Communication Plan
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Guide to Creating Your Own COVID-19 Prevention Materials</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Know your audience</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: Choose topics to focus on</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Choose the right format</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4: Create your materials</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose trustworthy sources</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore resources from other colleges and universities</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5: Get feedback from other students</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6: Revise your materials</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7: Share your materials</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your Guide to Creating Your Own COVID-19 Prevention Materials

As students come back to campus, everyone probably has a lot of questions about COVID-19 — like how to socialize safely and follow campus guidelines. As a student ambassador, you can help answer those questions by creating your own educational materials about COVID-19 prevention. Educational materials can include anything from social media posts to campus newspaper articles, posters, and more. You can use this guide to create your own materials.

**Short on time?**
Check out the easy-to-share educational materials on page 10.
Step 1: Know your audience

The first step is to decide who you want to develop educational materials with. You can choose to make your materials available to all students or create materials with a specific organization or group on campus. Partner with campus organizations to create educational materials that meet their needs.

Here are a few examples:

- Fraternity and sorority life organizations
- Cultural or religious organizations
- International student organizations
- Transfer or first-year student organizations
- Other organizations or clubs based on common interests
- Athletic teams
- Residence halls

You can even partner with campus organizations to create educational materials that meet their needs.
Step 2: Choose topics to focus on

Next, it’s time to decide what topics you want to focus on in your materials.

Know your audience

Think about the people who are going to see your materials. What do they want to know about campus COVID-19 guidelines, getting a COVID-19 vaccine, or COVID-19 in general?

If you’re not sure what your audience wants to know, ask them! You can get input from other students by:

- Posting a question or poll on your university’s social media accounts
- Asking student organizations to post on their social media accounts — or talk to members at their next meeting
- Talking to friends and acquaintances on campus

If you have several questions you’d like to ask, consider creating a survey. It’s easy to make one using an online tool like SurveyMonkey or Google Surveys. You can post a link to your survey on social media or ask campus organizations, academic departments, or professors to spread the word.
Choose topics that meet students’ needs

Then, consider how you can answer your audience’s questions about COVID-19. Here are a few example topics to consider:

**Campus guidelines:** Explain your campus’s COVID-19 prevention guidelines (e.g., wearing a mask or physical distancing) and offer suggestions on how to hang out safely while following the guidelines.

**Socializing safely:** Offer tips on how to socialize safely, assess your personal COVID-19 risk, and set boundaries with friends and roommates. You can also share guidance on how to plan safe social events or adapt existing events and traditions to follow campus guidelines.

**COVID-19 vaccines:** Explain why it’s important for students to get a COVID-19 vaccine and where to get one.

**How to make health care decisions:** Provide tips to help students make their own health care decisions, like when to go to the doctor or get a COVID-19 test.

**Taking care of yourself and others:** Offer strategies to help students care for their mental health and their community as they readjust to campus life.

You can choose to address one or more of these topics in your materials.

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**Check out the Vax Forward Digital Toolkit**

For resources to help you educate students about the COVID-19 vaccines, visit [vaxforward.com](http://vaxforward.com). This toolkit includes tips and talking points to address common questions and misinformation about getting vaccinated.
Step 3: Choose the right format

Once you’ve chosen topics to focus on, you'll need to choose a format for your educational materials. How will you share your message?

Social media posts

As things continue to shift and change with the COVID-19 pandemic, social media is the fastest way to share up-to-date information. There are many different ways to spread the word on social media, including:

- Text-only posts on Facebook and Twitter
- Graphics or GIFs to share on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- TikTok videos
- Instagram stories and reels

Other digital materials

Get creative with other types of digital communication, like:

- Posts or articles on campus media sites
- Ads on campus radio stations
- Announcements or videos to play during athletic events
- Digital signs for TV screens or campus shuttles
Print materials

Print materials may seem old school, but they're a great way to make your message stand out. Consider creating posters or flyers to draw students’ attention in common areas like the student union or cafeteria. Or write an article or ad for your campus newspaper.

Have a link you’d like to share? Consider including QR codes in your materials. When students scan the code with their smartphone, they’ll instantly be taken to your website.

