

## FAQ for students and parents (12 Feb 2020)

In light of the current 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation in Singapore, SMU has implemented and enforced a range of policies and measures to protect students, faculty, staff, alumni and visitors. The health and well-being of the SMU community is the University's top priority. While we understand your concerns, we would like to reassure you that the spread of the disease in Singapore is being contained and the situation is under control.

This FAQ seeks to address common questions we have received from students and parents.

The Singapore government has declared a DORSCON Level Orange on 7 February 2020. What does this mean?

What is SMU doing about the situation?

What are the support systems in place for international students in SMU to ensure their wellbeing?

Would the SMU insurance reimburse SMU students' medical expenses if a SMU student catches the COVID-19 from an unknown source or from someone in SMU?

How will students' studies be impacted?

Can mid-term assessment be postponed or taken online?

What arrangements can SMU make should I want to return to home country?

Why are not all classes going online?

Apart from some classes going online, can all student club activities be cancelled?

Who can I get in touch to seek more information or clarification pertaining to the situation?

1. The Singapore government has declared a DORSCON Level Orange on 7 February 2020. What does this mean?

1.1 The 'Disease Outbreak Response System Condition' (DORSCON) is a colour-coded framework that denotes the current disease situation (see table below). Under the DORSCON Orange, the outbreak is deemed to have moderate to high public health impact. While the disease is severe and spreads easily from person to person, the disease **has not spread widely in Singapore and is being contained**. Singapore had also raised DORSCON to Orange before in 2009, for the H1N1 swine flu.

# DORSCON ALERT LEVELS

(Disease Outbreak Response System Condition)

	GREEN	YELLOW	ORANGE	RED
<b>Nature of Disease</b>	Disease is mild <b>OR</b> Disease is severe but does not spread easily from person to person (e.g. MERS, H7N9)	Disease is severe and spreads easily from person to person but is occurring outside Singapore. <b>OR</b> Disease is spreading in Singapore but is (a) Typically mild i.e only slightly more severe than seasonal influenza. Could be severe in vulnerable groups. (e.g. H1N1 pandemic) <b>OR</b> (b) being contained	Disease is severe <b>AND</b> spreads easily from person to person, but disease has not spread widely in Singapore and is being contained (e.g. SARS experience in Singapore)	Disease is severe <b>AND</b> is spreading widely
<b>Impact on Daily Life</b>	Minimal disruption e.g. border screening, travel advice	Minimal disruption e.g. additional measures at border and/or healthcare settings expected, higher work and school absenteeism likely	Moderate disruption e.g. quarantine, temperature screening, visitor restrictions at hospitals	Major disruption e.g. school closures, work from home orders, significant number of deaths.
<b>Advice to Public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be socially responsible: if you are sick, stay at home</li> <li>• Maintain good personal hygiene</li> <li>• Look out for health advisories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be socially responsible: if you are sick, stay at home</li> <li>• Maintain good personal hygiene</li> <li>• Look out for health advisories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be socially responsible: if you are sick, stay at home</li> <li>• Maintain good personal hygiene</li> <li>• Look out for health advisories</li> <li>• Comply with control measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be socially responsible: if you are sick, stay at home</li> <li>• Maintain good personal hygiene</li> <li>• Look out for health advisories</li> <li>• Comply with control measures</li> <li>• <b>Practise social distancing: avoid crowded areas</b></li> </ul>

Source: Ministry of Health

1.2 At DORSCON Orange level, the Singapore government will introduce additional precautionary measures "to minimise the risk of further transmission of the virus in the community". The emphasis will now be on "aggressively trying to stop or limit further spread", according to the Ministry of Health, Singapore (MOH) pandemic readiness and preparedness plan.  
 (Source: <https://www.asiaone.com/singapore/coronavirus-what-does-code-orange-7-Febmean>)



# Coronavirus outbreak: Different levels of alert

The Disease Outbreak Response System Condition (Dorscon) is part of Singapore's pandemic preparedness plan. Here's how the colour coding system works:

	Be socially responsible: if you're sick, stay home	Maintain good personal hygiene	Look out for health advisories	Comply with control measures	Practise social distancing: avoid crowded areas
<b>GREEN</b> Minimal disruption	✓	✓	✓		
<b>YELLOW</b> Minimal disruption	✓	✓	✓		
<b>ORANGE</b> Moderate disruption (eg. quarantine, temperature screening)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>RED</b> Major disruption (eg. school closures, work from home orders)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

- Disease is mild. Or it is severe but does not spread easily.
- Disease is severe and spreads easily, but is occurring outside Singapore OR Disease is spreading in Singapore but is typically mild or being contained.
- Disease is severe and spreads easily but it has not spread widely in Singapore and is being contained.
- Disease is severe and is spreading widely.

