

Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE)

Restart Standards for all New Jersey Institutions of Higher Education

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OVERVIEW

The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) issued standards for institutions of higher education as they begin restarting campus operations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The standards align with the stages of New Jersey’s phased [“The Road Back: Restoring Economic Health Through Public Health”](#) plan and provide a framework of critical standards, additional steps institutions should consider when formulating plans, and examples of safeguarding practices in 10 key on-campus functional areas: instruction, residential housing, computer laboratories, libraries, research, student services, transportation, dining, international travel, and athletics.

Using the “Road Back” as an overarching framework, this document was developed with state public health officials and in consultation with other state higher education stakeholders. Through this document, institutions of higher education are required to develop an individualized staged plan for restarting services that adheres to the standards outlined below.

This document is intended to provide clarification of the mandatory requirements of [Executive Orders No. 155 and 175](#), as well as present additional non-binding considerations for institutions to contemplate as they develop their restart plans. It also includes examples of safeguarding practices (such as social distancing, mask wearing, frequent cleaning/sanitizing of supplies, etc.) in key on-campus functional areas. There are different standards and strategies for operations, depending on which stage New Jersey moves into, based on public health trends. The overall stages range from: maximum restrictions (most individuals staying at home and activity limited to essential tasks); stage 1 (restrictions are relaxed on low-risk activities if appropriately safeguarded); stage 2 (restrictions are relaxed on additional activities that can be easily safeguarded); and stage 3 (restrictions are relaxed on most activities with significant safeguarding). For a one-page summary of the multi-stage approach, including precautions across all stages, please view this [summarized infographic](#). Institutions should continue to monitor for updated federal, state, and local guidance as the situation evolves. As such, the requirements outlined in this document are subject to change, which could necessitate updates to an institution’s plan.

PLANNING FOR RESTART

Until a proven vaccine or approved therapy for COVID-19 is widely available, campus activity will involve some level of risk as operations resume. Institutions must develop robust and thoughtful plans for restarting operations that take into account concerns for public health. Ultimately, students, faculty, staff, and the general public will only feel comfortable returning to in-person activity if our campuses have taken appropriate safeguarding measures that are well-communicated to broader campus communities.

New Jersey is home to a diverse community of higher education institutions. Accordingly, institutions should be allowed to develop a restart plan that best fits their communities' needs and context, while at the same time adhering to state restrictions. Institutions' plans must balance the health and safety of the entire institutional community, including students, faculty, and staff, with the need to resume activities.

As detailed in Executive Order 155, institutions are required to submit a restart plan to OSHE within 14 days of the planned implementation date of their plans. OSHE made a standardized [restart plan template](#) available on its website for institutions to outline their plans for resuming activities. Each plan must follow a phased approach in accordance with the standards in this and any future supplemental document(s).

Restart plans should involve a process for engaging institutional faculty, staff and students in an ongoing health and safety committee that will help identify areas of noncompliance and inform the ongoing implementation of an institution's restart plan.

This guidance makes clear there are a number of rules that apply differently in the context of areas on a college campus open exclusively to students and faculty, such as dining halls, classrooms, and chapels, than apply to such spaces if open to the general public outside of a campus setting. There are a number of public health related reasons for this, in light of the unique and contained nature of institutions of higher education. In contrast to spaces that are open to the general public, defined and consistent groups of individuals populate the institutions' campuses each day, with little access available to the broader public—often ensured by, e.g., limiting access through ID cards and other security measures—which both reduces the risk of COVID-19 spread to the broader population and makes it easier for the institutions and the State to engage in contact tracing and thus identify and limit any potential outbreaks. In addition, the residential nature of many institutions reduces the need for significant traffic onto and off of campus, which likewise reduces the risk of a COVID-19 outbreak, and also means that the marginal risks presented by additional activities among those students—whether in the classroom, in a dining hall, or in a religious or political gathering, to take a few examples—are reduced. Still more, the universe of higher education in New Jersey is limited, with 29 public and 59 private institutions within the State, which reduces their overall contribution to the State's overall COVID-19 cases. Finally, in contrast to most other contexts, pursuant to Executive Order No. 155, every institution of higher education in the State was already required to submit a detailed reopening plan to OSHE as a condition of resuming in-person instruction, which

results in regulated and calculated campus reopenings, and thus addresses some of the public health and safety concerns that are present for the general public.

As public health conditions continue to evolve and additional information becomes available, the restart standards may be updated accordingly. The following document is not an exhaustive list of all considerations that an institution may need to contemplate, as some elements may be unique to certain institutions and not applicable to others. Please note that this is intended to be supplemental to federal and state requirements and guidance for institutions of higher education.¹

¹ OSHE would like to thank members of the Higher Education Restart Advisory Group, which included representatives from all higher education sectors, employees, and students, for their input on guidance and best practices.

GENERAL SAFEGUARDING

General safeguards should be observed throughout all functional areas across higher education.

Critical Policies and Procedures Mandated by Executive Order No. 155

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 155, institutions must submit a restart plan to the Secretary of Higher Education that details policies and procedures that provide for the following health and safety measures. Institutions should develop their plans with input from the campus community. Institutions' restart plans must be prominently posted on the institution's website and provided to students, staff, and faculty in advance of the anticipated date for implementation.

