us to better understand how to protect ourselves and our community.

Transmission of COVID-19 happens primarily person-to-person, through droplets that are created when people talk, cough, sneeze, or engage in similar activities that cause particles from the lungs to be expelled through the nose and mouth.

It is important to know that people who are infected with COVID-19 are contagious before they show symptoms, and some people never show symptoms at all (see also this article). Because of this, the best advice is to treat everyone, even yourself, as if they are contagious with COVID-19. The simple precautions below can help reduce the chances of infection.
Maintain distance of at least 6 feet between yourself and others to limit the chance of breathing any droplets that contain COVID-19.

Avoid touching people, including shaking hands, hugging, and other forms of contact.

Wear a face covering in public to provide a barrier to COVID-19 transmission.

Wash your hands frequently following WHO guidelines to kill viruses on your hands.

Avoid touching your face. Your hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Touching your face provides a route through which the virus can infect you.

One of the most effective ways to limit the spread of COVID-19 is by keeping distance between you and others (social distancing). As we return to work, we will:

- Modify spaces to decrease population density. This can be in the form of markings on the floor showing appropriate distances, signage, limiting the number of people allowed in a space at one time, and rearranging furniture.
- Decrease the number of people in an office by modifying work schedules and through telework.
- Increase air circulation and let in fresh air where possible. This dilutes any COVID-19 virus present, thus reducing the risk of transmission.

Other methods of transmission are not as common, but are still important to understand so we can minimize the risk posed. Transmission from hard surfaces is possible, as the virus can live on hard surfaces for up to 3 days, and it is important to sanitize high-touch surfaces. The risk of transmission through HVAC systems is low, but it is possible.

Answers to many questions can be found at the CDC, WHO, and NM Department of Health (NMDOH). NMDOH provides specific guidance for New Mexico, including public health orders.

Personal Responsibility

As members of the NMSU community, we are each responsible for our own health and safety. COVID-19 is new and there is still much we are learning about it, but we do know that through responsible behavior, we can reduce transmission of the virus and we can contribute to the health and safety of our colleagues across the NMSU system, as well as the communities and individuals we serve. Every member of the Aggie community needs to do their part as we battle COVID-19 together.

Prior to returning to campus, every student and employee will learn safety practices and precautions that can reduce transmission. For employees, this training will be offered through Training Central. For students, a video outlining expectations and personal responsibility will be viewed on Canvas as part of the syllabus for each course. As we learn more about COVID-19, NMSU will add more modules to this mandatory training. Included in this training is a statement of commitment to the safety of the NMSU community as is described below.6

New Mexico State University COVID-19 Safety Commitment

To minimize the risk to public health presented by the spread of COVID-19 while working and learning at NMSU, students, staff, and faculty are expected to adhere to the following:

- I will limit my exposure to COVID-19 by maintaining social distancing guidelines professionally and personally.
I will wear the appropriate cloth face covering or personal protective equipment and practice proper hand-washing techniques frequently.

I agree to closely monitor my health and will not enter an NMSU building or participate in face-to-face activities if I feel sick or if I develop or display symptoms of COVID-19.

I agree to decontaminate work surfaces at the beginning and end of my work.

If I have a positive test for COVID-19 and I have been on campus in the 48 hours before I was tested or I developed symptoms, I agree to immediately notify my supervisor and Aggie Health and Wellness (575-646-7375 or campus_health@nmsu.edu).

I agree to follow all NMSU guidelines to protect the public health.

I understand that failure to follow these expected behaviors would be detrimental to public health efforts and could impact my ability to perform work at NMSU.

Anyone failing to meet any of these expectations may be subject to corrective action under university policies.

Recommendations relating to face coverings, monitoring, self-quarantine, and isolation will be updated in alignment with guidance from the New Mexico Department of Health. Changes will be communicated to the university community.

Do Your Part: Personal accountability and COVID-19

Because COVID-19 is a disease that spreads primarily from person to person, all employees, students and visitors are expected to take personal responsibility for their own health, protect the health of others, and keep the Aggie community safe from the spread of COVID-19 and other infections as identified and instructed by the university.

Aggies lead by example, and in many situations, a person not maintaining proper distance or wearing a face covering can be asked to support the shared goal of staying healthy or reminded of NMSU standards. Ways to address such situations include:

- Handing a face covering to a person and saying, “Face coverings are required at NMSU. Here is one to use when you are on campus.”
- Another option: “Face coverings are required on campus, and there is a vending machine nearby where you can purchase one.”
- Social distancing reminders can be trickier: “Let’s all stay safe and keep our distance.” Or “This barrier (or the tape on the floor) is a reminder to maintain a safe distance.”

Each above approach requires each individual – whether student or employee – to exercise common courtesy and patience. Under no circumstance is either approach recommended to escalate into an argument or confrontation. If you suspect any resistance to your comment, politely exit the conversation immediately, and instead notify your supervisor of what has occurred. In alerting your supervisor, an appropriate additional step is to discuss additional strategies (signage, additional barriers, etc.) with that supervisor. If a person does not follow an NMSU directive that protects public health and safety, NMSU reserves a right to instruct that person to leave campus, unless NMSU has provided to that person an approval for an exception to that directive.

Approval for an Exception

Some members of our community will not be able to wear a face covering in situations when one is expected by NMSU guidelines. Employees seeking to be excluded from the face covering
requirement should notify their supervisor and contact the **Office of Institutional Equity** at 575-646-3635 for consideration for an exception approval. Part of the exception approval process will include protocols for the employee to follow (telework, change of office space or alternate controls) to help protect the health of other members of the NMSU community. Students seeking an exception approval should contact the **Dean of Students Office** at 575-646-1722.

**Travel Guidelines**
According to orders from the state of New Mexico, any person traveling to New Mexico from outside the state, including students and employees of the NMSU system, are required to self-quarantine for 14 days. NMSU requires that employees and students comply with the most current directives from the state regarding travel.

