

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

Paix – Travail – Patrie

MINISTRE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT

SUPERIEUR

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Peace – Work – Fatherland

MINISTRY OF HIGHER

EDUCATION

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Yaounde, 21 MARS 2020

CIRCULAR LETTER N°/ 20-000161 /MINESUP/SG/IGS/IGA/DDES/DAJ OF
MARCH 21, 2020 RELATING TO PREVENTIVE AND CONTROL MEASURES AGAINST
CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

**THE MINISTER OF STATE,
MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

TO

Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of Public University Institutions;
The Rector of the Pan African University;
The Coordinator of the Inter-State Congo-Cameroon University;
Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of Public Higher Education Establishments
with a special status (ENSTP, INJS, SUP'PTIC, LINAFI);
The Coordinator of the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences;
Ladies and Gentlemen Promoters of Private Higher Education Institutes;
Ladies and Gentlemen of the Central Services of MINESUP.

Following the measures taken by the Government to prevent and fight against the coronavirus (COVID-19), upon the Very High Instructions of **His Excellency Paul BIYA, President of the Republic, Head of State** and made public by the Prime Minister, Head of the Government, during his solemn declaration of March 17, 2020,

And in keeping with the resolutions taken during the working session I presided over at MINESUP las Friday, March 20, 2020, in your effective and constructive presence,

I have the honor to ask you to take the following measures in all the Higher Education Institutions under your responsibility:

A. IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

1. Closure of all establishments for the period prescribed by the Prime Minister, Head of Government and suspension of face-to-face teaching;
2. Prohibition of gatherings of more than fifty (50) students on campuses, and in particular, large-scale scientific, cultural and sporting events;

The first two measures remain applicable in respect of the delays prescribed by the Government;

3. Postponement of all para-University activities, sports, cultural and civic programmed in 2020, such as the University Games, FETUC, FETUNEC, SOAP, etc.;
4. Limitation of University travels to inter and intra-campus trips which are strictly necessary;
5. Priority be given to the use of electronic means of communication and digital tools for all meetings likely to gather more than ten (10) persons;
6. Suspension of missions abroad and international teacher/student mobility.

B. PREVENTIVE MEASURES

In addition, I urge the University administration, teachers and the various student associations (health clubs, Red Cross, cultural clubs, etc.) to sensitize the entire University Community of COVID-19, by using both conventional media (campus radio, campus TV, etc.) as well as digital media, posters, banners and non-media channels. Also, you should relay the hygiene messages recommended by accredited organizations (WHO, MINSANTÉ), such as washing your hands regularly with soap or a hydro-alcoholic solution; coughing or sneezing under your elbow or in a handkerchief; giving preference to non-contact greetings and avoid kissing; using disposable tissues only once; regularly disinfecting all commonly used surfaces: touch screens, door handles, etc. I further recommend that you develop other measures targeted towards the University environment by including, as much as possible, messages of the fight against violence, of citizenship and of the promotion of Higher Education ethics.

C. INFRASTRUCTURAL MEASURES

In terms of infrastructure, you will have to redirect your resources towards public hygiene infrastructure and equipment (water points with soaps, toilets, bottles of hydro-alcoholic solution, paper napkins, etc.) and

communication as well as security infrastructure on campuses (radios and community TVs, WIFI networks, video surveillance cameras, etc.), while taking measures to avoid overcrowding in public places (elevators, corridors, etc.). You will also have to rehabilitate the medico-social centers to deal with any eventualities, paying particular attention to both equipment and human resources.

D. ACADEMIC MEASURES

On the academic level, I recommend that you immediately implement in your respective institutions all facets of digital education (digital work environments, virtual classrooms, MOOCs, etc.) and teleworking, while facilitating by all means access to the internet within the entire University community. All the Vice-Rectors, or Deputy Vice-Chancellors and more particularly the Vice-Rectors in charge of Teaching, Professionalization and Development of Information and Communication Technologies will be put to work for the success of this accelerated transition to the Digital University.