1. Training for students regarding COVID-19 sanitization and social distancing practices and protocols as a condition of resuming in-person classes and/or living in on-campus residential facilities;
2. Training for faculty and staff on appropriate sanitization and social distancing practices and protocols, as well as institutional policies and procedures developed to limit the spread of COVID-19;
3. Use of face coverings for faculty, staff, students, and visitors, except when doing so would inhibit the individual's health;
4. Frequent cleaning and sanitization of classrooms, residences, restrooms, high-touch areas, equipment and shared surfaces;
5. Maintenance of adequate supplies, such as personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies;
6. Continued remote instruction for faculty and/or students who are unable to participate in in-person instruction;
7. Social distancing in classrooms, residence halls, restrooms, and other areas across campus;
8. Limitations on the number of students who may return to residence halls and restricted access to residential common areas;
9. Designation of space(s) for separation of individuals residing on campus who display symptoms consistent with or have a positive diagnosis of COVID-19;
10. A plan for on-campus transportation, which should include protocols for transporting sick students residing on campus to essential appointments as needed;
11. A plan for the operation of research labs, if applicable;
12. A plan for the operation of computer labs;
13. Strategies for food service and dining operations to ensure compliance with all health and safety standards and applicable Executive Orders;
14. A plan for intended resumption of athletics programs, if applicable;
15. A plan for the operation of student services;
16. Strategy for study abroad programs and international travel, if applicable;
17. Performance of health screenings for faculty, staff, students and visitors prior to entry, and education regarding self-monitoring for symptoms;
18. Commitment to working with local and state officials, including the local health department and local office of emergency management, to share the components of the restart plan and revise same as may become necessary; and
19. Establishment of COVID-19 testing guidance and contact tracing protocols developed in consultation with local health officials and in line with existing state and federal health

privacy statutes and regulations. At a minimum, such protocols should include a mechanism to maintain a log of students, faculty, staff and visitors to facilitate contact tracing, and the reporting of any instances of COVID-19 to local health officials.

20. Institutions must minimize gatherings where possible. Whenever institutions cannot minimize gatherings, they must ensure such gatherings are in compliance with current state limits.

Additional Considerations

(These steps can assist institutions in considering ways to adhere to the standards above.)

- **For the reasons previously given in this Guidance document, the State's indoor gatherings limits shall not apply to classroom instruction, religious services, and political activities, so long as they are limited to students and faculty. However, all remaining social, recreational, and extracurricular activities must continue to comply with the applicable State indoor gatherings limits.**
- Provide physical barriers (such as moveable barriers, plexiglass, etc.) where unable to maintain social distance.
- Adjust entryways and exits in buildings to control flow of pedestrian traffic.
- Remove or restrict access to high-touch areas and shared surfaces that cannot be cleaned regularly.
- Mark six-foot intervals in high traffic areas to help students, faculty, staff, and any other individuals who may be on campus visualize appropriate social distancing.
- Maintain documentation of date/time/location of cleaning of high-traffic areas.
- Develop an ongoing restart working group or task force to monitor compliance with guidelines, discuss challenges, and make recommendations for amendments to improve the restart plan over time as health data and federal or state guidance evolves.
- Conduct a health hazard assessment prior to restart to identify workplace protocols and places that might increase the spread of COVID-19.
- For any campus elevators, take steps to minimize traffic, such as limiting the number of individuals permitted on the elevator at one time or designating pathways in one direction. Elevator buttons should be frequently cleaned, and users should be encouraged to wash/disinfect hands upon leaving an elevator, which could be done by placing hand sanitizer stations outside of elevators.
- The use of water fountains should be discontinued and water fountains should be converted to water bottle fill stations where possible.
- Institutions should encourage, through orientations, signage, and other communications, frequent handwashing by all employees and students.
- As a reminder, institutions have the discretion to determine whether an employee's job duties must be performed in person or whether those duties may or must be performed remotely.

Helpful Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Social Distancing Guidance](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)
- New Jersey Department of Health: [Information for Communities and the General Public](#)

SCREENING, TESTING, AND CONTACT TRACING PROTOCOLS

A key precautionary measure throughout all restart stages will be appropriate screening, testing and contact tracing for the institutional community. Contact tracing efforts, however, are the responsibility of the local health department. Institutions need to work with the local health authority within their jurisdiction to establish necessary protocols.

Institutions will be responsible for establishing screening and testing protocols on their campus for employees and students. As access to testing and testing reliability changes, institutions will need to update their protocols. Establishment of COVID-19 testing and contact tracing protocols should be developed in consultation with local health officials and in line with existing state and federal health privacy statutes and regulations. At a minimum, such protocols should include a mechanism to maintain a log of students, faculty, staff and visitors to facilitate contact tracing, and the reporting of any instances of COVID-19 to local health officials. Institutions can locate their local health department through the [New Jersey Department of Health \(DOH\) directory](#).

Institutions should consider and communicate screening protocols to stakeholders as soon as possible. This may include daily temperature checks or logging of symptoms. Institutions must abide by all existing state and federal health privacy statutes and regulations in developing their testing and contact tracing protocols.

Institutions should revisit their Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to ensure that it contains clear next steps in transportation and housing (if applicable) of exposed or ill residential students and plans for timely reporting of pandemic exposure while maintaining confidentiality. Any updates to an institution's EOP should be resubmitted to OSHE at OSHE@OSHE.NJ.GOV.

Additional Considerations

(These steps may help institutions in considering ways to adhere to the standards above.)

- Prioritize populations for testing that may be at increased risk or likely to come into more frequent contact with others.

Helpful Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Testing for COVID-19](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Symptom Checker](#)
- New Jersey Department of Health: [COVID-19 Information for Schools](#)
- State of New Jersey: [COVID-19 Information Hub](#)

INSTRUCTION

Below, please find the anticipated instructional impacts of each stage on “The Road Back.” The conduct permitted in each stage will be controlled by Executive Order and thus, is subject to change. The intent of this section is to provide institutions with the information necessary, to the greatest extent possible, to plan for reopening across all three stages.