Faculty, staff and students commuting daily from cities outside New Mexico (such as El Paso and Juarez) may do so without the 14-day self-quarantine period, with the expectation they follow all NMSU safety protocols (face masks, social distancing, etc.), attend NMSU for their work or school, and then return to their home communities immediately after.⁵

University-sponsored student travel and employee business travel are limited to mission-critical functions to assure the continued safety of the campus community. If students travel and suspect they have been exposed to COVID-19, the student will be required to report this exposure to the appropriate university advisor and Aggie Health and Wellness Center. Employees who suspect they have been exposed to COVID-19 while away from the university or agency are required to notify their supervisor. Students and employees may be required to self-quarantine for 14 days, or consistent with current CDC and state guidance.

**When to come back to campus**
Protecting the health and wellness of the Aggie community is important. As an educational institution, we also must support our students as they work to achieve their educational goals. For that reason, every office that directly works with students will need to be operational during regular business hours no later than August 3, 2020. These front-line offices include academic departments, colleges, and student service providers.

**Faculty and Staff**
Although offices that serve students will be open, we will lower levels of staffing on campus overall to reduce opportunities for viral spread. Ideally, across campuses, we will have between 25 and 50% of normal staffing levels, in aggregate, as we begin the fall semester.

Decisions about who returns to campus and when they will return will be made at the college and organizational level, with the goal that every office that requires face-to-face interaction with students be open no later than August 3, 2020. Other functions that can operate effectively via telework are encouraged to do so. Employees at risk for COVID-19 according to **CDC guidelines** will continue to work from home if their job duties allow. NMSU recognizes the importance of employee privacy regarding medical information.
We’ve created a decision tree for supervisors who need guidance in planning for the needs of individuals and staffing levels.

We’ve also developed a new Alternative Work Arrangement (AWA) policy that promotes low employee density on the campus and allows for work to get done productively in remote locations. The options available in AWA include telework, flex time, short-term work modifications, and a compressed work week. Training modules have also been developed to assist managers and employees. Additional resources for telework are available at hr.nmsu.edu.

Before returning to campus, employees must have:

- Authorization from their supervisor
- Completed the Return to Campus training from Training Central

Faculty are asked to complete the training within 48 hours of returning to work.

Research and Creativity

NMSU Research is returning to campus using a phased approach adopted from Association of Public & Land-grant Universities Council on Research. Progress along phases will be based on COVID-19 data from the CDC and New Mexico Department of Health, plus guidance from state, local, and university administrative policies. Research activities conducted under Phases 1 through 4 require review and prior approval from research unit directors, department heads, deans and the vice president for research (VPR). The detailed plan and timeline is available at research.nmsu.edu.

Students

Students living on campus and arriving from out of state will begin moving in on Aug. 1 to allow for the 14-day quarantine period. Student arriving from within New Mexico will begin move-in on Aug 14.6 Classes begin Aug. 19. When students log in to campus technology resources in August, they will see information reminding them about Aggie COVID-19 safety expectations. This information will emphasize health and safety precautions and the importance of personal responsibility critical for the well-being of the NMSU campus community. Public Health Orders for the state will apply equally to all students, and ASNMSU will play a significant leadership role in promoting safety among our Aggie student community.

At the NMSU system level, no changes are planned to the previously published academic calendar. Any changes on individual campuses will be decided and communicated by local campus presidents.

We strongly discourage any student travel at Thanksgiving. If students choose to travel for the holiday, they should be prepared to follow any applicable state guidelines for quarantining upon return.

Workspaces

We are all adapting to a new environment, and we will facilitate employee transition back to campus by providing some guidance. Supervisors will ensure that their office includes, posted in a prominent place, the following information:
A daily health self-monitoring checklist
Instructions should an employee develop symptoms of COVID-19 or have a positive test for COVID-19
New Mexico State University COVID-19 Safety Commitment
Office-specific procedures for shared equipment like copiers, phones, refrigerators and water coolers
Any additional department-specific protocols for maintaining a healthy environment, including cleaning and waste removal

Some recommendations for department-specific protocols include:

- Employee break areas may be used if 6 feet is maintained between occupants.
- Face coverings may be removed for eating and drinking.
- Employees should be particularly aware of social distancing in restrooms.
- Meetings in online format should continue, even if all participants are on campus.
- All in-person meetings should begin with safety and health reminders.

Outside of the NMSU environment, faculty, staff, and students should be aware of their exposure to others. Anyone who believes they have been exposed to COVID-19 must place themselves in quarantine as public health protocols dictate.

**Using data to understand COVID-19 in our community**

Monitoring COVID-19 is one way to help protect the health and safety of the NMSU community. Three important tools for this monitoring are screening for COVID-19 symptoms, testing for COVID-19 infection, and tracing people who have been exposed to COVID-19. People infected with COVID-19 are contagious before they show symptoms, and some people who have been infected never have symptoms. Because we cannot be certain who is infected, we all need to rely on behavioral interventions like social distancing, hand-washing, and wearing a mask.

Each member of the NMSU community needs to screen their health for COVID-19 symptoms. People with symptoms must remain at home or in their dorms and contact a health care provider or Aggie Health and Wellness at 575-646-7375.

Another important aspect of dealing with COVID-19 is to understand its spread on our campus. We have created an extensive plan for this by leveraging faculty expertise, partnerships with private companies and funding from New Mexico Department of Health. This plan looks at multiple aspects of COVID-19 and includes:

- modeling COVID-19 prevalence and spread based on data from TriCore Laboratory, with later data from campus testing,
- measuring the spread of COVID-19 at specific locations through wastewater sampling,
- and a partnership with Electronic Caregiver© related to self-reported COVID-19 symptoms.