SOURCE: Ministry of Health

1.3 **The situation is under control in Singapore.** Enhanced precautionary measures to minimise the risk of further transmission of the virus in the community have been introduced by the Singapore government, including the following:

- Ramping up cleaning efforts in public spaces, such as increased cleaning and disinfecting in all housing estates, especially for touchpoints like lift buttons, railings, table tops and seats found in common areas; disinfecting trains and buses more regularly, especially for touchpoints like grab poles, overhead handles, seats and windows. Surfaces at MRT and LRT stations, and bus interchanges will be cleaned and disinfected.
- Daily health checks at workplaces. Employees are required to take their temperatures at least twice daily, and check that they do not have respiratory symptoms, such as cough or runny nose. Unwell employees, or those with a fever, should leave the office immediately to see a doctor.
- Cancel or defer large-scale events, or put in place necessary precautions if proceeding. Organisers should carry out temperature screening, look out for individuals exhibiting respiratory symptoms such as cough and runny nose, and deny unwell individuals entry to the event.

1.4 Official sources of information

Updates on 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Situation in Singapore:

<https://www.moh.gov.sg/2019-ncov-wuhan/> (**Ministry of Health, Singapore**)

<https://www.gov.sg/> (**Singapore Government**)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Situation: <https://www.moh.gov.sg/2019-ncov-wuhan/faqs>

## 2. What is SMU doing about the situation?

2.1 Taking guidelines from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education in Singapore, SMU has implemented and enforced a range of measures for all members of our University community as well as for SMU's visitors, contractors and tenants. The current measures that SMU have adopted are out of precaution and are deemed appropriate for the current situation. We are constantly reviewing our measures to protect the SMU Community, and update them based on the evolving situation and risk assessment.

2.2 The University has implemented enhanced precautionary measures to help safeguard the health and safety for the SMU community including the following:

### (a) Travel Management

- Cancellation of all existing and upcoming official trips to China, Hong Kong and Macau. We have reached out to all affected students who were bound for exchange programmes in China universities and have made alternative arrangements for them, taking into account their preferences and requirements. These include helping them to enrol in exchange programmes with other overseas partner universities and re-joining classes at SMU.
- All staff, students and faculty members are required to make a travel declaration – of past and upcoming travel plans – for both official and personal trips to all countries via SMU's Travel Declaration portal.
- All SMU staff, faculty and students returning from Mainland China are required to take a 14-day Leave of Absence (LOA) from classes and work.

### (b) Daily Temperature Taking

- All students, faculty and staff are required to take their temperature twice per day (before 10am and after 3pm) with effect from 10 Feb 2020 until further notice. They are to record their temperature at [https://tempdeclar.intranet.smu.edu.sg/log\\_temp.asp](https://tempdeclar.intranet.smu.edu.sg/log_temp.asp). This needs to be done whether they are on campus or otherwise.
- In campus, temperature screening stations have been set up in Level 1 of all buildings. Temperature screening is also instituted for all visitors to SMU and they have to pass through screening stations located at the main turnstiles areas at LKCSB, SOA, SOL, SIS, SOE/SOSS, Li Ka Shing Library, Kwa Geok Choo Library, SMU Connexion lift lobby, PSR and the Administration Building lobby.

### (c) Increasing Social Distancing

- Taking guidance from the Ministry of Education's advisory to minimise congregation of students in large numbers, and in alignment with measures

undertaken at other Autonomous Universities in Singapore, we will move all undergraduate and postgraduate courses sections that have student enrolment of 51 and above to an online mode, starting 10 February 2020. The intention of doing so is to contain group sizes to limit any risk of transmission.

