



MACHAKOS UNIVERSITY

ISO 9001:2015 Certified

COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS POLICY

JANUARY, 2021



ISO 9001:2015 Certified Soaring Heights in Transforming Industry and Economy

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APPROVAL

Policy Title: Covid-19 Preparedness Policy

Policy Contact: Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration, Planning and Finance)

Approval Authority: The University Council

Category: Division of Administration, Planning and Finance

Reference No: MksU/MR/A/00

Effective Date: Date of signing

Approved by University Council

Sign.....

PROF. LUCY W. IRUNGU, Ph.D.

&

PROFESSOR OF ENTOMOLOGY

VICE – CHANCELLOR & SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL

Sign.....

DR. JAMLECK MUTUGI, Ph.D.

CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL



Date.....

Date.....



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FOREWORD

Corona-Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The first case was recorded in China and then it spread to other countries around the world and later it was declared a Pandemic. Pandemics affect all aspects of life and the Education sector was badly hit paralyzing all activities. To reduce the impact of COVID-19 outbreak conditions, it is therefore important for all employers to plan now for COVID-19 mitigation measures. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection through its Directorate of Occupational Safety and Health Services developed guidelines, which focus on the need for employers to implement engineering, administrative, work practice controls and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), to help manage the impacts of COVID-19. The Directorate hence, directed all State agencies to develop COVID -19 Policies, based on the provided guidelines to manage the Pandemic. It is against this background that the COVID -19 Preparedness Policy is developed.


Prof. Lucy W. Irungu, Ph.D.

Vice-Chancellor, & Professor of Entomology
MACHAKOS UNIVERSITY



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FUNDAMENTAL STATEMENTS

Vision Statement

A preferred University of Excellence in Scholarship and Service Delivery.

Mission Statement

Provide Scholarly Education through Training, Research and Innovation for Industrial and Socio-economic Transformation of our Communities.

MksU Policy Statement

Machakos University is an academic institution committed to generating and transmitting knowledge, skills and attitude through Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for the benefit of humanity.

CORE VALUES

Integrity	- To honestly deliver on our promises to our stakeholders
Accountability	- To always be accountable in the assigned duties
Professionalism	- To be committed to high standards of training and service delivery
Inclusivity	- Respect for diversity
Creativity	- Determination to continually improve
Teamwork	- To actively work together to achieve common goals
Equity	- To strive to be an equal university where meritocracy is practiced in all areas



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

COVID-19:	Corona Virus Disease of 2019.
ERP:	Enterprise Resource Planning
PPES:	Personal Protective Equipments
HR:	Human Resource
VC:	Vice- Chancellor



DEFINITION OF TERMS

COVID-19: A respiratory disease that spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Quarantine: A state, period, or place that separates and restricts movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they will become sick. The people may have been exposed to a disease and do not know it, or they have the disease but do not show symptoms.

Isolation: Separation of sick people with contagious disease from people who are not sick.

Personal Protective Equipment -equipment such as gloves, masks and coveralls worn by people who are at risk of injury or infection.

Self –isolation: Separating oneself when sick with COVID-19 from people who are not sick. -

Self-quarantine: Separating oneself and limiting movement when one has or may have been exposed to COVID-19 disease to see if one will become ill.

Underlying medical condition- a health problem that can make a disease more serious in its effects if it is contracted. .

Staff: All persons employed by the University

Students: Any individual enrolled for a Machakos University programme of study.



1.0 PREAMBLE

Machakos University was chartered on 7th October, 2016 as a fully-fledged University. The University aims at becoming a leading center of academic excellence in Technical, Science, Education, Humanities & Social Sciences, Agriculture, Business & Economics, Environmental Studies, Hospitality, Public Health, Research, Training and Community Service nationally and internationally. The mitigation of effect of COVID-19 disease as envisioned in this policy will go a long way in helping the University in achieving its mandate.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Machakos University is committed to creating a safe work environment that promotes health and safety practices and seeks to prevent the occurrence and spread of COVID-19 disease risks associated with work and the work environment, reduce the exposure and mitigate effects of COVID-19 disease as reasonably practicable. The management shall therefore, support the implementation of this policy in accordance with their roles and responsibilities.

3.0 RATIONALE

Most of the staff and students spend much of their time at the University than they do at their homes and like any other environment, the University is exposed to health hazards and risks. The emergence of COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated that safety measures be adopted at all places to curb its spread and manage any infections. Machakos University has therefore crafted this policy on COVID-19 preparedness to adhere to the Directorate of Occupational Safety and Health Services' PostCovid-19 return to work advisory directives and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the University.

