



**Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science**  
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5/29/20—COVID-19 UPDATE

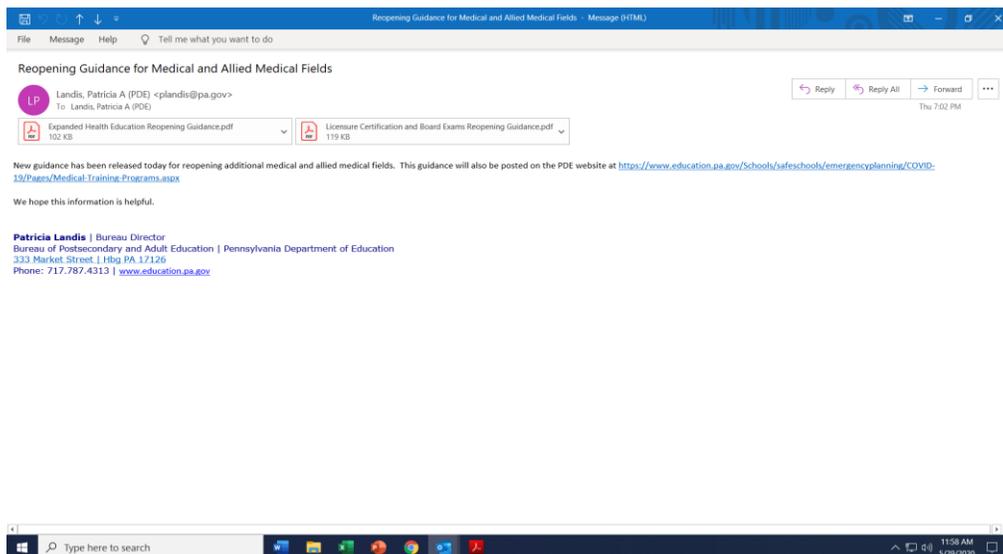
**RETURN TO IN PERSON INSTRUCTION**

Dear PIMS Campus Students, Faculty, and Staff,

The Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science was advised by the PA Department of Education-Private License Schools that medical and allied medical fields, which includes funeral service instruction, may **resume in-person instruction and ALL labs/practical experiences for schools located in counties categorized as yellow or green as per the Governor’s plan to reopen our State.** It should be noted that whether a school is in a yellow or green county, the State recommends that “such instruction shall employ physical distancing measures, universal masking, and applicable DOH and CDC guidelines and limited class sizes” (the primary difference between the yellow and green phase for schools is the number of students on campus—no students can be on campus if we would go back to red phase). This Pittsburgh Institute is prepared for all safety and health protocols consistent with such guidelines.

While this update is a significant development to aid the collective student pace and progression, it also has a level of change that can be disconcerting to some... Please know we understand that the one certain thing throughout this COVID-19 pandemic has been change! Accordingly, this policy update is designed to provide a level of stability to your Summer term and lay out “the options” as we see it dependent upon our status in relation to the virus.

This policy update replaces any previous policy and is effective immediately per the correspondence received May 28, 2020 from the State approving our reopening to in-person instruction and clinical/practical experiences (To understand the guidelines we are receiving, please see attached communications from the State below).





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**Medical, Nursing, and Allied Health Training Programs**  
Medical, nursing, and allied health training programs for health care practitioners and allied health practitioners may resume training as outlined below.

**Definitions**

**Health Care Practitioner:** For the purposes of this guidance, the term "health care practitioner" includes students preparing for licensure by the following boards in this commonwealth or another jurisdiction:

- State Board of Medicine
- State Board of Osteopathic Medicine
- State Board of Nursing
- State Board of Pharmacy
- State Board of Physical Therapy
- State Board of Podiatry
- State Board of Funeral Directors
- State Board of Occupational Therapy Education and Licensure
- State Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
- State Board of Veterinary Medicine
- State Board of Dentistry
- State Board of Optometry
- State Board of Nursing Home Administrators
- State Board of Chiropractic
- State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Professional Counselors, or
- State Board of Psychology

**Allied Health Practitioner:** For the purposes of this guidance, the term "allied health practitioner" refers to health professionals who are employed in professions to support the prevention of disease transmission and provide clinical support in the treatment and rehabilitation of patients. Allied health practitioners deliver direct patient care, rehabilitation, treatment, diagnostics, and health improvement interventions to restore and maintain optimal physical, sensory, psychological, cognitive and social functions. They provide *clinical* support services to physicians, nurses, and the licensed health care practitioners identified above. This guidance also applies to laboratory technicians.

**Clinical Training**

- Medical, nursing, and allied health programs may resume clinical training and rotations for health care practitioners and allied health practitioners. Clinical training and rotations must follow the guidelines provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Medical schools should consider the guidance provided by the [American Association of Medical Colleges \(AAMC\) related to Medical Students' Participation in Direct Patient Contact Activities \(April 14, 2020\)](#), and the guidance provided by the [Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education \(ACGME\)](#). Nursing education programs should consider the guidance provided by the [American Association of Colleges of Nursing's](#)

[Considerations for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response in U.S. Schools of Nursing \(March 20, 2020\)](#).

