

To all new and current students of Ritsumeikan University

# Thinking About Your Situation: Advice for All Students

A response to the [State of Emergency](#) declaration  
related to the novel coronavirus



April 14 (Tue.), 2020

Division of Student Affairs, Ritsumeikan University

# Responding to the **State of Emergency** declaration related to the novel coronavirus

As you all know, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is currently sweeping the world. Cases are growing from day to day in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, and other major urban areas in Japan as well.

In this situation, we hope that all of you will remain alert and take care of your health in the course of your everyday life.

It is also true that anxiety and stress can mount as a result of the changes that accompany the spread of the virus, such as the advice to stay at home and other restrictions on movement, as well as shortages of masks and some daily necessities.

Even if you're careful how you live, anxiety and stress can trigger a variety of feelings and desires, and unconsciously you may start behaving in a manner different from usual.

Think about appropriate ways to reduce your stress levels.

**Even if you're outside the areas covered by the State of Emergency declaration, you still need to remain on high alert.** Each and every one of us needs to be conscious of our actions, otherwise it may be too late to halt the spread of the virus.

We have produced this document in the hope that it will help you **continue to conduct yourselves in a responsible, self-aware manner.** Please read through it carefully.

# 1. What's going on in Japan and across the world

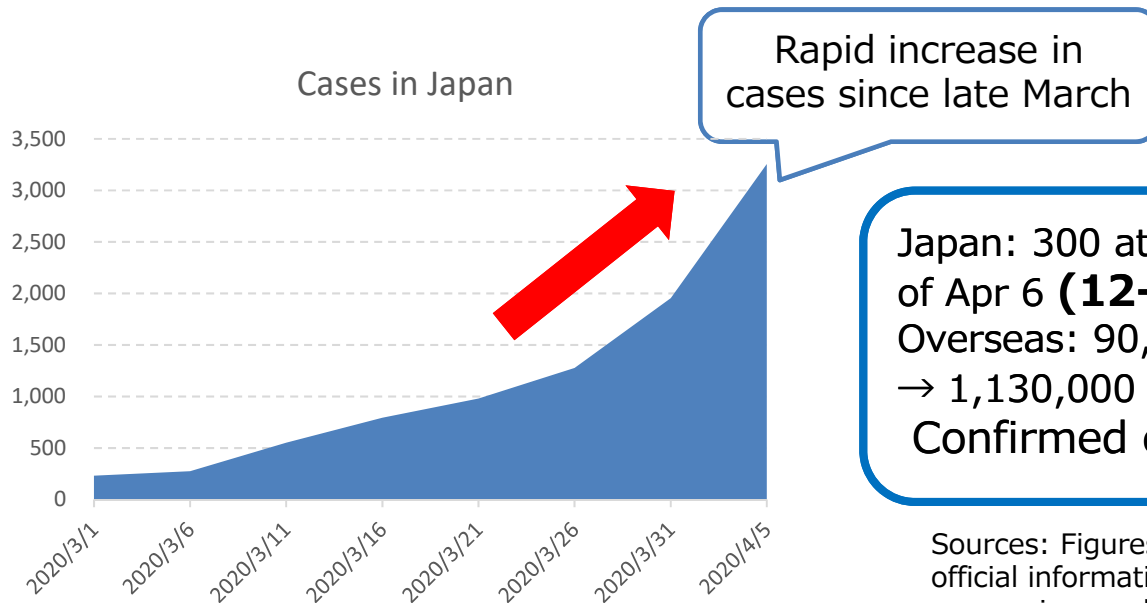
As has been reported, a novel coronavirus was detected in the city of Wuhan, China in late December last year, and is now **spreading across the world**, including Japan.

As of April 6

Within Japan		Outside Japan	
No. of cases	No. of deaths	No. of cases	No. of deaths
3,654 (383 more than the previous day)	73 (3 more than the previous day)	1,133,758 (82,061 more than the previous day)	62,784 (5,798 more than the previous day)



Check here for the latest information



Japan: 300 at start of March → 2,000 end of March → 3,600 as of Apr 6 (**12-fold increase**)  
 Overseas: 90,000 at start of March → 750,000 at end of March → 1,130,000 as of Apr 6 (**13-fold increase**)  
 Confirmed cases in more than 190 countries/regions!

