The University of Manchester

Guidance for All Staff Returning to the Campus

Updated May 2021

This guidance will be reviewed on an on-going basis in line with local and national guidance

You should not return to work unless you have been asked to do so by your line manager. This document provides guidance for you, as it is anticipated you will be returning to work whilst COVID restrictions are in place. It is important that you read and follow this guidance carefully. **COVID-19 poses a risk for you, for those you live with as well as those you come in contact with.**

Your welfare, the welfare of your colleagues and the welfare of those you live with is important to us. Please observe safe practice standards.
Key Issues You Need to Consider

1. What are the main things I need to understand about the risk of COVID-19?
   a. COVID-19 is a highly infectious and potentially fatal disease.

   *This a serious but a manageable risk*

   b. The impact of the disease is highly variable.

   *Infected individuals may not necessarily show any signs of the disease but may still be able to pass it to others*

   c. Some people are more vulnerable and have a higher risk of severe disease and fatality.

   *It is important that such individuals are not exposed to any unnecessary risks.*

   *Some individuals with no obvious underlying risk factors may also develop severe disease.*

   d. It appears to be primarily spread by aerosol and respiratory droplets, and also contact with surfaces on which the respiratory droplets fall or have been in contact with contaminated surfaces (e.g., hands). Aerosol and respiratory droplets can spread widely when sneezing or coughing but also during speaking, shouting or singing. Infection can occur through nose, mouth or eyes.

   *It is important to maintain social distancing and strict hygiene measures such as frequent handwashing/sanitising hands.*

   e. Handwashing with soap for at least 20 seconds according to NHS guidance ([NHS Handwashing Guidance](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/prevention-and-protection/handwashing/)) is effective in reducing the risk of transmission. Hand sanitisers (with at least 60% alcohol content) should be used where handwashing is not possible.

   f. Normal surgical facemasks/face coverings reduce risk of transmission by limiting spread of respiratory droplets and aerosols.

   *Face coverings must be worn indoors in all areas, apart from single user offices, or whilst seated and socially distant in a shared workspace. This also includes in face-to-face teaching spaces. They are NOT a substitute for social distancing. More details can be found within the face covering FAQs.*
2. Can I come into work if I have medical conditions that may make me more vulnerable to more severe COVID-19 infection?

The rate of COVID infections has fallen significantly since January 2021 and most clinically vulnerable people have now been offered vaccinations.

a. Clinically extremely vulnerable

The advice to shield for the extremely clinically vulnerable has been removed. However, clinically extremely vulnerable people must continue to follow the rules that are in place for everyone and they are currently advised to work from home where possible. If you cannot work from home, and need to attend the workplace then you may be able to do so. You should discuss this with your line manager to determine whether it is necessary for you to return to work and also if any changes are required in nature of work you undertake in the workplace to keep you safe.

b. Clinically moderately vulnerable Staff who are clinically moderately vulnerable should be able to return to the workplace if required to do so. If you are nevertheless concerned about this because of the nature of work (e.g., if it involves prolonged face-to-face contact with others) or for other reasons, please discuss this with your line manager so that necessary adjustments can be made to allow you to work safely.

Further information:

- Government guidance on clinical vulnerability

3. What do I need to do to reduce my risk of infection and the risk of infection to others?

a. We all have a responsibility and statutory duty to ensure we keep ourselves and those we work with safe.

b. Please follow all the guidance on the campus as well as in this document carefully.
Practical Guidance on Working During COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Before setting off for work
   a. If you or someone you live with have any symptoms of COVID-19 then you must not go into work and you must also inform your line manager.

      Follow NHS guidance on how to look after yourself and/or those you live with, and isolate as per the guidance.

   b. There will be no food preparation on the campus; take a packed lunch from home or purchase it from the campus food outlets.

   c. Take your face covering with you. You will need this on the campus and also if you use public transport.

      Guidance on how to wear a face mask/covering can be found in this Health and Safety Executive guidance.

   Face coverings will also be available for you to collect whilst on campus

   d. Wash your hands carefully before setting off to reduce your risk of transmitting the disease.

   e. Carry hand sanitiser (minimum 60% alcohol) with you and use it frequently to sanitise your hands.

2. Traveling to and from work
   a. The UK Government advice is to travel safely by walking and cycling, if you can. Where this is not possible, use public transport or drive. Further advice on transport can be found on the Government website. We have published travel FAQs online.

   b. If you use public transport, then maintain social distancing (at least 1m but preferably 2m between you and other people) and you must wear a face covering.

   c. Use contactless payments or term passes.