<u>Stage 1</u> <i>Colleges are engaged in distance learning</i>	<u>Stage 2</u> <i>Most in-person learning with safeguards</i>	<u>Stage 3</u> <i>Colleges may operate in person with reduced capacity</i>
Instruction		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All in-person instruction, including labs, clinical rotations and all other curricular activity, is prohibited, unless a waiver supported by a compelling rationale is obtained from the Secretary of Higher Education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursuant to Executive Order Nos. 155 and 175, in-person instruction may resume in alignment with state-established restrictions and other safety measures as appropriate. • Active courses, such as theater or dance, should be limited and if they must occur, should include additional safeguard considerations, such as enhanced social distancing and infection control practices. • Institutions must provide students with the option of participation via remote instruction to the extent practicable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person instruction, labs, and other curricular activity are allowed within state-established restrictions and other safety measures as appropriate.

Stage 1

- During Stage 1, institutions are limited to using distance learning to provide instruction, unless a waiver supported by a compelling rationale is obtained from the Secretary of Higher Education.

Stage 2

- During Stage 2, institutions may resume in-person instruction, as long as:
 - Institutions provide students with the option of participation via remote instruction to the extent practicable;

- Classroom occupancy and density are limited as needed to allow for social distancing of six feet, at minimum, to be observed; and
- Institutions observe Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) public health standards for [distancing](#), [sanitizing equipment](#), [handwashing](#), and [cleaning and disinfection](#).
- Active classes that involve activities in which students are more physically or verbally active than sedentary and may therefore be emitting more aerosols or droplets than normal talking (such as theater, music, or dance) pose a higher risk. Institutions should consider limiting the number of these type of classes during stage 2, as well as provide additional safeguards (enhanced social distancing and infection control practices) to protect students when they participate in these kinds of activities.
- Institutions must provide students with mandatory training or orientation regarding COVID-19 sanitary and social distancing practices before the students begin or resume in-person courses at the institution.

Stage 3

- Modified in-person instruction for all types of classes may resume in accordance with both statewide restrictions and [CDC/DOH](#) public health infection control standards, including social distancing, sanitizing equipment, handwashing, and cleaning and disinfection.
- Active classes that involve activities in which students are more physically or verbally active than sedentary and may therefore be emitting more aerosols or droplets than normal talking (such as theater, music, or dance) are of a higher risk. Institutions must provide additional safeguards to protect students when they participate in these kinds of activities.

Limitations for All Stages

- Throughout all stages, there should be a continued provision of instructional options, including remote instruction, as may be required under State and federal law, or when otherwise feasible in order to accommodate faculty and students who are unable to participate in in-person instruction.
- Individuals presenting with symptoms or a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 must not attend in-person instruction and must be provided an alternative option for their work, such as remote instruction.
- Social distancing is required and should be encouraged through signage, spacing of tables, chairs, or desks. Institutions should be mindful of entryways and exits that could be sources of crowding. Institutions must take steps to ensure students and instructional staff are able to maintain at least six feet distance while engaged in classroom instruction. Institutions may need to change classroom arrangements, capacities, and class enrollment sizes to adhere to social distancing protocols.
- Institutions must develop a plan to ensure high-touch areas and shared surfaces in classrooms are cleaned and sanitized after every use.
- Institutions must abide by general safeguarding measures outlined in Executive Orders No. 155 and 175 (face coverings, social distancing, cleaning protocols, etc.).

Additional Considerations

(These steps may help institutions in considering ways to adhere to the standards above.)

- Have students attend classes on alternating days.
- Offer hybrid learning options such as [HyFlex or converged learning](#) (“flipped classrooms”) to manage the classroom capacity and pedagogical limitations imposed by social distancing (such as not being able to correct student work in close contact, reduced ability to touch and interact with student work products, etc.)
- Remove or restrict access to high-touch areas and shared surfaces that cannot be cleaned regularly.
- Implement staggered classroom use to allow for routine cleaning between classes and to eliminate student crowding outside of classrooms.
- Provide increased access to sanitation stations (e.g. handwashing or hand sanitizer stations) both around campus and in the classroom.

ON-CAMPUS RESIDENTIAL HOUSING

Below, please find the anticipated impacts of each stage on “The Road Back” for on-campus housing. The conduct permitted in each stage will be controlled by Executive Order and thus, is subject to change. The intent of this section is to provide institutions with the information necessary, to the greatest extent possible at this time, to plan for reopening across all three stages.

<u>Stage 1</u> <i>Colleges are engaged in distance learning</i>	<u>Stage 2</u> <i>Most in-person learning with safeguards</i>	<u>Stage 3</u> <i>Colleges may operate in person with reduced capacity</i>
On-Campus Residential Housing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No students allowed to reside in a residential facility, except for those enrolled in courses/programs with an in-person approved waiver or in narrowly defined extenuating circumstances who are already present on campus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited number of students (based on occupancy restrictions detailed below) can return to residential housing on campus. Institutions should be mindful of students for whom residential housing is necessary for an equitable education. • Common areas are closed. • Minimize outside visitors to residence halls unless there for delivery, maintenance or emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions continue to operate at reduced capacity as detailed below. • Students with greatest need should be prioritized for housing given the reduced capacity. • Common areas may open if the layout allows for social distancing and any state occupancy guidelines in place at that time.