NMSU leadership closely monitors daily reports from the New Mexico Department of Health to understand, down to the level of ZIP codes, the trends of COVID-19 in the community. An online COVID-19 data dashboard has been created to provide a snapshot of that data for each week. These reports help us understand trends in things like new infections, recoveries, and hospital capacity.
Prevalence testing is another way to understand COVID-19 levels in the community. Prevalence is the proportion of people who are infected with COVID-19 at a certain time. Because people are infected with COVID-19 before they show symptoms, understanding its prevalence in the general population is a good way of understanding trends in infections before people start getting sick. NMSU Las Cruces has already participated in two testing events on campus; by participating in these events, we helped the Department of Health understand the effects COVID-19 has on our community. NMSU Las Cruces has also partnered with NMDOH to provide on-campus testing for most out-of-state resident students within days of arrival to identify and address asymptomatic cases.

Testing for COVID-19 infection is available daily through the New Mexico Department of Health. In the Las Cruces area, tests are available at the Department of Health Office and at Memorial Medical Center.

Because COVID-19 is contagious, the New Mexico Department of Health traces contacts of people who have tested positive. This means they reach out to people who have been exposed so that they can also be tested. At NMSU, we are also assisting in tracing contacts to ensure that our community members understand the implications of an exposure.

Through notification and collaboration between Aggie Health and Wellness Executive Director Lori McKee and NMDOH Director of Border Health Travis Leyva, NMSU’s Las Cruces campus has been assigned a rapid response team that will coordinate rapid response testing for impacted employees and students, if needed. This plan includes electronic sign-up for testing, coordinated testing locations and times, timely follow-up on testing results, and assistance with contact tracing.

Each of the NMSU system’s community college campuses has identified its own contact tracing protocol, with support from Aggie Health and Wellness Center for training, database setup and dashboard metrics for the entire NMSU system. Each campus will identify a NMDOH contact in their county that will support rapid response testing, if needed.

Community college employees and students should report a positive test to the main COVID-19 contact point for their campus:

- Alamogordo campus: Ken Van Winkle
- Carlsbad campus: Karla Volpi
- Doña Ana Community College campus: Kelly Brooks
- Grants campus: Mickey Best

Responding to a surge in COVID-19 cases

We are counting on all Aggies doing their part to reduce spread of COVID-19 in the NMSU community, and part of the role of NMSU leadership is to closely monitor daily reports from the New Mexico Department of Health, down to the level of ZIP codes, to understand the status of COVID-19 in the community. These reports inform us about critical trends in metrics such as new infections, recoveries, and hospital capacity.

Under certain conditions, the NMSU administration is committed to severely limiting campus activities to reduce viral spread. Possible triggers include:
levels of COVID-19 that are statistically higher on campus than in the age-matched population in Doña Ana and El Paso counties.

- local hospitals approach capacity for ICU beds. In this case, we could not assure that sick students or staff could get the care they need.
- a cluster of positive cases associated with a particular campus setting, such as within a building or multiple buildings; within residence halls; within athletics, band, or other units or groups of students; and within on-campus employees.

In addition to daily monitoring, NMSU leadership will meet weekly, or more frequently as needed, with campus experts to assess trends in critical metrics. These meetings could trigger actions and data collection to better assess the situation. Examples of these actions may include:

- increased testing for COVID-19 for specific groups of students, faculty and staff, with contact tracing for positive cases;
- investigating outbreaks to understand contributory factors such as social events or decreased vigilance regarding social distancing or face coverings, and taking corrective action as needed;
- closing campus buildings for disinfection in concert with NMSU Facilities & Services;
- reviewing related rules and policies;
- closing buildings to instruction and restricting campus activities; and
- communicating with the campus community as needed.

NMSU could pivot to fully online course delivery and stay-at-home restrictions based on expert guidance, even if a statewide school and business closure order has not been reinstated. Student services such as residential life and dining would continue as essential services.

Maintaining flexibility

Pedagogies such as hybrid teaching allow faculty to switch from face-to-face to online environment quickly. NMSU’s Alternative Work Arrangements policy facilitates telework and is supported by a decision tree for managers. Every department must review and revise continuity of operations plans to include plans for a return to telework.

Facility Readiness

Facilities & Services staff are working with academic departments and Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) across the system to prepare spaces for the fall semester. Modifications to spaces are being completed according to those spaces’ alignment with the priorities below, from the NMSU LEADS 2025 strategic plan:

1. Students’ Academic Progress (Goal 1)
2. Student Services (Goal 1)
3. Faculty Research and Creative Activity (Goal 2)
4. Faculty Services (Goal 2)
5. Meeting and Convening Spaces (Goal 3)
6. Business Services (Goal 3)
7. Auxiliaries, if not related to students or faculty (Goal 4)
Many spaces need no modifications, such as single-occupancy offices or shared offices where the occupants will stagger schedules. Barriers will be installed in high-traffic spaces where social distancing is more of a challenge.

Modifications managed through Facilities & Services include:

- Attached barriers that require installation
- Computer labs
- Floor plan reconfiguration of cubicles
- Retrofitting existing cubicle partition height with panels (attached cubicle add-on)
- All other physical modification to existing space

**Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems**

Facilities & Services is reviewing our HVAC systems to ensure they are operating at their peak. Assessment and performance testing will note:

- Overall system type, location, and age
- Mechanical condition
- Equipment performance
- Areas served
- Filtration technology
- Humidity control
- Air volume control
- Fresh air type
- Airflow stations
- CO₂ monitoring
- Reserve ventilation capacity

**Instructional Readiness**

When we originally planned the fall 2020 schedule, we had very different expectations for college and university life from what we now anticipate. However, that schedule is the basis for our preparations, and we will hold to it as much as possible as we adapt to reduce opportunities for viral transmission.