Sources: Figures constructed using data from MHLW website and WHO special official information website; Japan data from MHLW, "Current status of novel coronavirus and MHLW response (excluding cruise ship)"; overseas data from WHO, "Coronavirus disease (COVID19)" special information website

- On March 11, the WHO declared the novel coronavirus to be a "pandemic"
- There is a possibility that cluster (group) infections have occurred in universities too

## 2. Why we need to refrain from certain activities right now

The **fear** regarding this virus is that it is still largely unknown to medical science, and it will take some time before a vaccine can be developed.

Other reasons for the spread of the virus include the increase in cases where the infection route cannot be traced, and the number of cases with no obvious symptoms

### What we know so far

- The virus enters the body through the mouth or nose via airborne droplets or direct contact.
- The incubation period is 1-14 days, and there have been cases of re-infection after recovery.
- Symptoms include cough, sore throat, fever, fatigue, shortness of breath, and loss of sense of smell/taste, but there are also **many cases not accompanied by symptoms**.
- There have been reports of **infection and death** even among **young, healthy individuals**.
- Symptoms easily become more severe for the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions.
- **Because this is a new virus, nobody in the world has immunity: it could infect everyone.**

### Conditions where infection is common

1. Poorly ventilated  
Closed spaces

2. Highly populated  
Crowded areas

3. Close proximity  
Contact, including  
conversation



**The risk of cluster infections is highest where these three Cs come together!**

In addition to avoiding these three conditions, try to disinfect **shared-use items**.

Source: MHLW website, etc.

**Everybody in Japan is being asked to avoid the three Cs, refrain from non-essential, non-urgent outings, and behave with restraint. University students are no exception.**

### 3. What “attitude” and “mindset” do we need in emergencies?

There are many things that are unknown about the novel coronavirus, but as is shown by the cases occurring among ordinary people, celebrities, athletes, and other famous people, everybody faces a **risk of infection** in their everyday life.

The first step is to acknowledge that this is **not somebody else’s business: it affects you too.**

The next step is to act appropriately and with consideration not only for **your own health and safety**, but for **the impact on others** as well (not just family members and friends, but also people you don’t know)



What **attitude** and **mindset** do you need to adopt in this situation?  
For example, think about how you should act in the case below.

#### Case study:

In A’s household there are grandparents and a parent with an underlying health issue. Through media reports, A has learned something about the fears of the coronavirus, but assumes that he will not get it because he’s young. A receives an invitation to a meet-up that will be attended by a large number of people in an enclosed space. He decides to attend, but feels a little guilty, so keeps his attendance secret from the rest of his family. **Think about what kinds of problems may arise if A attends the meet-up.**

# Possible problems (examples)

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If somebody at the meet-up has the virus:

- A is at risk of being infected.
- If A is infected, he may infect others.
  - His grandparents and the parent with an underlying health issue may develop severe pneumonia, which could be fatal.
- If A has no symptoms and no family members are infected, A may continue going out as usual and spread the virus to others. Moreover . . .
- He might be attacked unreasonably on social media.
- He might become involved in such attacks himself.
- . . . And so on.

The payoff might be bigger than you ever imagined . . .

If nothing happens, it might be possible to get through this particular problem unscathed, but **over the long span of our lives, we need to live with all kinds of new challenges and changes in our environment.**

There are certain “attitudes” and “mindsets” that will help us avoid trouble.

# Attitudes and mindsets to avoid trouble and hazards

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Three elements that are essential to deal with all challenges in life!

**Acquire the minimum essential knowledge**  
(accurate information, understanding of laws, conditions, etc.)

**Appropriate conduct**

**Think ahead**  
(prediction, insight, deployment)

**Exercise self-control**  
(autonomy and self-reliance)

Source: Ritsumeikan University, *TIPS ON CAMPUS LIFE FOR STUDENTS 2020*  
<http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/infostudents/campus-diary/>

**These attitudes and mindsets will be required in all kinds of situations throughout your life. They will empower you to live effectively in wider society.**

# Relationship between knowledge, foresight, and self-control



Example: Why go to a meet-up when the coronavirus is spreading?

