

Update #9 CUNY COVID-19 Guidance on Academic Continuity

Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost | April 4, 2020

This document presents CUNY’s latest COVID-19 Academic Continuity Guidance. The information herein complements and supersedes information currently presented in [CUNY’s COVID-19 Portal](#) and will in due course be reflected on the portal as well. Important to note that additional details are channeled to appropriate staff on campuses via standing University-wide Councils and organizational structures. For convenience, the document is formatted as a running list of issues, with updates from previous reports and new entries marked as such for convenience. 🌟 = New entry not included in previous guidance. ↻ = Update from previous guidance. ⬤ = Past entry with no changes since previous guidance.

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Academic Calendar and Events

🌟 **Commencement Celebrations Postponed:** Per Chancellor Matos Rodríguez’s **April 3** message to the campus community, “with all public gatherings currently prohibited and no way to know how long this will continue to be the case, colleges simply cannot begin choosing dates, even if for later than usual, securing venues and taking all the logistical steps that go into planning a successful commencement. To be clear, this will have no impact on diplomas. At the completion of the spring semester, all degrees will be conferred as scheduled. It will also not impact the official summer start date for our full-time faculty. We look forward to a future date when we’ll be able to celebrate in person and believe me — that will be an occasion like no other. If any group of graduates deserves a chance to mark its achievements, it is the resilient Class of 2020. I sincerely regret the impact of these sad circumstances on our students, who have worked so hard, and overcome many obstacles to get to this point. I know this will also come as a disappointment to faculty and family members. I have spoken to all CUNY presidents and deans, and they are exploring other ways to mark this rite of passage on their campuses. While we know that nothing can replace the pure joy of a commencement ceremony, some schools are considering alternate celebrations that fit their campus community.”

🌟 **Summer 2020 — Distance Education:** After careful consideration and consultation, The City University of New York’s Summer 2020 course offerings will be exclusively conducted via distance education format. Any exceptions will require approval by a college’s president or dean and be subject to the social distancing provisions of the New York State on Pause Executive Order that may be in effect at the time. This decision is consistent with [NYSED Guidance](#) published on **April 2, 2020**, which waives the requirement that specific courses and programs be registered for delivery via distance education. We appreciate the feedback we received from the University Faculty Senate and other academic leaders on this. For staff, current guidance regarding remote work will remain in effect consistent with the New York State on PAUSE executive order.

🌟 **Fall 2020 — Guidance Forthcoming:** Guidance regarding Fall 2020 course offerings will be provided in due course, once consultation with academic leaders and faculty has occurred and guidance from NYSED and other accrediting bodies has been obtained. In the meantime, please know that NYSED has indicated that “offering programs in the distance education format (i.e., 50% or more of the requirements can be completed through study delivered by distance education) beyond the Summer 2020 term(s) will be subject to regular distance

education approval requirements, including the submission of program registration applications to NYSED. The need to extend this flexibility beyond the Summer 2020 term(s) will be determined depending upon the COVID-19 emergency time frame.”

🔴 **Impact of Recalibration Period and Instructional Recess on CUNY’s Academic Calendar:** To date, when we consider the losses and gains in instructional days due to CUNY’s Instructional Recess and Recalibration Period, the number of instructional days we need to make are as follows: Mondays (1), Tuesdays (1), Wednesdays (1), Thursdays (0), Friday’s (2), Saturdays (1), and Sundays (1). These days, in the absence of regulatory relief, can ultimately be made up using additional assignments to assist students in making up missed work. Such assignments might include interactive projects, supplemental instructional material, preparation of reports, or other assignments at the discretion of the department and the instructor. This is similar to what the University did to make up lost instruction time during Hurricane Sandy. For Sandy, campuses had to “make up” from 5 to 10 days, so we have plenty of wiggle room based on precedent before having consider extending the semester. As to the University’s previously scheduled Spring Recess, per the Chancellor’s previous communications, it will now run from Wednesday **April 8** through Friday **April 10**, encompassing the beginning of Passover and Good Friday. For faculty, staff and students whose religious observation extends into the week of **April 13**, as always you have the right to request a religious exemption to observe the holiday and we will offer maximum flexibility in addressing the requests. CUNY’s guidance for religious exemptions can be found [here](#) and we will remind faculty and staff about our guidance as we get closer to that date.

Summer 2020 and Fall 2020 Admissions

🔴 Admissions Services (Welcome Center/Recruitment/Communications)

University Admission Services continues to provide application support, recruitment and outreach services remotely during this critical time. Applicants and the broader community can contact us by [email or phone](#). We are currently working with Financial Aid and the Registrar on a central landing page to provide comprehensive university enrollment updates as they become available.

- **Applications Available:** Our admission applications for undergraduate freshmen/transfer, graduates, visiting students and continuing education learners remain open.
- **Commitment Deadline Extensions:** Over 300 hundred colleges and universities nationwide have extended their commitment deadline as a result of the crisis, including many CUNY colleges. The [National Association for College Admission Counseling \(NACAC\)](#) provides a helpful tool that captures the latest information by institution. Colleges can complete the form here: [College and University Admission COVID-19 Response](#). We are currently gathering any CUNY deadline information into one central landing page and will update as the information becomes available.
- **Virtual Tours and Recruitment:** Virtual tours are an important tool for applicants considering their college options given current campus restrictions on gatherings and visitors. While not all campuses have tours available virtually, many are using available video conferencing tools and other virtual messaging platforms to conduct information sessions for admitted students as a substitute for traditional in-person yield events.

- **Recruitment Communication:** Recruitment and application messages continue to go out to the CUNY applicant pool and broader educational community that supports them. You can view copies and timing of these messages on our Recruitment Communication Blog: <https://cunyadmissions.wordpress.com/>.
- **Admissions Operations (UAPC):** University Admissions Operations continue remotely with minor changes to the receipt and processing of mail. Application review is moving forward on schedule and we would like to provide some guidance on assisting applicants with file completion.

✦ **Submission of Supporting Documents:** With the launch of the CUNY Application we have seen an increase in the number of applicants who submit supporting documents electronically; through the CUNY Application or via secure e-delivery services. Some applicants continue to mail supporting documents to the University Application Processing Center and/or the CUNY Welcome Center, and we are prepared to continue to pick up and scan those documents into the admission system on a weekly basis. Postal mail continues to be a viable option for document submission and applicants should be encouraged to utilize it in the event documents are unable to be submitted electronically. Below is some guidance on specific credentials necessary to the completion of the application review process.

- **Official College/University Transcripts:** We continue to require official post-secondary records, whether those credentials are coming from US based institutions or International institutions. Though many colleges and universities are closing on-campus facilities, like us, they are moving to a distance workforce and their students are able to request transcripts via the web. Our applicants who attended US based institutions, will continue to request that official transcripts be emailed to admissions@cuny.edu or mailed to the University Application Processing Center. For our applicants who attended institutions abroad, and who indicate that they are unable to obtain their academic records because of the closure of the institution, we will consider copies of the original documents on a case-by-case basis. The copies of those credentials should be accompanied by a statement from the applicant that clearly indicates the reason for being unable to obtain the official credentials and an understanding that when the institution is able to do so, official post-secondary records will be requested and sent to CUNY. College administrators may consult the University Admissions Office via our campus support help desk (askCWC@cuny.edu) with any questions on the copies of the international credentials.
- **Official High School Transcripts (from US based institutions):** Applicants from US based institutions are required to submit official secondary school records. Schools/Guidance Counselors may continue to submit those via postal mail to the University Application Processing Center or they may submit electronically to transcripts@cuny.edu. The copies of those credentials should be accompanied by a statement from the applicant that clearly indicates the reason for being unable to obtain the official credentials and an understanding that when the institution is able to do so, official secondary school records will be requested and sent to CUNY. College administrators may consult the University Admissions Office via our campus support help desk (askCWC@cuny.edu) with any questions on the copies of the credentials.
- **Photocopies of High School Transcripts (non-US based institutions):** In line with our general business process, copies of secondary school credentials (transcripts, certificates, and national exam scores) from non-US based institutions will continue to be accepted. Those copies may be emailed to admissions@cuny.edu or mailed to the University Application Processing Center. The only exception

are those applicants who are providing proof of secondary school completion through the WAEC; where we typically require the scratch-card information to be submitted via email for score verification with the testing agency.

- **English Language Translations of Secondary/Post-Secondary Credentials:** In line with our general business process, copies of translations of academic credentials will continue to be accepted via email to admissions@cuny.edu or postal mail to the University Application Processing Center.
- **Standardized Test Scores:** We continue to request, receive, load and match standardized test scores to applicant's records electronically. This is the fastest, most accurate and efficient way to get the scores attached to the applicant's record. For applicants unable to submit required standardized test scores (SAT, ACT, TOEFL, IELTS, PTE) as a result of a cancelled test administration; waiver requests should be directed and decided on by the campus admissions director.