Face-to-face classes will resume in August, but not all classes will be offered face-to-face. Teams are assessing physical arrangement of the rooms, mode of instruction, ventilation, entry, and exit. We’re considering course type, priorities, and demand in determining which courses will be offered in which formats. Our goal is for instructors and students to have options that help meet their teaching, learning and safety needs. Our **Academic Technology** team has created FAQs, workshops, and other resources to help both faculty and students get the most out of their online teaching and learning experiences.

**Classroom Spaces**

Classrooms will be reconfigured to allow for students and faculty to satisfy social distancing requirements. Seating configuration will allow for a minimum of 6-foot separation to reduce the risk to public health in accordance with CDC guidelines. Modifications to learning space include:
Closing classrooms too small to allow for social distancing
Implementing alternate classroom furniture configuration, to include
  → Restricting and removing seating to maintain 6-foot separation
  → Clearly identifying available and restricted seating
Adding signage explaining social distancing
Identifying directions for one-way foot traffic
Limiting and identifying entrances and exits to rooms

More than 200 classrooms have been reconfigured to meet social distancing requirements for our largest courses. More classrooms are being assessed and readied as possible.

In order to maintain social distancing measures under CDC guidance and accessibility requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act, a modified maximum capacity for each classroom has been identified and clearly posted by Facilities & Services. This reduced capacity must be strictly observed, and modifications to seating in classroom spaces are not permitted.

Our classroom spaces are being modified to provide additional protection for instructors, such as acrylic barriers, microphones, and technology to facilitate remote teaching.

To reduce congestion in buildings, instructions will be posted about entry and exit paths and to discourage students gathering in hallways, lobbies, or using elevators unless necessary. Teaching spaces will be disinfected regularly to reduce COVID-19 spread. In addition to disinfection by Facilities & Services crews, NMSU will install about 1,300 sanitation stations, and disinfectant wipes will be available for students to clean their spaces before and after use, similar to the model commonly used in gyms and fitness centers.

At the Las Cruces campus, several outdoor instructional spaces will be created using tents, and additional temporary shade structures will be set up across campus to provide areas for students to rest outdoors between classes while following social distancing guidelines. Once classroom tents are installed, instructors should contact their department heads for scheduling.

**Classroom Technology**

ICT worked with the colleges to identify and upgrade technology in about 40 classrooms on the Las Cruces campus. These modifications will allow classrooms to be used for hybrid synchronous online delivery. Faculty will be able to use Zoom to broadcast their classroom sessions to the students that are not physically in the classroom, as well as record the lecture for future viewing.

ICT and Facilities & Services collaborated on equipment installation and worked with the Registrar on classroom scheduling for the fall semester. ICT and Instructional Innovation & Quality are also working with instructors to support Zoom and other technology in the classroom.

**Computer labs** at all NMSU system campuses have been modified to accommodate social distancing guidelines, and many have remained open throughout the spring and summer. At the Las Cruces campus, general use labs are available in Hardman-Jacobs Undergraduate Learning Center, Corbett Center Student Union, and Vista Del Monte. Hours are subject to change, but labs are scheduled to be open 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday beginning Aug. 15. Hours and availability of other departmental computer labs may vary.
In addition to wireless internet access available in campus buildings, AggieAir wireless hotspots can be found in many outdoor locations around the Las Cruces campus, including green areas, food courts, parking lots and bench seating areas.  

**Instructional Delivery Methods**

Adding flexibility to instructional delivery allows options to incorporate social distancing and provides the ability to move instruction to partially or fully online platforms, if necessary, due to a resurgence of COVID-19. Some definitions:

- **100% online asynchronous delivery**: Students complete work independently, on their own schedule, no matter what time of day. Students are given deadlines by which they need to login and complete assignments.
- **100% online synchronous delivery**: Classes occur on set schedules through remote delivery. Students and instructors are online at the same time, and lectures, discussions, and presentations take place at specific hours. All students must be online at that time in order to participate in the class.
- **Hybrid (online with required in-person attendance)**: Content delivery incorporates more than one modality, e.g., face-to-face and remote synchronous or asynchronous delivery. Face-to-face attendance is limited and may include alternating in-person and online synchronous or asynchronous attendance; may also provide recordings of lectures or experiential components for later reference to supplement concurrent transmission of lectures or experiential components. All students participate in all delivery modalities.
- **Flex (NMSU-Grants Campus)**: Students can choose whether to attend face-to-face or remotely via synchronous video conferencing tools. Face-to-face attendance is limited and may include alternating attendance options; may also provide recordings of lectures or experiential components for later reference to supplement concurrent transmission of lectures or experiential components. Students may not participate in all delivery modalities.

Schedule types that you’ll see in [my.nmsu.edu](http://my.nmsu.edu) include:

- **HY**: Online with Req In Person Mtgs (online with required in-person meetings)
- **ONL**: Online with Synchronous Mtgs (100% online w/synchronous meetings)
- **WB**: Online no Synchronous Mtgs (100% online asynchronous)
- **CL**: Classroom/Lecture (fully in-person)
- **LB**: Lab (in-person labs)
- **IND**: Independent Meeting
- **PC**: Practicum/Clinical
- **TD**: Thesis/Dissertation

**NMSU-Main Online Classes**

NMSU-Main online classes that were originally developed for a fully online delivery will continue to incur the per-credit fee indicated in the class schedule course listing during registration. If this fee is indicated for a class, students will pay that fee. If it is not, then no matter what happens with the delivery model for that course later in the fall semester, no fee will be added. Courses may not be switched to an S/U grading option after the deadline to elect that grading option solely based on a change in delivery mode.
NMSU-Online (UO) Classes

NMSU-Online classes that were originally developed for a fully online delivery will continue to incur the UO per-credit tuition rate indicated in the class schedule during registration.