3. Arriving or leaving work
   a. You will be required to wear a face covering indoors at all times, unless you are in a single user office or seated and socially distanced in a shared occupancy office. Some staff and students may be exempt from wearing face coverings on health or disability grounds. More details on the wearing of face coverings
can be found in the FAQs. You need to sanitise your hands to put on your face covering before entry into the building.

b. On arrival or departure, please use the allocated and signposted entry and exit doors only.

c. Use hand sanitiser from the dispenser near the door immediately on entry to avoid contaminating high contact surfaces in the building.

Alternatively, if there are toilets on ground floor, these may be used additionally as washrooms for handwashing. Wash your hands thoroughly using soap and warm water.

d. Follow any signposts and markings on the floors, stairwells and lifts to maintain social distancing.

e. Make your way to and from your area of work directly and if possible, avoid touching high-contact surfaces such as door handles, lift buttons etc. You may be able to use your elbow or foot to push open the doors.

4. Working

a. The campus will have reduced capacity because of social distancing measures. Line managers will decide who should be working on campus and who can continue to work from home.

b. You may be working individually or in a small team.

If you are working alone (e.g., office-based staff), you may have to follow a rota to allow others to work on the campus as well.

If you are working in a team, each team will have a designated leader and defined rota.

If you are designated team leader, you will have responsibility for
- providing staff information along with the line manager
- safe practice by your team and
- supervision of more inexperienced members of your team; you may be able to delegate this to another suitability experienced member of your team.

c. Make sure you have had relevant safety information before you start.

d. A risk assessment will be completed for your role or teaching setting and your line manager will inform you of the risks and identified mitigations and actions.
e. Make yourself familiar with all safety protocols and follow them carefully.

f. When you arrive or leave your work area, you must wash your hands carefully so as not to contaminate high-contact common surfaces such as door handles.

g. You must observe social distancing and will be allocated a specific area for your work.

h. You will have to wear a face mask or face covering, whilst in doors unless in a single occupancy office or seated and socially distant in a shared office. (Some staff and students may be exempt from wearing face coverings on health or disability grounds, see Government Guidance on how to wear a face covering.) Further information on wearing face coverings can be found in the FAQs.

- Indoors, you should wear your University-issued face covering or you may choose to wear a reusable face covering.

- In laboratory spaces, you must wear a disposable mask; this will need to be changed at least every 4 hours or earlier if damp/contaminated. (Some staff and students may be exempt from wearing face coverings on health or disability grounds. More details can be found within the face covering FAQs.)

i. If you are sharing any equipment, you must clean it with the appropriate agent/wipes (these will be provided) after you finish using it.

j. You may have to help with regular cleaning of high contact surfaces like door handles, switches, taps etc. in your immediate area.

k. When you finish work, clean all the surfaces in your allocated area; there is likely to be someone else working in the same space in rotation with you.

5. Taking breaks

a. There will be no food preparation on the campus; bring your lunch from home or purchase it from campus food outlets.

b. There will be common areas available for taking breaks and eating lunch but these should not be used for social gathering; social distancing must be maintained.

If you are in single use office space, you should use this for your lunch or breaks to avoid crowding common spaces.
c. Stagger break times with your colleagues.

d. Wash your hands carefully on arrival and departure from the break area.

6. Sharing your concerns
   a. It is important you feel able to raise concerns about safety in your workplace. Your voice is important in helping us improve our practice and protect our staff from harm.
   
b. You should raise this with your supervisor or line manager in the first instance.

   c. If you are not satisfied that your concerns have been addressed satisfactorily and remain concerned, then please raise the matter with your Head of Department/Division/Directorate.

   d. It is also important you provide feedback to your line manager on what works well and what does not.

7. Managing Compliance
   In order to achieve and maintain a COVID-19 secure campus, it is critical that all staff observe the policy and associated requirements relating to returning to workplace. Key elements of this are:
   
   • Attending campus only when expressly required to do so—with line management approval and in line with the Campus re-opening plan;
   • Observing social distancing rules including those relating to use of entrances, exits and one-way systems;
   • Observing requirements relating to wearing of face coverings, use of hand sanitiser and cleaning protocols.
   
   It is critical that all members of our University community make themselves familiar with and observe the rules and guidance to maintain a safe environment, and in order to protect the wider community and the NHS. While we expect colleagues will respect and observe the requirements and appreciate that some may take a little time to adjust to the arrangements, we will treat any repeated or serious breaches of the rules and requirements as misconduct under the University’s Disciplinary Procedure.

   We are legally required to exercise a duty of ourselves and each other and it is important that we do so. Equally, in exercising its health and safety obligations, our University must ensure that our staff work in a manner that is COVID-19 safe.