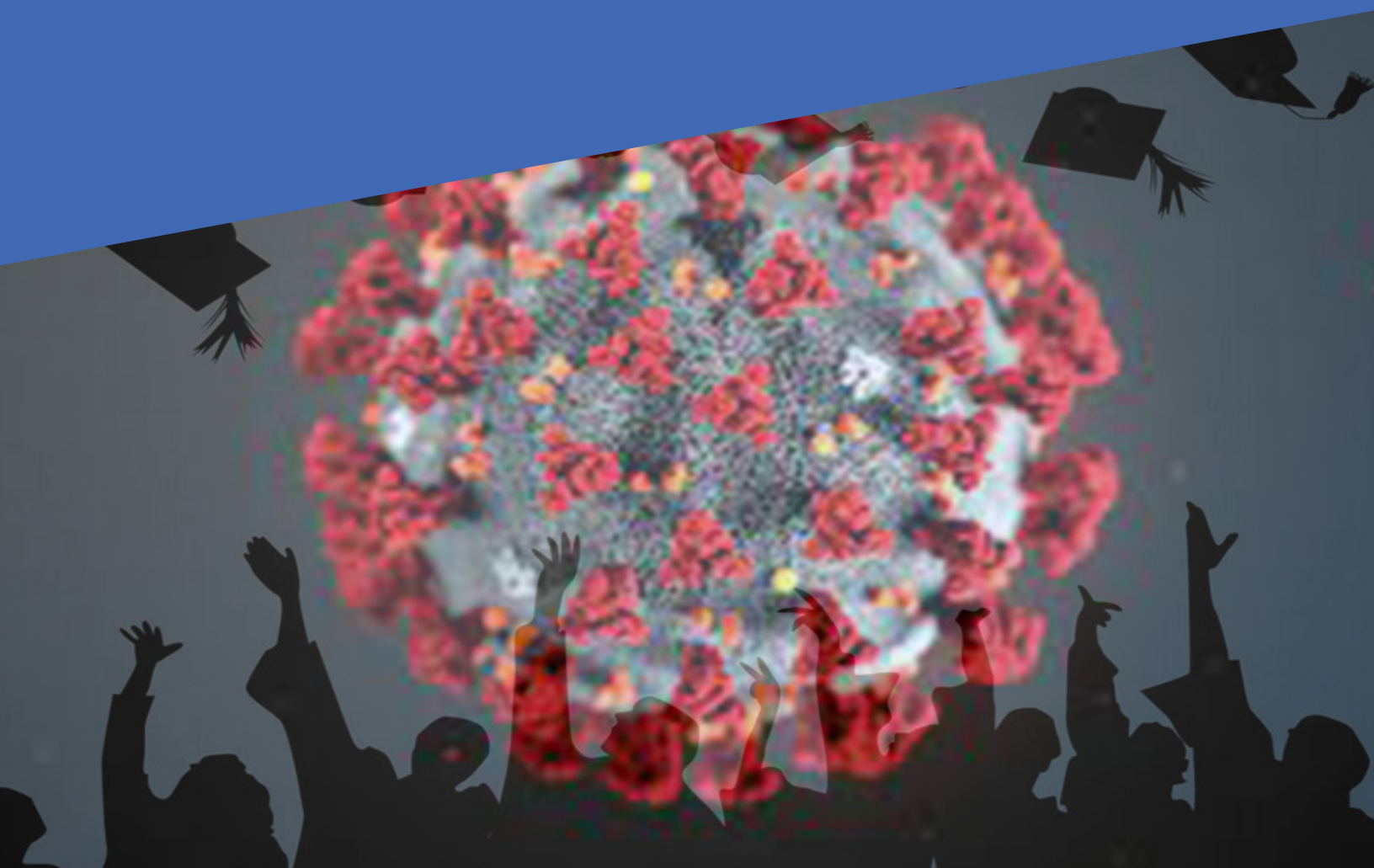
