University COVID-19 Protocols for Residential Facilities

Annex 4: Management of students in student accommodation during ACT lockdown

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Overview

This appendix to the *Residential Guidelines and Protocols at ANU campuses - COVID-19 Response* has been developed specifically to deal with the management of students in ANU student accommodation during an ACT-wide lockdown. The document is applicable to any residential hall, Lodge or affiliated hall linked to the ANU when the Acton campus alert level is at high (orange) or extreme (red).

During an ACT-wide lockdown, all Canberrans are required to stay at home as a default. There are only six essential reasons to leave home as determined by ACT Health:

- to buy essential groceries and medicine
- to access essential healthcare including in-home care
- for essential work
- to exercise outdoors for one hour per day in your region
- to get a COVID-19 test
- to get a COVID-19 vaccination.

In ANU student accommodation, additional restrictions are required due to the unique risk profile of shared accommodation. These protocols have been developed in consultation with ACT Health and broadly consistent with their Public Health Directions applicable to all individuals in the ACT.

While these protocols provide the general principles to manage student residences in lockdown, implementation will vary between residences depending on operating factors and as determined by the Head of Residence.

The key references utilised for the development of this document was the [ACT Health COVID-19 webpage](https://www.act.gov.au/).  

Key principles

Key to this protocol is to maintain a positive living environment for residents with a proactive approach to risk mitigation while following ACT Public Health Directions and advice. Risks include:

- Public Health risks related to COVID-19; specifically, the risk of spreading COVID-19 within the residence and in the broader ACT community.
- Mental health and wellbeing risks associated with restrictions to movement for a period of time.

Types of accommodation

Types of student accommodation on the ANU campus include the following:

- Individual studio or single room apartments – students can only leave their apartments for one of the approved reasons according to the risk level.
- Multi-bedroom apartments – individuals will have their own room but will use shared spaces such as bathrooms, kitchens and lounge areas. Students can only leave their apartments for one of the approved reasons according to the risk level.
- Dormitory style accommodation - individuals will have their own room but will need to share bathrooms. In most cases, students will be designated into geographical bubbles, although this may be lifted as risk levels reduced as deemed by the Public
Health Lead – COVID Response Office. Use of all other shared spaces such as kitchens and lounge rooms will be controlled to enable social distancing.

Levels of restrictions

As residences are a shared living environment, additional restrictions will come into place when the risk escalates. These restrictions are developed by the ANU COVID Response Office in consultation with ACT Health, the Director of the Residential Experience, and the Heads of Residences. The following outlines the levels of restrictions during an ACT-wide lockdown and triggers for escalating.

1. **Level 1 (stay-at-home orders)**
   - This is triggered when an ACT-wide lockdown is declared and/or the Acton [campus alert level](#) is raised to high (orange).

2. **Level 2 (enhanced stay-at-home orders)**
   - This is triggered when the Acton [campus alert level](#) is raised to extreme (red).

3. **Level 3 (enhanced stay-at-home orders in quarantine)**
   - This is triggered when an individual or individuals in the residence are identified as close contacts, which renders other residents as secondary contacts. Only dormitory style accommodation would operate under this model.

4. **Level 4 (full quarantine)**
   - Individuals who are close or casual contacts, or secondary contacts when their close contact is outside the residence, will have to enter quarantine in a self-contained or studio apartment. This could be their own apartment if they are in a single studio or the resident will be moved to a suitable location.

The protocols for these levels are detailed in this document but a simple overview can be found in figure 1.

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**Figure 1 – broad overview of restrictions at different levels.**

In the event a resident is found to be COVID-19 positive, the Public Health Lead – COVID Response Office will stand up the Outbreak Operations Group and the Outbreak Plan will be implemented. The protocol for this scenario is detailed in [Annex 1 to Residential Guidelines - Outbreak plan](#).
Operational protocol

Level 1 (stay-at-home orders)

Students may leave their rooms provided they remain in their bubble groups for the following approved purposes:

- to use the allocated bathroom facilities
- to use the kitchen or dining hall at an agreed upon time
- to use other shared spaces, such as a study area, or lawn, in a COVID-safe manner as approved by your Head of Residence. A capacity of 1 person per 4m² should be maintained whether indoors or outdoors and masks must be worn.
- to visit their nominated buddy, including in their room

A mask must be worn at all times when the student is out of their room, even within their bubble group or area.

Lockdown ‘bubble buddies’

Residents in dormitory style accommodation can nominate one person from within their bubble to be their buddy. Residents in single apartments can nominate one person from the same residence to be their buddy who is also in a single apartment. This lockdown buddy cannot change throughout the lockdown period.

Leaving the residence for essential reasons

While the default position is to remain in their bubble group within their residence, students may leave the residence for an essential reason as determined by ACT Health.

Leaving to undertake all types of essential work in accordance with the ACT Health definitions is allowed. This includes working in other student residences provided there is no contact with other students.

