

# Guidance for Performing Arts, Recordings or Loud Vocalisation in Teaching SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19)

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance is supplementary to the high level guidance on office and general teaching space. Much of the guidance regarding social distancing and sanitation specified elsewhere and has not been repeated here.
- 1.2 This guidance is aimed at providing targeted guidance to staff carrying out performing arts activities in a teaching environment including;
- Singing or raised voices (shouting) that may be part of a language or drama course
  - Musical Instruments
  - Dance and Acrobatics
  - Recording studios
- This guidance is based on relevant extracts from the [government guidance for performing arts](#)
- 1.3 This guidance is for teaching and performances viewed by class members, tutors and examiners. Performances with an audience made up of other members of the University or wider public

## 2. Covid-19 as a Hazard

- 2.2 The hazards from covid-19 that you have been considered in this guidance are;
- Transmission via hand contact
  - Transmission via droplet or airborne means
- 2.5 Controls for transmission via hand contact. Best practice for controlling the spread of covid-19 between surfaces appears below organised by the type of activity or equipment. It is key to remember that covid-19 is a respiratory virus and an individual having covid-19 on their hand will not cause an infection unless they transfer it to their face. It is for this reason that hand washing and sanitisation are the preferred control rather than gloves as a gloved hand can still transfer covid-19 to another surface.
- 2.5 Controls for transmission via droplets or airborne transmission re
- 2 Metre social distancing without masks or 1 metre social distancing plus an additional control most likely a facemask.
  - Adequate airflow, details of the checks that have been carried out on ventilation systems will be published on the Health & Safety Covid-19 resources page. From the perspective of an academic or member of technical services considering the use of the area you should ensure that the room is not being overcrowded with too many people and that you have considered any activity such as singing or wind instruments that require adjustments (see below for guidance).

## 3. Testing

- 3.1 All staff and students attending campus should take an LFD (lateral flow device) test at least once a week. Ideally 2 tests would be taken weekly 3 days apart. Where this is not practical 1 test is acceptable.

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- 3.2 Tests can be booked at the [on-site testing centre](#). Walk-ins are also accepted at this centre but booking is recommended, it is advisable to check the opening times prior to arrival as this may change in line with demand.
- 3.3 Alternatively home test kits can be order from [UK Gov here](#). Either home testing or on campus testing are acceptable means of testing
- 3.4 LFD tests should be performed regardless of if an individual has been vaccinated. The only group that should note perform regular LFD tests are individuals that have had a confirmed case of covid within 90 days of the test.
- 3.5 PCR (polymerase chain reaction,) testing should be performed by individuals with symptoms or individuals that have requested a PCR test as a result of a positive LFD. In this case an individual should self isolate unless they have a negative PCR test after the initial LFD test. PCR tests can be [ordered here](#).

## 4. Room setup

- 4.1 General teaching space that has been setup in a socially distanced manner cannot be rearranged. Resetting it means that it will not be available for other users as it needs to be setup in the same configuration and spacing. This needs to be carried out with reference to the space plan and should not be done by students or academic staff.
- 4.2 This guidance is intended for use in studios or other areas that are clear of seating and can be arranged for specific activities. If in doubt consider if the room contains a poster listing the rules for general teaching space, if so it is unlikely to be a room that can be cleared.

## 5. Singing, shouting or other vocal projection

- 5.1 Where ever possible the best control is having only 1 person in an area singing, shouting, vocally projecting or speaking loudly. Where this is not possible consider the following:
  - Can 2 metre distancing be maintained between participants?
  - Can face masks be worn with 1 metre distancing? If the activity cannot be performed with a face mask, then 2 metre distancing will be required.
  - Avoid work that involves 2 or more people facing each other while singing or speaking loudly.
  - Arrange performers so that they are facing either away from each other or in the same direction (In way of example, see Figures 1 & 2 below on the use of wind instruments for diagrams of suitable spacing).
  - Consider whether the activity could be more safely executed outdoors.

