



University for Peace



Communication on Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response #5 Wednesday 18 March 2020

**Dear University for Peace Community,
Students, Faculty and Staff,**

As you are aware, on **11 March 2020**, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a pandemic. On the same day, UPEACE issued an official communication indicating a range of preventive measures to be immediately employed by the University and the UPEACE community. Among other things, it was decided to transition all face-to-face courses into online modality commencing from 16 March 2020 until 12 April 2020, that is, the end of Easter Week.

On **16 March 2020**, the President of Costa Rica declared a State of National Emergency in Costa Rica. The measures taken included directing all schools (public and private) to be closed until the end of Easter Week with classes expected to resume on 13 April 2020. Additionally, the declaration stipulated that in the case of flights, as of **18 March 2020 and until 12 April 2020**, with the exception of air transport, commerce and supply crews, only Costa Rican citizens and legal residents may enter the country. Upon such entry, however, they shall have to undergo mandatory preventive isolation for 14 days in accordance with the sanitation order they receive from immigration officials at the point of entry.

In the last few days, states of emergency, lockdowns and travel restrictions have been imposed by several countries in all regions of the world. Although, in Costa Rica, a state of yellow alert continues as of date, it remains unpredictable as to what the national and international situation related to COVID-19 might be post-Easter. As a result of the proactive measures being undertaken by the Costa Rican government, even if the situation does not deteriorate significantly in the country, it appears very likely that the current state of yellow alert might continue for a few months. In turn, it is also very likely that the current state of emergency might be extended by the government beyond 12 April 2020. Simultaneously at the global level, it remains unclear as to whether travel restrictions might be relaxed or might continue to be in place post-Easter.

As reiterated in all previous related communications, the health and safety of the UPEACE community – all students, staff, resident and visiting faculty, and contractors – remains of primary concern. At the same time, it is of paramount importance to UPEACE that academic programmes continue to operate in as unhindered a manner as these extraordinary circumstances permit. Amid the pervasive uncertainty surrounding the situation that may unfold post-Easter, it is increasingly becoming impracticable to plan and implement courses based on the presumption that campus operations might be regularized by 12 April 2020 and that air travel for visiting professors without the possibility of being quarantined might be possible.

Under these circumstances, in order to balance both the imperatives of ensuring health and safety on the one hand, and academic continuity on the other, and to provide a sense of certainty to students, staff and faculty, the following implementation measures have been decided upon by the Rector, in consultation with the Dean, Academic Coordinator, Heads of Academic Departments, the Registrar, and the UPEACE medical unit:



I. SUSPENSION OF FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES FOR THE REST OF THE SEMESTER

1. All face-to-face classes scheduled for the post-Easter period in all academic programmes shall be suspended until the end of the academic semester.
2. Similar to the measures undertaken for the period between 16 March 2020 and 12 April 2020, all post-Easter face-to-face classes until the end of the semester will transition to the online modality.
3. Each Academic Department will coordinate with their students regarding these upcoming courses.

II. OPTION TO RETURN OR STAY

1. Since all courses henceforth until the end of the semester will be delivered online, students have the option to return to their own countries or places of regular residence, or to stay in Costa Rica till the end of the semester.
2. Students choosing to stay in Costa Rica must abide by all health and safety regulations of the Costa Rican government as well as communications issued from time to time by UPEACE, including those related to campus access and activities.
3. The decision to leave or stay is personal. Students should, however, be advised that given the decision to move all face-to-face courses to online modality for the rest of the semester and also considering that it is impossible to clearly determine if travel restrictions imposed by Costa Rica and several other countries worldwide will in fact be lifted on the already announced dates by each government, UPEACE is not in a position to guarantee, at this time, that students who decide to travel, either back to their home country or back to Costa Rica if restrictions are lifted, won't face disruptions in their transit either way.

III. PRE-DEPARTURE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

1. Irrespective of the date of departure, every student must complete the following formalities before leaving the country:
 - a. Return all books to the library.
 - b. Clear all financial matters, including pending payments, with the Finance Department.
 - c. Settle any pending bills with the cafeteria.
 - d. Give notice to your landlord as soon as you make the decision to leave.
 - e. Send a message to registrar@upeace.org notifying us of your departure date. This is very important for Immigration purposes.
2. As is the general policy at UPEACE, no transcripts or diplomas will be issued unless all the aforesaid requirements have been completed.

IV. FINAL GRADUATION PROJECTS

1. All final graduation project requirements remain in place as incorporated in the UPEACE guidelines. In view of the extraordinary circumstances. However, exceptions will be considered by your academic departments strictly on a case-by-case basis.



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2. Students who have chosen the internship track and find it difficult to get internship positions due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, have the option to switch to the capstone track, or if approved by your academic departments, to the thesis track. In case the capstone track is chosen and additional credits from coursework become necessary, students may, subject to approval by the academic department concerned, enroll in any course offered in the online modality free of cost.
3. Subject to approval by the academic department concerned, remote internships that may be offered by host organizations as a result of the pandemic, and which fulfil the learning objectives expected from an internship, may be accepted as a final graduation project.
4. Students should coordinate with their respective supervisors to ensure online communication for development of their final graduation projects.
5. Students who remain in Costa Rica will continue to have access to medical services on campus all throughout the rest of the semester. Appointment must be cleared by email first (kmoraf@upeace.org, cc: lmurillo@upeace.org) because medical staff must confirm availability of seats on the bus every day in order to observe social distancing.

V. COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

1. A decision on the appropriate modality for the commencement ceremony, originally scheduled for 9 June 2020, shall be made in due course and communicated to the UPEACE community.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING ACADEMIC MATTERS

1. All regular communication channels regarding academic matters, including the academic support officers for your programmes, remain in place.
2. For future questions or assistance regarding transcripts and eventually graduation/diploma processes, please write to the UPEACE Registrar, Ms. Elvia Farfan, at efarfan@upeace.org or registrar@upeace.org.