4.0 SCOPE

The policy shall be applicable to all employees, students and stakeholders of the University and shall provide information on how to curb and manage COVID-19 infections.

5.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to staff, students and stakeholders of Machakos University on the management of COVID-19 infections and how to conduct themselves during the



COVID -19 pandemic period. The policy sets the objectives for and provides the framework within which COVID-19 policy will be implemented to ensure the health and safety of the Machakos University community.

6.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are:

- a) To provide a framework for implementing COVID-19 guidelines to contain infections.
- b) Promote a safe and health working and learning environment.
- c) Promote a culture of safe attitudes and practices towards COVID-19 disease.

7.0 THE MKSU COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS

The University shall put in place the following guidelines and measures that will strictly be adhered to by staff, students and stakeholders:

7.1 Promotion of Social and Physical Distancing

- a) The University shall adhere to guidelines on maintaining the prescribed social distance of 1.5 meter rule by re-arranging offices, lecture halls, hostels and any other premises;
- b) Avoid any form of congregation except as provided for in Government directives on COVID-19 Pandemic;
- c) Minimize walk-ins except by prior appointment and record details of all visitors;
- d) Where possible hold online classes, online orientation, online graduations, work in shifts, hold virtual meetings and trainings.

7.2 Workplace Hygiene and Safety

In regard to work place and learning hygiene and safety, the University shall take the following precautionary measures which will be strictly adhered to by all staff and students:

- a) Ensure all staff have masks and provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to staff performing critical duties;



- b) Provide alcohol based sanitizers and access to hand washing facilities with soap and clean water for staff, students and clients ;
- c) Carry out temperature checks for all staff, students and clients entering the University;
- d) Ensure work places are clean and hygienic by regularly disinfecting surfaces such as door handles, desks, tables, telephones and keyboards among others;
- e) Undertake regular fumigation of office premises, vehicles, washrooms in line with guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health from time to time;
- f) Sanitize all incoming mail and documents prior to opening, encourage use of electronic mail and scanned documents;
- g) Encourage staff, students and clients to wash hands frequently with soap and water and sanitize hands with alcohol-based sanitizers;
- h) Remind all staff, students and clients to cover their noses and mouths when coughing and sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow;
- i) Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms; and
- j) Ensure all staff, students and clients wear face masks properly to cover nose and mouth while in public places at all times.
- k) Ensure lecture halls and other shared rooms are well ventilated.

7.3 Conduct of Meetings

Where meetings are necessary, the University shall ensure that the following measures shall be observed:

- a) All physical meetings meet the prescribed numbers as provided for by Government guidelines issued from time to time and any numbers beyond the prescribed ones, shall be conducted through available online platforms;
- b) Ensure that participants of physical meetings are seated at least 1.5 meters apart and windows and doors are kept open whenever possible to make sure the venues are well ventilated;
- c) Commit that participants wear face masks at all times during the meeting; and
- d) Ensure that all participants in physical meetings provide their contact details; mobile telephone numbers, emails, and physical addresses.



7.4 Staff and Students with Pre-existing Medical Conditions

The management of staff and students with underlying health conditions will be guided by the prevailing guidelines issued by the government from time to time. Hence, all persons who are at an increased risk for contracting COVID-19 disease due to underlying medical conditions or other factors, the University shall ensure that:

- a) All staff with pre-existing medical conditions and/or are aged 58 years and above shall seek and obtain written approval to work from home. Additionally, such persons will be required to declare their status with the human resources directorate who in turn will ensure their safety and health;
- b) The measure in 7.4.a) above may exclude employees in critical and essential services.
- c) Students with pre-existing medical conditions shall be sensitized to request for deferment or adopt online mode of learning or may attend lectures conducted in open spaces which provide more air circulation.

7.5 Working from Home

The following arrangements shall apply to staff working from home after meeting the conditions outlined in 7.4(a) above:

- a) Staff working from home will be given targets and deliverables for attainment, for smooth delivery of services.
- b) Where the concept of working from home has been successfully implemented, such arrangements will continue to apply with clear targets and deliverables for the officers;
- c) All supervisors shall be required to prepare a weekly duty roster covering the minimum employee numbers to ensure business continuity indicating the officers who will be in charge of operations; and
- d) Where members of staff are permitted in writing to work from home, there will be clear assignments and targets tasked for the period designated and a clear reporting line to monitor and review work done.

