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[Home](#) > UWI activates coronavirus response plan

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The University of the West Indies (The UWI) says it is closely monitoring the Coronavirus situation in China and has activated a response plan for its students and staff member in that country.

The UWI says it has 36 students enrolled in a BSc Software Engineering programme at UWI-China Institute of Information Technology, which allows for two years of study at the Global Institute of Software Technology (GIST).

The university says at this time of inter-semester break, 28 students and one administrator are currently in Suzhou, China.

The UWI says it is working closely with GIST and other relevant local authorities in China to ensure the safety and well being of students and staff.

According to the university, Suzhou is not within the epicentre of the virus.

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The UWI says it is engaging global precautionary measures as well as the positions adopted by its stakeholder governments in relation to travel advisories and screening protocols.

Nevertheless, the GIST campus remains closed until February 23 when the new semester is expected to begin.

There is continuous on-site support on the campus. Medical and screening protocols have also been established.

The UWI says it is in regular contact with GIST and is receiving situation reports.

The university has also held meetings with the students and communicated directly with parents and guardians.

The next meeting with parents and guardians is planned for Friday, January 31, 2020.

Simultaneously, the university says it is collaborating with regional entities and agencies including the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), CARICOM Secretariat, Ministries of Health and Foreign Affairs, and others in the regional management and

response strategy.

It has also convened a group of experts to examine the issues and help inform decision-making.

The UWI will host a Vice-Chancellor's Forum today which will offer informed analysis and perspectives.

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