★ **Submission of Biographical/Demographic Application Updates:** The University Enrollment Office (Registrar, Admissions, Financial Aid) is working closely with CIS to provide a secure solution for submission of documents containing sensitive information that would normally be submitted in person.

- **Social Security Updates:** TBD (but should align with any University practice on this topic)
- **Name Changes:** TBD (but should align with any University practice on this topic)
- **Gender Changes:** TBD (but should align with any University practice on this topic)
- **Contact Information Updates:** An applicant may continue to update their mailing address and email address via the Student Center. Students confronting difficulties may contact admissions@cuny.edu for support in completing the update.

★ **Recommendation for Evaluating Applicants Missing Standardized Test Scores:** Given the limited availability for applicants to sit for standardized testing as a direct result of the COVID-19 crises, we strongly encourage college admission offices to consider applicants missing only standardized test scores on other available academic data. Centrally, we continue to request, receive, load and match available standardized test scores to applicant records electronically. Using a publicly accessible query (CU_AD_AUDIT_APPS_INCMP_CHKLIST), colleges can identify the exact list of applicants who are incomplete as a result of missing SAT/ACT scores. Using the output of the query, and other academic data points available on the Applicant File and CUNYfirst, colleges should review and decide on whether or not they are willing to admit an applicant without SAT/ACT scores presented. The college may choose to accept the applicant to the academic program initially requested or a more suitable academic program at the college. In practice, the college would mark the college-specific AUTST (SAT/ACT) checklist as waived and manually enter the ADMT row on the campus application in Maintain Applications. Colleges must do the two steps simultaneously to avoid receiving an inaccurate admissions decision recommendation from the University Admissions Office. If the college is unwilling to make an admission decision without the SAT/ACT scores, the AUTST checklist should remain initiated and the file left in Applicant status.

★ **Document Upload Tool:** CIS and OAA/EM staff are working together to deliver an integrated solution in CUNYfirst for students to upload Financial Aid, Immunization or any document that colleges may require of students. This functionality will allow students to login to their Student Center, select the type of document they want to upload and using FileNet document upload functionality, upload their documents. Administrative users at all campuses will be able to view these documents for their respective business area (FA Staff will be able view FA documents, Health Services will be able to see immunization documents etc.). Project is currently in development stage with testing tentatively scheduled for week of **April 6, 2020** and tentative go live date of **April 17, 2020**. Additional details include:

- Students will be able to access a newly created page in CUNYfirst to browse and upload documents from their desktop. The document will be appended with metadata picked up from CUNYfirst (student emplid, name, DOB).
- The documents can be in one of the following three categories: (1) Financial Aid, (2) Health Services, (3) Student Records.
- After selecting the link in PeopleSoft and being redirected to FileNet, the document will be loaded into the object store.
- Administrators will have the ability to access (single sign-on) and retrieve documents on FileNet.

Grading Policies and Deadlines

🔄 **CR/NC Grading Policy:** On March 30, the CUNY Board of Trustees approved the following “Special COVID-19 Flexible Grading Policy for the Spring 2020 Semester.” Please know that a detailed implementation plan and FAQs based on questions raised during the development of this policy will be published soon.

Special COVID-19 Flexible Grading Policy for the Spring 2020 Semester

As part of The City University of New York’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, during the Spring 2020 semester, all students shall have the option to convert any or all of the (A-F) letter grades they earn in their classes, to Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) grading.

1. During the Spring 2020 semester, all students shall have the option to convert any or all of the (A-F) letter grades they earn in their classes, to Credit/No Credit grading.
2. Students shall be able to make this decision up to 20 business days after the University’s final grade submission deadline. Once selected, the CR/NC option cannot be reversed.
3. If a student chooses to exercise this option, a passing letter grade (A, B, C, or D) will convert to ‘CR’ with credit for the class being awarded, while a failing grade (F) will convert to ‘NC’, with no credit awarded. Credit/No Credit grades will not impact the student’s GPA.
4. Courses taken for a letter grade will continue to be included in the semester and general GPA, while courses taken for a Credit/Non-credit grade will be excluded, just as is the case with such courses taken at a student’s home institution.

5. If a student exercises the option of Credit/No Credit, the Credit (CR) grade will not negatively impact the student's satisfactory progress toward degree completion.
6. Students with Credit/No Credit grades will be able to transfer those courses across colleges within CUNY, per current CUNY policy.
7. The Special COVID-19 Flexible Grading Policy shall apply to coursework completed on Permit and will not affect Board of Trustees Policy 1.14 – Policy on Coursework Completed on Permit.
8. Students placed on academic probation by their institution at the start of the Spring 2020 semester shall not be penalized with academic dismissal based upon their grades earned this semester.
9. The Special COVID-19 Flexible Grading Policy shall not affect the University standards of student retention and progress in accordance with Board of Trustees Policy 1.26.
10. Before choosing this grading option for one or more of their classes, students shall consult with their academic and financial aid advisors regarding potential impact to their financial aid, licensure requirements, and graduate school admissions.
11. The Special COVID-19 Flexible Grading Policy shall supersede and override all undergraduate and graduate program-level grading policies currently in effect at CUNY colleges and schools, including those related to required and elective courses within the major, minor, general education (Pathways), pre-requisite courses, honors courses, courses taken on permit and maximum number of credits that a student can earn with Credit/No Credit grades.
12. The grade glossary, attached to each transcript, will be updated to include a notation denoting that all Spring 2020 grades, including CR or NC, were earned during a major disruption to instruction as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
13. The Special COVID-19 Flexible Grading Policy shall apply to all CUNY colleges and schools, except the School of Law and the School of Medicine, which may develop their own Pass/Fail policies, subject to approval of the Board of Trustees, to conform to norms in legal and medical education.
14. The Special COVID-19 Flexible Grading Policy, which shall be effective **April 1, 2020**, applies to the Spring 2020 semester only and that the Chancellor, may, in his discretion, to meet public health emergency policies and practices, extend this policy to future semesters, if necessary and report such extension to the Board of Trustees immediately.
15. The Special COVID-19 Flexible Grading Policy shall be codified in the Manual of General Policy as Policy 1.4. and cannot be overwritten by any individual units of the University, including presidents, provosts, or college councils.

The policy will remain in effect for the Spring 2020 semester and will be reviewed by the Chancellor and extended as necessary to meet public health emergency policies and practices.

● **Student Retention and Progress:** Per University policy, each student will be expected to maintain a grade point average of at least 1.50 for the first twelve credits, attempted and at least a 1.75 grade point average for the first twenty-four credits, attempted. In each subsequent semester students will be expected to maintain at least a 2.00 grade point average. Students who fail to meet their college’s retention standards or the conditions of an academic or other probation for Spring 2020, are to be placed on continued probation and will not be subject to academic dismissal.

● **Course Withdrawal Period:** Last Day to Drop with a Grade of “W.” The current deadline date listed on the calendar is Wednesday, **April 1, 2020**. We will move that date to Thursday, **May 14, 2020** (for KCC/LAG/GCC – Spring Session 1: **June 4, 2020**; Spring Session 2: **August 1, 2020**). This is the published “Last Day of Classes,” and *before* final examination week and also prior to the “End of the Spring Term”.

● **Incomplete Grades:** Students who receive an INC grades in the Spring 2020 term would generally be required to submit outstanding work, “according to a deadline established by individual colleges of the University but no later than the last day of the following semester.” But the University will allow students to submit incomplete work to faculty for resolution of INC grades for courses taken in Spring 2020 through the Fall 2020 semester, and the new deadline for faculty to submit Incomplete to Grade forms to the Registrar’s Office for resolution will be Wednesday, **December 23, 2020** (for KCC/LAG/GCC – **March 1, 2021**). This date coincides with the “Final Grade Submission Deadline” for Fall 2020 courses. For Students who received an INC grade in the Fall 2019 semester, the University will allow students to submit incomplete work to faculty for resolution through end of Summer 2020 semester. The new deadline for faculty to submit Incomplete to Grade forms to the Registrar’s Office for resolution will be **August 30, 2020**.

Clinical Placements

★ **Health Professions– Credit Considerations for Clinical and Field Experiences During the COVID-19 Crisis:** Below is guidance for credit consideration from the Office of Academic Affairs on Credit for HHS Student Experiences During the COVID-19 Crisis to consider **portfolio reviews** for clinical/field experiences completed outside of CUNY-approved placements. Final guidance is still pending on insurance and liability protections for students who choose to accept paid or volunteer roles during the crisis. This guidance was shared with HHS deans and chairs (**April 3, 2020**) in response to Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.10 - Mar 23 authorizing healthcare professions students to receive educational credit for volunteering in facilities without the need for clinical affiliation agreements, as well as guidance from national licensing boards and accrediting bodies endorsing academic/practice partnerships for students to work in paid roles at healthcare facilities and receive academic credit toward clinical requirements to address critical workforce demands during the COVID-19 crisis.