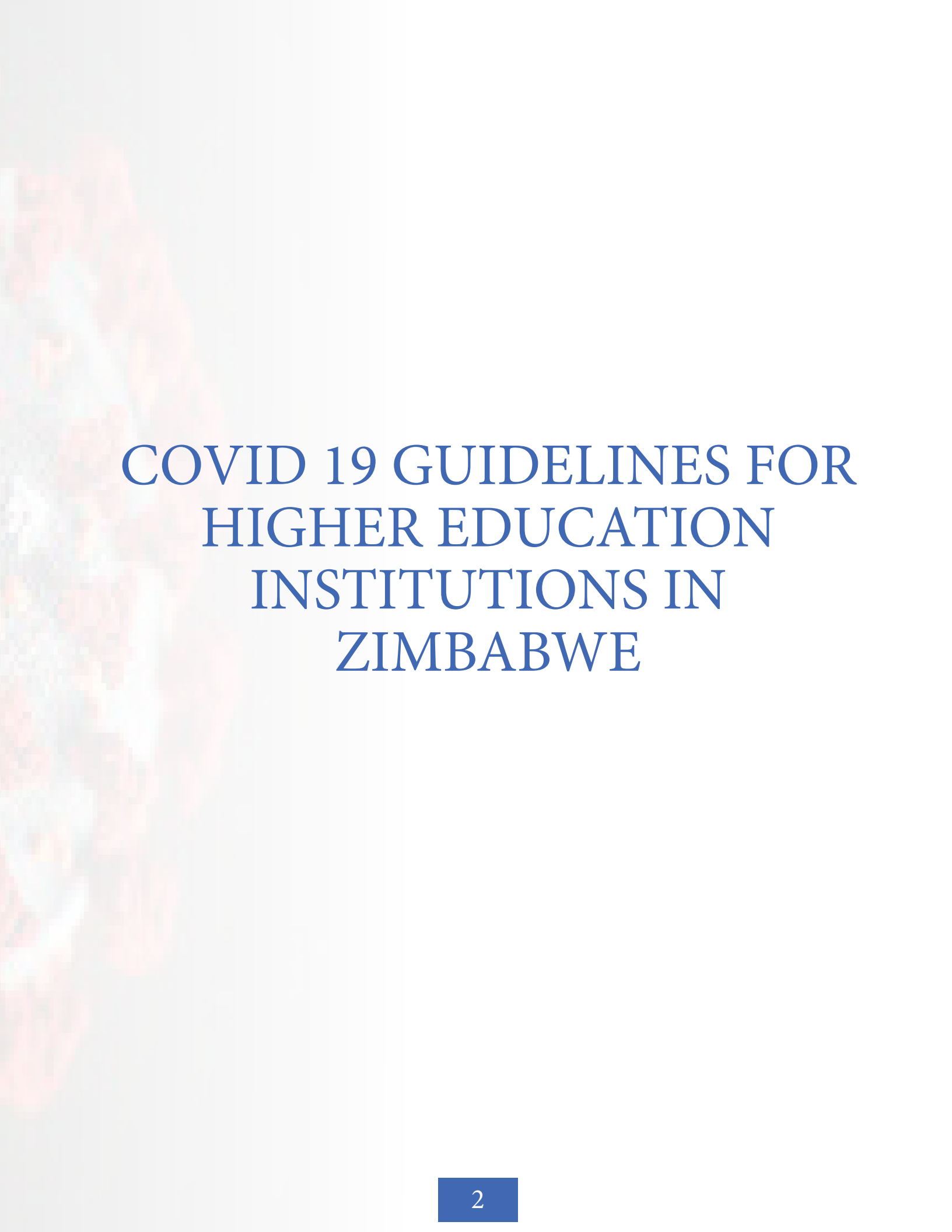


COVID 19 GUIDELINES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ZIMBABWE



Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education
Quality Assurance in Higher Education

A blurred background image showing a close-up of hands, possibly wearing gloves, in shades of pink, red, and white. The image is out of focus, creating a soft, ethereal effect.

COVID 19 GUIDELINES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are intended to mitigate the risks of spread of COVID-19 as staff and students have a need to work on campus. All staff and students in HEIs are advised to follow the guidelines of the ZIMCHE and or the different Universities' guidelines diligently.

THE TARGET GROUP

These ZIMCHE guidelines are targeted at all staff and students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Zimbabwe who are to return to work physically on campuses or have plans to do so.

GUIDELINES

The following guidelines shall be referred to by staff and students in HEIs in Zimbabwe.

- ✿ Universities are advised to find a means of disseminating mandatory information about COVID 19 to students and staff online before they can physically access their campus facilities.
- ✿ Staff and Students may be required to return to online mode of delivery and learning at any time and are required to adhere to the given guidelines.
- ✿ It is advised that staff and students are not allowed to visit their campuses whenever they are sick or have symptoms of COVID 19.
- ✿ Staff and students must wear masks correctly on campus at all times in line with the Ministry of Health and Childcare guidelines in Zimbabwe. Staff and students in HEIs must wear masks when in elevators, common rooms, hallways and all other shared spaces not listed here.
- ✿ Staff and faculty must follow these compulsory guidelines whilst on campus in order to protect themselves and others:
 - Temperature check at all entry points into the HEIs. If experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 staff and students are advised not to go to work or attend classes.
 - Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, particularly after getting contact with common facilities e.g. doorknobs, handrails, and shared equipment.
 - Students and staff are expected to cough/sneeze into sleeves, preferably into the elbow and sanitize hands as frequently as possible.
 - In order to prevent infection, avoid touching your face; particularly your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands to prevent infection.
 - There is a need to clean and disinfect frequently shared objects of frequently touched objects and surfaces in different workspaces.
 - Keep all surfaces in workspaces free of litter or any other waste to allow for proper cleaning in the workspaces.

KEY POINTERS FOR HEIS FOR PROTECTION OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

✿ **Protecting yourself and Others**

✿ **Wearing a mask**

- If you are not fully vaccinated you should wear a mask in indoor public places.
- In areas with high numbers of COVID-19 cases and also consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with close contact with others who are not vaccinated/fully vaccinated.
- Staff and students are advised to talk to their healthcare provider about steps they can take to manage their health and risks.
- If you are fully vaccinated, you are still required to wear a Mask
- Masks are required on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, with in, or out of the country.

✿ **Social distancing**

- Stay 1.5metres away from others.
- Inside your home: Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Outside your home: Maintain distance between yourself and people who do not live in 1.5 meters away from people in your household.
- Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.

✿ **Vaccination**

- Authorized COVID-19 vaccines can help protect from COVID-19.
- You should get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible.

✿ **Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces**

- Being in crowds like in restaurants, bars, fitness centers, or movie theaters puts you at higher risk for COVID-19.
- Avoid indoor spaces that do not offer fresh air from the outdoors as much as possible.
- If indoors, bring in fresh air by opening windows and doors, if possible.

✿ **Clean and Disinfect**

- Clean high touch surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If someone is sick or has tested positive for COVID-19, disinfect frequently touched surfaces. Use a household disinfectant product from according to manufacturer's labeled directions.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them using detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

❁ Monitoring health daily

- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
- Especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a 1.5 meters
- Take your temperature if symptoms develop.
- Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature.

❁ SYMPTOMS OF COVID19

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- GI distress, including nausea, diarrhea, and/or vomiting
- Congestion and/or runny nose
- Sore throat and/or
- New loss of taste or smell

GUIDELINES FOR COVID 19 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS IN HEIS

The following should be reported to the HEI once observed by staff and students.