Studies into the effect of singing or other activity involving loud vocalisation on the transmission of covid-19 are ongoing<sup>1</sup>. It is for this reason that limiting the number of people singing or vocally projecting in a single area, and ensuring appropriate social distancing and directional measures should be enforced.

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## 6. Musical Instruments

6.1 Pianos/keyboards, string instruments, guitars, percussion, synthesisers and any other instruments that do not require human breath to operate can be treated like any other item of equipment with regards to the need to control the spread of covid-19 by contact. Where they are used the following hierarchy of controls should be used.

- Can performers have their own instrument that is not shared? If so this should be done to eliminate this route of transmission
- Can the instrument or piece of music technology be quarantined for 72 hours between uses by different individuals? If so detail how this will be controlled: for instance, will the instrument be locked away during this period or will it be labelled up with the date it was last used, by who and when it can be used again? Consideration will have to be given to the appropriateness of any control given the users of instruments and other items.
- If either of the above is not possible then ensure that individual users of the instrument wash or sanitise their hands before and after use and avoid touching their face while playing. Gloves are not a recommended control for this work but can be used if users are more comfortable with them.

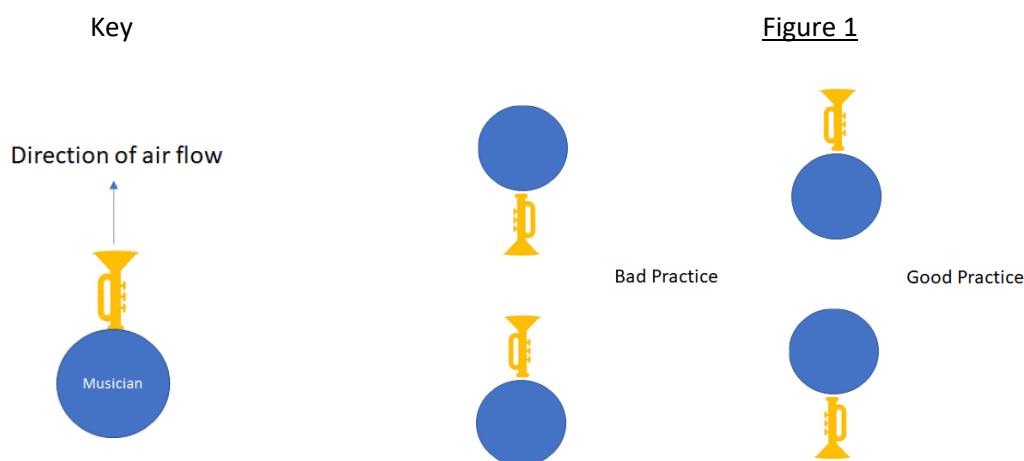
For instruments like the violin that are held close to the musicians face consider using a plastic sheet that is replaced between each use by a different person. When positioning a group of musicians or listeners social distancing measures of 2 metres or 1 metre with additional controls (face coverings) will apply.

With bands or duets, fixed teams or partners should be used whenever possible.

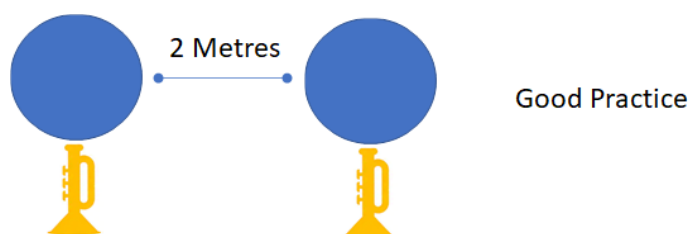
6.2 Playing duets on the same instrument should be avoided where possible (for instance a piano). If this is required review the close contact guidance for how to carry out this activity.

6.3 Wind, brass or other instruments operated by human breath cannot be shared between musicians. In addition to this you will need to consider the space and positioning of the players and any others in the area. Examples of good and bad practice are shown below.

