# CSU Library Operating Principles in a Time of Pandemic

## I. **Introduction/Guiding Principles for Operational Planning**

**Introduction**

The California State University (CSU) Libraries are internationally-recognized for enriching the learning environments of our campuses, informing and educating our communities, and transforming knowledge and scholarship by connecting people and ideas. During this unprecedented pandemic, the 23 CSU Libraries have mobilized rapidly in support of changing learning and research needs, adapting our shared mission of collaboration, innovation, and supporting learning and the public good to changing conditions through the provision of equitable services, expertise, and information resources. While temporarily reducing in-person operations in support of public health, we have expanded our robust slate of digital resources for learning and research and developed creative new modalities for critical library services including instruction, research support, course reserves, and resource sharing.

Providing accessible and engaging spaces for learning, research, and technology access is a central mission of all CSU libraries. As we begin to consider a "phased and incremental" return to in-person service provision in accordance with state, county, and local guidance and campus instruction modalities, providing safe environments for users and employees is of the utmost importance. This document frames guiding principles for a thoughtful return to physical library operations of the CSU Libraries based on a series of progressive operating scenarios, with the understanding that libraries may need to transition between scenarios in response to changing pandemic conditions.

**Guiding Principles for Operational Planning**

1. People first. Make decisions that protect students, employees, our communities, and public health.
2. Develop creative service models that are responsive to campus needs and emerging instructional models;
3. Focus on long-term enhancements to digital services and resources that further student success.
4. Operate library buildings safely and to the greatest extent possible to support learning and student basic needs,
5. Practice decision making that foregrounds [COLD strategic plan](https://calstate.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/COLD/pages/337608718/CSU%2BLibraries%2BStrategic%2BPlan%2B-%2B2018-2021) and CSU Mission centered on teaching/learning and our unique student populations.
6. Adhere to policies and procedures at the state, local, and campus levels, and proactively inform associated interpretations and improvements to navigate new environments.
7. Follow most current and robust evidence-based guidance and experiences from higher education and libraries.
8. Make decisions in conjunction with campus partners, such as facilities and safety, and advocate for the agency of libraries as unique institutions and spaces.
9. Commit to compassion and flexibility. Recognize that the need to “pivot” rapidly between service models in response to shifts in pandemic and public health guidance will be continuous.

## II. **Operating Phase Matrix**

| **Operating Phase** | **Phase 1** | **Phase 2** | **Phase 3** | **Phase 4** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Service/Access Tier** | Full digital  | Staff only onsite | Minimal/Limited users onsite | Full onsite operations with precautionary measures |
| **State/County Mandate** | Stay at home order in place | Social distancing/Minimal grouping | Social distancing/Limited grouping allowed with guidance | Social distancing/No capacity limit specified |
| **Campus Operating Mandate** | Virtual with essential employees onsite | Virtual with essential and other employees onsite | Limited face-to-face instruction taking place on campus | Majority of instruction taking place face-to-face on campus. |
| **Building Hours** **of Operation**  | Virtual | Virtual  | Limited hours informed by times of courses held on campus/ Designated hours for vulnerable populations  | Regular hours, informed by onsite employee availability |
| **Employees in Building, including students** | With advance approval | Some employees report on-site for activities that cannot be conducted remotely, observing social distancing and schedule modifications | Designated employees report for modified shifts based on job requirements  | Most employees report for regular shifts, with potential modifications |
| **PPE Recommendation** | Emphasize personal protective practices | Robust recommended PPE for all on-campus shifts | Robust recommended PPE for all on-campus shifts | Maintain recommended PPE for all on-campus shifts |
| **Sanitization/ Cleaning Recommendation** | Recommended enhanced sanitizing procedures based on employee building presence | Recommended enhanced sanitizing procedures based on employee building presence | Recommended significantly enhanced sanitizing procedures in employee workspaces, patron transaction areas, and available seating | Recommended enhanced sanitizing procedures in employee workspaces, patron transaction areas, and available seating |
| **Book stacks** | Digital only | Digital only | Digital encouraged/Limited requests | Stacks open to public with social distancing measures  |
| **Reserves** | Digital reserves only | Digital reserves only | Digital reserves preferred | All Reserves available for checkout with sanitizing measures, digital reserves preferred/Headphone and microphone checkout not recommended |
| **Circulating Equipment** | Long-term loans only | Long-term loans only | Preference for long-term loans, with sanitizing measures between each use | Limited equipment available for checkout with sanitizing measures between each use |
| **Seating/Study** | None | None | Limited and reconfigured seating on limited floors, Monitoring Procedures for entry/exit, limited or card access elevator use | Open, possibly reconfigured seating but maintaining enhanced custodial/sanitizing practices |
| **Group Study** | None | None | Dependent on social distancing requirements | Open, reservation and social distancing encouraged, reduced seating as needed |
| **Computer Labs** | None  | None | Reduced capacity in accordance with distancing guidance and required sanitizing standards | Computer labs with station distancing and required sanitizing as needed |
| **Transactional Safety** | N/A | N/A | Touchless transactions recommended/Distancing signage and transaction barriers | Touchless transactions recommended/Distancing signage and transaction barriers |
| **Check-Out Method** | Digital Only | Digital Only | Touchless check-out or curbside/Self-service only | Touchless check-out preferred/ Check-out at service desk available with precautionary measures |
| **Materials Returns** | Encouraged not to return/ Outdoor book drops open | Outdoor book drops open/ Quarantine materials for at least 6 days | Outdoor or all book drops open/Quarantine materials for at least 6 days | All book drops open, all materials due dates enforced |
| **Resource Sharing** | Digital only | Digital preferred, some limited home delivery | Digital preferred, some limited home delivery and pick-up | Digital preferred, some limited home delivery and pick-up |
| **Library Instruction** | Video and digital  | Video and digital  | Video and digital, minimal in-person informed by courses held on campus with social distancing measures employed  | Video and digital, small group sessions, multiple sessions if necessary, observing remaining distancing guidance |
| **Events and Outreach** | Video and Digital  | Video and Digital  | Video and digital, minimal in-person informed by courses held on campus with social distancing measures employed and pre-registration required | Video and digital, small group programs, multiple sessions if necessary, observing any remaining distancing guidance |