**Classroom Instruction**

- Medical, nursing, and allied health training programs located in counties designated as yellow and green in the [Governor's Process to Reopen Pennsylvania](#) may resume in-person classroom instruction. Such instruction shall employ physical distancing measures, universal masking, and applicable DOH and CDC



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This new policy is designed to consider the variables and “what if” scenarios, while easing everyone back into campus on a limited basis (with the exception of the “A” or Non-core 16 term who are going to be Alternative Delivery the entire term). That said, our goal is to create a “blended learning” approach so that if the virus strikes back and we are forced out of classrooms again, AD will have been a part of the term throughout. Hence, for Classes 161 and 162 you will have this “blend” of alternative delivery mixed with campus in a very unique learning situation that ultimately will have you back on campus approximately 2-3 days per week (a full schedule is pending from the office of Dean Burns).

Specifically, this return to in person instruction policy is a 3 phased plan depending on our phase as determined by the State. An outline of the plan is listed below:

RED PHASE	YELLOW PHASE	GREEN PHASE
<p>If our county is moved to Red, the <b>ONLY OPTION WILL BE TO RETURN TO ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY</b>. Please note this could happen with a spike in cases as determined by the State as a precaution for our safety and health. Embalming would be on a volunteer basis. Labs and practical experiences (e.g. Celebrant training) would not be able to commence. Zoom would be the classroom for synchronous lecture.</p>	<p>-Currently, our county is in this phase hence our plan, with the recent State approval moves forward as such.            -Alternative delivery will be maintained throughout the term for classes 161 and 162, yet 2-3 days per week campus contact hours will be provided with a more limited group as we move towards July. The schedule from Dean Burns will explain the breakdown of days each class will attend. The idea is to limit the number of days students need to be in Pittsburgh for lodging purposes so AD will offer instructional resources and tests/quizzes, while the campus instruction will be lecture and review in lieu of Zoom.            -Celebrant training to ALL 161 and 162 students will be offered TBA dates in June (we must limit according to restrictions in Yellow phase).            -RA lab for 162 will be on campus in August.            -Rescue Randy for 162 will be in June.            -For class 161, due to their size and the limitations placed on us in the Yellow phase, they will be split into two groups for contact lecture hours.            -For Class 161, <b>OPTIONAL</b> reviews will be offered on various Fridays.            -The month of June will be AD for classes, but these in person training experiences mentioned above will be provided throughout (this should ease everyone back into the groove); July 7, 2020 Class 162 will be back and July 9, 2020 Class 161 will be back for lecture and in person instruction.</p>	<p>-If the county moves to the Green phase, all protocols listed in the yellow phase will continue <b>EXCEPT</b> the splitting of Class 161 for instructional days on campus.            -This will allow class 161 more contact hours via instruction if we go Green. The schedule from Dean Burns will explain the idea and contrast green vs. yellow in person instruction for Class 161. The phase will not matter for Class 162. “A” term is AD.            -All labs and experiential learning will be performed in accordance with the Dean’s schedule.</p>

We realize that the variables listed above may be somewhat fluid, however, our attempt is to give you some stability in a time where the virus generally predicts the path we will take. We believe this “blended



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learning” where we will use AD throughout the term for all three classes (once again, “A” term will only use AD), mixed with campus instructions will provide the following benefits:

1. consider those who are renting living spaces but may be able to reduce such expenses by exiting leases and renting overnight accommodations;
2. provide the lesson plans and requisite learning outcomes from ABFSE curriculum outlines in preparation for the NBE and PIMS comps;
3. provide enough level of personal instruction and campus interaction you are accustomed to while keeping you engaged in AD just in case the virus spikes;
4. enable you to make pace, progression and succeed in your academic journey!

As mentioned, Dean Burns and I have arduously worked out the nuances to your new Summer schedule and it will be forthcoming. This “blended approach” to delivering your education is new to our instructors and administrators, so we ask your patience. However, the primary focus of this plan was designed to keep you safe and healthy by maintaining census limits, social distancing guidelines, and other protective measures, while providing you with stable expectations to optimize your learning experience during this pandemic.

In closing, we continue to adapt to this everchanging situation and once again, I speak for everyone at PIMS in recognizing your remarkable tenacity and fortitude to move forward. To that end, one of my favorites quotes is from the late Dr. Randy Pausch who gave the “Last Lecture” and stated, “Experience is what you get when you don’t get what you wanted...” You wanted to attend PIMS and become a funeral service professional without the COVID-19 pandemic changing our lives. Yet, your desire to continue being educated in the funeral service during this pandemic, is perhaps an experience you have gained that will help you in this profession and reinforce the need for selfless humility every time you are called to serve the bereaved and provide dignified care for their loved ones!

Thank you as always for choosing the Pittsburgh Institute for your funeral service education.

Sincerely,

*Barry T. Lease*

Dr. Barry T. Lease -Program Director