Stage 1

- During Stage 1, institutions must not open on-campus residential housing to students, with the exception of students with extenuating circumstances, such as those using on-campus housing as their primary residence.

Stage 2

- During Stage 2, institutions may permit a limited number of students to return to campus with rigorous adherence to social distancing, cleaning/sanitation protocols and general safeguards detailed in Executive Order No. 155.
 - Full occupancy of buildings is not acceptable for restart plans. Institutions must reduce density of residential living spaces to the extent practicable.
 - Institutions should be mindful of students for whom residential housing is necessary to obtain an equitable education.

- Common areas, such as lounges and shared areas typically open to all residents within a housing facility, remain closed.
 - Common/shared kitchens in a residence hall may open for the use of cooking, however, institutions should limit occupancy, remove any furniture for the purpose of congregation, and ensure frequent cleaning.
- Institutions must develop a policy that limits the number of outside visitors to those with a compelling reason to be in the building (such as meal delivery, emergency personnel, or maintenance).
 - As an exception, staff and immediate family members of a student residing in an on-campus housing facility who have completed a screening for COVID-19 (e.g. temperature checks, questionnaires about recent health symptoms) can assist with student move-in and related activities.
 - Institutions must also discourage visiting between rooms within a building to help prevent spread of COVID-19.

Stage 3

- During Stage 3, institutions continue to de-densify residential facilities with a reduced occupancy limit.
 - Full occupancy of buildings is not acceptable for restart plans. Institutions must reduce density of residential living spaces to the extent practicable.
- Institutions should continue to be mindful of students for whom on-campus housing is necessary for an equitable education.
- Common areas may open for limited usage if area allows for social distancing and safeguarding (as detailed in Executive Order No. 155). Institutions should post signage in the common area regarding social distancing and related health and safety precautions.
- Visitation continues to be limited and monitored to facilitate contact tracing.

Limitations for All Stages

- Institutions must set aside a reasonable percentage of designated single rooms with private bathrooms for isolating residents who display symptoms or have a positive diagnosis of COVID-19.
- Institutions shall not require a student to live on-campus.
- Institutions must promote social distancing measures within residential facilities, including limiting gatherings of residents.
- The institution must implement a system for frequent self-monitoring by residents for any symptoms of COVID-19. Institutions must develop a reporting protocol that is clearly communicated for residents to follow if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- Move-in/move-out days should occur in scheduled shifts to reduce the number of people on campus and inside of a given building. Prior to move-in, institutions must implement a system for self-screening for symptoms by residents and those helping with move-in. This system should include a mandatory reschedule of move-in times for any individuals experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- Institutions must institute increased sanitization measures, including regular cleaning of all common or high-touch areas, including elevators and stairwells.

- For shared bathrooms:
 - Residents should not keep personal items in the bathroom and should be instructed not to place personal items directly on bathroom surfaces but instead utilize a shower caddy or basket.
 - Institutions should post prominent signs in bathrooms to notify residents of high-risk areas, such as sinks and shower areas, with suggested best practices to prevent infection.
 - Trash cans should be emptied regularly, and the person emptying trash should utilize gloves when carrying out this task.
 - The institution is required to clean the bathroom regularly (a minimum of twice daily).
- Residents, residential directors, advisors, and those working in residence halls must receive COVID-19 health and safety training regarding appropriate cleaning and social distancing protocols from their institution that includes any training on institutional policies and procedures developed to limit the spread of COVID-19. All training must be done prior to re-populating on-campus residential facilities.

Additional Considerations

(These steps may help institutions in considering ways to adhere to the standards above.)

- Seek to de-densify buildings and facilities whenever possible.
- Develop protocols for continuous student screening measures for when students return to campus after weekends off campus and after holiday breaks. There should be institutional policies and procedures for students returning to campus residential facilities after having been off campus for multiple days.
- Develop clear compliance standards for students around proper safeguarding activities like social distancing, wearing face coverings, and congregating in communal areas or visiting other students' rooms to minimize the possible spread of COVID-19.
- For shared bathrooms, consider utilizing automated hand dryers, toilets, faucets, and doors where possible to eliminate high-touch surfaces.
- Encourage students and staff to abide by general safeguarding measures detailed in Executive Order No. 155 (face coverings, social distancing, cleaning protocols, etc.) by way of signage, e-mails, text messages, etc.
- Rearrange furniture to promote social distancing.
- Implement staggered shifts for bathroom use for personal hygiene.
- Install signage about risk of transmission in communal bathrooms (particularly near sink and shower areas).
- Develop protocols for staff responsible for cleaning and disinfecting high-traffic surfaces within buildings, such as delivery/receiving areas, mailrooms, or loading docks attached to residence halls.
- Utilize single occupancy rooms to the maximum extent possible, as they present a smaller risk of transmission than a multiple occupancy dwelling.

COMPUTER LABS

Below, please find the anticipated impacts on computer labs of each stage on “The Road Back.” The conduct permitted in each stage will be controlled by Executive Order and thus, is subject to change. The intent of this section is to provide institutions with the information necessary, to the greatest extent possible at this time, to plan for reopening across all three stages.

Stage 1 <i>Colleges are engaged in distance learning</i>	Stage 2 <i>Most in-person learning with safeguards</i>	Stage 3 <i>Colleges may operate in person with reduced capacity</i>
<u>Computer Labs</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer laboratories remain closed. • Institutions should explore potential alternatives to computer laboratories (i.e., providing every student a laptop or PC and internet access). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer laboratories may open on a limited basis in accordance with state overarching requirements for computer labs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer laboratories may open on a limited basis in accordance with state requirements. • Curbside pickup or delivery is available.