Exercise outdoors can be undertaken with one other person if the person is from a different bubble, or not more than two people if they are all from the same bubble. If exercising in a group, students must remember to remain COVID-safe through maintaining distance and wearing a mask. If sports equipment is used, please remember to clean it after use. Students should not interact with anyone else with whom they are not exercising with.

The risks of introducing COVID-19 into the residence increases each time a student leaves the residence. For this reason, students are encouraged to remain in the residence unless absolutely necessary. Alternatives to going out should be chosen when possible. For example:

- Buying groceries and essentials online and having it delivered through contactless delivery. If students need to leave to purchase essentials, they are strongly encouraged to limit these trips to once a week.
- Considering telehealth or other virtual care options where possible and clinically appropriate
- Working from home and refraining from working in settings which involve high risk of COVID-19.

Meal and food delivery

In catered halls, meals will be prepared in the Residence’s kitchen and individually portioned for the students to eat in their own rooms. Where practicable, heads of halls may designate meal times according to bubbles in the dining hall.

Other meal options include ordering food or groceries online. Delivery is the strongly preferred method to reduce exposure with click and collect being the next preferred if delivery timeframes are not viable.
Meals, shopping or groceries ordered online will be delivered to Residential Hall reception. Students will be asked to ensure all deliveries occur during normal business hours. The number of deliveries each day should be limited where possible.

Visitors and travel

No visitors are allowed into the building under this level of restriction.

Residents are not allowed to visit other households outside of the residence unless it is that of an intimate partner. Residents with an intimate partner who lives in a different residence or bubble cannot visit them in their room but can exercise outdoors with them. In these circumstances the partner should not interact with the rest of the bubble. An alternative may be for one of the intimate partners to move into the other’s bubble.

If a student wishes to leave the residence to complete their stay-at-home period elsewhere, they must plan to do so for the duration of the lockdown and must inform their head of residence. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that they comply with all state and territory health restrictions.

Waste management

Students can remove their rubbish as per normal as long as they wear a mask when leaving their room.

Cleaning

Students will be responsible for cleaning their own rooms and apartments during their stay, including frequently touched areas and surfaces. Antibacterial wipes and multipurpose cleaner with disinfectant and paper towel will be made available.

Individuals who are sharing common spaces should develop a cleaning roster to ensure their space remains clean.

Laundry

Students are allowed to use the laundry room at a capacity of one person at a time or with their bubble buddy. Cleaning products are to be provided to allow the residents are to clean the surfaces before and after use. Students should wear a mask at all times.

Emergency Response and evacuations

If there is a Fire Alarm, the standard protocols must be followed. Students will be required, where possible, to don a mask before evacuating. Additional masks and gloves will be available if required.

In the event of a medical emergency, ANU staff and/or students should dial 000 and administer first aid using appropriate PPE.

The Public Health Lead – COVID Response Office should also be notified as soon as possible.

Level 2 (enhanced stay-at-home orders)

Residences are placed under level 2 restrictions when the risk level in the ACT is deemed to be extreme (red) and there is significant community spread of COVID-19 in Canberra. These enhanced restrictions are to mitigate the risks and keep the residence safe.

All protocols remain the same as level 1 with the exception of the ones mentioned below.

Leaving the residence for essential reasons

Students are expected to remain in the residence as a default. The only approved reasons to leave are:
To exercise outdoors with a maximum of two others in their bubble. A mask must be worn and students should not interact with anyone else outside of their bubble.

To access essential healthcare, including getting a COVID-19 vaccine or test.

In an emergency.

A mask must be always worn when the student is out of their room.

Students are not allowed to leave for essential work, essential groceries or shopping. This is because movement in and out of the residence would put the entire residential community at significant risk.

**Meal and food delivery**

If residents are unable to access food or essentials through delivery, they should alert their head of residence. There are options available for the University to provide essential items to the students or for the residence to arrange a mutually accepted time for the student to leave.

**Visitors and buddies**

Residents are not allowed to leave the residence to visit other people or intimate partners. If residents have care responsibilities, residents will have to negotiate with their head of residence a COVID safe way to fulfil these responsibilities.

**Level 3 (enhanced stay-at-home orders in quarantine)**

If a close contact is detected in a residence, all students within the close contact’s bubble will be declared secondary contacts and will be under level 3 restrictions. Students are not allowed to leave the residence except for the following approved reasons:

- To exercise outdoors only with their ‘bubble buddy’. A mask must be worn, and students should not interact with anyone else outside of their bubble.
- To get a COVID-19 test.
- In an emergency, including needing emergency medical care.

A mask must be worn at all times when the student is out of their room.

Students are not allowed to leave for any other reason including essential work, essential groceries or shopping, or for essential non-urgent medical reasons including COVID-19 vaccination. This is in line with the [Public Health (Diagnosed People and Close Contacts) Emergency Direction 2021 (No 2)](#).

All other protocols remain the same as level 2.

**Level 4 (full quarantine)**

Students who are identified as close or casual contacts, or secondary contacts from exposure outside of the residence, will have to quarantine in a self-contained or studio apartment. The only reason students are allowed to leave their apartment are the following approved reasons:

- To get a COVID-19 test.
- In an emergency, including needing emergency medical care.

Detailed protocols for managing students in full quarantine can be found in Annex 3 – Home-based quarantine in student accommodation.

**Infection control measures**

Staff must practice good hand hygiene, follow physical distancing requirements, and avoid unnecessary contact where possible, except in the case of emergencies. If direct contact with
residents is unavoidable, appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn as indicated below.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
Masks must be worn at all times by staff and students. The exception to this is when eating or drinking, or when a student is in their own room.

**General hygiene measures**
Hand sanitiser will be provided at the entrance of the Residence, the reception area and near the lifts.

**Health and wellbeing**
All aspects of health support will be overseen by the Public Health Lead – COVID Response Office, who will also be the primary point of contact with ACT Health. It is the responsibility of the students’ home residence to conduct welfare checks in accordance with Annex 2 of the residential protocols.

**COVID-19 testing**
Students should undergo a COVID-19 test if they develop any symptoms, no matter how mild. A negative test does not exempt anyone from complying with the requirements.

If students become a close or casual contact, they should be moved into quarantine and follow the advice published by ACT Health according to their situation. The COVID Response Office should be notified as soon as possible and extra cleaning may be advised.

**Health monitoring of staff**
All staff will be educated on the symptoms of COVID-19 and must immediately isolate and seek testing if they develop any symptoms. Staff must not come to work if they are unwell.

**Management of individuals requiring quarantine**
Residents who are identified as a close, casual or secondary contact through their exposure in the community, e.g. through communication with ACT Health officials or having been to a listed close contact site, must inform their head of residence and fill in the ANU ACT contact notification questionnaire. In accordance with ACT Health guidelines, the resident is required to follow health advice, complete an ACT Health Contact Declaration Form, quarantine, get tested for COVID-19, and remain in quarantine until further advised by ACT Health.

Detailed protocols for individuals in quarantine can be found in Annex 3 – Home based quarantine in student accommodation.

**Close contacts**
- Close contacts in individual apartments –
  - These students can quarantine in place for 14 days or until advised
  - They must identify any other rooms they have spent time in, or individuals who have spent time in their rooms. These individuals are secondary contacts and will have to quarantine until the close contact’s first or second negative test result is received.
  - The rest of the residence remain at existing restriction level.
• Close contacts in multi-share apartments –
  o These students must be moved to single apartments and quarantine there for 14 days or until advised
  o Their housemates are considered secondary contacts and will need to quarantine until the close contact tests negative.
  o The close contacts must also identify any other rooms they have spent time in, or individuals who have spent time in their rooms. These individuals are secondary contacts and will have to quarantine until the close contact’s first or second negative test result is received.
  o The rest of the residence remain at existing restriction level.
• Close contact in dormitory style accommodation –
  o These students must be moved into single apartments and quarantine there for 14 days or until advised
  o The close contact’s bubble will escalate into level 3 restrictions.

Casual contacts

• Casual contacts in individual apartments –
  o These students can quarantine in place until they receive a negative test result that is taken on or after day five from their exposure, or until advised
  o The rest of the residence remains at the existing restriction level.
• Casual contacts in multi-share apartments and dormitory style accommodation –
  o These students must be moved to single apartments and quarantine until they receive a negative test result that is taken on or after day five from their exposure or until advised
  o The rest of the residence remain at existing restriction level.

Secondary contacts

Residents who are identified as secondary contacts through exposure in the community will have to quarantine until the close contact tests negative. Secondary contacts in multi-share apartments and dormitory style accommodation must be moved to a single apartment to quarantine.

General health support

Attending essential medical or healthcare needs is a valid reason for the individual to leave their room while under level 1 and level 2 restrictions.

Mental health

ANU will support mental health and wellbeing as required.

Fundamental to the Model’s approach to maintaining good mental health while in lockdown is the opportunity to feel a sense of community, purpose and social connectedness, both online and as a member of a small quarantine group.

Measures to maintain positive mental health will include a programme of online activities arranged by the residences and access to reliable Wi-Fi.

Residences are responsible to maintain regular one-on-one contact with each student, including via daily welfare checks. This will be done using dedicated student welfare specialists and trained student peer mentors.

As detailed above, a series of online engagement programs, both educational and for entertainment, will also be provided to ensure students are kept occupied during this period.
In addition to these programs, students will have access to peer support through linking each quarantine group to a Senior Resident or Student Leader and the use of TalkCampus, a multilingual global application that allows students to chat with other students anywhere in the world.

Students who have concerns about mental health or wellbeing will be able to book an online counselling session with a mental health provider from the ANU Counselling Centre via email at counselling.centre@anu.edu.au or phone: 02 6125 2442.

Other free support can be provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via ANU Wellbeing and Support Line on 1300 050 327 or via SMS Text message service on 0488 884 170.

Support and assistance is also available through the Respectful Relationships Unit respect@anu.edu.au.