Special Note for Students in Clinical Programs and Operations

Special precautions are required for students and faculty in clinical and other programs (such as nursing, allied health, athletic training, communication disorders, band, or student teaching). These precautions are unique to each program and are guided by the program’s accreditation or governing authority, as well as medical and public health guidance. The university will provide oversight of these arrangements as appropriate.

Student Life

The excitement of student life is essential to the NMSU experience. We are collaborating with students through ASNMSU and at our community colleges to determine how to engage students in all aspects of campus life, including how to maintain a healthy environment.

Aggie Student Life

Public Health restrictions on gathering sizes guide our plans regarding everything from club meetings to attendance at sporting events. Our Student Life office is working to create safe ways for all students to engage in the activities that make college life vibrant.

Clubs, lectures, fraternities, sororities, study sessions, intramurals, and other activities that occur in person will be limited in size and are expected to observe precautions such as physical distancing and face coverings based on guidance from state and local public health authorities, university guidance, and the space used.

NMSU will provide in-person activities to the extent that it is safe and practical to do so. While study abroad and student exchange activities are not possible at this time, such activities will resume as soon as possible. Similarly, field trips and other experiential learning activities will occur where possible. We expect all of these activities to adhere to the precautions recommended by state and local health authorities.

Athletics Readiness

The NMSU system takes great pride in Aggie Athletics and supports the university’s resumption of athletics in the 2020–2021 academic year. Timing and format depend on ongoing evaluation of conditions and direction from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Western Athletic Conference (WAC). Strength and conditioning training will resume in phases, as allowed by national and regional athletics governing bodies, and with protective equipment in use when social distancing is not possible.

Decisions about sporting events, including the presence of spectators at events, will be made in accordance to guidance from the NCAA, WAC, and state and local officials.
**Aggie Health and Wellness**

The Aggie Health and Wellness Center continues to offer health and wellness services to the NMSU community. This includes counseling services for students provided by counselors and psychologists who can assist with crisis, mental health, and personal growth and well-being issues. Services are free and confidential to NMSU Las Cruces campus students, and we have increased our counseling staff to provide additional support.¹

In an effort to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19, the Aggie Health and Wellness Center offers both in-person and telehealth services for access to medical and counseling providers, laboratory, and pharmacy services. Appointments for telehealth screening are available at 575-646-7375 from 8 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Appointments can also be made for in-person laboratory services and pharmacy refills.

**Housing & Residential Life Readiness**

NMSU’s Housing & Residential Life office supports a healthy on-campus living environment, and is committed to providing students with a positive, engaging, safe, and supportive campus experience. We are looking forward to welcoming residents to campus housing in August. To prepare, we are implementing practices that adapt to a COVID-19 world. Our practices are based on advice from NMSU health experts, New Mexico Department of Health, CDC and other resources. We will provide training and education for our students and expect they will do their part to stay healthy and protect the health of the NMSU community.

Because we believe in the importance of a structured living environment, NMSU is not waiving the first-year residency requirement. However, we have added an exemption specifically for COVID-19, according to certain eligibility criteria.

**Visitors & Holiday Travel**

Students living in Rhodes Garrett Hamiel, Juniper Hall, Garcia Hall, Piñon Hall, Chamisa Village, Vista del Monte and Cervantes Village will not be permitted day or overnight visitors in those housing facilities, including their rooms. This does not apply to student family housing.

Residential living students are strongly discouraged from leaving the university area for the duration of the semester, including Thanksgiving, to limit exposure. If students do leave the residence hall and suspect they have been exposed to COVID-19, the student will be required to report this exposure to the appropriate resident director and may be required to self-quarantine in accordance with CDC and state guidance.

**Move-in Schedule**

Move-in for in-state residents will be by scheduled appointment from August 14 to 16 for first-year residents and from August 16 to 18 for upperclassmen, to allow for social distancing and to limit the number of people in a facility at any given time. Resident directors will contact residents with information on how to sign up for a move-in appointment. Each resident will be limited to two helpers during their scheduled move-in time. Face coverings will be required, along with social distancing and frequent hand-washing.

Resident students traveling to the Las Cruces campus from out of state, including El Paso/Juarez, are asked to arrive for early move-in by August 1, 2020. While students commuting daily from communities outside New Mexico are expected to follow mask-wearing
and social distancing guidelines the entire time they are on campus, our resident students join
the housing community – their Aggie family – when they make a home on our campus. For the
protection of all of our resident students, quarantine requirements outlined by the New Mexico
Department of Health will apply to all campus housing arrivals from out of state. These students
will need to fill out an “Early Arrival Request – Fall 2020” on their myHousing portal, and
provide documentation of travel so we can best coordinate their living spaces with their travel
plans.5

Protecting Health

Housing & Residential Life supports healthy habits for resident students. Operations desks at
Garcia Hall, Chamisa Village and South Campus will be open and staffed. Guidance on expected
health protocols will be provided to residents and placed prominently throughout housing
facilities. Signs will be placed on the premises that direct residents to entrances and exits, and
provide instructions for foot traffic flow and maximum occupancy in certain areas. Because of
the importance of physical distancing while in the community, common spaces such as lobbies,
game rooms and study rooms may not be available.

Isolation housing is available as needed, in housing units that are private and separated from
other residential areas. Meal delivery service will be available if required. A team of staff
members will support students while in isolation housing through regular phone calls, errands,
and meal delivery.

Residents are responsible for keeping their living spaces (rooms, restrooms, and shared areas)
clean. Shared or frequently touched surfaces should be disinfected after use by each individual.
Residents must supply their own cleaning supplies and materials. We recommend cleaners that
disinfect or a bleach and water solution. Residents should not occupy the restroom or shower at
the same time to reduce the potential for virus spread.