Thus, during the period of this pandemic, you will have to provide for the functioning of deliberative instances (Departmental meeting, Faculty Assembly, Consultative Commission for the Recruitment of Assistant Lecturers, University Council, and Board of Directors) of the University institution placed under your responsibility. In this context, apart from home consultations, which are a possibility for operating these deliberative organs (by sending files, and collecting responses and opinions, the totality of which would enable the resolution of major issues), it will also enable resorting to telecommuting among the said organs. You can operate by organizing the planned working sessions and meetings (message exchanges and video-call) by Skype, WhatsApp, telegram, etc. These working conditions do not exempt you from providing session allowances to statutory members and invited guests.

With regards to teaching, because the University being physically closed for the moment, you will conduct its academic functioning, by securing yourself to the available electronic media communications outlets, because digitally, we are at the era of the Open University. In this sense, the organization is required of you:

- distance teaching: digital lectures (obligatorily including the bibliography and course outline), TD (sheets and the constitution of the groups and then sending presentation topics to students), TP, TPE can be transmitted to an address or a digital platform available to students. Apart from emails, the supports that are WhatsApp, Facebook and Telegram for example, can be requested. Campus radios, audio and video recordings of the lessons, micro

programs, telephone and television recordings and explanations can also be used in broadcasting lectures to students;

- distance assessment: students will be subjected to distance evaluations. For this purpose, homework and examination papers can be sent to them digitally. Instead of desk-top evaluations, research-inducing subjects, such as those often made for tutorials (regarding presentations), can be given to students in groups or individually, so that they return their copies digitally to the 'establishment. Likewise, written evaluations can be replaced by oral ones, allowing one or more teachers to question the student using the media outlets listed above.

- tele-defenses: videoconferencing is prescribed for the defense of theses and dissertations before a duly constituted jury for this purpose. The communication platforms of the University Institution may be used, as well as the electronic means of communication, at the request of the Heads of Institutions, Heads of Establishments, and Heads of departments who will organize the circulation of defense registers for signature by members of the constituted juries.

- distance research: for this purpose, documentary resources must be digitalized so as to create virtual libraries which will be accessible to teachers and students from their place of location. Electronic books and journals, Ebooks, will be acquired for these purposes. Distance experiments and tests, as well as applied work, may also be carried out. Likewise, scientific events such as symposia and seminars should be held via the use of ICT.

E. HEURISTIC MEASURES

On an empirical level, I urge you to develop a University platform for the diagnosis of COVID-19, in order to know and control the circulation of the virus in the national territory. The partnership with national research teams, in particular the Institute for Medical and Medicinal Plants Research (IMPM) and already existing international ones should strengthen activities towards the development of vaccines and improved drugs against COVID-19. In addition, University institutions with Faculties of Science (Biochemistry Departments), Faculties of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, and Faculties of Medicine and Pharmaceutical Sciences (Departments of Pharmacology and Traditional Medicine / Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences of the University of Yaoundé I) will have to actively contribute to preventive and curative research against this pandemic.

F. MANAGERIAL MEASURES

Administratively, you will need to set up a steering and monitoring committee for all these measures which shall meet at regular intervals and make the necessary adjustments.

To guarantee the success of these actions, the direct and personal involvement of the Heads of Institutions and the management of institutional communication at the highest level are essential, in order to legitimize these restrictive but necessary and innovative measures.

I invite the University Community not to panic, and to exercise discipline, solidarity and a sense of responsibility.

I attach great importance to the strict application of these directives and ask that a regular report be sent to me on their implementation.

Copy:

- PM, Head of Government (for rendering of account);
- Min of State, SG/PR (for rendering of account);
- Min DCC/PR (for rendering of account);
- Min SG/PM (for rendering of account);
- MINSANTE (for information).



Jacques Fako Ndong