Stage 1

- During Stage 1, computer labs remain closed.

Stage 2

- During Stage 2, computer labs may open on a limited basis following state overarching requirements for computer labs.
- Social distancing is required, and institutions must configure spaces to allow for social distancing of at least six feet between individuals at desks or terminals, provide adequate sanitation of equipment and guidance for users, (i.e., wipes to clean the keyboards, computer terminals and desks after each use) and enforce face covering requirements, unless where doing so would inhibit the individual’s health.
- Computers and other high-touch areas must be disinfected before and after each use, and signage should direct individual users to disinfect the terminals after usage with cleaning equipment provided.
- Hours of operation, wherever possible, should include a reserved designated period of access solely for high-risk individuals, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- A physical barrier, such as a shield guard, must be installed between the staff member(s) overseeing the computer lab and individuals using the computer lab; wherever feasible or otherwise ensure six feet of distance between those individuals.

Stage 3

- Computer laboratories may open in accordance with state restrictions.
- Institutions must have restrictions in place for social distancing of at least six feet between individuals, in addition to requirements for adequate sanitation measures and face covering requirements.
- Computers should be disinfected before and after usage, and signage should direct individual users to disinfect the terminals after usage with equipment provided to use for cleaning.
- Institutions must configure spaces to allow for distancing of at least six feet between individuals at desks or terminals, provide adequate sanitation equipment and guidance for users, (i.e., wipes to clean the keyboards after each student), and enforce face covering requirements, unless an individual has a medical exception.
- Curbside pickup is available for requested materials, if applicable. Employees who deliver the materials should wear protective face covering and gloves and place materials directly in a patron's vehicle whenever feasible.

Limitations for All Stages

- Sanitizing stations should be available at entry and exit points and cleaning materials and sanitizer should be available throughout the facility.
- Institutions must abide by general safeguarding measures detailed in Executive Order No. 155 (face coverings, social distancing, cleaning protocols, etc.).

Additional Considerations

(These steps may help institutions in considering ways to adhere to the standards above.)

- Limit students' use of computer laboratories to alternating days in order to have fewer students in the lab at one time.
- Implement precautions and safeguards that limit the number of students entering and exiting the laboratory at one time. This could include establishing an appointment system for entry into the computer laboratories.
- Rearrange the layouts of computer laboratories, such as physically distancing computers from one another or alternating which computers may be used.
- Schedule computer laboratory access to accommodate students who lack internet or broadband access at home, those who may not have access to adequate technology at home, or those who otherwise have greater material need for services of the computer laboratory.
- Provide protective equipment coverings, such as disposable keyboard covers.
- Offer expanded laptop access and increase the number of wireless hotspots on campus, particularly for students who do not otherwise have access to technology or internet.
- Place physical barriers (e.g. movable partitions) between computer terminals in cases where social distancing is not possible.

LIBRARIES

Below, please find the anticipated impacts of each stage of “The Road Back” on libraries. The conduct permitted in each stage will be controlled by Executive Order and thus, is subject to change. The intent of this section is to provide institutions with the information necessary, to the greatest extent possible at this time, to plan for reopening across all three stages.

Stage 1 <i>Colleges are engaged in distance learning</i>	Stage 2 <i>Most in-person learning with safeguards</i>	Stage 3 <i>Colleges may operate in person with reduced capacity</i>
<u>Libraries</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries remain closed. • Returned items are sanitized wherever possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries may open on a limited basis in accordance with state overarching requirements for libraries. • Curbside pickup of requested materials is available. This should be done on a scheduled basis and handled by curbside pickups. • Returned items are sanitized wherever possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library facilities may open on a limited basis in accordance with state overarching requirements for libraries. • Curbside pickup of requested materials should remain available.

Stage 1

- During Stage 1, libraries remain closed, however online access to collections remains available.

Stage 2

- During Stage 2, libraries may open in accordance with statewide overarching requirements for libraries.
- Curbside pickup is available for requested materials. Employees who deliver the materials must wear protective face covering and gloves, and place materials directly in a patron’s vehicle whenever feasible.
- Transactions should be handled in advance by phone, email, or other means to avoid person-to-person contact.
- Items should be sanitized wherever possible when returned.

Stage 3

- Libraries may open with a reduced number of occupants based on state guidelines. Libraries should have policies in place for social distancing of at least six feet, adequate sanitation measures (i.e., hand sanitizer stations, sanitization of tables and computer equipment, etc.), and face coverings.
- Institution should develop cleaning procedures for computer terminals used to search library holdings/collections. Computers should be disinfected before and after usage, and signage should be in place that directs individual users to disinfect the terminals after usage.
- Social distancing must be enforced, as many on-campus libraries have “communal” spaces for groups to study and learn. These areas should remain closed and/or only used if social distancing (at least six feet of distance) can be observed.

Limitations for All Stages

- Returned materials should be sanitized as appropriate, where possible.
- Computer terminals used for searching library catalog and collections should be cleaned prior to and after each use- following procedures similar to computer labs.
- Online access, remote requests, and interlibrary loans remain available and should be expanded wherever possible. Libraries should encourage students, faculty, and staff to use online versions of publications whenever possible.
- Institutions must allow employees break time for repeated handwashing throughout the day.

Additional Considerations

(These steps may help institutions in considering ways to adhere to the standards above.)