In addition to regular cleaning of rooms, restrooms, and shared areas (where applicable),
residents should wipe down or spray shower, toilet, sink and counter surfaces with disinfecting
cleaner frequently and leave restroom door(s) open for ventilation to dry the restroom.

Residents are responsible for removing trash and placing it in parking lot dumpsters.
Community spaces, including lobbies, community bathrooms, patios, etc. will undergo enhanced
cleaning and disinfection by the custodial team on a regular schedule.7

More specific information for residential students can be found at housing.nmsu.edu.

Dining Readiness

Food service around campus will be ready to serve the NMSU community with additional
choices in ordering and delivery, consistent with the current quality, standards, and regulations.
During late July and early August, employees will undergo rigorous training on enhanced
cleaning protocols.

In accordance with New Mexico’s Public Health Order, all dining room seating areas will be
closed. All food service will be provided utilizing carryout and mobile ordering pickup and
delivery.7
Technological and physical accommodations designed to reduce the spread of and exposure to COVID-19 will include:

- Mobile app ordering
- Robotic meal delivery
- Barriers and social distancing signage to control lines
- Touchless cashiering and acrylic barriers at cashier stations
- Elimination of self-service and buffet options
- Menu adaptations to accommodate to-go and delivery items
- Signage, maps, and menus at the entrance to facilities
- Flexible and layered protective equipment for all employees
- Additional shaded and cooled outdoor seating for dining near Corbett Center Student Union

In the event that dine-in service is able to resume, additional technological and physical accommodations designed to reduce the spread of and exposure to COVID-19 will also include:

- Tabletop acrylic barriers

## Protecting Your Health & Safety

### Cleaning for Prevention

In alignment with public health recommendations, NMSU is taking measures to reduce community spread of COVID-19, which includes **daily enhanced cleaning** and disinfection procedures created by Environmental Health Safety & Risk Management (EHS&RM) based on guidance from the CDC and the NMDOH for cleaning and disinfection.

We can all contribute to a healthier campus by following these general guidelines:

- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting, focusing on high-touch surfaces such as residence hall communal rooms, public restrooms, computer labs, exercise rooms, library tables, buttons, handrails, tables, faucets, doorknobs, and shared keyboards. Cleaning and disinfecting daily and between users for shared workstations with attention to these areas helps remove bacteria and viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Practice good hand hygiene after cleaning:
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- In an effort to reduce custodial time emptying waste bins while freeing up resources to increase cleaning services on campus, Facilities & Services will replace current office trash baskets with mini waste bins which will attach to office recycle bins. Staff and faculty are expected to empty their mini waste bins into a centralized bin, which will be emptied and sanitized weekly.

Detailed **guidelines for cleaning** are available on the ESH&RM website. That site includes cleaning procedures, information on the **process to clean after a positive case is reported**, and recommended **disinfectants**.
Our Facilities & Services custodial team has revised their schedules to increase custodial coverage and to have staff on campus during classes. Custodial team schedules will be adjusted, if needed, after classroom use schedules are finalized.

Custodial teams will emphasize sanitizing shared spaces on a **daily basis** in the academic buildings:

- Clean and sanitize classrooms
- Clean and sanitize computer labs
- Clean and sanitize restrooms
- Clean building entryways, break rooms, elevators, conference rooms, and common areas.

Some tasks will be reduced to allow custodial resources to focus on sanitizing high-use areas.

Custodial teams will perform the following tasks on a **weekly basis** in the academic buildings:

- Remove trash and recyclable materials from departmental offices
- Vacuum and dust surfaces without moving items in departmental offices
- Clean hard surface floors weekly
- Vacuum and carpet spot removal weekly

As we move forward with resuming some in-person instruction, the custodial team may modify weekly tasks to accommodate increased daily task cleaning.

In non-academic buildings, the custodial team will adapt their cleaning schedule and frequency to adjust for reduced building occupancy. Schedule changes will be communicated to the building monitors.

Custodial teams will perform the following tasks on in the non-academic buildings after the occupancy load is verified:

- Clean and sanitize occupied departmental offices
- Clean and sanitize training or computer rooms
- Clean and sanitize restrooms
- Clean building entryways, break rooms, elevators, conference rooms, and common areas.
- Empty trash receptacles in common areas and break rooms
- Remove trash and recyclable materials from departmental offices
- Vacuum and dust surfaces without moving items in occupied departmental offices
- Clean hard surface floors weekly
- Vacuum and spot removal weekly

Facilities & Services will update the cleaning protocol document regularly as additional departments reopen on Aug. 3, and communicate updates with building monitors and campus community.

**COVID-19 Supplies**

NMSU is working to procure the supplies needed to maintain a healthy environment. All faculty, staff, and students should ensure that their personal workspaces are sanitized, and NMSU will ensure availability of standard supplies upon return to campus operations. Employees and
students will be provided masks, or they may use their own, and all will support the COVID-19 Safety Commitment. Other efforts to support personal sanitation include:

- **Sanitization Stations**: Approximately 1,300 hand sanitizer dispensers will be installed in classrooms and common areas on the Las Cruces campus. Custodial teams will service the dispensers as part of the university’s daily cleaning program.

- **Supply Vending Machines**: These will be located across campus and will contain hand sanitizer, latex gloves, reusable and disposable masks, safety glasses, disinfectant wipes and other items. These supplies are offered without charge to NMSU employees through a departmental PIN code, and paid for by CARES Act funding through a central index. In addition to reusable masks purchased for and distributed to students at no cost by ASNMSU, Housing & Residential Life, Aggie Stampede, and other organizations and departments, reusable masks will also be available for purchase by students at select vending machines in Corbett Center Student Union, Aggie Express and the Activity Center.

**Departmental Supplies and Facility Modifications**

Departmental supply orders from various vendors are available through AggieMart and Banner, with assistance from the Aggie Service Center. Business managers who do not have access to AggieMart may submit a **COVID-19 Supplies Order Form** to asc@nmsu.edu.