Credit Consideration: CUNY encourages programs to consider educational credit for students who choose to seek clinical and field experiences during the crisis, based on guidance from the respective NYS licensing boards and professional accrediting bodies, and in alignment with the direction provided by NYSED.

Programs may conduct a portfolio review for clinical/field experiences completed outside of program-approved placements during the COVID-19 crisis for students who feel they have gained knowledge and experience equivalent to either an existing course or a new course. While this may be an opportunity for some students to apply their experience during the crisis toward an educational certificate or degree, it is the responsibility of the student to describe, reflect, and synthesize their learning experiences carefully for consideration of credit. The

college/program has the discretion to accept and apply these experiences to existing or new electives or course requirements, pending internal governance approval processes.

If courses need to be created or changed in order to assign credit to these portfolio experiences, colleges should consider efficient ways of obtaining any applicable governance approvals. Following local approvals, the existing Academic University Report (AUR) mechanism may be utilized to have such courses approved so that they may be added to degree plans. The approval of such new or modified courses will be done by the Chancellor's Designees normally approving the AUR, on a special expedited schedule outside of the usual timeframe for AUR submissions. The Office of Academic Affairs stands ready to assist colleges with considering ways in which courses may be developed or adapted to apply experience credits for program and degree requirements.

🔄Clinical Placements — HHS Programs: FAQs currently being prepared by the Office of Academic Affairs to inform the implementation phase of the new Flexible Grading Policy which will include information for students earning a letter grade or choosing a CR/NC option as it pertains to admission to or progression in health professions programs. In response to ongoing requests from healthcare facilities to address critical workforce demands, we are exploring liability and academic credit considerations for students interested in volunteer or paid positions at healthcare facilities during the crisis. Information on these issues will forthcoming, as available. In the meantime, the University continues to identify and facilitate access to virtual resources to support alternative training models for our health and human service programs. Lastly, the University hosted the first Annual *CUNY NYSIM Simulation Summit*, on **Friday, April 3**. This virtual event included 10 national simulation experts, as well as CUNY faculty and staff, who shared their expertise and recommended online resources for designing effective clinical simulation and reflective learning experiences. Attendance included 125 CUNY participants. Please contact [Patricia Simino Boyce](#) for additional information.

🔄Clinical Placements — Education Programs: As of Monday, March 16, education students who were participating in clinical placements for fieldwork or student teaching required by their academic program, and their faculty supervisors, were told not report to school/field sites until further notice. Virtual fieldwork, facilitated by faculty, is recommended and supported. In light of the DOE school closure, CUNY will support clinical fieldwork placements that support schools' use of remote learning, under the following conditions: 1. The principal invites/approves the candidate's continued participation; 2. cooperating teachers can provide adequate supervision to students in the context of remote learning; 3. faculty are willing and able to support student placements, as required; and 4. students are aware of risks and willing to take the necessary precautions, as per available guidance, to participate in the school-based training during the crisis. This policy, and its four conditions, pertains to social workers, therapists, counselors and other students with required school-based placements. In cases where CUNY students are not able to access a web-based remote learning environment because of PII/FERPA concerns, candidates may be able to support their cooperating teachers through the development of instructional materials, assessments, etc. [On March 30, NY State Education Department issued specific guidance for Educator Preparation Programs pertaining to clinical experiences and certification exams \(including the edTPA\).](#)

Education Deans and Chairs are receiving communication and resources from University Dean for Education Ashleigh Thompson via email and postings on <http://www.cuny.edu/teachered>. Please contact [Ashleigh Thompson](#) with any questions and updates. The health and safety of our students and faculty remain a top priority, therefore considerations for clinical experiences and placement may be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Financial Aid and Other Types of Support

★ **Pandemic Unemployment Insurance:** City and State officials have released information on additional unemployment resources as a result of the CARE Act that was passed on 3/27/20. Specifically, there are new and additional unemployment benefits called Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) that is available to those who are not typically eligible for unemployment insurance including self-employed/1099 workers, part time workers, and those who were not working for an extended period of time. Impacted students can apply by phone or online. We encourage all campuses to share this information with all students broadly via digital, faculty, student affairs and general college communications. More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#). There is also a hotline NYC WELL staffed 24/7 with counselors, described as follows: “An infectious illness outbreak such as this one can be stressful to you, your loved ones, and your friends. It is natural to feel overwhelmed, sad, anxious, and afraid, or to experience other symptoms of distress, such as trouble sleeping. To reduce your stress and to manage the situation more resiliently, try to remain positive, remind yourself of your strengths, connect with friends and loved ones and use healthy coping skills. NYC Well's website offers a number of well-being and emotional support applications (apps) that can help you cope. If your symptoms of stress become overwhelming, reach out for support and help. You can contact [NYC Well](#), a confidential 24/7 helpline, staffed by trained counselors. They can provide brief counseling and referrals to care in over 200 languages.”

- Call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355)
- Text "WELL" to 65173
- Chat at nyc.gov/nycwell

★ **Financial Aid for Veterans:** Student Veterans will continue to receive their GI Bill benefits under [S. 3503](#), which President signed into law March 21. The law enables VA to continue providing the same level of education benefits to students having to take courses online due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The law gives VA temporary authority to continue GI Bill payments uninterrupted in the event of national emergencies. This allows for continued payment of benefits even if the program has changed from resident training to online training. Thanks to the law, GI Bill students will continue receiving the same monthly housing allowance (MHA) payments they received for resident training until **December 21**, or until the school resumes in-person classes. Students receiving GI Bill benefits are not required to take any action. Benefits will continue automatically. VA will work closely with schools to ensure accurately certified enrollments and timely processing. Updates will be provided to students via direct email campaigns and social media regarding VA’s effort to implement these new changes. For more information, please contact Lisa Beatha, CUNY Director for Veterans Affairs, at lisa.beatha@cuny.edu.

↻ **New York State Financial Aid:** HESC has allowed for COVID-19 impacted students who are adversely affected by the crisis to be held faultless for the term and has created a portal with additional information, which can be accessed here: [COVID-19 Updates & FAQs for Students, Parents, Borrowers, and Lenders](#). As always, for more information, please contact Elaine Pimentel, Univ. Exec. Director of Financial Aid: elaine.pimentel@cuny.edu.

● **Summary of Financial Aid Considerations in \$2 Trillion Congressional Relief Package:** A \$2 trillion COVID-19 Relief bill passed recently, of which, \$14 billion was allocated to Education. This must now be put into action by USED, and it should include guidance on how institutions will indicate students affected by this emergency, and direction on implementation. The relief includes:

- Emergency aid based on enrollment of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) recipients, for both the students in the form of emergency grant and for the institution to assist with expenses incurred due to COVID-19;
- More flexibility in the managing of the FWS and the SEOG programs; including allowing "emergency SEOG" to be awarded up to the maximum Pell award amount, and permitting FWS to continue to get paid during the emergency.
- If able to administer by USED, loans and Pell grant will not count as having being used for students unable to complete the term;
- Instituting a waiver process where the amount of grant or loan associated with each withdrawn student would not have to be returned by the school or the student;
- Removes the "attempted" credits requirement of the Satisfactory Academic Progress calculations;
- Extends Leave of Absences process to standard colleges permitting students to return and complete courses at a later time;
- For the duration of the declared emergency, it will allow Title IV-participating foreign institutions the ability to offer distance education;
- Suspends interest and payments until 9/30/20 of all Direct Loans.

● **General Issues:** The University has communicated with campus financial aid directors regarding [USDE Guidance for interruptions of study related to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) and HESC guidance related to the effect short-term and long-term school closures would have on student financial aid regulations. The expectation is that beginning March 19, students will successfully transition to distance education, and the guidance provided below is for the exception, not all students. To date, HESC has indicated that it will work with colleges to ensure “continued eligibility for awards under all circumstances related to the Coronavirus.” The USDE guidance addresses the following five scenarios among other important matters, such as Satisfactory Academic Progress, Federal Work-Study payments in the event of a closure, etc.:

- A student was enrolled or was supposed to begin a travel-abroad experience and either the student has been called back to the U.S. or was never able to begin the travel abroad experience;
- A student was enrolled in a program and met the requirements for full-time enrollment; however, due to the COVID-19, one or more classes – such as an internship, a clinical rotation, student teaching or fieldwork – have been cancelled and now the student has fallen below the 12-credit hour minimum and is no longer considered to be a full-time student;
- A student is quarantined and misses class, or a student is incapacitated due to COVID-19 illness;
- A campus temporarily stops offering ground-based classes in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- A foreign school that serves U.S. students who participate in title IV programs temporarily suspends operations due to COVID-19.

● **Federal Financial Aid:** Key topics discussed in most recent guidance: 1) Supplementing the Professional Judgement form for COVID-19-related reasons; 2) Federal Work-Study for students who are unable to continue working due to closure or inability directly due to the crisis; 3) If a student is appealing SAP on a COVID-19-related circumstance. Additional guidance for the treatment of Federal Aid can be found [here](#). Finally, a Central communication was sent recently to all 2019-20 FWS students, whom accepted their award and were enrolled, providing guidance on job locations, working remotely, closures, and the location of the FA COVID-19 Form. FA Offices were provided with a copy of the template communication and a list of the students communicated to.