## III. **Focus Areas:**

### Handling of materials that circulate within or outside the library

* Checking out materials
	+ If the building remains closed to patrons but some employees are able to return, consider paging books and providing “curbside service” outside the building.
	+ For partial reopening of some spaces and services, consider closing the stacks and paging books for patrons.
	+ Upon full reopening of the stacks, encourage patrons to use self-checkout machines where available.
* Course reserves
	+ Consider purchasing electronic versions of texts whenever possible.
	+ Reserve materials are among the most heavily circulated items in the library. Because returned reserve materials will need to be quarantined for a period of days, consider purchasing additional copies and/or working with the bookstore to rent copies of the most heavily used reserve items.
* Returning Materials
	+ Encourage patrons to use book drops or to mail materials rather than returning items at the check-out desk.
	+ Install production transfer-aiding materials (such as shelving) to reduce person-to-person production hand-offs.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* Sanitizing returned materials
	+ Books and papers
		- Because the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) can persist on paper for four to five days, materials that cannot be sanitized without potentially damaging them should be isolated for at least six days before being returned to a space where patrons can handle them or check them out.[[2]](#footnote-2)
		- If objects are bagged in plastic bags in order to prevent staff from touching them during the period of isolation, they should be isolated for ten days, since the virus can persist on plastic up to nine days.
	+ Laptops and other electronic support items.
		- Laptops and other electronic support items that are checked out should be disinfected upon return.
			* While manufacturers’ instructions for disinfecting specific products should be consulted to prevent damage, consider using a 70 percent isopropyl alcohol wipe, as per the CDC.[[3]](#footnote-3) [A study](https://www.journalofhospitalinfection.com/article/S0195-6701%2820%2930046-3/pdf) has shown that 70 percent isopropyl (propanol) can disable the virus after an exposure time of 30 seconds.[[4]](#footnote-4)

### Public Access

Libraries have a variety of spaces (from service desks, to small study rooms and large open areas and everything in-between) with the potential for a high-level of contact between both the public and library employees. Public access to library spaces will depend on a number of factors including the ability to protect employees, the ability for the public to socially distance, accessibility to supplies and facilities for good hygiene, and the cleaning regimen of surfaces and equipment. The level of public access will depend on the previous factors as well as the type of space and activity. In general, beginning to introduce public access to the library best aligns with Stage Three of California’s Pandemic Roadmap.

Library spaces should be reopened on a gradual basis with special consideration given to the unique requirements for overall size, types of activities expected, and the ability to maintain safety and hygiene.

