



The State University
of New York

MEMORANDUM

TO: SUNY Campus Presidents and Safety Monitors

FROM: Valerie Dent, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

SUBJECT: Clarification of Infection Rate Thresholds for the Temporary Suspension of In-Person Learning on College and University Campuses In New York State.

DATE: March 5, 2021

On February 20, 2021, the New York State Department of Health issued [SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDANCE FOR COVID-19 CONTAINMENT AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS DURING THE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY](#) (the “Supplemental Guidance”). This memo provides additional clarification on the minimum infection rate thresholds for the temporary suspension of in-person learning and other activities at SUNY campuses.

Clarification: Specifically, for purposes of complying with the new directive, SUNY campuses should use the “Rolling 14 Days” metric, which is displayed on the SUNY COVID-19 Tracker under “Campus Administered Testing”. This measurement is based on the number of positive cases from campus administered testing over a rolling 14-day period and cannot exceed 5%. If the 5% positivity rate is reached, the campus must immediately (1) transition all in-person learning to remote format(s) and (2) limit on-campus activities for a period of 14 days.

At all times, each campus should continue to closely monitor the positivity rate and maintain the ability to take aggressive and more restrictive action whenever significant trends emerge, and it is deemed warranted. Any restrictions should be made in consultation with the Chancellor’s office and the local department of health prior to any public announcement.

Mandatory Actions if Threshold is Reached: During such limitation period, in-person athletic events, extracurricular programs, and other non-essential student activities, including most in-person instruction, must be suspended, and dining hall(s) and other on-campus food services must be converted into take-out or delivery models, as appropriate. Essential on-campus functions are authorized to continue as described in the “Limitations of On-Campus Activity” section of the Supplemental Guidance. Residence halls should remain open.

After the 14-day period, the local health department(s) where the higher education institution is located shall evaluate the institution’s efforts to contain COVID-19 transmission at such location. If the local health department(s), in consultation with DOH, determines that the institution has demonstrated that community spread of COVID-19 has been effectively contained, the location shall be authorized to reopen for in-person learning. However, if after the 14-day period, the institution has not demonstrated that community spread of COVID-19 has been contained at such location, the local health department(s), in consultation with DOH, may require a continued suspension of in-person learning (i.e., an extended period of remote learning) and/or further mitigation measures by the institution.