- Additionally, for the undergraduate programmes, all courses listed under the Core Curriculum (i.e. any course coded COR- or COR-XXX) and first year pre-assigned courses will also move online by 17 February 2020. Many of these pre-assigned courses are programme core courses. These may be delivered through online active learning classes via WebEx, as well as videos and online resources uploaded on eLearn. In the main, these courses are taught to large numbers of students from across the University and have been moved online to minimise social contact and risk of transmission across different groups of students.
- This is an appropriate response based on assessments of the current situation. We want lessons to continue with as many of their usual learning and activities as possible, but are ready to step up our measures if need be. We will progressively move more courses online from 2 March 2020 and will provide more information soon.
- In line with increasing social distancing, large scale events, including student activities, in the following venues will be cancelled, postponed, or replaced with virtual activities, unless they are deemed critical:
  - (i) Concourse, T-Junction
  - (ii) Mochtar Riady Auditorium (MRA), Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium (NAKA), SMU Hall
  - (iii) University Lounge (U-Lounge), Li Ka Shing Library Quiet Area, Alcove and Student Study Lounges

If a particular event uses multiple venues on campus, they will also be cancelled, postponed, or replaced with virtual activities.

(d) Enhanced Cleaning Regime

- To ensure that the spaces on campus have a high standard of safety and hygiene, we have increased the cleaning frequency at common areas and of frequently touched surfaces with disinfectant, as well as the air conditioning system.
- Professional cleaners have been engaged to clean and disinfect the internal premises of individual apartments at Prinsep Street Residences (PSR) on a regular basis.

(e) Enhanced Leave of Absence (LOA)

- The LOA protocol will be strengthened for situations where a member of our community comes into contact with someone who is either a confirmed case or a suspected case of COVID-19, or someone who is under quarantine. In these circumstances, COVID-19-related LOAs will be required. Students under COVID-19-related LOA will continue to be supported with their studies, including through various online learning platforms such as online consultations via WebEx.

(f) Emotional Support

- It is understandable that in the current situation, some of us may be confused and worried. As part of the student community, we want you to know that you are not alone in SMU. If you find yourself in need of emotional and psychological support, please contact our SMU counsellors or peer helpers at:

Mrs Wong Kwok Leong Student Wellness Centre  
 Li Ka Shing Library (B1-44)  
 Tel: 6828 0786 (during office hours)  
 Mon to Thu: 9.30am to 5.30pm  
 Fri: 9.30am to 3.30pm  
 Closed on Sat, Sun & PH  
 Email: counselling@smu.edu.sg

(g) SMU Microsite

- A dedicated SMU microsite, this serves as a one-stop location with key updates for the SMU community and important information on the COVID-19, and contacts for assistance.

SMU Microsite: <https://crisisresponse.smu.edu.sg/>

- 2.3 SMU is adopting these measures to ensure the campus remains a safe environment for the SMU community. Staff and students are already on extra alert. Hygiene is a major determinant of risk of transmission, so personal and group hygiene standards have been raised. No measure is 100% fool proof or guaranteed, but we will take the necessary precautions to contain and manage the risks, while enabling life to go on. **We should not let fear of the virus get the better of us and prevent us from going about our daily lives.**

### 3. **What are the support systems in place for international students in SMU to ensure their wellbeing?**

- 3.1 We recognise that especially for international students who are away from their families, the COVID-19 situation may be a cause for anxiety and worry. We wish to reiterate that the current situation in Singapore is under control and that there is no need to be excessively alarmed. The disease **has not spread**

**widely in Singapore and is being contained** We should stay vigilant and calm, be socially responsible and adopt the necessary precautions, while allowing life to go on as normally as possible.

- 3.2 The well-being of all students is important to us. SMU counsellors and peer helpers are available and ready to render emotional support to all students. They can be reached via:

Mrs Wong Kwok Leong Student Wellness Centre  
Li Ka Shing Library (B1-44)  
Tel: 6828 0786 (during office hours)  
Mon to Thu: 9.30am to 5.30pm  
Fri: 9.30am to 3.30pm  
Closed on Sat, Sun & PH  
Email: counselling@smu.edu.sg

In the recent weeks, the SMU counsellors and peer helpers have been actively reaching out to international students staying at PSR to provide emotional and practical support.

- 3.3 A dedicated Care Team made up of SMU Staff have also been set up to promptly address PSR residents' queries, provide advice and to allay concerns.
- 3.4 We encourage international students to maintain regular communication with their parents and to keep them up-to-date of the actual situation in Singapore. The disease has **not spread widely in Singapore and is being contained**. The situation is under control.