* In open study spaces: Remove seats and move furniture to meet recommended distancing. Use table signage to remind users to maintain social distance.
* In study rooms: Depending on size, study rooms may remain closed until the final phase of reopening if social distancing cannot be safely maintained.
* In hallways, stairwells or escalators: CalOSHA guidance is to establish one-way traffic, where possible, to eliminate people passing each other. Post signs to allow six feet between each person
* In elevators: Post signs to designate max number of persons in the elevator, in order to maintain six feet distancing. Require face coverings and frequently clean high-touch surfaces.
* In classrooms/labs: Remove and/or reconfigure furniture and equipment to maintain the recommended 28 square feet around each person. Consider using a reservation system and/or signage to limit to one user per workstation. Personal protective equipment may also be warranted depending on campus guidelines and the type of activity taking place. Clean and disinfect shared items (e.g., computers) between uses is a best practice.[[5]](#footnote-5)
* In specialized spaces, such as food services areas, family rooms, meditation spaces, maker spaces, and innovation centers: Depending on size and the ability to sanitize in between users, specialized spaces may remain closed until the final phase of reopening if social distancing cannot be safely maintained. Maker spaces and innovation centers that support scheduled class activities will need to abide by standards for labs, with an emphasis on cleaning shared surfaces/equipment between uses.

Library services should also be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with a phased approach based on the ability to maintain safety and hygiene with regard to physical distancing and equipment handling.

* At service points where materials are checked out and/or face-to-face services are provided, provide
	+ Transaction barriers.
	+ Personal protective equipment, including masks, face shields, and gloves.
	+ Hand sanitizing dispensers at service points.
	+ Tape or printed decals on the floor and signs to enforce six-foot distancing.
	+ Workstation monitors at service points can be turned toward the user.
	+ Consider alternate methods of providing services that reduce physical employee/patron interaction, such as remote services, self-service models, or contactless services (e.g., paging items then placing them in book lockers for the patron to retrieve.)
* For in-person instructional sessions and reference/consultation services in a hybrid environment:
	+ Consider dividing up classes and scheduling half in-person and half virtual sessions.
	+ Consider extending virtual instruction services until Phase 4.
	+ Consider extending virtual reference and consultation services until Phase 4.
* Communication plan required for implementing and upholding social distancing and hygiene:
	+ Determine how to enforce these rules by consulting with the campus emergency team.
	+ Floor and wall signs throughout the building
	+ Social media and website posts
	+ Outreach to student government and/or directly to students

### Faculty/Staff

* A Phased Reopening
	+ Phase One: Library building closed to patrons and employees. All online resources and services remain available, including research assistance and information literacy instruction via remote modalities. Aligns with campus closures for all but essential employees, remote instruction, and Stage One of [California’s Pandemic Roadmap](https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Update-on-California-Pandemic-Roadmap.pdf): Safety and Preparedness.
	+ Phase Two: Library building remains closed to patrons. Employees who can perform their duties remotely will not return to campus. Some employees will return to the library to provide limited service for activities that cannot be performed outside of the building (e.g., require the handling/use of physical materials that cannot be feasibly removed from the building). On-site employees should limit physical interactions, avoid gathering in groups, and continue to follow recommendations about hygiene. If employees share a space that does not allow for at least a 28 square-foot allotment per person (i.e., a circular area with at least a 3-foot radius surrounding each person)[[6]](#footnote-6) in order to maintain six feet of social distancing, as per the CDC’s recommendations, and no other space is available/adequate, then a staggered work schedule may be instituted so that employees work on-site and from home at different days/times.[[7]](#footnote-7) This may require that only every other cubicle be occupied simultaneously. Aligns with a partial campus closure and remote instruction and Stage Two of [California’s Pandemic Roadmap](https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Update-on-California-Pandemic-Roadmap.pdf): Lower Risk Workplaces.
	+ Phase Three: The Library building is partially open with limited operations in order to maintain social distancing while also resuming access to some spaces (e.g., computer labs) and services (e.g., checking out materials). Physical interaction with patrons should be limited (reduced service points, discourage extended interactions) and feature enhanced safety (e.g., plexiglass partitions at service points). Aligns with a hybrid model, where some instruction is online and some is conducted face-to-face on campus and Stage Three of [California’s Pandemic Roadmap](https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Update-on-California-Pandemic-Roadmap.pdf): Higher Risk Workplaces.
	+ Phase Four: Library building is open to the public and all employees who are not part of vulnerable groups. Some employees may continue to work from home if they can do so effectively or to have alternating/staggered schedules, but the majority of employees will return to work to focus on regular operations within the context of enhanced cleaning and social distancing measures. Stage four aligns with a model in which the majority of campus operations, including instruction, have returned to normal and Stage Four of [California’s Pandemic Roadmap](https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Update-on-California-Pandemic-Roadmap.pdf): End of Stay-At-Home Order.
* Safety Guidelines and Protective Equipment
Until the crisis is resolved, employees will maintain social distancing measures and follow all federal, state, and local health and safety guidelines. Personal protective equipment (gloves and masks), which are of particular importance in situations where employees are interacting with the public, will be provided to ensure the safety of on-site employees. Hand sanitizer will be available at all entrances, by all service desks, and in other high traffic spaces or where people are likely to touch the same surfaces (e.g., by elevators). High traffic areas should also receive regular extensive cleaning from custodial staff. Time intervals for this type of cleaning will be determined in coordination with campus guidelines for sanitizing high use public areas. Employees who handle materials that have been checked out to patrons should do so wearing gloves. Service desks where six feet of social distancing cannot be easily maintained will be equipped with plexiglass or the like to provide a barrier between employees and patrons.