Space modifications are managed through Facilities & Services. Departments may also purchase the following types of items:

- Freestanding barrier shields
- Freestanding panel base workstation screen
- Freestanding counter shield at a reception desks and check-in points
- Freestanding desk screen
- Moveable barrier

**Signs and Informational Posters**

In addition to temporary signage being installed by Facilities & Services, printable informational posters, checklists, and fliers are available for download at ready.nmsu.edu, along with guidelines about where and how they should be posted by building monitors. These will include reminders about the NMSU system’s COVID-19 Safety Commitment, rules and expectations regarding personal responsibility, checklists for self-monitoring of health and wellness, information about reporting a positive COVID-19 test, and other topics.

**Face Coverings**

Wearing an **appropriate face covering** is just one aspect of our multi-pronged approach to help protect the safety and health of our NMSU community. They are also required by the NMDOH for anyone in a public space, with exceptions for eating, drinking, or swimming, or if otherwise advised by a health care provider. If wearing a face covering will adversely affect an employee’s safety or health, employees should contact EHS&RM or the Aggie Health and Wellness Center for additional guidance. Vending machines across campus will be stocked with face coverings, other protective equipment, and supplies.

If more than one person is in a university vehicle, all people in the vehicle must wear a courtesy face covering. This includes open-air utility vehicles.
The Purchasing Department has ordered unbranded reusable face coverings that meet CDC standards for all faculty and staff. These will be distributed to each college and division. Face coverings with NMSU logos are available from approved suppliers for promotional and marketing activities. Procurement cards may be used for all orders. For other supplies not mentioned above, please contact Jason Sandoval at jasonsa@nmsu.edu or at 575-646-7708.

**Reporting COVID-19 at NMSU**

Any employee of the NMSU system or affiliated agencies who has tested positive for COVID-19 and had been on campus at any time 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms or COVID-19 positive test must notify their supervisor and Aggie Health and Wellness Center (575-646-7375 or campus_health@nmsu.edu) immediately.

The positive individual may not come to work and must follow current CDC guidance regarding self-quarantine or self-isolation. Any individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 will need to be cleared to return by their health care provider and in accordance with CDC guidance.

Any student is also strongly encouraged to report a positive test to Aggie Health and Wellness Center (575-646-7375 or campus_health@nmsu.edu) immediately.³

When NMSU is notified of a person with confirmed COVID-19, Aggie Health and Wellness Center (AHWC) will coordinate the process to notify exposed individuals (those who have been within 6 feet for 15 minutes)⁷ and disinfect buildings. The identity of the COVID-19 positive person will not be disclosed. Supervisors of staff who may have been in the affected building (e.g. Facilities, ICT) will be alerted in order to share with those staff.

Community college employees and students should report a positive test to the main COVID-19 contact point for their campus: ⁵

- Alamogordo campus: Ken Van Winkle
- Carlsbad campus: Karla Volpi
- Doña Ana Community College campus: Kelly Brooks
- Grants campus: Mickey Best

**Cleaning After a Positive Test Notification**

Following notification of a positive test, supervisors or department heads must coordinate with Aggie Health and Wellness Center by contacting Lori McKee at lomckee@nmsu.edu or campus_health@nmsu.edu. AHWC will rapidly engage with Facilities & Services to implement enhanced cleaning. The process flow chart is found under Cleaning and Disinfection on our COVID-19 Health and Safety Resources page.⁵

A **COVID-19 enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocol** developed by EHS&RM will be applied in all cases in which a person with COVID-19 spent time in university spaces from 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms until seven days have passed since the person was present in a university space. This disinfection process uses CDC-approved methods, supplies, and guidance.
Ready for our community

Cooperative Extension Service

NMSU’s Cooperative Extension Service (CES) continues to serve New Mexico during the pandemic, and is increasing its operations as public health restrictions are eased, including volunteer-led youth or adult programming, meetings, and gatherings. Guidelines for individual counties or specific programs will be followed if they are more restrictive than that of NMSU CES.

Specialists and agents provide adult consultation services on an individual basis, and these meetings are documented in contact logs for traceability. All interactions follow guidelines for social distancing, and the use of facemasks and gloves is required. Employees travel in separate vehicles to meet clients if needed, although distance modalities are encouraged.

As restrictions are eased by state and university leaders, Extension group programming will transition from virtual only to allow for limited group face-to-face programming. Extension offices will be physically open to the public, by appointment at first, and then later transitioning to fuller operation as CDC and state guidelines allow.

Guidelines for Campus Visitors

Much like NMSU students and employees, visitors to each of New Mexico State University’s campuses are responsible for following all current public health orders and for taking all steps needed to minimize the possible transmission of COVID-19.

Any university vendor, contractors, outside community members or other campus visitors who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should not come to any NMSU campuses. These individuals should stay home and contact their healthcare provider.

Resources for Campus Visitors

♦ COVID Safe Practices (CSPs)
♦ NM Public Health Orders

In alignment with current public health orders from the State of New Mexico, all visitor to campuses within the NMSU system must wear a mask or face covering at all times while indoors or outdoors, unless eating, drinking or swimming.

Only NMSU students, NMSU employees and those conducting official business with the university are permitted inside NMSU buildings.

Anyone visiting an NMSU campus must follow all #NMSUReady signage and instructions, posted indoors and outdoors regarding face coverings, social distancing, the use of access doors, and traffic flow directions.

Guidelines for Events and Gatherings

New Mexico State University has a strong relationship with the communities we serve. Under normal circumstances, NMSU invites alumni, donors, community members and other guests to each of our campuses across the university system on a regular basis to take part in various
events and gatherings. These activities are part of NMSU’s broader community relations efforts, as outlined in our strategic plan, **NMSU LEADS 2025**, Goal 3: Amplify Extension and Outreach.