★ **USDOE Guidance on Federal Student Loans:** “The US DOE directed all federal student loan servicers to grant an administrative forbearance to any borrower with a federally held loan who requests one. The forbearance will be in effect for a period of at least 60 days, beginning on **March 13, 2020**. To request this forbearance, borrowers should contact their loan servicer online or by phone. Also, an automatic suspension of payments was authorized for any borrower more than 31 days delinquent as of **March 13, 2020**, or who becomes more than 31 days delinquent. To request the forbearance or more details on the suspension of payments, borrowers should contact their loan servicer online or by phone. ”

Student Payment Modifications

★ **Payment Plan (Nelnet):** The final Spring 2020 scheduled April payment for the 15-week schools is postponed from **April 5th** to **May 5th**. The scheduled April payment for the 12/6 schools is also being postponed, and will be split between **May 1st** and **June 1st**. Students who did not make their **March 2020** payment will have that missed payment added to the remaining scheduled payments in their respective plans. For the Spring 2020 semester, Nelnet will not make re-attempts on student payments. Students who require additional time to make the final scheduled payment may be able to receive an additional extension. The 15-week schools’ Plan participants may request a hardship extension to **June 5th**, and the 12/6 schools’ Plan participants may request a hardship extension to **June 26th**. Students must contact Nelnet to request this additional extension. A communication from Nelnet will be sent to effected students shortly.

★ **Registration and Cancellation:** Colleges will have the flexibility over cancellations and registration for the Summer 2020 and Fall 2020 semesters. This flexibility includes if and when students are cancelled for non-payment of current semester charges, and the profile of the students that may be cancelled. Colleges will also have flexibility in determining if they will allow students with an outstanding Spring 2020 unpaid balance to register for Summer and Fall 2020 classes, and the criteria for allowing students to register with outstanding balances.

★ **Collections:** Colleges are asked to: 1) Temporarily postpone sending notices to students who have an outstanding Spring 2020 balance; 2) Temporarily postpone assigning unpaid student balances from Spring 2020 semesters to the University’s collection agencies. Additionally, please be aware that two resolutions regarding student fees were passed by the University’s Board of Trustees yesterday (March 30, 2020), as following:

★ **Student Activity Fees:** The resolution related to the University waiving (i) 25% of the Spring 2020 student activity fee for students enrolled in those University schools and colleges on a 15-week calendar; and (ii) 50% of the student activity fee for students enrolled in those University schools and colleges on 12/6 week calendars. The portion of the fee which supports the activities of the University Student Senate will not be waived (\$1.45 per student). The University Office of Budget and Finance will be performing the necessary activities in CUNYfirst to process these waivers, and will be in touch with the campuses prior to execution. In addition, the Board’s action resolved that the individual colleges will ensure that any student receiving compensation from their local student government will continue to receive full payment for the remainder of the semester.

★ **Dormitory Fees:** The Board resolution authorized the University to credit dormitory fees on a prorated basis from the move-out date to continuing students, and would apply these credits to either the Summer 2020 or Fall 2020 semester. The resolution also authorized the University to refund dorm fees, on a prorated basis from

the move out date, for students that are expected to graduate in Spring 2020. The University Office of Budget and Finance will be sending out a template to those colleges with dorms in order capture information about the students who resided in the dorms for the Spring 2020 semester. These credits and refunds will need to be calculated and processed in partnership between the central office and the colleges.

Conversion to Distance Learning

🔄 Middle States Council on Higher Education: Colleges should have submitted a letter to MSCHE by **April 1, 2020** to communicate changes made in the areas of a) Distance Education; b) Temporary Agreements with Other Institutions; c) Academic Calendar; and d) Temporary Sites for Instruction. Substantive Change requirements have been temporarily waived in these areas to allow institutions to act first. MSCHE expects the college president or Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) to submit the letter and encourages questions via their MSCHE VP liaison.

The Annual Institutional Update (AIU) has been postponed until further notice. For IPEDS institutions, most of the information is pre-populated, so MSCHE staff intend to begin the AIU process on their end; however, colleges will not see that transfer of data or have access to it until the AIU opens at some point in the future. Also, this postponement includes any required *Recommendation Responses* that institutions would have submitted with the AIU. MSCHE will continue to update institutions about the timing of this year's AIU through email to key contacts as well as by posting information at www.msche.org/covid-19. Please contact [Karen Kapp](#) for additional information.

🔴 All In-Person Courses Suspended: Effective **Monday, March 23**, all in-person courses were suspended for the duration of the State's "Pause". This applies to all undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education courses that have not yet converted to distance-learning modes. Faculty engaged in these courses are asked to continue to explore, in conversation with their students, ways in which the in-person courses can be converted to distance learning. If the course's learning outcomes cannot ultimately be achieved via distance learning, the courses could resume once the "pause" is lifted, at which time faculty and students would work to make up for lost time. Given the circumstances, students could also opt to withdraw from the course or receive a grade of incomplete if appropriate. For in-progress continuing education courses, colleges will communicate options available to students who decide to drop or cannot continue with coursework. The University is currently developing a refund/credit policy for these types of situations related to COVID-19.

🔴 Distance Learning: As we have indicated before, the objective of an academic continuity plan is to help safeguard the academic term from the standpoint of our student's academic progress and their financial aid as we work to address the challenges posed by COVID-19. As far as distance learning is concerned, the U.S. Department of Education has indicated that at a minimum, our faculty must be able to "communicate to students through one of several types of technology – including email – ... and [that] instructors must initiate substantive communication with students, either individually or collectively, on a regular basis." As an example of this, the USDE offers that "an instructor could use email to provide instructional materials to students enrolled in his or her class, use chat features to communicate with students, set up conference calls to facilitate group conversations, engage in email exchanges or require students to submit work electronically that the instructor will evaluate." All of these minimal levels of interaction and more are supported by the CUNY licensed software solutions itemized in previous guidance and identified in our www.cuny.edu/coronavirus portal.

Note: CUNY has asked faculty and staff to be prepared to accommodate affected students to the greatest reasonable extent. This includes, among other things: facilitating enrollment after the deadline, fast-tracking academic advising, permitting make-up exams and extending due dates of final assignments and projects. In this same spirit and understanding the minimum USDE requirements to meeting learning outcomes, **we urge faculty members to privilege asynchronous over synchronous distance learning approaches.**

Indeed, the most important thing is for faculty to confer with their students to get a sense of what the most effective and EQUITABLE way to move forward with distance learning should be, considering both faculty and student readiness, accessibility to devices and reliable internet access, and phone capabilities. Ultimately, faculty and colleges should ask themselves how they can create optimal conditions for students to meet their learning outcomes. Because the reality is that our faculty and students lives and daily schedules will surely be disrupted in the days to come — especially now that the NYC Department of Education has itself indicated a move to distance learning.

🔴 **Conversion of Courses:** Per guidance issued on **March 11**, college presidents and deans will be required to submit an implementation plan to the Office of Academic Affairs. We expect to provide campuses with the necessary reporting templates once the elements of the plan are finalized and will work to minimize the amount of information that is required to the minimum needed to meet the expectations of our regulatory agencies and accrediting bodies. As of now, our plan is to cull data from CUNYFirst for retooling information (in person coding to Hybrid or Fully Online) and expect campuses to provide high level overall plans for transition and exceptions before the end of **April 2020**. But as we said before, it will be important that campuses institute an orderly process that will allow them to substantiate, on a course by course level how courses were converted to distance learning.

Furthermore, Colleges should certify providing guidance to faculty regarding relevant policies associated with IT platforms, safeguarding student data, and accessibility standards. Per guidance provided by the USDE, for an institution to meet the requirements for distance education. Also, it will also be important for colleges to identify courses that cannot be effectively transitioned to distance education mode and present a plan for maintaining instruction during the Spring semester. In addition to providing a list of these exceptions, colleges should explain how instruction in these programs and courses will be altered, if at all, in the current context.

Finally, Colleges will need to certify how they plan to accommodate instructional time lost during the instructional recess for pedagogical retooling and describe the steps that would be taken with regard to the academic calendar and any anticipated impact on future academic terms. (Note that we expect most courses to be able to make up the instructional time without changes to the academic calendar.)

Distance Learning Platforms, Tools & Resources

🌟 **Library e-Resources, Book Renewals and Services:** Office of Library Services' [OER, Zero-cost, and Copyright Fair Use](#) guide supports CUNY instructors moving coursework online, featuring Fair Use guidelines for the COVID-19 emergency and tips for permanent, re-usable, and password-protected links to e-resources. The [New York Public Library](#) provides all New Yorkers with an array of literary and archival e-resources available with a valid NYPL barcode. CUNY libraries continue intensive preparation to migrate the library services platform, including the catalog, e-resources, and acquisitions functions, to an up-to-date web-based platform during summer 2020. CUNY-wide library book renewal limits are raised and automatic renewals are in effect. Overdue

and recall fines were eliminated for items not already long overdue. Hold requests on all material were cancelled, with notifications sent to requesters. For more information contact [Polly Thistlethwaite](#).