- Implement staggered schedules to allow for fewer students in the library at one time.
- Establish service hours that accommodate the needs of vulnerable populations, such as creating an earlier opening for immunocompromised students/faculty only.
- Expand online access to publications and other remote services.
- Create more decentralized spaces for individual and group study throughout campus and rearrange furniture where possible to promote social distancing.
- Post signage encouraging students and employees to recognize symptoms of COVID-19.
- Provide easy-to-access sanitation stations (e.g. handwashing or hand sanitizer stations) at entrances and around the library.
- Implement a virtual or self-checkout system where possible to limit person-to-person exchange of materials.
- Explore screen-sharing software as a possibility for providing assistance by librarians while maintaining social distance.

RESEARCH

Below, please find the anticipated impacts of each stage of “The Road Back” on research. The conduct permitted in each stage will be controlled by Executive Order and thus, is subject to change. The intent of this section is to provide institutions with the information necessary, to the greatest extent possible at this time, to plan for reopening across all three stages.

<u>Stage 1</u> <i>Colleges are engaged in distance learning</i>	<u>Stage 2</u> <i>Most in-person learning with safeguards</i>	<u>Stage 3</u> <i>Colleges may operate in person with reduced capacity</i>
Research		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only essential research operations, with appropriate safeguards, is allowed to occur in-person. • Institutions must offer any student-related research for credit remotely, unless a waiver is obtained from the Secretary of Higher Education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research in outdoor spaces that can adhere to social distancing and cleaning protocols may resume. • Individual labs/facilities can open in accordance with state restrictions where the lab can allow for social distancing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person research is allowed in accordance with state restrictions. • Research that can be conducted remotely should continue to be conducted remotely.

Stage 1

- During Stage 1, any student-related research for credit must be offered remotely, unless a waiver is obtained from the Secretary of Higher Education, as this activity is considered “in-person instruction.”
- Most research offered remotely; only health-related and essential services/research is permitted to continue in-person with appropriate safeguards (see general safeguarding measures detailed in Executive Order No. 155).
- Human-subject research is not allowed, unless deemed essential by the state in response to COVID-19.
- Researchers should seek modalities that avoid personal contact.

Stage 2

- During Stage 2, research that occurs in outdoor spaces may continue with appropriate safeguards.
- Research that occurs in a lab/facility that can allow for social distancing can resume in accordance with state restrictions.
- Where possible, research should be conducted remotely.

Stage 3

- Institutions may allow in-person research in accordance with state guidelines, provided that research labs have restrictions in place for social distancing of at least six feet, adequate sanitation measures, and personal protective equipment.
- Research requiring more substantive human interaction can begin with appropriate safeguards. Participants and researchers must engage in social distancing with appropriate personal protective equipment.

Limitations for All Stages

- Research meetings and presentations should be held virtually where possible to eliminate person-to-person contact.
- Any research/lab materials should be regularly cleaned and sanitized according to [CDC guidelines](#).
- Research labs must abide by general safeguarding measures detailed in Executive Order No. 155 (face coverings, social distancing, cleaning protocols, etc.).

Additional Considerations

(These steps may help institutions in considering ways to adhere to the standards above.)

- Researchers should enter labs in shifts to limit capacity and interaction.
- Researchers should undergo training on appropriate safeguards while conducting research.
- Institutions should limit the use of shared laboratory equipment to the extent possible.
- Consider a soft start or ‘waves’ as you enter each stage for restart in order to build up capacity.

STUDENT SERVICES

Student services denotes specific staffed departments across campus, such as advising and health centers. Student services may also be encompassed in other functional topic areas, such as athletics, study abroad, etc. Student services are able to open in accordance with state occupancy guidelines. Where possible, student services that can be offered remotely should be offered remotely in order to help reduce capacity and risk of spread of COVID-19.

Limitations for All Stages

- Throughout all stages, students and employees who are immunocompromised, or otherwise in a high-risk category, should be allowed to do work or meet remotely rather than in-person.
- To limit interaction, institutions should use an appointment system to help reduce capacity in waiting areas.
- Institutions must abide by general safeguarding measures detailed in Executive Order No. 155 (face coverings, social distancing, cleaning protocols, etc.).
- Campus recreation centers and student/campus centers often house multiple amenities and services. Each of the individual amenities offered therein would be subject to the most current Executive Order/Directive and/or Administrative Order (such as those applicable to indoor pools, gyms, theaters, etc.) that would apply if the amenity was freestanding.

Additional Considerations

(These steps may help institutions in considering ways to adhere to the standards above.)

- Where possible, modify waiting areas in student support offices to allow for social distancing and help reduce traffic flow.
- Allot extra turnover time between appointments, events, or scheduled gatherings to allow for increased cleaning between events and to minimize crowding.
- Rearrange spaces frequented by students, such as study spaces, lounges, etc., to reflect social distancing protocol and to help students/employees visualize six feet.
- Redirect student traffic to limit contact and interactions.
- Offices should implement virtual check-in procedures when possible to minimize person-to-person contact and eliminate high-touch surfaces.

TRANSPORTATION

Institutions should adhere to the statewide guidance on transit available at the time for each stage and should consider [Executive Order No. 125](#), which implements additional mitigation requirements on NJ TRANSIT, Private Carriers, and Restaurants to limit the spread of COVID-19. Institutions must develop a plan for on-campus transportation, which should include protocol for transporting sick students residing on campus to essential appointments. Institutions must abide by general safeguarding measures detailed in Executive Order No. 155 (face coverings, social distancing, cleaning protocols, etc.).

Additional Considerations

(These steps may help institutions in considering ways to adhere to the standards above.)

