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TO: Institutions with Spring 2020 Visits (Evaluation and Follow-Up)
FROM: Erin Mattson, Senior Director for Accreditation Services
RE: Spring 2020 Travel Procedures
DATE: March 9, 2020

The coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to be a global concern, and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) has received a number of inquiries about its operations, especially as our dedicated peer evaluators prepare for travel to support the work of peer review this Spring.

MSCHE has delayed international on-site evaluation visits but has not done so for scheduled domestic on-site evaluation or follow-up visits. However, MSCHE is providing the following guidance to peer evaluators as they prepare for scheduled on-site visits to your institutions.

- **Notification to the Commission:** If peer evaluators are unable or unwilling to participate in upcoming visits due to issues related to the spread of the coronavirus, whether this involves a personal health concern or a restriction put into place by their home institution or by their state or system, the evaluator must immediately notify me by email at emattson@msche.org. MSCHE is committed to working closely with each team and with institutions to offer advice about how best to proceed should one team member or several be unable to participate as planned. Please note that federal regulations hold expectations about the on-site evaluation, as do Commission policy and procedures, so teams and institutions should not adjust aspects of the visit without consulting with staff. Should the institution hosting the visit be required to close due to the coronavirus, the Commission will outreach to the team immediately about next steps.
- **Travel Insurance:** For any peer evaluator making or changing flights or rail travel, travel insurance must be purchased in the event that changes in circumstances prevent participation on the visit. Costs related to the purchase of the insurance may be included on travel reimbursement forms.

As an institution scheduled to host an on-site visit, please notify me immediately (emattson@msche.org) if your institution closes the campus or any branch or additional location. You should also notify me if your institution implements any other restrictions that could impact an on-site visit.

Please note that you should have also received a separate communication from MSCHE about the United States Department of Education (USDE), Office of Postsecondary Education, [*Guidance for interruptions of study related to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)*](#) that was released on March 5, 2020. Please be sure to also review that important communication. Be assured also that MSCHE has outreached to systems and states in the region to request information about their responses to the coronavirus (COVID-19) as it impacts institutions of higher education that the MSCHE accredits. As the Commission continues to monitor the impact of the coronavirus, updates will be provided on our website under [*Travel Warnings and Advisories*](#) as well as communicated directly with teams and institutions as circumstances may warrant. Please continue to take necessary precautions and contact me, or the institution's MSCHE Vice President Liaison, with any questions you may have.

Download a PDF of this memo at <https://go.msche.org/20200309-Institutions-Memo-with-Visits>