✦ **Making Online Content Accessible:** CUNY offers a variety of University-wide guides and tutorials to faculty members to help make their online content accessible to students with disabilities. There is an Accessibility link at the bottom of every page of www.cuny.edu containing a tab for Faculty, including a section on Accessibility in the Classroom and Online Courses. This section links to [Reasonable Accommodations: A Faculty Guide to Teaching Students with Disabilities](#), prepared by CUNY's Council on Student Disability Issues. It also contains guides on making content accessible, including [Creating PDF & Microsoft Office Documents](#), [Creating Emails](#) and [Captioning Videos](#). In Blackboard, there is also an "Accessibility Training" tab, with a self-paced, online course about making online courses and course materials accessible. The course was created by CUNY faculty for CUNY faculty. It includes tutorials focusing accessibility features in Blackboard, Microsoft Office documents, PDF documents, multimedia content, and materials from publishers. To get started, you can watch a [video created by CIS](#) for instructions on how to find it in Blackboard. The "Accessibility Training" tab in Blackboard also includes Accessibility Training videos, which are recordings of a prior live training on making your website and documents compliant with accessibility guidelines.

✦ **CUNY Assistive Technology Services:** As we all adjust to instruction in a distance learning environment, the CUNY Assistive Technology Services (CATS) and Media Accessibility Project (MAP) are here to continue to support CUNY students with disabilities. The [CATS website](#) features updates on assistive technology resources, including how-to guides, videos, accessibility resources, and other important information with easy and simple [installation instructions](#) for CUNY students. As a friendly reminder, the following software is available to students for free at-home use, CATS Assistive Technology Lab Package:

- **Kurzweil 3000 and WYNN** are reading and writing software programs used primarily by students with learning disabilities.
- **ZoomText Magnifier/Reader** is a magnification and reading program tailored for low-vision users.
- **JAWS** is a screen reading software program that enables blind or visually impaired users to read the text that is displayed on the computer screen using a speech synthesizer or refreshable braille display.
- **Fusion** is a combination of JAWS screen reader and ZoomText Magnifier/Reader primarily used by low vision and blind students.
- **OpenBook** is a scanning and reading software program that converts printed documents into accessible digital text.

For training videos on accessibility, please visit [YouTube channel \(CATSCUNY\)](#). More information on assistive technology and accessibility training videos can be found on our [CATS website](#). For additional information, call 718-281-5014 or contact shmahabir@qcc.cuny.edu.

✦ **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:** To support the ongoing need to prevent plagiarism and ensure academic integrity of our students; work product, the University licenses Turnitin under an enterprise contract. This solution is available as a Blackboard Building Block and our colleges, through their Blackboard Administrators, have developed extensive documentation and user guides for this invaluable tool.

🔄 **Distribution of Tablets and Laptops:** Per previous communications, CUNY purchased 30,000 new laptops and tablets for students who need one to fully participate in distance learning. If you are a student in need of a

device, please request one through your school by referring to the links provided [here](#). Important to note that after prioritizing degree-seeking students, colleges can allocate devices to students in pre-matriculation programs, Continuing Ed Programs, and faculty who may need them.

🔄 Testing Options and efforts to Secure Proctoring of Distance Learning Exams: CIS and Respondus have developed a path forward to implement both the Monitor and Lockdown products. As previously reported these products work well on the iOS and window platform but do not operate on the Chromebook/Android operating system. While CIS had hoped to develop a work around using VDI technology, Respondus informed them that this was not possible. Respondus Lockdown will work on Chromebooks if it is used in a “kiosk” mode but the Monitor product does not function in this mode on Chromebooks. In short, there are no easy answers or single approach that works for all. While CIS looks for other solutions, they are moving forward with implementing Respondus and are now working on finalizing a timeline for implementation and training. At this time, Respondus believes the implementation and training may be achievable within 4 weeks. CIS also held meetings with two other vendor products, [Proctorio](#) and [Honorlock](#). Both of these solutions work on the Chromebook platform but not on iOS and they are significantly more expensive than Respondus on a per student basis (nearly 15x higher). CIS will continue to explore other solutions and try to bring alternate solutions to our Academic Community.

🔴 Using Blackboard and Blackboard Collaborate on Chromebooks: While several Blackboard Administrators and faculty have expressed concerns that Blackboard Collaborate would not work on the Chromebooks that CUNY has attained for designated students, staff and faculty, the fact is that CUNY CIS has received official assurances from Blackboard, Inc. that Blackboard Collaborate is indeed compatible with Chromebooks. CIS staff have also tested Collaborate on the Chromebook from both the instructor and student perspective and found that it works smoothly. We also validated operations such as using the whiteboard, polling, uploading PowerPoint and breakout rooms. Additionally, Blackboard Learn [student](#) and [instructor](#) Chromebook browser tests indicate overall compatibility with the exception that the pop-up blocker should be disabled. CIS is informing the Blackboard Administrators and the Service Desks of the compatibility and test results, as well as sharing with them instructions they developed for getting on Blackboard Collaborate from a Chromebook. These instructions will also be posted on the Blackboard support page (www.cuny.edu/blackboard) and on a support site for those receiving Chromebooks and iPads (www.cuny.edu/loaners).

🔴 Expansion of EAB Navigate to Graduate Students at the Senior Colleges: CUNY OAA is working in conjunction with EAB and CUNY Finance and Procurement to accelerate the addition of graduate students to the EAB Navigate implementation. The anticipated final approval of the contract expansion is at the May Board of Trustees meeting; in recognition of the importance of the tool to the CUNY colleges during the current crisis, EAB has agreed to provide this service in advance of the contract amendment. Queens College requested this acceleration and has pointed out several benefits of this added functionality. It will:

- Expedite finding contact information for any graduate students reporting COVID-19 exposure
- Facilitate sending communications to graduate students
- Allow us to track COVID-19 related issues (such as need laptop, need Wi-Fi, need tutoring, need space to work, need special financial or academic advice)
- Allow graduate students to stay connected to their graduate advisors, by being able to book appointments with them virtually.

This functionality will provide a vital tool to all of the OAA, CIS, and EAB will immediately begin work on the implementation of this functionality. Associate University Provost for Planning Bob Maruca will update the EAB Navigate program sponsors and owners on implementation progress. He can be contacted at Robert.Maruca@cuny.edu should you have any questions. We are grateful to EAB for this demonstration of partnership and support.

● **New Curricular Resources for Faculty:** In addition to the open educational resources indexed on the [Office of Library Services website](#) and the previously announced free access to commercial e-books offered by Barnes and Noble and Akademos (see below), some companies have offered free resources to colleges and universities affected by the COVID-19 virus, including:

1. Lumen Learning is making its courseware, [Waymaker](#) and [OHM](#), available at no cost for courses currently in session. Lumen also provides free services to support the transition. Details [here](#).
2. Pearson is similarly offering digital resources at no charge. Details [here](#).

For faculty members seeking digital alternatives or supplements to their current course materials, these materials may be an appropriate fit. Please note that CUNY is not endorsing or requiring the use of such services. Nevertheless, CUNY is appreciative of their support in making such services available to our students and faculty. *For more information, contact: Bob Maruca, robert.maruca@cuny.edu*

● **Additional Blackboard Help Desk Support:** CUNY has contracted with Blackboard to provide this telephone support as an additional service to our students and faculty to ensure coverage when the campus help desks are closed and Blackboard administrator support to students and faculty is unavailable. After-hours Blackboard support is to assist students and faculty with using Blackboard only; all performance, technical and access issues will remain the responsibility of campus helpdesk and Blackboard administrators during their regular support hours. Starting tonight, students and faculty with a pressing Blackboard question can call Blackboard for assistance. This after-hours Blackboard support will be available by telephone: weeknights, between 8:00pm and 8:00 the next morning; weekends, all day and night on Saturdays and Sunday.

● **Cloud Resources:** As a reminder, most CUNY applications and cloud resources, such as Blackboard, CUNYFirst, Microsoft Office 365 (including OneDrive), and Dropbox can be found online on [CUNY's Technology Resources pages](#) and accessed through web browsers. Also, please know that Blackboard course shells are automatically created for every CUNY course based on CUNYFirst data.

● **Online FAQs and Training:** CIS Training offers a variety of training resources for CUNY-wide cloud applications that support remote collaboration, such as [Dropbox](#) and [Microsoft Office 365](#). Webinars on these applications have been added as a result of the increased demand – [registration for the webinars](#) is available to all faculty and staff. Additionally, faculty and staff can view CUNY-specific video tutorials for Office 365 Teams, such as creating teams, sharing files, and posting announcements, on the [CIS Training Stream channel](#). CIS Training is available for training questions and requests at CISTraining@cuny.edu. On Monday, we will also be launching a new [IT Training site](#) that consolidates links to all sites with training guides, videos, etc., so that users can more easily find the training they need to work and teach remotely. Again, we hope that the CUNY community will appreciate having one resource to find desired training and guidance. This site will also be accessible from the new [IT Remote Resources](#) site.