- Rotate vehicles to allow for more frequent disinfecting between routes.
- Any shared vehicles (campus police, car rentals, security shuttles) should be cleaned regularly with a thorough disinfectant between shifts. Where possible, an individual should try to consistently utilize the same vehicle to help prevent spread.
- Institutions should address any institutional ridesharing programs (such as for bicycles) and provide cleaning wipes for shared bikes before/after use.
- Adjust schedules/routes or increase the number of shuttles running during peak times to help limit capacity.
- Encourage contactless boarding of buses/shuttle to prevent person-to-person spread.
- Implement campaigns at stations/stops on routes to encourage passengers to monitor for symptoms and not to board if they have any common symptoms of COVID-19.
- If vehicle allows, open windows to increase ventilation.

DINING

Below, please find the anticipated impacts of each Stage of “The Road Back” on dining and food service. The conduct permitted in each Stage will be controlled by Executive Order and thus, is subject to change. The intent of this section is to provide institutions with the information necessary, to the greatest extent possible, to plan for reopening across all three Stages.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Stage 1</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Colleges are engaged in distance learning</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Stage 2</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Most in-person learning with safeguards</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Stage 3</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Colleges may operate in person with reduced capacity</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Dining</u></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor dining facilities are closed. • Takeout, “grab-and-go,” and/or delivery available to those who must continue to reside on campus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takeout, “grab and go,” and/or delivery options should remain available. • Indoor dining halls operated by degree-granting institutions of higher education may open provided that social distancing can be maintained and access is limited to faculty, staff, and students (not general public). • Outdoor dining is allowed pursuant to statewide health and safety guidelines. • All dining facilities must follow state and federal safeguarding guidelines, such as (not an exhaustive list): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proper hygiene protocol ○ Wearing a cloth face covering ○ Remaining six feet apart ○ Minimizing gatherings ○ Disinfecting and sanitizing workplaces and dining areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor dining facilities may open based on state guidelines in place at the time. Must adhere to all CDC and DOH protocols, social distancing guidelines and sanitation protocols. • Takeout, “grab and go,” and/or delivery options remain available. • Outdoor dining should continue pursuant to statewide occupancy, health, and safety guidelines. • All outdoor and indoor dining facilities must follow state and federal safeguarding guidelines, such as (not an exhaustive list): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proper hygiene protocol ○ Wearing a minimum of cloth masks in public ○ Remaining six feet apart ○ Minimizing gatherings ○ Disinfecting and sanitizing workplaces and dining areas

- During Stage 1, institutions must keep in-person, campus-owned dining facilities closed for in-person dining.
- Institutions that have residents remaining on campus will need to determine alternatives for providing students with food, such as “grab and go,” takeout, or delivery.

Stage 2

- During Stage 2, takeout, delivery, “grab-and-go” options are preferred.
- Indoor dining halls operated by degree-granting institutions of higher education may open, provided that social distancing can be maintained and access is limited to faculty, staff and students (not general public).
- Outdoor dining may open in accordance with state occupancy and outdoor dining guidelines in place at the time and where general safeguards can be implemented.

Stage 3

- Outdoor dining may continue in accordance with state occupancy and outdoor dining guidelines in place at the time and where general safeguards can be implemented.
- Indoor dining halls operated by degree-granting institutions of higher education may continue to operate, provided that social distancing can be maintained and access is limited to faculty, staff and students (not general public).
- Dining facilities must adhere to all CDC and DOH protocols, social distancing guidelines and sanitation practices.

Limitations for All Stages

- All individuals entering dining facilities must wear face coverings.
- All dining employees must wear gloves and face coverings while in dining facilities or providing food outside of the facilities for the purposes of outdoor dining and delivery. Exceptions will be made only for medical reasons.
- Dining employees must be trained on appropriate sanitization and social distancing practices and protocols, as well as institutional policies and procedures developed to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- Institutions must limit the number of individuals in a single facility at any given time, including employees, in accordance with the occupancy guidelines. For example, during Stage 1, institutions may want to consider multiple food pick-up points, staggered food pick-up times, or direct food delivery to help manage capacity.
- Institutions must increase sanitization measures, including regular cleaning of all high-touch areas.
- Institutions must eliminate buffet style dining.
 - Institutions should eliminate any shared items (such as condiment bottles).
- Dining facilities must follow state and federal safeguarding guidelines and follow proper hygiene protocols, wear masks, practice social distancing, minimize gatherings, and disinfect and sanitize workplaces. For example, see New Jersey Department of Health’s Food and Drug Safety resource page: <https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/food-drug-safety/>.

Additional Considerations

(These steps may help institutions in considering ways to adhere to the standards above.)

- Alter dining facilities to reduce the possible transmission of COVID-19. Possible alterations include:
 - Rearranging or reducing the number of tables and seats in the dining facility to allow for proper social distancing between diners (e.g. six feet apart).
 - Monitoring entrance/exit of facilities to control flow/capacity of dining facilities. For example, once the maximum number of patrons enters, a patron may only enter once another patron leaves.
 - Clearly marking six feet of distance in check-out lines on floor with tape or signage to help patrons visualize appropriate social distancing.
 - Adding physical barriers (such as moveable barriers) between dining workers and customers, particularly at registers.
- Implement timed dining once statewide occupancy capacity is increased to help reduce capacity and allow for additional cleaning in between dining shifts.
- Explore additional space on campus for dining to allow for social distancing.
- Post signage throughout dining facility to notify students of COVID-19 symptoms and other safeguarding guidance.
- Use disposable food service items (e.g. utensils, dishes). If disposable items are not feasible, institutions will need to ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and that proper cleaning protocol is implemented.
- Reduce or eliminate physical transfer of institution IDs/credit/debit cards at cash registers. Institutions may want to consider virtual payment and/or student ID lookup options.