### Hygiene

General hygiene measures to consider before reopening the library to keep staff and users safe (adapted from: [IFLA - COVID-19 and the Global Library Field](https://www.ifla.org/covid-19-and-libraries) and [CDPH & Cal/OSHA - COVID 19 Industry Guidance: Workplaces](https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-office-workspaces.pdf), and [OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf)):

* Encourage staff and users to stay home or not enter the library if feeling unwell,
* Require temperature and/or symptoms screening for all staff and users when entering libraries,[[8]](#footnote-8)
* Require all staff and users to wear masks in the library,
* Provide hand-sanitizer at service counters and at strategic locations throughout the library,M
* Adhere to social distancing in public areas and service desks,
* Frequent sanitizing and cleaning of facilities in public areas,
* Install high-efficiency air filters and/or increase ventilation rates in the work environment[[9]](#footnote-9)
* If the number of seats and other spaces needs to be limited, consider restricting library access to primary users.

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1. “COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Office Workspaces.” California Department of Public Health. <https://www.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-office-workspaces.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Kampf, G., Todt, D., Pfaender, S., & Steinmann, E. (2020). Persistence of coronaviruses on inanimate surfaces and their inactivation with biocidal agents. *Journal of Hospital Infection*, *104*(3), 246–251.<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhin.2020.01.022>

From [COVID-19 Basics: Disinfecting Cultural Resources](https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/covid-19-basics-disinfecting-cultural-resources/): “another [article](https://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMc2004973?articleTools=true) has been published as a correspondence in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and this article gives shorter times for some surfaces. It says for example 4 hours on copper, 2 days on stainless steel, and up to 3 days on other surfaces. The difference between the New England Journal of medicine article is that it’s a communication and hasn’t gone through as thorough a review process as the article for the journal of hospital infection. So, in order to err on the sign of caution, I recommend that you isolate materials for 6 to 9 days.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. CDC. (2020, February 11). *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)—Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>

*How to clean your Apple products*. (n.d.). Apple Support. Retrieved May 5, 2020, from<https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT204172> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Other disinfectants proven to be effective in deactivating the virus and their corresponding exposure times are outlined in the document [Cultural Resources and COVID-19](https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/download/49420/), produced by the National Center for Preservation TEchnology and Training. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The draft CDC report [Interim Guidance for Schools and Day Camps](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6883734-CDC-Business-Plans.html) and CalOSHA [COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Office Workspaces](https://www.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-office-workspaces.pdf) both recommend cleaning and disinfecting shared objects / equipment between uses. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.density.io/blog/how-to-plan-conference-room-usage-in-the-age-of-social-distancing/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Note that alternating teams of people who work a week on and a week off is preferable to daily alternating schedules for the purpose of contact tracing, should someone become ill. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Per the CalOSHA document, “COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE: Office Workspaces,” <https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-office-workspaces.pdf>: Provide temperature and/or symptom screenings for all workers at the beginning of their shift and any vendors, contractors, or other workers entering the establishment. Make sure the temperature/symptom screener avoids close contact with workers to the extent possible. Both screeners and employees should wear face coverings for the screening. If requiring self-screening at home, which is an appropriate alternative to providing it at the establishment, ensure that screening was performed prior to the worker leaving the home for their shift and follows CDC guidelines. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf), p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)