#### **4. Would the SMU insurance reimburse SMU students' medical expenses if a SMU student catches the COVID-19 from an unknown source or from someone in SMU?**

- 4.1 All SMU students are covered under the SMU medical insurance and the details of the policies can be found here: <https://www.smu.edu.sg/campus-life/student-services/student-insurance-coverage/medical-insurance>
- 4.2 Any illness sustained by the student, and covered under the policies, would be treated and claimable, regardless of how the illness is contracted.

#### **5. How will students' studies be impacted?**

- 5.1 Taking guidance from the Ministry of Education's advisory to minimise congregation of students in large numbers, and in alignment with measures undertaken at other Autonomous Universities in Singapore, we will move all undergraduate and postgraduate courses sections that have student enrolment

of 51 and above to an online mode, starting 10 February 2020. The intention of doing so is to contain group sizes to limit any risk of transmission.

Additionally, for the undergraduate programmes, all courses listed under the Core Curriculum (i.e. any course coded COR- or COR-XXX) and first year pre-assigned courses will also move online by 17 February 2020. Many of these pre-assigned courses are programme core courses. These may be delivered through online active learning classes via WebEx, as well as videos and online resources uploaded on eLearn. In the main, these courses are taught to large numbers of students from across the University and have been moved online to minimise social contact and risk of transmission across different groups of students.

Some courses, such as those using the SMU-X pedagogy as well as others, may involve non-SMU contributors. For these courses, we will take enhanced precautionary measures to protect our faculty, staff and students, including the use of tele-/video-conferencing in lieu of face-to-face sessions. If it is necessary for non-SMU personnel to come to campus, all visitors are required to pass through a temperature screening station at Level 1 of all SMU buildings.

- 5.2 This is an appropriate response based on assessments of the current situation. We want lessons to continue with as many of their usual learning and activities as possible, but are ready to step up our measures if need be. We will progressively move more courses online from 2 March 2020 and will provide more information soon.
- 5.3 For students who have been affected by the PSR relocation, necessary academic adjustments have already been made with the respective Schools.
- 5.4 We would like to reassure all students that teaching and learning continue to take place, and that students are expected to continue attending their classes as per normal, either by coming to University for classes that have not been moved online or by participating in WebEx seminars for classes that have been moved online. Unauthorised absence from class means that students will not be able to take part in learning activities, class discussions and/or assessments as intended. This may affect their overall grade. However, students with valid reasons preventing them from physically attending classes, such as international students who face restrictions travelling to and/or from Singapore or those on COVID-19-related LOA, will be given special dispensation.
- 5.5 With the necessary precautions to contain and manage the risks in place, life should go on as far as possible. **We should not let fear of the virus get the better of us and prevent us from going about our daily lives.** We should stay vigilant and calm, as well as do our part to be socially responsible. Should

students have any concerns pertaining to the completion of their modules this term, they should contact their Schools for advice.

## **6. Can mid-term assessment be postponed or taken online?**

- 6.1 We empathise with students who may be facing anxiety from the uncertainties in this current situation. As such, we have decided that for all undergraduate and Juris Doctor courses, no in-class graded assessment, or graded assessments with strict time constraints (of less than a week), should be administered from Weeks 6 (starting from 12 February 2020) to 10 (inclusive).
- 6.2 In lieu of the cancelled assessments, instructors may convert the planned graded assessment(s) into online or take-home assignment(s) that allow students at least one week to complete. Alternatively, the planned graded assessment(s) may be postponed until after Week 10. Course instructors will be providing the necessary instructions to students.

