



## MEMORANDUM

**TO : HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS AND FACULTY**  
**RE : PROTOCOL DURING HIGH HEAT INDEX**

As temperatures rise in the coming days, we want to ensure everyone in our university community stays safe and comfortable. Our top priority is the well-being of our students, faculty, and staff. We are implementing measures to help you navigate the heat while continuing your academic activities.

### WHAT IS THE HEAT INDEX?

The heat index, also called the "apparent temperature," is how hot it actually feels when humidity is factored in with the air temperature. In tropical countries like the Philippines, high humidity can make it feel much hotter than the recorded temperature.

### HEAT INDEX LEVELS (PAGASA GUIDELINES)

According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), the heat index is classified as follows:

Heat Index	Classification	Potential Health Effects
27°C - 32°C	Caution	Fatigue possible with prolonged exposure; continuous activity may cause heat cramps.
33°C - 41°C	Extreme Caution	Heat cramps and heat exhaustion possible; prolonged exposure may lead to heatstroke.
42°C - 51°C	Danger	Heat exhaustion likely; heatstroke possible.
52°C or higher	Extreme Danger	Heatstroke imminent.

### WHY IS IT SO HOT?

Several factors contribute to the high heat index in the Philippines, including:

- High humidity, especially in urban and coastal areas
- Urban heat island effect (heat absorbed by buildings and roads)
- El Niño, which causes prolonged dry spells and intense heat
- Global climate change, leading to rising temperatures

## HOW WE ARE ADAPTING TO THE HEAT

### 1. Hybrid Learning for Extreme Heat

- If the heat index reaches **45°C**, in-person classes will be suspended **AND** students will shift to **online learning**. We shall follow the PAGASA forecasts as the official source of information. The Office of the Vice President for Higher Education will announce any schedule changes in advance.
- **Online learning** can be conducted **synchronously** using Google Meet or **asynchronously** using learning packets or modules prepared by the faculty. Our Learning Management Systems, My EClass or Google Classroom, are helpful for online learning.
- Faculty are encouraged to prepare learning packets in advance and adjust activities as needed to minimize heat exposure. Please plan instruction and assessments with flexibility through the end of the semester.

### 2. Cooler Classroom Environments

- Air-conditioned classrooms will remain open for students who need a cooler place to study. The scheduled availability of classrooms is posted near the doors. Ateneo de Zamboanga University is well-equipped to handle high heat indexes due to its air-conditioned classrooms and facilities.
- Non-air-conditioned classrooms will be equipped with additional fans and ventilation.
- The air-conditioned University Library is available for students needing a heat break.
- All non-functioning air conditioning units in the classrooms must be immediately reported to the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) for proper action.
- During days when in-person classes are suspended, students are permitted on campus to allow them to continue their learning activities.

### 3. Flexible Attendance Policies

- If you feel unwell due to the heat, you can get an excused absence with medical verification.
- Faculty are encouraged to provide recorded lectures or extra learning materials for those unable to attend in person.

### 4. Changes to Outdoor Activities

- **PATHFIT** Classes (Physical Education) and other strenuous activities will **not be held outdoors** between **10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.** They will have to be done indoors.
- Sports events will be rescheduled to cooler times or moved indoors.
- Faculty and event organizers should monitor the weather before conducting outdoor activities.
- Graduation events will be scheduled accordingly to prevent excessive heat exposure.

### 5. Final Examinations

- Final examinations will proceed as scheduled even during elevated heat index levels. If absolutely necessary, exams may be rescheduled or extended to later dates.
- The College Registrar's Office will post the available classrooms designated as study areas for students preparing for their upcoming exams while on campus.

## STAYING SAFE ON CAMPUS

### 1. Adjusted School Hours

- Arrive before **10:00 a.m.** and leave after **4:00 p.m.** to avoid peak heat during commute.
- Try to stay indoors between **10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.** when temperatures are highest.

## 2. Dress Comfortably

- During the summer months (April and May), school uniforms are optional. Students in PATHFIT classes may wear comfortable clothing instead of PE uniforms.
- Light-colored, loose-fitting clothing is recommended to stay cool.
- Use umbrellas or hats for shade when outdoors.

## 3. Hydration & Cooling Stations

- Please bring your tumblers.
- Water stations are set up in the College Building for easy access to drinking water. More water stations will be established when needed.
- Lounges, kiosks, and shaded spaces may serve as cooling areas.

## 4. Recognizing Heat-Related Illnesses

- **Heat cramps:** Muscle pain, excessive sweating.
  - **Heat exhaustion:** Dizziness, nausea, fainting.
  - **Heatstroke (Emergency!):** High fever (above 40°C), confusion, unconsciousness.
- If you experience any of these symptoms, **seek help immediately!**

## 5. Medical Assistance on Standby

- The University Infirmary is on **high alert** for heat-related concerns.
- First aid kits and emergency response teams are available across campus.
- Our Nursing Clinical Instructors and trained nursing students will be on hand to assist during emergencies.

## KEEPING EVERYONE INFORMED

- We will distribute the latest safety advisories through official university email, schools/colleges, and bulletin boards.
- Educational materials regarding heat safety will be provided to both students and staff.
- The university maintains a close partnership with local health authorities and government agencies to ensure that we implement the most effective safety measures.
- The university will comply with any class suspension issued by the local government unit (LGU), which shall include the suspension of student activities.

## TAKE CARE & STAY COOL!

We encourage everyone to take precautions during this hot spell. If you feel unwell, please do not hesitate to ask for help. Your safety is our priority!

If you have any concerns, please reach out to the **University Infirmary**.

**Prioritize your safety, keep yourself well-hydrated, and take care of your well-being! Your health is important.**

**(sgd) FR. RENE C. TACASTACAS, SJ**  
Vice President for Higher Education