
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

All Staff and Students

13 February 2020

Dear Colleagues and Students

I am writing to inform you that a faculty member who attends the Grace Assembly of God church has been tested positive for COVID-19. [Two earlier cases of infection linked to the church were announced by the Ministry of Health yesterday.](#)

The Singaporean professor, who has no travel history to China, is from the School of Design & Environment (SDE). He is currently warded in an isolation room, in stable condition, at the National Centre for Infectious Diseases. He is in good spirits.

No recent contact with students

On Monday, 10 February, the professor declared his temperature in line with NUS' requirements, and was well and had no symptoms. He attended a meeting with colleagues at SDE, and went straight home in the afternoon. He developed symptoms later that night and did not return to campus. **The professor did not have any recent contact with students. His last contact with students was on 5 February.**

I am grateful that the professor alerted us as soon as he was informed that he was suspected to be infected with COVID-19. This allowed us to swiftly trace the professor's activities and people he came into contact with, before official confirmation was received, and to immediately ask those who had been in close contact with the professor to isolate themselves at home, as a precautionary measure. None of them are students. They are now on a mandatory 14-day Leave of Absence (LOA) pending further communication from the authorities. They are all well, and show no symptoms.

Disinfection and increased frequency of cleaning for SDE

At the same time, upon being alerted that he was confirmed to be infected, we thoroughly disinfected the areas the professor had used or visited in SDE on Monday, 10 February, before he developed symptoms. These include all high traffic areas such as hand railings, lifts, and lift lobbies around the affected premises.

We have immediately ramped up the frequency of cleaning at SDE, including enhanced cleaning from once to twice a day for the School's studios and high traffic areas. We have also increased the cleaning frequency of restrooms in SDE from twice a day to four times a day.

E-learning at SDE

I know that this latest news may alarm some in the community. I ask that we remain calm. I would like to reassure everyone again that the professor was not in contact with students, and was only in contact with NUS staff, mostly in SDE. Given the SDE staff involved, we decided to adopt an additional precautionary measure to move all classes

in SDE to e-learning from tomorrow, Friday, 14 February. Small group studio sessions, which cannot be replaced by e-learning, will be suspended. **There will therefore be no in-person classes, tests, meetings or interactions between students and staff of SDE for the next eight days (14 to 21 February) prior to recess week (22 February to 1 March).**

Enhanced Precautionary Measures Across Campuses

Since the start of the COVID-19 situation, the University has:

- Put staff and students with a recent travel history to mainland China on compulsory LOA;
- Disciplined anyone who breaches the University's control measures such as LOA;
- Mandated twice daily temperature taking for all staff and students – with the first temperature reading to be submitted before they come to campus;
- Stepped up the frequency of cleaning and disinfection of areas with high human traffic on our campuses;
- Moved all classes with more than 50 students to e-learning;
- Cancelled or delayed events and activities involving more than 50 people.

We are doing everything we can to keep everyone on our campuses safe and healthy, and ask that you strictly adhere to the precautionary measures we have put in place.

In the meantime, our best, everyday defence is perhaps the simplest to put into practice: good personal hygiene and social responsibility. Because of the personal responsibility demonstrated by the professor at SDE and the information he provided, the University was able to swiftly launch contact tracing to limit the risk to the wider community. **The health and well-being of our entire community hinges on each and every one of us staying alert, vigilant and responsible to this evolving situation.**

Should you have any questions, please email: covid-19@nus.edu.sg or contact the management office of your department.

Professor Tan Eng Chye
President

Stay updated:

- NUS circulars, FAQs, emergency contact numbers, as well as useful links on the coronavirus situation are available at emergency.nus.edu.sg.
- Daily updates from our Dean of Students can be seen [here](#).
- Please refer to the [MOH website](#) for the latest information on the COVID-19 situation in Singapore.