Guidance on Safe Return of Activity to the Campus
Updated May 2021

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

1. Understanding COVID-19 Risk
   a. COVID-19 is a highly infectious and potentially fatal disease.
      
      This is 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.
   
   d. It appears to be primarily spread by aerosol and respiratory droplets and through contact with surfaces on which the respiratory droplets fall or have been contact with contaminated surfaces (e.g., hands). Aerosol and respiratory droplets can spread widely when sneezing or coughing and also whilst 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 second according to NHS guidance (NHS Handwashing Guidance) 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 covering may reduce risk of transmission by the wearer through limiting spread of aerosol and respiratory droplets. (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.)
   
   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.
2. Deciding whether staff should return to the campus

a. The COVID-19 epidemic is still in circulation in the population (COVID Alert Level 3) and remains a risk. It is anticipated that there will be no unrestricted return to campus until the level of the transmission of COVID-19 in the UK is low (probably at least COVID Alert Level 2).

The majority of colleagues will continue to work from home for a significant part, and for some, all of their working week. To maintain overall social distancing measures in our buildings. For those staff who need to be on campus, colleagues are encouraged to continue to work from home for at least 2 or 3 days a week where appropriate for their role and it is safe for them to do so. Staff should be given a minimum of one weeks’ notice before being required to return to campus, although two weeks’ notice is preferable.

b. Can the work be undertaken at home if it is enabled by provision of equipment (IT equipment, access to software etc)?

c. Is the work listed as a priority area? (See the University’s activity mapped to UK government roadmap) This should include consideration of wellbeing of staff members who find it difficult to work at home.

Is the work on campus listed as desirable but not a priority? (See the University’s campus management framework March - December 2021.) Efforts should be made to accommodate this but only in keeping with COVID-secure measures on the campus. Health and safety must not be compromised.

d. Is the person returning going to be working in single-user or multiuser space? If, in multiuser space, is social distancing or staggered working possible?

e. Opening will require support beyond your own immediate environment particularly from Estates and Facilities staff. You must factor this in your considerations and confirm that this available.

f. Under current conditions, all staff who are required to return to campus should be able to return. Staff and students will need to be provided with guidance on vulnerability in relation to COVID-19 and asked to self-declare if the nature of their work or interactions on the campus require measures beyond those already in place to make the campus COVID-secure. There is broader Manager Guidance for supporting staff to return to campus working.

It may be necessary for some staff who are extremely vulnerable to work from home.

g. Use of Offices

There is no unrestricted access to the campus, and desk-based work should primarily be done from home, during this phase of re-opening. Offices should not routinely be occupied for work that can reasonably be undertaken at home and any use of offices should be done so by arrangement with a Line Manager, Head of Department and then signed off by the relevant HoSO/Head of Business Area. Staff that ordinarily work in single or shared offices are not prohibited from doing
so and if you are required on campus for teaching or laboratory work across the day, your office can be used in before or between these activities for desk based work. Please see here for a [template risk assessment](#) for office space and [guidance on cleaning](#) your workspace.

There may be offices within areas of certain buildings that have not been included in the re-opening plans at this time, and are not being serviced by Estates and Facilities, in which case alternative work space will need to be considered. In addition, some shared workspaces may be being used for teaching or other purposes and may not be available. This will be communicated to staff as part of discussions around returning to campus.

3. **General guidance on safe practice at work**
   a. We have obligations to comply with health and safety at work legislation and requirements to manage and control workplace risks, including protecting workers and others from the risk of COVID-19 infection in the workplace ([HSE: Regulating occupational health and safety during the coronavirus outbreak](#))

   b. Ensure that premises have been authorised for access and use, and the necessary safety checks have been performed by the Estates and Facilities Team.

   c. Access currently is only possible between times specified by your Faculty. Any out of hours access should be tightly monitored and arranged by exception.

   d. Where relevant, ensure all equipment has had safety checks and maintenance if necessary or due.

   e. Ensure that returning staff complete the [IT guidance and checklist](#) to ensure safe use of equipment.

   f. Ensure all staff are made aware of agreed safe practice by provision of [guidance for staff](#) and the return to campus video.

   g. Document accurately and contemporaneously all safety checklists ([PI checklist](#) or [Line manager workspace checklist](#)) and risk assessments. This is important to ensure we can verify and confirm to others, that we have followed due process and performed all the necessary checks for safe practice.

   h. Meetings may be held on the campus if deemed essential or if staff are already on campus for other activity such as research or teaching. COVID-secure measures must be observed.

   i. Ensure any other preparations necessary for reopening are in place e.g., procurement of supplies etc.
4. Specific Actions Required Locally

   a. Risk assessment
      This must be carried out and documented.