## Conduct

Participating in a meet-up in spite of the advice to avoid non-essential, non-urgent outings

## So, why do you do it?

### Desires and feelings:

- You want to have fun with your friends.
- All the fuss about corona and the mood of self-restraint makes you stressed; you need to let off steam

### Self-serving thoughts:

- “It’s OK to be in an enclosed space if I wear a mask”
- “My parents won’t find out”
- “I did it once and nothing happened, so I’ll keep doing it until something does”
- “I’ll be fine” – an unfounded sense of optimism
- “Everybody’s doing it” – an assumption

## Awareness

You know (vaguely) that it’s a dangerous situation

- Preventive behaviors such as avoiding closed spaces, crowds, and personal contact
- Spread of infection among young people.
- Serious consequences of infection for the elderly and those with underlying conditions.

## Knowledge

**Everyone has desires, moods, and feelings. The question is: can you learn to control them?**



# How to improve your powers of self-control

## Foresight (imagination, insight)

If I go to this meet-up . . .

- I might catch the virus.
- If I catch the virus and pass it on to family members, I'll regret it forever.
- People, even those unconnected with me, might question my common sense.
- My inappropriate conduct might be shared and attacked on social media.

You can foresee these consequences, but what do you need to do in order to **control your desires and feelings**?

## Self-control: effective strategies

- (1) Listen to others' opinions, discuss things with others until you're convinced.  
→ Looking at your own thoughts objectively
- (2) Measure the physical and psychological damage that would result from getting the virus.  
→ Assessing the trade-off for your actions
- (3) Think about the impact on others, and whether it's even appropriate to be having a meet-up at a time like this.  
→ Considering moral and ethical perspectives

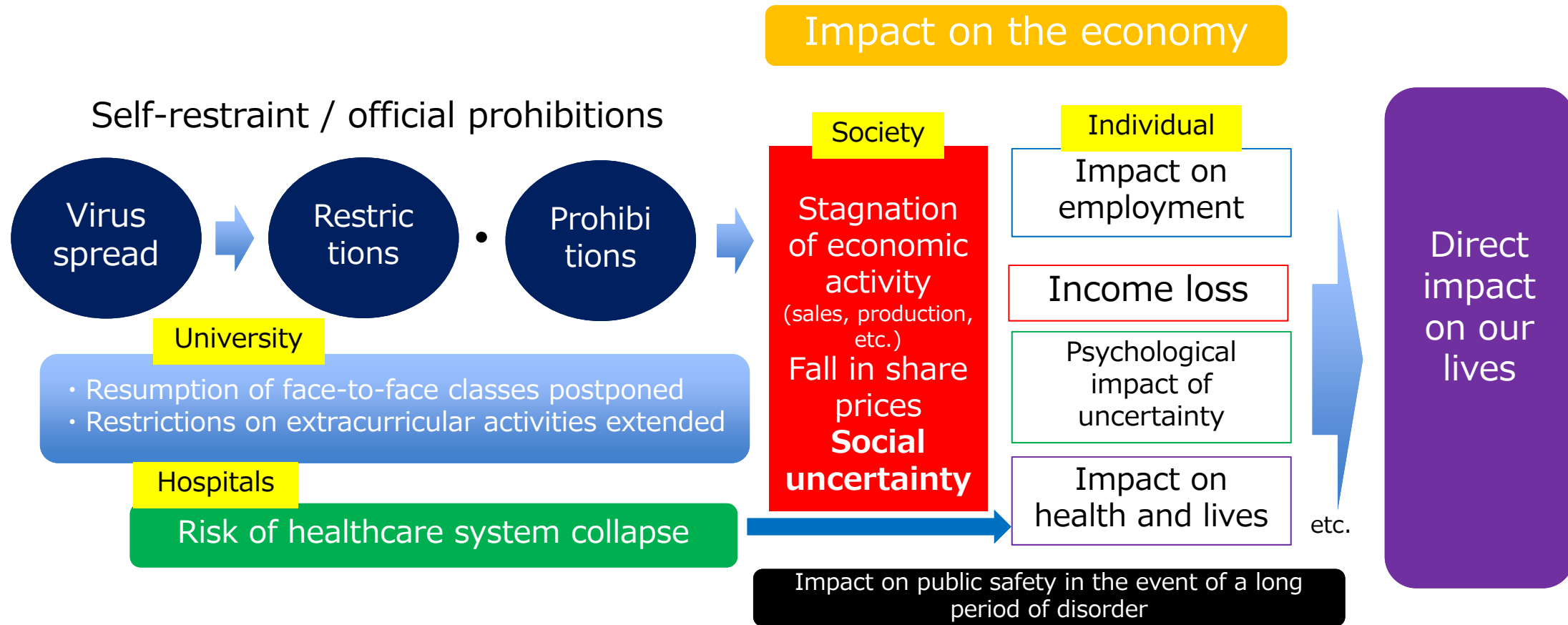
Or: will you choose to satisfy your immediate desires?