The following guidelines are provided to balance the need for some events to take place at the university during COVID-19 and the obligation to mitigate the risks of these events. For purposes of this guidance, events include a coordinated gathering of five or more individuals at some location within the NMSU system for a purpose outside of a normal workplace or instructional meeting.

Decisions regarding gatherings must be made in the interest of the health and safety of our university community and in accordance with current public health guidance. NMSU will continue to reassess this guidance and update these temporary restrictions as appropriate.

The university encourages virtual, online activities whenever possible. Requests for gatherings larger than five individuals must have a compelling reason to do so, which cannot be accommodated in a virtual environment.

These gatherings and similar activities may be permitted at the discretion of the applicable community college president, dean, vice president, or equivalent authority as long as they adhere to current public health order specifications. Additional considerations for approval of events would include an indoor vs. outdoor space, minimized length of time together and the serving of food. Many university facilities are still being modified for additional safety. Those areas may not be immediately available.

**Student Events and Gatherings**

- The normal Activity Request process will still be in place for student events.
- Requests, requiring a reservation of academic space, can be submitted to University Student Records via the **Event Scheduling website** upon approval by Campus Activities.

**Employee/Department Events and Gatherings**

- Employee gatherings, outside of normal daily business and similar interactions, must follow all applicable rules and public health guidance, as outlined by the NMDOH.
- Begin the event request process by completing and submitting the **Event Request Form**.
- Event requests will be reviewed by a designated group representing Auxiliary Services, EHS&RM, Fire, Police and F&S members. Organizers of these events must submit a safety plan through their Department Head or Division Director for approval by the broader group representing Campus Activities, EHS&RM, Fire, Police and F&S members. The plan must be submitted at least two weeks in advance, which should include the date, time/duration, and location of the event; the names of attendees; and steps outlined to ensure social distancing, the wearing of face coverings and other measures designed to ensure the healthiest possible situation.
- Requests requiring a reservation of academic space, can be submitted to University Student Records via the **Event Scheduling website** upon approval.

**NMSU-Sponsored Events**

- Events sponsored by a university department must follow all applicable rules and public health guidance, as outlined by the New Mexico Department of Health.
- Begin the event request process by completing and submitting the **Event Request Form**.
Event requests will be reviewed by a designated group representing Auxiliary Services, EHS&RM, Fire, Police and F&S members. Organizers of these events must submit a safety plan through their Department Head or Division Director for approval by the broader group representing Campus Activities, EHS&RM, Fire, Police and F&S members. The plan must be submitted at least two weeks in advance, which should include the date, time/duration, and location of the event; the names of attendees; and steps outlined to ensure social distancing, the wearing of face coverings and other measures designed to ensure the healthiest possible situation.

**NMSU Special Events**

- Guidelines for spectators attending NCAA competitions are still being drafted by the relevant bodies. The university will follow all rules as outlined by the CDC, NCAA, Western Athletic Conference and NM Department of Health when it comes to these kinds of gatherings.
- All concerts and similar performing arts presentations scheduled to take place at NMSU have been postponed until 2021. The university will follow all rules, as outlined by the CDC and NM Department of Health once these events are approved at the State level to take place.

**Community Events and Gatherings**

- Community members seeking to rent space at NMSU for an event must ensure the event follows all applicable rules and public health guidance, as outlined by the NM Department of Health. Current public health orders would not permit these types of gatherings.
- The outdoor spaces of each of the NMSU campuses are considered to be available to the general public. As such, no restrictions will be enforced for various outdoor activities or outdoor community gatherings which follow current public health order specifications and would have taken place under normal circumstances. These kinds of gatherings include, but are not limited to, various exercising activities, picnics, fishing, and other instances where five or more people would gather for a coordinated activity. Indoor spaces are not included as part of this guidance, and are restricted to university business only.

**Resources for Events and Gatherings**

- CDC guidance for events and gatherings
- COVID Safe Practices (CSPs)
- NM Public Heath Orders

**Documenting our planning & decisions**

Documenting and reporting information about our operations during the COVID-19 pandemic is critical to our internal organizational decision-making, future planning, external requests and requirements, and for seeking support from national, state and local entities. NMSU will collect data to document student and employee impacts due to transitions between phases, particularly focused on matters of equity and access. A decision log is maintained by the Rapid Response Team. Please send relevant data to Gena Barela at gbarela@nmsu.edu for filing.
We’ll be ready for you

Communication and transparency are top priorities as we continue to adapt to a changing environment. Additional guidance will be provided as it becomes available. All members of the NMSU community are encouraged to contact system leaders at covid19@nmsu.edu with questions and comments. Your input helps us to understand what you need to know.

NMSU embraces an agile mindset to navigate and respond to change. The ability of the NMSU community to navigate ongoing changes such as temporary moves to online instruction, meetings, and day-to-day business will be key to our resilient response, motivation, productivity and wellness. To support change facilitation efforts, NMSU now offers change management and leading through change workshops to support the NMSU community. The university also utilizes best practices and resources from professional organizations of which we are a member institution, such as the Network for Continuous Change and Innovation (NCCI) and Western Association of College and University Business Officers (WACUBO). For more information about change facilitation at NMSU, please contact Lauren Goldstein, organizational development specialist at poet@nmsu.edu.4

In addition, our commitment to support our community through change will continue through online town halls, supervisor guidance, and other activities as we can hold them. We must work together and learn from each other to provide a safe and outstanding experience for our students and assure, as best we are able, the safety of students, faculty, and staff.

1 Updated 06/23/20
2 Updated 06/30/20
3 Updated 07/07/20
4 Updated 07/14/20
5 Updated 07/21/20
6 Updated 07/28/20
7 Updated 08/04/20