● **Open Educational Resources & Free Access to Commercial Books:** Building on the Open Educational Resources initiative and also including CUNY library resources, the [Office of Library Services website](#) provides an index to digital resources that faculty may use in online/distance courses at zero cost to their students. Check the [Continuity of Library Services page](#) under the heading “Support for Online Instruction.” This site will be regularly updated. If you are aware of additional resources that should be added or if you have other questions or requests, please contact Ann Fiddler, Open Education Librarian, ann.fiddler@cuny.edu. Akademos and Barnes & Noble have partnered with the digital platform VitalSource to offer free access to over 50,000 eBooks to its current customers to facilitate their move to online learning. CUNY students at participating colleges can now access these materials by creating a VitalSource account at bookshelf.vitalsource.com using their [cuny.edu](#) email addresses. Free access will last through the end of the Spring semester or [until May 25](#), whichever comes first. More information is available at [VitalSource Helps](#) and [the VitalSource help page](#)

● **Blackboard & Collaborate:** To accommodate greater use of Blackboard for distance learning, CIS asked Blackboard to double the default quota for all Spring 2020 courses (from 750 MB to 1.5 GB). In addition, the Blackboard Collaborate tool, which CUNY licenses will also be able to support 300,000 students. Collaborate is Blackboard’s all-in-one video conference platform that works through computer, tablet, or mobile device. As a fully interactive web conferencing environment and asynchronous voice authoring solution, Collaborate enables faculty to establish web conferences and connect with one student or an entire class, up to 500 participants per Collaborate session.

● **Cisco WebEx Access:** WebEx is now available for all faculty and staff across the University under a 90-day license. They can initiate calls with students now, and student-initiated calls are being enabled. It is also integrated WebEx within Blackboard for setting up a collaboration workspace, online meetings and online office hours for courses. See the [ConnectCUNY WebEx Quick Start Guide](#) for instructions on accessing and information on using WebEx Meetings and WebEx Teams.

● **Microsoft Teams:** Faculty can now easily add students to Microsoft Teams meetings. The CUNYfirst Class Roster now contains students’ CUNY login usernames that can be downloaded and inserted into Teams Meeting invitations. [Accessing the Student Roster for Dropbox/Microsoft Office 365](#), available on the [Microsoft Office 365 for Education Training Resources](#) page, provides step-by-step instructions.

● **Cloud-Based Adobe Licenses for Students:** CIS is working now with Adobe to enable student access through the CUNY Login page using their [@login.cuny.edu](#) credentials. Faculty already have home use of these tools under our current CUNY licensing agreement. The services in question are described below.

- Adobe is making [temporary at-home access to Creative Cloud](#) available [until May 31, 2020](#) for universities who currently have only lab access for students, at no additional cost.
- Adobe provides a [student asset migration portal](#) that enables graduating students to transfer the assets associated with their assigned school account to a personal account.
- Adobe will be sharing a curated set of resources soon on the [Adobe Education Exchange](#) website to help faculty with their transition to online instruction.

Shared Governance and Contractual Obligations

● **Tenure clock:** The University recognizes that the transition to distance learning in the Spring 2020 semester as a result of COVID-19 may cause interruption and delay in faculty research and scholarship. This is particularly critical for faculty advancing toward tenure. Accordingly, the University will permit faculty whose candidacies for tenure are coming up in the fall 2020 semester to receive a one-year extension, if they so desire. Such faculty must request a tenure clock extension by emailing the request to their college Provost by **May 1, 2020**. Going forward, faculty on the tenure track who subsequently want to request a tenure clock extension based on the circumstances of Spring 2020 must so apply by **February 1** in the year immediately preceding their tenure review. Faculty wanting to apply for a tenure clock extension should follow the procedures normally followed at their college for requesting these extensions to tenure review; their request will be subject to fact-specific review, in accordance with past University practice.

● **Appointment/Non-Reappointment Notices:** During this period of telecommuting, any notices required to be provided to faculty and staff, including those pursuant to Article 10 of the PSC-CUNY collective bargaining agreement regarding notification of appointment/non-reappointment for faculty and staff and Article 13 regarding HEOs, should be sent, at a minimum, to an employee's CUNY email address. If there is no CUNY email address on file, whatever email address is on file should be used. If possible, especially in cases of non-reappointment, we suggest that multiple methods of communication be used. These may include CUNY email address, personal email address, and text to cell phone number. It is important to use our best efforts to get notification to faculty and staff. We understand that this is an extra burden, but the number of non-reappointments pales in comparison to the number of reappointments, and the colleges must demonstrate strong best efforts to ensure that notice of non-reappointment was effectuated.

● **P&B Meetings and Remote Voting:** Earlier in the week, the University had a conference call with the college Legal and Labor Designees on this issue. Several of the colleges reported that they had tested/were testing systems to be able to hold remote P&B voting. Colleges that were still trying to figure out how to proceed were advised to reach out directly to their colleagues, including those at Lehman College, City College and Baruch College who were among the schools that had worked out a process for these important meetings.

● **Public Meetings:** Per previous guidance, Article 7 of the Public Officers Law, to the extent necessary, permits any public body to meet and take such actions authorized by the law without permitting in public in-person access to meetings and authorizes such meetings to be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the ability to view or listen to such proceedings and that such meetings are recorded and later transcribed.

● **Distance Learning and Contractual Obligations:** The following guidance is in response to questions pertaining to faculty office hours, classroom observations, annual evaluations, student evaluations, adjunct overload waivers, and the reappointment, tenure, and promotion process. This guidance is based on consultation with several provosts and in discussion with the Professional Staff Congress at a recent labor management meeting with the Chancellor and his executive team.

1. Both full-time faculty and adjuncts who are responsible for, and paid for, office hours will hold office hours through distance technology and will notify their students and their department chair regarding how they plan to hold the hours. These notifications were due on or before **Friday, March 27**.
2. Classroom teaching observations that have not yet been conducted during the Spring 2020 semester will only be conducted if requested by the employee to be evaluated. The department may use the new protocol for observations in online settings (Article 18.2(b)3), where the course was changed to a distance modality mid-semester, provided the employee is made aware and has the option to proceed with the observation. Teaching observations for those who have been teaching online since the start of the semester, and who were otherwise contemplated to be observed pursuant to the new provision in Article 18.2(b)3 for online observations, will have their observations conducted.
3. Annual evaluations which include the conference and confirming memorandum will have the conference conducted through distance technology, which may include telephone and/or videoconferencing.
4. Student evaluations are discussed in the BOT Statement on Academic Personnel Practice. The Statement on Academic Personnel Practice states that "Personnel committees should consider student evaluations as a factor in assessing teaching effectiveness" But it does not specify how often these evaluations must be done. Therefore, college presidents and deans — after careful consideration and consultation — can determine whether or not their colleges will do student evaluations this semester. But if they decide to do student evaluations, given the extraordinary nature of this semester, faculty should be given the opportunity to decide whether or not the evaluations should be considered as part of future personnel actions. Please note that these decisions must be college-wide and apply to all faculty.
5. In addition to the five adjunct overload waivers routinely allotted to each college, for the duration of the semester, each college is being allotted an additional three adjunct overload waivers. If your college does not need these additional waivers, or is not using all of the five waivers, please email Pam Silverblatt pamela.silverblatt@cuny.edu and let her know so that those waivers can be redirected to a college that needs them. Please call SVC Silverblatt or EVC Cruz if your situation requires further discussion.
6. Decisions on tenure, promotion, reclassification and discretionary assignment salary differentials that are currently in process shall be completed.
7. Faculty and staff shall be permitted to retrieve personal belongings and materials needed to work remotely. Some colleges may allow staff, faculty and students on campus to collect any personal or work-related materials they need via an appointment process. Faculty should contact your local campus for specific information.

Research Continuity

● **Activation of Research Ramping Down Protocols Mandated:** Effective **Monday, March 23**, all research projects must ramp down/suspend unless they can be conducted remotely and all colleges shall activate their corresponding emergency protocols related to animal care, equipment etc. Is should follow guidance provided by their campus administration, many of which are asking PIs to ramp down to only essential functions. PIs should consider whether maintenance of research resources (e.g., equipment, animals) require emergency personnel (trained people to work on site), in case the University were to close, or mass transit is impacted. It

may take time to develop sufficient plans to ramp down research activities. Planning now will help us to be proactive and responsive if the University were to close. Note for students engaged in any research (from undergraduates to graduate students, for courses, theses, dissertations, etc.), they should be guided by their faculty, who should be guided by their campus and the information below. All research engagement, whether funded or not, requires compliance with federal guidelines.