   For generic activities e.g., lectures, seminars, and office-based activities a general risk assessment to cover all such activities is sufficient and necessary mitigations will be covered by University-wide measures. These can be found on our Teaching and Learning pages. You should read these carefully and ensure that they are relevant to your area and that the measures are in place. You will need to modify the risk assessments if necessary.

   If you think there are generic activities that have not been covered by the templates than please liaise with Head of the Safety Services, Patrick Seechurn to generate a risk assessment.

   If you need to prepare a specific risk assessment for your area the you can guidance on what a risk assessment should consist of here (HSE Risk Assessment Guidance) and you can download an example of a risk assessment here (What To Include in A Risk Assessment).

   b. Specific safety measures for prevention of COVID transmission
      - Follow Health and Safety Executive’s guidance for working safely during COVID-19 pandemic Coronavirus: latest information and advice - HSE news

      - Implement social distancing measures to conform with University guidance (Social distancing and making your workplace COVID-secure) which requires 2m social distancing, with face coverings worn indoors at all times, except in individual offices and shared workspace (whilst socially distant). It is important to have low density occupancy of an enclosed space. Specify maximum numbers permitted in the enclosed spaces at any one time that allow at least 2 metres spacing.

      Work in small teams and arrange a rota – this will allow more people to work as well as not exceeding the numbers necessary to achieve social distancing. This could be either allocating specific days of the week or alternating weeks etc.

      Non-work areas may be used for having lunch or breaks but social gatherings should be prohibited, and social distancing measures must be enforced in these areas. In addition, ensure handwashing or hand sanitisation before entry and on exit to such areas. If private spaces are available for lunch such as own single use office spaces, then these should be used to avoid crowding common areas

      - If working in a group, design teams with a named leader, mixed experience and designated rota
1. Keep workers together in teams – where possible do not swap workers between teams
2. Where possible, isolate teams if possible, by avoiding cross-over during rota change.
3. Stagger break times
4. Ensure there is always adequate supervision of students or inexperienced members of staff

- To prevent COVID-19 transmission by direct contact, implement strict and frequent handwashing/sanitising measures. Ensure staff practice frequent handwashing in general, but particularly on entry/leaving the work area and the building, and touching high contact surfaces such doors, commonly used equipment, light switches, lift buttons etc.

Gloves are NOT an alternative to handwashing; gloves can get contaminated and carry the same risks of transmission once contaminated. If gloves are contaminated, then gloved hands should still be washed.

- Face masks/Face covering – this is mandatory in all indoor public spaces and in areas where social distancing is not possible, but should NOT be used as an alternative to social distancing or handwashing/sanitising.

- Disposable mask/covering must be used in laboratories and should be regularly changed (at least every 4 hours or earlier if damp). (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.)

- Allocate designated workplaces to members of the teams if possible.

- Set up a protocol for cleaning/sanitising the equipment (e.g. after each period of use) using appropriate cleansing or sanitising agents. Subject to risk assessment, allocate personal sets of high contact and high use equipment (e.g., keyboards) if possible.

- Design workflows to minimise movement to different areas of the building and contact with other people in the building if possible.

- Avoid food preparation in your area; advise staff to bring own lunch in containers or purchase it from campus food outlets.

- Have a communications plan to include regular reminders about safe practice.

**c. Staff Guidance**

This is essential to ensure staff are aware of safe practice procedures. This must be led by the Line Manager and the Team Leader.

Provide everyone with Individual **Guidance for Staff** in advance of accessing the campus.
Line managers should arrange a pre-start meeting with each team via MS Teams or Zoom to discuss safe practice and provide opportunity to discuss the issues and address any queries.

d. Student Induction
Student inductions will take place through welcome and transition programmes. Students will get University-wide messaging through online welcome. This will be supplemented by School and programme level inductions.

e. Staff and Student Voice and Feedback
It is extremely important staff and students feel able to raise any concerns about safety or work practice. This should be stressed in the induction process and line managers/supervisors should strive to create an open culture where such matters can be raised and discussed. Alternative channels for raising concerns should also be provided (named independent senior staff other than line managers/supervisors).

Feedback on what works well and what does not, and suggestions for improving practice should be encouraged and shared widely.

5. 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 the 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.
## Appendix 5 - Teams

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line Manager</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Division/Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>School/Directorate</td>
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### Areas to be used and shift pattern (specified times, alternate days/weeks etc)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area/Rooms</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shift</td>
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</tbody>
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### Composition of the team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Leader¹</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Team Members</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior Team members</td>
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¹*Team leader has the overall responsibility for the team including induction, supervision or nominating a supervisor from the senior team members and for safe practice.*