## **7. What arrangements can SMU make should I want to return to home country?**

- 7.1 Students are expected to continue attending their classes as per normal, either coming to University for classes that have not been moved online or by participating in WebEx seminars for classes that have been moved online. Unauthorised absence from class means that students will not be able to take part in learning activities, class discussions and/or assessments as intended. This may affect his/her overall grade. However, students with valid reasons preventing them from physically attending classes, such as international students who face restrictions travelling to and/or from Singapore or those on COVID-19-related LOA, will be given special dispensation.
- 7.2 In addition, we have decided that for all undergraduate and Juris Doctor courses, no in-class graded assessment, or graded assessments with strict time constraints (of less than a week), should be administered from Weeks 6 (starting from 12 February 2020) to 10 (inclusive). In lieu of the cancelled assessments, instructors may convert the planned graded assessment(s) into online or take-home assignment(s) that allow students at least one week to complete. Alternatively, the planned graded assessment(s) may be postponed until after Week 10. Course instructors will be providing the necessary instructions to students.
- 7.3 International students who wish to return to their home countries in the meantime should, as far as possible, ensure that they continue to fulfil the

required course requirements and submissions in order not to risk jeopardising their course completion and/or overall grade.

- 7.4 Students who need to manage a long-term health, family or personal problem may apply for leave of absence (LOA) from their studies, and this is subject to approval by the school. Taking a LOA is not the same as suspending studies for a short period within the term. The leave of absence is for the duration of one term - Term 1 or Term 2 (for undergraduates). All courses are dropped automatically upon approval of the LOA. If the leave of absence is effected within the first 2 weeks of the undergraduate term, there will be 100% refund of that term tuition fees paid. If the leave of absence is effected from week 3 of the undergraduate term onwards, there will be no refund. Students may refer to the SMU student portal OASIS > Policies > LOA (<https://oasis.smu.edu.sg/Pages/RO/Leave-of-Absence.aspx>) for more information on LOA.

## **8. Why are not all classes going online?**

- 8.1 SMU has taken guidance from the Ministry of Education's advisory and the measures we have implemented are aligned with those undertaken by other Autonomous Universities in Singapore. All undergraduate and postgraduate courses sections that have student enrolment of 51 and above will be moved to an online mode, starting on Monday, 10 February 2020. The intention of doing so is to contain group sizes to limit any risk of transmission.
- 8.2 Additionally, for the undergraduate programmes, all courses listed under the Core Curriculum (i.e. any course coded COR- or COR-XXX) and first-year pre-assigned courses will also move online by 17 February 2020. These may be delivered through online active learning classes via WebEx, as well as videos and online resources uploaded on eLearn. In the main, these courses are taught to large numbers of students from across the University and have been moved online to minimise social contact and risk of transmission across different groups of students.
- 8.3 We want lessons to continue with as many of their usual learning and activities as possible, but are ready to step up our measures if need be. We will progressively move more courses online from 2 March 2020 and more information will be provided soon.

## **9. Apart from some classes going online, can all student club activities be cancelled?**

- 9.1 While we strive to allow campus activities to go on as normally as possible, we have adopted precautions to safeguard the SMU community.
- 9.2 In line with increasing social distancing, large scale events, including student activities organised by any SMU office, in the following venues will be cancelled, postponed, or replaced with virtual activities, unless they are deemed critical:
- (iv) Concourse, T-Junction
  - (v) Mochtar Riady Auditorium (MRA), Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium (NAKA), SMU Hall
  - (vi) University Lounge (U-Lounge), Li Ka Shing Library Quiet Area, Alcove and Student Study Lounges

If a particular event uses multiple venues on campus, they will also be cancelled, postponed, or replaced with virtual activities.

- 9.3 In addition to the above, the University will adopt the following guidelines to determine if and how student activities organised by any SMU office should proceed:

In deciding whether to hold a specific activity on campus, we take into consideration the following factors:

- (i) the scale of the activity (e.g. the expected number of participants)
- (ii) ease of access and whether the attendees are internal, external or from overseas
- (iii) significance of impact on students if activity/event does not run
- (iv) availability and feasibility of alternative platforms for engagement
- (v) transmission risk level of activity (e.g. factoring in degree of physical contact; and possibility of multiple persons coming into contact with a common object)

- 9.4 We are constantly reviewing our measures to protect the SMU community, and update them based on the evolving situation and risk assessment.

## **10. Who can I get in touch to seek more information or clarification pertaining to the situation?**

For updates on 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Situation in Singapore:

**Ministry of Health, Singapore**  
<https://www.moh.gov.sg/2019-ncov-wuhan/>

For SMU-related issues:

**Singapore Management University**

SMU Microsite - One-stop for key measures and updates  
<https://crisisresponse.smu.edu.sg/>

Dean of Students  
[deanofstudents@smu.edu.sg](mailto:deanofstudents@smu.edu.sg)