- ❁ HEIs should have clear COVID 19 reporting protocols which should be clearly stipulated to staff and students. Reporting for COVID 19 positive results, any suspected COVID 19 cases.
- ❁ Students and staff are encouraged to have voluntary self-isolation if there is suspected exposure to COVID-19, or the presence of symptoms.
- ❁ Universities should have clear guidelines for the following:
 - COVID 19 testing
 - COVID 19 vaccinations
 - Procedures for handling positive cases
 - Guidelines for quarantine and self- isolations
 - Contact tracking

Personal Illness and Quarantine

- Staff and Students may not report or return to campus while they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (or other respiratory illnesses), such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, muscle pain or body aches, headache or chills. The CDC maintains a current list of symptoms associated with COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.
- Staff or Students who experience an onset of symptoms while at work must leave campus immediately. Staff should contact their manager and the Office of Human Resources. Students should contact the designated office(s) for handling issues to do with COVID 19 and other respiratory diseases

✿ External Clients and Meetings

- Meetings should continue to take place in a virtual setting wherever possible.
- For physical meetings, 1.5 meters should always be maintained
- Expectations regarding visitors to campus should be outlined for every institution.
- Administrators /Directors of works and Estates/ Projects Officers bringing Contractors to work on campuses are required to share COVID 19 guidelines of the institution before work commences.
- As a condition for continuous or intermittent access to university campuses or facilities, Contractors must have to provide their own COVID-19 risk mitigation guidelines or procedures. These procedures should be presented to institutions and may be used as a means of screening/competition for contractors.
- **HEIs should set up stern measures to deal with staff and students who knowingly break COVID 19 rules.**

Summary of general principles applicable to HEIs

The principles underlying the considerations for learning-related public health measures to prevent and minimize COVID 19 transmission in HEIs settings are as follows:

- ✿ Ensuring continuity of safe, adequate, and appropriate educational and social learning and development of students,
- ✿ Minimizing the risk of COVID 19 transmission within HEIs
- ✿ Guarding against the potential for universities to act as amplifiers for transmission of COVID 19 within communities

Administrative level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative policies: setting attendance and entry rules; cohorting (keeping students and teachers in small groups that do not mix, also referred to as bubble, capsule, circle, safe squad); staggering the start of school, breaks, bathroom, meal and end times; alternate physical presence (e.g. alternate days, alternate shifts) • Infrastructure: Reorganization of the physical space or its use, identifying entry/exits and marking direction of walking, handwashing facilities, building environmental design clues (“nudging”) to facilitate appropriate use of space
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining clean environment: frequent cleaning of surfaces and shared objects • Ensuring adequate and appropriate ventilation with priority for increasing fresh outdoor air by opening windows and doors, where feasible, as well as encouraging outdoor activities, as appropriate • Use of masks where physical distancing cannot be maintained; this includes ensuring the availability of masks • Symptom screening by parents and lecturers, testing and isolation of suspected cases, as per national procedures; stay-at-home when sick policies • Reorganization of transportation and arrival/departure times where there is provision for transportation • Clear accessible sharing of information, and feedback mechanisms established with parents, students and teachers • Continuation of essential university-based services such as mental health and psychosocial support, school feeding and nutrition programmes, vaccinations and other services.
Classroom level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical distancing where appropriate • Wearing of masks, where recommended • Frequent hand hygiene • Respiratory etiquette • Cleaning and disinfection • Adequate ventilation • Spacing of desks or grouping of students if required.
Individuals at high-risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of students and lecturers at high-risk of severe illness – those individuals with pre-existing medical conditions; develop appropriate strategies to keep these individuals safe • Adoption of a coordinated and integrated approach to ensure vulnerable students' holistic needs (protection, mental health and psychosocial support, rehabilitation, nutrition and other issues) • Maintenance of physical distancing and use of medical masks • Frequent hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

Contacts

Each HEI should provide details of contact(s) who can address questions regarding COVID 19 in their institution. For https://cquin.icap.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ZIMBABWE_COVID-19-CLINICAL-GUIDELINES-APRIL-2020.pdf for more information concerning management of COVID19 in Zimbabwe refer to the Ministry of Health and Child Care on this link https://cquin.icap.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ZIMBABWE_COVID-19-CLINICAL-GUIDELINES-APRIL-2020.pdf

SOURCES:

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