STUDY ABROAD AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Institutions should follow federal, state, and local health guidance when considering domestic and international travel. CDC provides [guidance](#) regarding travel advisories due to community spread of COVID-19. Institutions must develop a plan for study abroad programs and international travel, which should include frequent communication with their students regarding changing travel restrictions due to public health metrics.

Additional Considerations

(These steps may help institutions in considering ways to adhere to the standards above.)

- Monitor travel guidance and advisories for countries under consideration for programs.
- Consider length of time for isolation/quarantine when planning for trips.

ATHLETICS

Institutional athletics are generally governed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and their membership conferences. Restarting athletics should be done in collaboration with guidance provided by these organizations and state and local entities. Prior to any restart, institutions must develop a program preparation plan that follows any [NCAA conference guidelines](#) (or other conference as appropriate), and that takes into account student health and safety as the primary concern. Programs such as club and intramural sports should follow guidance from relevant organizations, and state and local entities, including the “[Guidance for Sports Activities](#)” published by the DOH.

Limitations for All Stages

- Institutions should develop a protocol mandating frequent screening and testing for coaching staff and student-athletes and those in close contact with student athletes, particularly in advance of any games.
- Institutions should develop written protocols and conduct student-athlete and staff orientation/trainings regarding the transmission of COVID-19 and the handling of high-touch items, such as shared sports equipment, water bottles, etc. Institutions should limit any equipment sharing whenever possible, which includes the elimination of team water coolers.
- Team meetings should be held virtually whenever possible. If meetings cannot be remote, they must be socially distanced with general safeguarding protocols in place as detailed in Executive Order No. 155.
 - Team huddles, high-fives, handshakes and spitting should be restricted.
- All staff must wear face coverings. Athletes are encouraged to wear face coverings during down-time or when not in play, however, it is not recommended that face coverings be worn during physical activity.
- Institutions must have a quarantine/isolation protocol for student-athletes who have tested positive for COVID-19, come into contact with those who have tested positive, or who have developed symptoms.
- Institutions must limit any nonessential visitors, staff, volunteers, vendors, and media as much as possible.
- Institutions must educate athletes and athletic staff on the policies and protocols in their program preparation plan prior to arrival on campus.
- Institutions must follow state guidance and limit mass gatherings of spectators at sports competitions and follow state occupancy restrictions regarding indoor/outdoor venues. This includes concession stands, which must meet the requirements for outdoor dining.
- Institutional plans must address protocols for traveling for games, and hosting teams in competition. These protocols should include appropriate pre- and post-travel testing, and the potential for rearranging team schedules in the event of unsafe conditions for travel.

Additional Considerations

(These steps may help institutions in considering ways to adhere to the standards above.)

- As athletes return to campus for the start of the school year, have athletes self-isolate for two weeks prior to start of any practices.

- Given that different sports have different viral contact levels of risk, institutions should monitor guidance issued by the NCAA (or other appropriate conference) for each sport. New Jersey has developed a categorization of sports by risk level, available on [DOH's website](#). For example, golf and cross-country would be identified as low-risk, while sports such as football and rugby would be high-risk.
- Adopt a culture that encourages athletes and staff who exhibit symptoms to stay home and refrain from any athletic participation.
- Stagger use of shared facilities between different sports teams to reduce capacity and allow for sanitization of facilities in between use.
 - Where possible, institutions should encourage outdoor practices.
- Assign equipment to student-athletes to reduce sharing or engagement in person-to-person exchange of sports equipment in order to limit potential exposure.
- Divide larger teams into smaller groups for practices. These groups should be kept consistent and, where possible, stagger the practice schedules and practice days.

Amendments to Restart Standards

Date	Updates to Restart Standards
July 28, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the introduction, a link to OSHE’s restart plan template was added. • Mandatory items (as delineated in Executive Order No. 155) and ‘Limitations’ section within the guidance was updated for clearer language in response to stakeholder feedback. • The section on contact tracing protocols was updated to clarify the role of institutions and local health departments. • The section on instruction updated the language surrounding instructional options for those unable to participate in-person. • The section on libraries was updated to reflect the ability to open during Stage 2 in accordance with updated state guidance. • The section on student services was corrected to utilize term ‘high-risk.’
August 11, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For residential housing, additional clarification was provided on common spaces, such as kitchens, which are allowed to be open for the express use of cooking. • The section on computer labs was updated to reflect the ability to open during Stage 2 in accordance with updated state guidance. • For student services, additional information clarifying the status of campus recreation centers and student/campus centers was provided. • The corresponding document, “Template for Submission of Institutional Plans for Restart” was also updated to clarify the use of the Governor’s three-stage approach and to add an additional question under ‘Instruction.’
August 18, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The section on general safeguarding includes additional information on directives from Executive Order 175 and clarification on employer determination of whether jobs can be conducted remotely. • The section on instruction was updated in accordance with Executive Order No. 175. • The section on dining was updated to allow for indoor dining operated by institutions of higher education to open during stage 2 if state-established requirements and safeguarding are in place. • The section on athletics was updated to include club and intramural sports.
August 31, 2020	<p>The most recent changes to content areas have been bolded within the document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction was edited to provide additional context for the Restart Standards. • The section on general safeguards was updated to clarify how and when the State’s indoor gathering limits apply to higher education.