7.6 Sick Staff, Students and Other Situations Involving Sick Leave

- a) Sick staff and students: Staff and students who have symptoms of fever, cough or shortness of breath (unless a cough or shortness of breath is known to be from another



existing medical issue such as allergies, asthma, etc. must stay home and contact their health care providers to determine if they should be tested for COVID-19.

Immediate supervisors (with the support and involvement of HR and University health services as needed) should ask employees and staff who are exhibiting such symptoms to go home and stay until 72 hours after they are free of symptoms without the aid of medication.

b) Self-isolation

Staff who are required to self-isolate (by public health officials or guidelines, healthcare providers or the University), and whose work is not suitable for telecommuting, shall use paid sick leave during the period they are in isolation.

While on self-isolation staff and students shall be required to observe the following:

- Not to report for work or visit public places but one may work from home
- Not to use public transport
- Not to go out of one's house for food or medication and that one may order it online or by phone or request someone to drop it at one's house/home.
- Not to have visitors in the house including friends and family members except for those providing essential care
- Not to go out for exercise but one may exercise at home
- Isolate oneself for 14 days or more until one recovers

c) Self-quarantine: Staff who are required to self-quarantine (by public health officials or guidelines, healthcare providers or the University), and whose work is not suitable for telecommuting, shall use paid sick leave during the period of quarantine.

While on self-quarantine staff and students shall be required to observe the following:

- To stay in separate rooms and use separate bathrooms if available and disinfect services and clothing
- Ensure that services in the household such as tables, doorknobs, forms are cleaned thoroughly or disinfected



- Avoid sharing household items including utensils, towels and beddings and wash the items thoroughly after use
 - When one coughs or sneezes to cover ones mouth and nose with a tissue and safely dispose it.
 - Wash hands with soap and running water for at least twenty (20) seconds and if these are not available clean with alcohol- based hand sanitizer
 - One should not entertain visitors
 - Wear face masks if one must be around people
 - To quarantine oneself for at least for fourteen (14) days to monitor if they develop any symptoms
- d) **Insufficient sick leave:** Employees with insufficient accrued sick leave for the uses outlined above should contact the Office of Human Resources for guidance.
- e) **Reporting sick leave:** Staff members who are out sick (sick leave taken, or leave taken for family/dependent care) should apply for sick leave in the University ERP system promptly.
- f) Students who are sick will be required to submit evidence and the Examinations policy shall apply.

7.7 Dealing with Suspected and Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

- a) The university shall set up a temporary holding space for at least between two (2) to three (3) hours, people reporting COVID-19 symptoms (Liaise with the county health department to use their set aside facilities)
- b) If anyone tests positive for COVID -19 he/she will be required to provide the contact list for purposes of self-quarantine for 14 days.

7.8 Return to Work/Class after Quarantine/Isolation

At the end of the Quarantine or Isolation period, staff and students shall be required to observe the prevailing guidelines on COVID-19 mitigation. Specifically the following conditions shall be observed before returning to the University:

- a) Obtain the requisite clearance from the quarantine or isolation facility certified by the designated persons indicating that the staff/student is free and safe from COVID-19.



The staff/student will present these documents to the University health unit at the point of returning to the University;

- b) Stay away from the University for a period of seven (7) days or any other period which may be guided by Government from time to time after the date of medical certification;
- c) Comply with the Government guidelines on prevention of COVID-19 including wearing mask, social distancing, maintaining of clean surfaces and wearing of other Personal Protection Equipment;
- d) Staff/students on self-quarantine will be required to report to the University after the expiry of the fourteen (14) days requirements;
- e) Students' hostels shall not be used for self-quarantine and any student with symptoms shall be required to leave the University immediately

7.9 Stigma and Discrimination

- a) Staff and students will have access to adequate mental health and psychosocial support;
- b) Staff and students returning to the University from COVID-19 Quarantine and/or Isolation shall not be discriminated against or stigmatized; and
- c) It is an offense to discriminate any person on grounds of actual, perceived or suspected COVID-19 status in the work place.

8.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This Policy shall take effect from the date of approval by the Directorate of Occupational Safety and Health services and University Council. The VC shall ensure effective implementation of this policy. The implementation will be guided by prevailing circumstances and any subsequent provided guidelines shall supersede the guidelines in this Policy.

9.0 POLICY REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed as need may arise.



Policy recommended for approval:

Vice Chancellor:

Date:

Policy Approved for implementation:

Chairman of Council:

Date:

