

COVID-19 Alert Level Plan and Related Actions

January 22, 2021

At Western New England University, the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff, are of paramount importance. The University will continue to take an analytics-based approach to determine whether to offer a majority of classes on-ground, per our current plan. All scenarios that may cause the University to alter the current plan will involve a thorough analysis by the President and the members of the University’s Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT). The information below highlights the steps and timeline the University will take should it decide to alter the current plan.

CASES OF COMMUNITY SPREAD

A community spread, as defined by the CDC, means that people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected. If a community spread of COVID-19 is determined, the University will close the relevant area(s) for a period of 72 hours. During that time, the area will go through deep cleaning protocols until it is determined to be safe for community members to re-enter that area. Should such an event occur, the University will notify the community via RAVE alert, an all-campus email, and postings to the COVID-19 website (wne.edu/coronavirus). Classes/events normally held in the area will be moved to a remote learning format until the area can be re-opened. Should a community spread occur in a residence hall, students may be asked to quarantine in their current residence, move to another part of the building, or be temporarily provided accommodation in another residence hall on campus.

WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY ALERT LEVELS

Western New England University has adopted a four-level alert system to provide guidance to the campus community regarding the current level of risk present on campus and to inform key operational decisions that need to be made. The University will be evaluating the metrics outlined below in order to make a data-based decision on the appropriate alert-level for the University.

WNE’S ALERT SYSTEM OVERVIEW	
Level 1—Green	Cases are rare. Remain vigilant with daily health checks, practice good hygiene, physical distancing, and wear face coverings.
Level 2—Yellow	There are relatively few numbers of cases on campus. The sources are known. Be extra vigilant about limiting contact and continue all Level 1 protocols. Deep cleaning protocols in affected locations and related actions will be implemented, per the community spread protocol. Some classes may be moved to remote learning for a limited period if classrooms require deep cleaning.
Level 3—Orange	A concerning number of cases are known on campus and sources are not known in all cases. There is a strong likelihood that undetected cases exist. Limit everyday activities. Campus to remain operational, but all coursework is to be moved to remote learning. All dining services will become “Grab ‘n Go” only, with food being delivered to sections of campus as needed.
Level 4—Red	Widespread outbreak with many undetected cases. A large and growing number of cases. Take strong measures to limit all contact. Campus Shutdown Plan to be implemented.

Level 1—Green

Level 2—Yellow

Level 3—Orange

Level 4—Red

Indicator

***Regional Data Weight—10%**

Springfield Average Daily Incidence Rate per 100,000—14 day average

Fewer than 15

16-32

33-48

49 or higher

Hampden County Average Daily Incidence Rate per 100,000—14 day average

Fewer than 15

16-32

33-48

49 or higher

Springfield hospitals daily census as percent of capacity (ICU and non-ICU)

Fewer than 30%

30-50%

51-80%

Greater than 80%

Springfield hospital new COVID-19 admits 7 day average

Fewer than 20

21-40

41-75

Above 75

Springfield and county percent positivity in last 14 days

Fewer than 5%

5-9%

9.1-15%

15.1% and greater

Indicator

WNE Data Weight—90%

WNE positive cases in past 7 days

5

5-10

11-15

16 or greater

Percent of students in on-campus isolation

Fewer than 10%
(11)

10%-19.9%
(20)

20%-29.9%
(31)

30% or Higher
(104)

Percent of tests with positive results

Fewer than 4%

4%-7%

7.1%-12%

Greater than 12%

Percent of designated isolation beds in use

Fewer than 30%
(31)

30%-50% (52)

50.1%-80% (83)

Greater than 80% (84+)

Percent of general housing beds in use for quarantine

Fewer than 30%
(27)

30%-50% (40)

50.1%-80% (64)

Greater than 80% (64+)

Number of community spread incidents in the past 7 days

0-1

2

3

Greater than 3

*The University will monitor all key metrics for Springfield and surrounding communities.

The University's Alert System model builds on work done at Elon University and based on a COVID-19 Plan Guide and Self-Assessment for Higher Education published by the Center for Health Security at Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, and Tuscan Strategy Consulting.