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**Figure 2**



- 6.4 At present the risk from brass and wind instruments is poorly understood it is therefore not recommended that there are listeners when these instruments are played other than a tutor or partner. <sup>ii</sup>
- 6.5 Where possible playing outside is best practice. Ensure that an area of campus has been selected that will not impact indoor activities as windows are likely to be open. When inside if possible consider playing towards an external door or window. Playing from a room into an internal corridor is not permitted.
- 6.6 When arranging musicians remember to consider the main exit of air for each instrument, as in some cases this may not be in the direct the musician is facing for instance with a French horn.
- 6.8 Reeds, Spit valves and tone holes. When cleaning instruments or replacing reeds consider the appropriateness of the environment where this is being done. If possible do this in a private area that will not be accessed by other individuals. Be careful not to spread potential saliva contamination to surfaces outside of a private room and consider the use of plastic sheeting if a private area is not possible. Ensure that hands are sanitised after carrying out this activity. When purchasing a new reed that may have been handled wait 72 hours before using.

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## 7 Microphones

7.1 The risk from a microphone is via contact with saliva hitting the microphone because Covid-19 is transferred via contact. Once on a microphone, spit droplets will adhere to the microphone rather than be subsequently released into the air. In order to limit this means of transmission<sup>iii</sup>:

- All users must avoid touching the microphone with their mouth or lips

In addition to this consider which of the following controls is most practical

- Can individuals have their own microphone?

- Can microphones be quarantined for 72 hours between uses by different individuals?

- Can microphones be wrapped in a plastic bag which is replaced between users (most applicable for boom microphones)? It is likely that in some circumstances this may not be possible as it will have too dramatic effect on the recording. Consider what is a reasonable recording quality for the activity being undertaken.

- If you are using a boom microphone, can it be held above the head and behind the front of an individual being recorded?

- If none of these are appropriate then ensure that individual users wash or sanitise their hands before and after using a hand held microphone and avoid touching their face while recording. Gloves are not a recommended control for this work but can be used if users are more comfortable with them.

- Where you are using a static microphone, not touching or moving the microphone is a suitable control. As with other microphones after readjusting a microphone it is important to wash or sanitise your hands.

7.2 Clip on microphones can be used but individual must sanitise their hand before and after handling them.

## 8. Recording Studios

8.1 The guidance on a recording studios has been separated into the recording and sound studio side.

8.2 In a sound studio that is separated from the recording area by window standard social distancing rules of either 2 metre or 1 metre with face coverings. It is likely not possible to sanitise mixing consols between use. Because of this hand sanitiser must be available and used before and after using a mixer consols.

8.3 Recording area, where ever possible record only a single person at a time. Where this is not possible consider the following

- Can 2 metre distancing be maintained between participants?

- Can face masks be worn with 1 metre distancing? It is unlikely that masks will be compatible with singing.

- Avoid work that involves 2 or more people facing each other and talking or singing.

- Arrange performers so that they are facing either away from each other or in the same direction.

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8.4 Studies into the effect of singing or other activity involving loud vocalisation on the transmission of covid-19 are ongoing<sup>iv</sup>. It is for this reason that limiting the number of people singing in a single area and ensuring appropriate facing and social distancing measures should be strictly enforced.

## 9. Camera Equipment

9.1 In addition to the usual hazards from contact with shared equipment cameras can carry the added risk of being held close to the face. Because of this with certain cameras it may not be possible to rely on hand sanitisation alone to control transmission. See examples below for further details.



This camera is not held against the face during use and can therefore be viewed as a standard piece of equipment with regards to covid-19 controls. This means that handwashing or sanitising is an effective means of control (see musical instruments section 4)



These 2 cameras are held to an individuals face and it is for this reason that hand washing may not be an appropriate control. In these circumstances consider the following.

- Can individuals be issued with their own piece of equipment?

- Can the equipment be quarantined for 72 hours between uses by a different users?



- Is possible to replace the part of the equipment that will be in contact with users face in between uses?

It is not recommended that equipment of this nature is sanitised between uses as this may damage the equipment.