Having knowledge, foresight, and self-control will help you deal with all kinds of hazards.

# 4. How the spread of the virus is connected with our everyday lives

Anyone can catch the novel coronavirus, and the spread of the virus will have a huge impact on our lives. This is another reason to consider the virus **your own problem** rather than other people's business.



The spread of the novel coronavirus is closely intertwined with our everyday lives. In order to stop the virus as soon as possible and return to our normal way of life, each one of us, university students included, needs to behave in a self-aware, responsible manner.

## 5. A final note

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The State of Emergency declaration does not mean that people outside the affected areas can take it easy. It's important to behave with self-control regardless of where you are.

Many of you may feel inconvenienced or restricted by the limitations on everyday activities arising from the spread of the virus.

Becoming overly cautious and fearful is not good for your mental or physical wellbeing.

Keep in mind the three Cs, use a mask, wash your hands, and keep enclosed spaces well ventilated; get accurate information and knowledge; come up with your own ways to relax and put them into practice.

Because the whole world is in crisis and our everyday activities are restricted, this is also a chance to develop fresh awareness and learn new things. Why not take this opportunity to reflect on your own progress, think about your future prospects, and try out something that you haven't been able to do before?



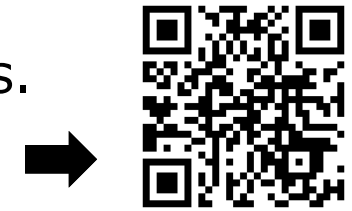
# Other things to keep in mind

## 1. Be wary of invitations from groups outside the university!

In uncertain times, some groups outside the university seek to take advantage of people's heightened levels of anxiety. These include cults, fraudulent business ventures (pyramid schemes, multilevel marketing), and exploitative employers, as well as "fake clubs" that haven't been authorized by the university.

Once you join one of these groups, it's difficult to leave. Please take care to avoid risky invitations and enticements.

\*For more details, see Ritsumeikan University's *TIPS ON CAMPUS LIFE FOR STUDENTS 2020*  
<http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/infostudents/campus-diary/>



## 2. Keep your eye out for fake news!

All sorts of rumors and fake news about the novel coronavirus are circulated on social media and the like.

Don't take them at face value: get your information from reliable sources and conduct yourself appropriately.

**Keep up to date with accurate information and the latest advice.**



## 6. Useful websites

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Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) novel coronavirus information

[https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/newpage\\_00032.html](https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/newpage_00032.html)

WHO coronavirus information site

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

World map of coronavirus cases (WHO)

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/685d0ace521648f8a5beeeee1b9125cd>

Map of coronavirus cases in Japan (MHLW)

<https://mhlw-gis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/c2ac63d9dd05406dab7407b5053d108e>

If you have the following symptoms, contact your prefectural consultation point for virus exposure / overseas returnees in your prefecture.

(1) Cold symptoms and fever of 37.5°C or more **continuing for 4 days or more**  
(including cases where you need medication to bring the fever down)

(2) Severe fatigue or difficulty breathing

[https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/kenkou\\_iryuu/covid19-kikokusyasessyokusya.html](https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/kenkou_iryuu/covid19-kikokusyasessyokusya.html)

If you're told that you have, or might have, the novel coronavirus, please let the university (college/grad school administrative office, Manabi Station, Office of Student Affairs, etc.) know immediately: <http://www.ritsumeai.ac.jp/inquiry/>