

## COVID-19

Although these are challenging times, we have every reason to remain optimistic here in Greece as a result of our successful response to the pandemic crisis. Thus, rest assured that you have made the best choice to plan your future studies with us and we will do everything we can to support your decision. As we keep monitoring the ongoing coronavirus situation and reviewing our response in line with national and international developments, these pages will be updated as new information becomes available.

### The role of NKUA in the COVID crisis

We take pride in our Medical School and its internationally recognized academic staff who have been at the forefront of the battle against COVID 19 since the outburst of the epidemic, not only fighting the disease on a day-to-day basis in our hospitals, but also leading and coordinating the medical response in Greece as the State's advisors. Indeed, a number of our medical academic and research teams urged to collaborate and offer their services to promote COVID 19 research and serve the public good.

The NKUA has been taking the following actions in response to the unprecedented Coronavirus (COVID 19) crisis: Following the urgent legislation passed by the Greek Ministry of Education imposing the closure of all schools and universities, our University responded swiftly to the emergency, shifting all courses online throughout the lockdown phase. Although we've had an arsenal of distance learning and on-line resources for a long time, we were given the opportunity to test them on a large scale and we were very glad to see that the response was successful.

We keep **vigilantly monitoring the situation on a day to day basis**. We are in constant close contact with State authorities and actively follow the official advice. We assess each decision individually based on the facts available and the guidance that we receive from our medical staff and pertinent health agencies.

Because **our highest priority is and always will be the safety and well-being of our colleagues, students and their families**, we decided to offer all our university programs on-line during the lockdown period and whenever government restrictions make on-campus classes inadvisable. As we are gradually returning to normality, we are resuming on-campus activities, like laboratory work and exams, always conforming to social-distancing requirements.

### Greece's response to the epidemic

We are proud that Greece's response to the coronavirus pandemic has so far been "a rare coronavirus success story" as the UK's *Financial Times* has recently reported since Greece took early and drastic action. Moreover, we are strongly encouraged by the MIT's optimistic forecast for the course of the epidemic in Greece, which according to its *Delphi* AI model, **no particular increase in COVID 19 cases is expected in the summer, even without measures being taken**.

With the lockdown having worked to contain the epidemic, Greece continues weekly relaxation of COVID 19 lockdown restrictions. All measures are expected to have been lifted by the end of June.

### **About our students**

Although Greece complies with the temporary ban of non-essential entry to the EU, holders of a long-term European or Schengen area visa are exempt from this restriction. Thus, **once you obtain your D type student visa you are free to travel to Greece**, in accordance with the health protocols applying at this time. Therefore, we advise you to push ahead with the visa application procedure as soon as you have access to the Greek consulate or embassy nearest to your address.

We are ready and waiting to welcome you into our NKUA community in the coming academic year, preparing to meet one another on campus and provide our teaching from September 2020 at the School of Philosophy. In the meantime, we are taking all the likely scenarios into account and the University is working hard to ensure that no student is educationally disadvantaged by the current situation. Therefore, we are preparing contingency plans, including options for studying remotely, which will be confirmed if they become necessary.

Thank you for putting your trust in us as you plan your future studies. We will keep your safety top of mind at all times and genuinely hope that normality will soon return to the world and to every one of you. At the same time, we extend our heartfelt sympathies to all of you currently experiencing difficulties. We are well aware of the challenges many of you are still facing and our hearts and thoughts go out to you. Wishing you, your families, colleagues and communities good health and safety going forward.