● **Remote Work:** Principal Investigators (PIs) should continue aspects of their research that can be conducted remotely (without a campus or site visit) such as manuscript writing, data analysis, report writing, administrative tasks, and should continue to support those who are grant or contract funded who can assist in this work. Contact your program director and/or grants officer and document these decisions. PIs should have suspended projects and not start new projects requiring on-site activities, but continue or modify their research to engage in remote activities (see below for more detail). The research enterprise must continue to follow appropriate regulatory guidance. Federal sponsors are allowing for maximal flexibility with regard to administrative, cost, and reporting requirements (e.g., [NSF](#), [NIH](#)). For example, NSF allows payment of salary and stipend costs, as long as those costs align with CUNY and RF CUNY policy. Documentation of charges for research, operational changes required to be flexible and remote, and their rationale/justification will be very important for funders and auditors. If a study needs to be paused (because all activities require on-site work) then PIs should use the standard process to notify the sponsor in accordance with sponsor issued timelines. Unless otherwise notified by the sponsor, all reports due to sponsors must continue to be submitted. PIs should also ensure that their Program Directors/Grants Officers are aware of any changes being implemented to sponsored projects.

PIs should follow guidance provided by their campus administration, many of which have asked PIs to cease on-site activities excepting essential functions (e.g., animal care, facility care). These essential functions require essential personnel (trained people to work on site), who can be designated as such at any time, though adequate training and coordination with campus leadership is required. In designating such personnel, please consider access to campus (e.g., in case the University were to close or mass transit is impacted). Those students who are engaged in any research (from undergraduates to graduate students, for courses, theses, dissertations, etc.), should continue to be guided by their faculty mentors, who in turn should be guided by their campus leadership and the information below. All research engagement, whether funded or not, requires compliance with federal regulations and guidelines and University policies.

Lastly, as we are all facing these difficult and uncertain times, we want you to know that we are with you. Many of us are dealing with myriad issues, anxieties, and frustrations, let us take a moment to be grateful for what we are able to do, to reorganize our activities to focus on pressing priorities, and to work together to find solutions to new issues as they arise. Please be as flexible, patient, and compassionate as possible with yourself and your research teams.

● **Human Subject Research:** For research involving interactions with people, interactions should be limited to minimize risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19, in accordance with [CUNY Coronavirus Guidance](#), [CDC Guidance](#), and campus guidance. Follow your campus HRP guidelines, but in general **human subject research involving direct interaction with study participants should be paused and no study participants should travel to CUNY colleges (except studies with therapeutic benefit, see below)**. PI judgment is most critical and we rely on PIs for determining necessary changes to protocols. Ethical principles of research and federal regulations for the protection of human research participants require an acceptable risk/benefit ratio for in-person contact associated with research. The prospect of direct benefit to the participant is determined by justification

provided by the PI. This guidance is being provided in order to promote public health. PIs should follow guidance that is in the interest of public health, and thus engage in the responsible conduct of research. Unethical or irresponsible conduct may result in disciplinary action from campus administration.

Studies which offer direct therapeutic benefit to participants or where stopping procedures would cause harm to study participants may continue, on a case-by-case basis. For health and safety, changes to protect study participants can be instituted immediately. Please submit a modification to the IRB to indicate temporary modifications within 5 business days.

Studies which do not offer direct therapeutic benefit to participants or where stopping procedures will NOT cause harm to participants and PIs would like to continue the study, PIs must submit a modification to change study procedures requiring NO face-to-face interactions. Studies which do not involve face-to-face interactions (i.e., conducted electronically or via telephone) may continue.

PIs should notify the campus [HRPP Coordinator](#) and sponsor of any changes in research procedures and submit all HRPP/IRB modifications via [Ideate](#). For PIs submitting new protocols, data collection protocols should be for remote data collection, depending upon therapeutic benefit on a case-by-case basis. Protocols may also include in-person data collection for some future time, when guidance for remote collection is removed CUNY-wide.

○ Non-human Animal Research: For animal care, essential personnel who are needed to maintain on-site facilities should be identified and trained to ensure coverage. PIs should work with campus leadership to designate essential personnel in such cases. In the case of University closure, identification of such essential personnel may depend on ease of access to the facility and the availability of mass transit. Extra food and bedding for animals should be ordered, and extra Personal Protective Equipment for animal husbandry staff. Orders for additional animals should be suspended, except on a case-by-case basis. If a campus shuts down, PIs should follow their campus and IACUC policies when determining whether a holding protocol is appropriate. Inspections are allowed to be conducted up to 30 days beyond the 6-month period, but this should not drift forward from year to year. During this interim emergency period, non-USDA inspections can be made by 1 qualified person. Waiver requests for inspections can be made by IOs, or IACUC Chairs, Coordinators, or Vets. There should be communication amongst these groups about requesting waivers. Waivers may be granted for specific functions of the IACUC (defined in [The Guide](#)), and must be accompanied by a justification for waiver of each function. Also see [USDA Coronavirus guidance page](#).

○ Researcher Travel: For researcher travel, including conferences and field research, researchers should follow CUNY travel guidance on the [CUNY Coronavirus](#) portal, , as well as avoid any [international travel per the U.S. State Department](#). For guidance on reimbursement from federal funded travel - see appropriate links or contact your Program Director. Additional guidelines for PIs from federal funders are available through the [CUNY Research Foundation](#) portal.

● **Data Use Agreements:** For studies of data access and analysis covered by data use agreements (DUA), PIs *may* need to request modification if you require a different platform than what is covered by the DUA. Please contact the [Agreements Point Person](#) at your campus. If the DUA involves human subjects and the protocol requires modifications, an IRB modification should be submitted via Ideate.

● **Tissue and other non-IACUC Materials Research:** For tissue and other non-IACUC materials such as insects, plants, and sea animals, additional orders should be suspended, except on a case-by-case basis. PIs should decide which to maintain (e.g., freeze) and which to abandon. PIs who work with such materials should contact their campus EHS Officer to design a contingency plan appropriate to the materials in question.

● **Equipment/Facilities:** For equipment/facilities that require human attention and/or supplies for operation, preparations should be made for extra supplies and training of essential personnel, who would be able to maintain equipment if necessary, in case of University shut down. PIs should communicate this via the proper campus contacts (including campus safety). PIs should follow their campus policies regarding ramping down equipment/facilities.

Internships

● **Guidance for CUNY Students Working in Internships:** CUNY students working as interns, whether with private or public sector employers, should abide by the internal protocols of their internship site. They may work if the site remains open and is allowing interns to report. In addition to the work site's coronavirus policy, students who are sick or have knowingly been in contact with anyone who is sick should notify their internship manager and CUNY program manager or contact immediately. We ask that all students and supervisors touch base to work on a course of action. Some students may be working with individuals in vulnerable populations, so we ask that supervisors and students use their best judgment. Companies or organizations may institute telecommuting or work from home policies that apply to students. We ask students to inform their internship manager or CUNY program manager if their employers move to telecommuting/work from home policies. Students should confirm that they have the tools they need to do this effectively and reach out to their internship manager or CUNY program manager with any questions or concerns. In some cases, students have negotiated a leave of absence from internships, that will end when the statewide "pause" is lifted.

● **Guidance for Campus- Based Internships:** Similar to the guidance for public and private sector internships, students and supervisors should abide by the protocols and policies set by the institution.

● **Guidance for credit bearing internships:** Students will maintain enrollment in Spring 2020 campus-based academic internship courses at their discretion and the discretion of college faculty with whom they are registered. Students and faculty will continue to meet in seminars via online/distance learning tools once they are introduced at the campuses. Students and faculty will work together to redesign any assigned internship deliverables, to ensure that learning outcomes reflected in course syllabi are met and measured at the conclusion of the semester. Where permissible, academic internship responsibilities given to students by outside organizations at the beginning of the semester will continue to be carried out via remote. In cases where internship responsibilities cannot be carried out via remote, campus faculty will develop and assign alternative experiential learning responsibilities and goals to students enrolled in credit-bearing courses.

Adult and Continuing Education Programs

● **Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) Financial Management:** As is generally the case for University-wide academic and administrative programs, all college business managers and budget directors should be keeping track of COVID-19 expenses for all areas of operation, including Adult and Continuing Education. ACE units should be working with College leadership and Presidents to manage any new or existing financial needs resulting from COVID-19 impacts. The CUNY Budget Office is in process of working with the colleges on updating their current financial conditions. For more information, contact: Angie Datta Kamath, angie.kamath@cuny.edu.