Giveaway items

Giving away small freebies can help students remember to follow campus guidelines. Giveaway items could include hand sanitizer, tissues, or thermometers with your campus name or logo.
Step 4: Create your materials

Now that you’ve learned about your audience and decided on a format, the next step is to create your educational materials.

Short on time? Check out our easy-to-share materials

At Higher Ed COVID-19 Community of Practice Student Ambassador Program Toolkit, find resources that you can download and share right away — including posters, social media graphics and posts, and digital signs. These materials promote following campus COVID-19 guidelines, wearing a mask, washing your hands, and keeping a safe distance. Simply choose the materials that meet your needs, add your school’s name and logo, and you’re ready to share!

For resources to help you educate students about the COVID-19 vaccines, visit vaxforward.com. This toolkit includes tips and talking points to address common questions and misinformation about getting vaccinated.
Choose trustworthy sources

When you’re communicating about COVID-19, it’s important to make sure you’re sharing information from sources you can trust.

- **Learn the basics about COVID-19** from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Check your state and county health department webpages for information on the latest COVID-19 policies in your area.
- For resources to help you educate students about the COVID-19 vaccines, check out [ACHA’s Vax Forward toolkit](https://coronavirus.unca.edu/resources/student-health-ambassadors/)
- **Explore more COVID-19 resources** for college and university campuses.

Explore resources from other colleges and universities

Here are a few resources that campuses across the country have created to slow the spread of COVID-19 on campus. You can look to these for inspiration as you create your own materials.

- Washington State University: TOGETHER Workshop [https://cougarhealth.wsu.edu/together-workshop/#C2](https://cougarhealth.wsu.edu/together-workshop/#C2)
- University of North Carolina Asheville: Student Health Ambassadors [https://coronavirus.unca.edu/resources/student-health-ambassadors/](https://coronavirus.unca.edu/resources/student-health-ambassadors/)
Step 5: Get feedback from other students

So you've got a first draft ready. Now it's time to get feedback from other students. By sharing your materials with others, you can get suggestions to improve your materials and make sure they meet your audience's needs.

Host a focus group

A focus group is a meeting where several people share their thoughts on a specific topic or material. You can host your own focus group by inviting 5 to 10 students to review your materials and give feedback. If you're creating materials for a specific organization, you can ask members to join your focus group.

If you're creating materials for all students on campus, be sure to invite students of different races and ethnicities, majors, age groups, and students with chronic illnesses or disabilities. Including a diverse group of students can help you make sure your materials are accessible to everyone.

Consider bringing snacks or offering incentives — like a gift card to the campus bookstore or a restaurant near campus, for example — to encourage students to participate in your focus group.
Other ways to get feedback

You can send materials to student organizations and ask them to gather feedback from their members. And if you're short on time, you can always share your materials with friends to get their feedback.

What to ask

Here are a few questions to get the conversation started:

- What’s your first impression of this material?
- Is there anything specific you like or don’t like about it?
- Is there anything that’s confusing or hard to understand?
- Do you have any questions about [topic of the material]?
- Is there anything you would add to this material?
Step 6: Revise your materials

Next, it’s time to revise your materials. Take a look at all of the comments you’ve received from your focus group, student organizations, or friends on campus.

Are there any common themes that came up in your discussions? For example, maybe several people had the same question about campus guidelines. Or maybe a few were confused about the same sentence. Keep these themes in mind as you revise your materials.

You don’t have to take every single suggestion that people provide. Your goal is not to make everyone happy — it’s to make your materials easier to use.

Once you’re finished revising your materials, ask someone to proofread to make sure they’re error free.
Step 7: Share your materials

So your materials are ready to go. Now it’s time to choose the best way to share them with students. Here are a few ways to share:

- **Post print materials and hand out giveaway items in common areas, like the student union, cafeteria, academic buildings, or residence halls.**
- **Ask student organizations to share your materials with their members.**
- **Ask campus media organizations to share your materials.**
- **Ask public health, nursing, pre-med, or related academic departments to help spread the word.**
- **Amplify your social media posts by sharing them on your own personal account and asking friends to share.**