LEVEL 1 ALERT

Campus Open, Cases Are Rare Remain Vigilant with Safety Protocols

When in Level 1, the campus community must remain vigilant in practicing all health and safety protocols. Face covering, physical distance, and hygiene protocols are to be observed at all times. In this phase, instruction will be offered in the format originally outlined at the start of the term, which is a combination of in-person, hybrid, and online courses. The University's random testing of the asymptomatic campus population will be in effect during this phase, with the bi-weekly posting of results to the University's COVID-19 website. During this phase, there are no further actions required by the University community to control the spread of the virus other than the outlined protocols.

LEVEL 2 ALERT

Cases Are Contained Deep Cleaning Protocols Implemented

During this phase, the University will continue to follow the protocols outlined in Level 1. There are relatively few cases on campus and the University is able to identify the sources of all of the positive cases and has adequate space and resources to properly care for the positive cases and protect the community. In Level 2, the University will implement deep cleaning protocols in efforts to mitigate the spread, per the community spread protocol. Some, but not all, courses may be moved to an online format should the space in which the on-ground course is to take place become unavailable in order to be deep-cleaned. The deep cleaning protocol during this phase may also require the temporary moving of students, faculty, and staff from residence and/or office space. Random testing will escalate and become more focused during this phase.

LEVEL 3 ALERT

Classes Move to Remote Learning Campus Operations Remain Open

In this scenario, Western New England University will move all courses to a remote format. Non-essential faculty and staff will work remotely to reduce the spread. Campus operations, including the residence halls and dining services will remain operational. Students may choose to live on campus and conduct remote coursework from their residence halls, as current federal guidance advises against sending students home to minimize spread. Campus activities and support services will be available, offered in a remote format. The University will continue to offer Health Services and housing for infected resident and commuter students. All food service will be offered in a "Grab 'n Go" format only. Food will be delivered to various parts of campus by the University food service provider as needed. The University will reassess its ability to offer in person classes following two weeks of remote instruction.

LEVEL 4 ALERT

Shutdown of the Campus

Criteria:

An Executive Order by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to shut down because existing data shows that it is not in best interest of public health to stay open.

Factors:

Western New England University will implement its Emergency Shutdown plan when internal and/or external analytics indicate that is in the best interest of the safety of our community to do so. We will also implement the plan in the event that we are required to do so by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

All on-ground classes and campus activities will cease within two hours of notification. Faculty, staff, and students are directed to immediately begin collecting belongings, including teaching and learning supplies, to support the closure of campus operations. Multiple closure alerts will be sent to community members via a RAVE alert and through all relevant electronic means (email, campus portal, website, social media). The plan will take 48 hours to be fully complete, with a majority of on-campus operations being closed within eight hours. The remaining shutdown tasks involve the completion of residential students collecting belongings and coordinating transportation home. Within 48 hours, resident students will be expected to have arranged a final pick-up or have secured a place to reside off campus. Students in quarantine or isolation halls will remain on campus for the duration of their required seclusion. Meals for remaining students will be boxed and delivered. After the initial 48 hours of closure, University-defined essential employees will remain the only employees able to access campus.

PLAN FOR THE CONTINUATION OF INSTRUCTION

It is important to note that if the Emergency Shutdown plan is implemented, all on-campus and hybrid courses will continue to be offered, but in an online format. The University has invested significantly in the training of our faculty and staff and in technology and infrastructure to ensure a consistent and high-quality remote learning experience that will meet all accreditation standards. In addition, all student support services, which include but are not limited to, counseling, career, advising, tutoring, and mentoring services will continue to be offered in a virtual format, as will a wide variety of student activities designed to facilitate student connections.

Campus Shutdown Plan

DAY 1

All on-ground classes and campus activities will cease within two hours of notification. Faculty, staff, and students are directed to immediately begin collecting belongings, including teaching and learning supplies, to support the closure of campus operations. Multiple closure alerts will be sent to community members via a RAVE alert and through all relevant electronic means (email, campus portal, website, social media).

DAY 2

The plan will take 48 hours to complete, with a majority of on-campus operations being closed within eight hours. The remaining shutdown tasks include the coordination of residential students collecting belongings and moving off campus. Within 48 hours, resident students will be expected to have arranged a final pick-up or have secured a place to reside off campus.

DAY 3 AND BEYOND

Students in quarantine or isolation halls will remain on campus for the duration of their required seclusion. Meals for remaining students will be boxed and delivered. After the initial 48 hours of closure, University-defined essential employees will remain the only employees able to access campus.