● **Employer/Employee Resources Related to the Impact of COVID-19:** Many of our students work while attending school, perhaps especially in our Adult and Continuing Education programs, are navigating difficult financial times, both in terms of their personal finances as well as their small business operations. Below is a list of resources that may help them during these difficult times. **For workers:** 1) The NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) has a number of helpful links, including [here](#); 2) [Unemployment Insurance](#); 3) [City of New York's Virtual Service Center](#); 4) Please also encourage people to call 311 with any questions – particularly New Yorkers who lack internet access. **For Employers:** 1) [General Guidance for Business Owners](#); 2) [Zero-interest loans and payroll grants for small businesses](#); 3) NYS Department of Labor has a program available called [Shared Work](#) that enables employers to reduce their workers' hours, and also enables those workers to be eligible for part-time Unemployment Insurance to supplement their income; 4) finally, for concerns about their business, students can contact SBS Commissioner Gregg Bishop at gbishop@sbs.nyc.gov. *For more information, contact: Angie Datta Kamath, angie.kamath@cuny.edu.*

Student Success, Equity & Inclusion

● **International Students:** SEVP has permitted institutions to accommodate students as they deem necessary for instance, if a student cannot complete one course of his/her program because the course has been cancelled, that student is permitted to remain in status in SEVIS. The Designated School Official will indicate that the student was unable to complete the particular class due to the coronavirus outbreak and the student will be deemed to be in valid status in the country, and they can continue with classes once everything is back to normal. However, no clarity has been given in the event the student chooses to withdraw from all courses but still remains in the country. Our understanding is that SEVP is still working on such kind of cases to come up with proper guidance for the schools. Below is recap on the last clarification from SEVP:

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP) provided some clarification on department's guidance to colleges/universities about how to handle student-visa issues during the coronavirus outbreak. SEVP informed colleges that they would be given leeway to [adapt policies](#) for international students during the public-health crisis. Though the latest guidance was more on students records in SEVIS, it still gives an idea on the process. The three common scenarios below were based on the questions from the international higher education community related to emergency procedures/operations that colleges have put in place:

- The first scenario is in the event the college completely closes without any online courses or alternate learning opportunities and how the students' records should be recorded in SEVIS.

- The second scenarios refer to colleges/universities that cancel in-person classes and shift to online instruction, and the international students decide to stay in the United States instead of going back to their home countries. In this case, students could count online courses toward their full course of study, superseding the restrictions that limit them to a single online course per semester.
- The third situation is similar to the second, except the international student leaves the U.S. In that case, students will still be allowed to engage in online study and the records in SEVIS will remain in active status even though the students are outside the country.

Due to the “fluid nature of this difficult situation, SEVP will continue to provide updated guidance as more issues and scenarios arise making the current guidance subject to further tweaking. Please be advised that the current guidance does not address any school operations beyond the spring 2020 semester yet.

○ Student Veterans, National Guard & Reservists: Please advise students who are activated to communicate with their campus Veterans Services Coordinator, Registrar’s Office, and faculty. The University might be facing one of the following scenarios: 1) National Guard students called up as early as the week of **April 1, 2020**; 2) military personnel may be activated in 30 days; or 3) Military units might be given notice of activation at any time. Students’ response to all three scenarios SHOULD NOT be to drop classes or discontinue their Spring 2020 coursework. Rather, as per CUNY Military Activation Policy Sections 3.1 – 3.3 listed below, faculty can and should accommodate activated students to enable them to complete the Spring 2020 semester. *For more information, contact: Lisa Beatha, lisa.beatha@cuny.edu.*

3.1 A student who is called to active duty in the armed forces of the United States or National Guard should be given every consideration around either making up the work for the course, obtaining an Incomplete, or being given the grade that he or she has earned at the time that he or she is called to duty.

3.2 At each college, the appropriated committee or other designated authority shall be empowered to grant the remaining number of credits required for graduation to a member of the graduating class who lacks twelve or fewer credits in elective courses to complete the requirements for the degree for those called to active duty in the armed forces of the United States. Credits should be applied from the service members JST (Joint Service Transcript) as MILT elective credit

3.3 Colleges shall encourage students who enter military service to maintain their status as students by availing themselves of such opportunities as may be offered to them (by the colleges, by other accredited colleges, and/or by service agencies) to continue their studies while in Military Service.

○ CUNY EDGE Research Foundation Campus Staff: CUNY EDGE Research Foundation (RF) campus staff, both FT and PT, may work remotely with the approval of their supervisor. CUNY RFGuidance can be found [here](#), which outlines the recommended policy and includes a Remote Work Agreement to be completed and signed by each staff member and their supervisor. CUNY OAA EDGE leadership fully supports this move and has worked with college program directors to ensure EDGE students can be served remotely. All advisement activities can be conducted via phone, email or text, and campus staff are already using a variety of platforms to do so that have been in place for more than a year. Additionally, CUNY OAA EDGE leadership has received approval from our funder, the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) to suspend all new referrals to our HRA Fellowship Program and to submit required documentation to HRA remotely. CUNY EDGE is fully prepared to support participating students through remote work arrangements.

● **Disability Services:** During this transition to distance learning, CUNY’s faculty remain the University’s most vital resource in ensuring reasonable accommodations for our more than 11,000 students with disabilities. As our faculty prepare to deliver course content via distance learning modalities, we ask that they consider the following overarching principles and key resources:

- Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), CUNY college are still required to provide equal access to our University’s academic programs – even in a distance learning environment.
- Campus Offices of Disability Services (ODS) continue to serve as key sources of technical assistance and support to faculty in determining the best ways to reasonably accommodate students with disabilities in distance learning instructional modalities; please use this link to contact the ODS on your campus: <http://cats.cuny.edu/reasonableaccommodations/COSDIDirectory.html>
- The barriers that exist at the intersection of a student’s disability and course design may be different from those posed by the original course format. Some accommodations students used before may no longer apply in distance learning formats, and some accommodations not considered previously may need to be considered now; we appreciate our faculty’s flexibility and collaboration with ODS staff and students with disabilities themselves to meet their accommodation needs in distance learning modalities.

To aid in these efforts, the guide **Reasonable Accommodations: A Faculty Guide for Teaching Students with Disabilities** resource was developed specifically for CUNY faculty to provide them with information and best practices to be most effective in meeting the needs of students with disabilities and achieving the goal of equal access. This guide includes helpful information in accommodating students with disabilities in distance learning, including the following two sections: [Technology in the Classroom and for Online Courses](#) and [Alternative Text for Students with Disabilities](#). Please know that our campus Offices of Disability Services will work closely with our CUNY Office of Student Inclusion Initiatives to ensure that our faculty have the support they need to successfully and meaningfully accommodate students with disabilities. We are grateful to our faculty and to our disability services professionals for their abiding commitment to the access, success, and wellness of students with disabilities.

● **CS/MS and Adult Literacy and Language Immersion Programs:** CUNY Start/Math Start, CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP), and the Adult Literacy Program are all moving their instruction online. The Central Office staff that support each program have been working with college teams to develop plans for this transition using both synchronous and asynchronous delivery via platforms like Blackboard, Dropbox, Zoom, and WebEx, and how to make use of video, discussion tools, chat, and other technology tools to deliver instruction. Each program will develop a plan, to be provided to the appropriate college leadership, that details how content will be delivered, multiple options for communicating with students, and how student work will be assessed to document learning outcomes have been met. Colleges are encouraged to make any local resources that are available to faculty to assist with this conversion available to these programs as well. CUNY CIS is also supporting assessment of technology needs for these programs if there is not a local college resource readily available. We will provide further guidance on any standardized testing that typically takes place in CUNY testing centers, which would also be developed for students in developmental education classes that require the CUNY Assessment Test in Writing (CAT-W) and CUNY Elementary Algebra Final Exam (CEAFE). CUNY OAA has also confirmed with the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Adult Career and Continuing Education Services that our adult literacy programs should follow the guidance of their respective agencies/organizations

(i.e.: CUNY, SUNY, DOE) regarding the use of distance learning strategies to maintain program continuity and keep students and teachers engaged while in-person classes are suspended.

International and Domestic Travel

● **Prospective Academic and Business Travel (Faculty, Students, and Staff):** All non-essential university-related international and domestic travel is indefinitely suspended at this time, this includes the suspension of all Spring 2020 and Summer 2020 study abroad programs. It also includes all CUNY-sponsored student international travel (including spring break), non-CUNY credit-bearing programs, and non-credit travel under the auspices of CUNY or any CUNY college or student organization. Please know that credits earned on non-CUNY study abroad programs this summer will not be accepted by the University.

● **Planning For and Returning from Personal Travel:** The [Department of State's Global Health Advisory](#) (issued March 19, 2020) warns that a shutdown of international travel options is imminent, and that Americans abroad should arrange to immediately return to the U.S., or risk an indefinite stay abroad. In order to help CUNY students, return home before it is too late, CUNY will continue to offer rebooking support to any CUNY student or employee abroad (regardless of citizenship) who is unable to make these arrangements directly with the airline. Individuals should contact evac-support@cuny.edu with details on their CUNY affiliation (including EMPLID if possible) to receive instructions on accessing this support. Students returning from abroad should coordinate closely with the Study Abroad Office on their home campus to ensure they receive support to complete the semester whenever possible. Employees returning from abroad should contact their supervisors to arrange to work remotely, if this is not already in place.