## 10. Outdoor Recording or Filming

10.1 If filming of campus or travelling to location please see the travel and offsite working guidance available [here](#)

10.2 When filming on campus or in the surrounding park land it is important to maintain social distancing guidelines of either 2 metres or 1 metre with an additional control for instance face coverings.

10.3 When filming please stay up to date with regards to the current recommended [group size for social gatherings](#). In public places there will be an expectation that this advice is followed

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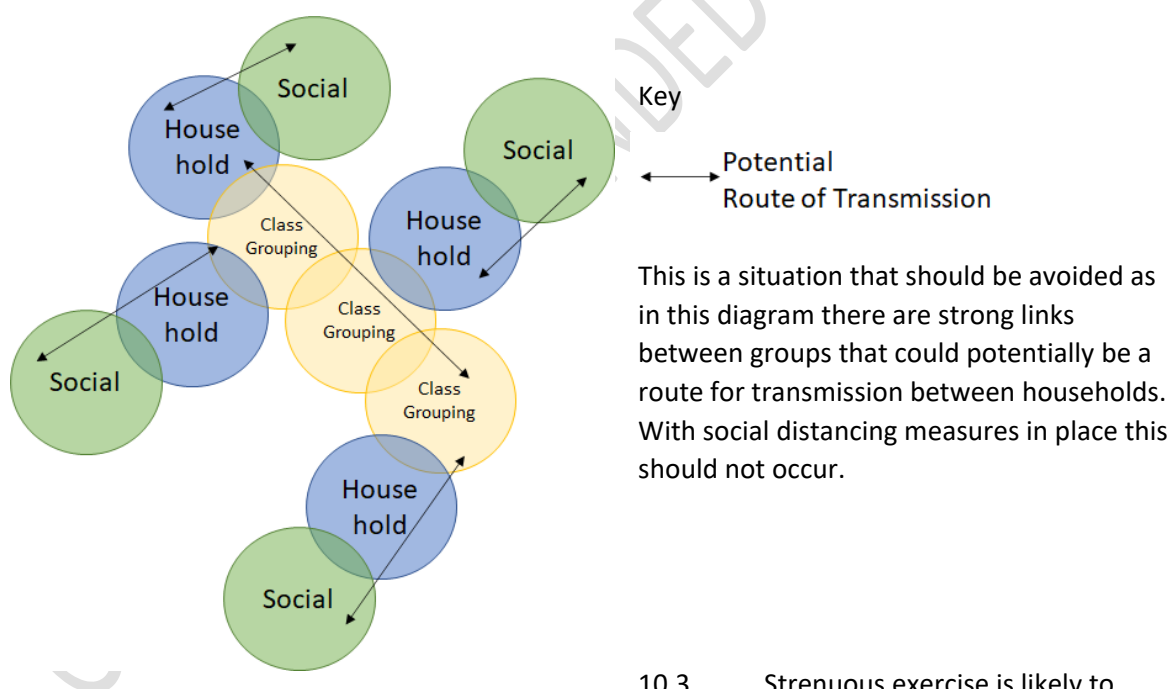
10.4 When filming on campus please consider that windows in teaching and office areas are likely to be open so as to increase ventilation. Because of this consider extra distance between filming locations and buildings to avoid disruption to other activities.

## 11. Acrobatics, Dance and Drama

11.1 **Close contact dances or other activities** with 2 or more participants are not currently recommended. If at a future date this is revised see the guidance for close contact work. It is likely that many of the controls required will be unsuitable in a performing arts environment. Individuals within the same house can continue close contact work without restriction (as, in this example, individuals are in the same bubble).

11.2 **Group work and activities.** Where possible groups should be fixed for the duration of a term. This is to provide some segmentation between groups. When setting up these groups social distancing measures should still be in place (i.e., either 1 metre with face coverings or 2 metres without). The reason for this is that due to the modular nature of courses other members of academic staff may set up other groups. While within an individual course this may seem reasonable, when taking into account other courses you can end up with many interconnected groups. See figure 3 for a diagrammatic representation.

Figure 3

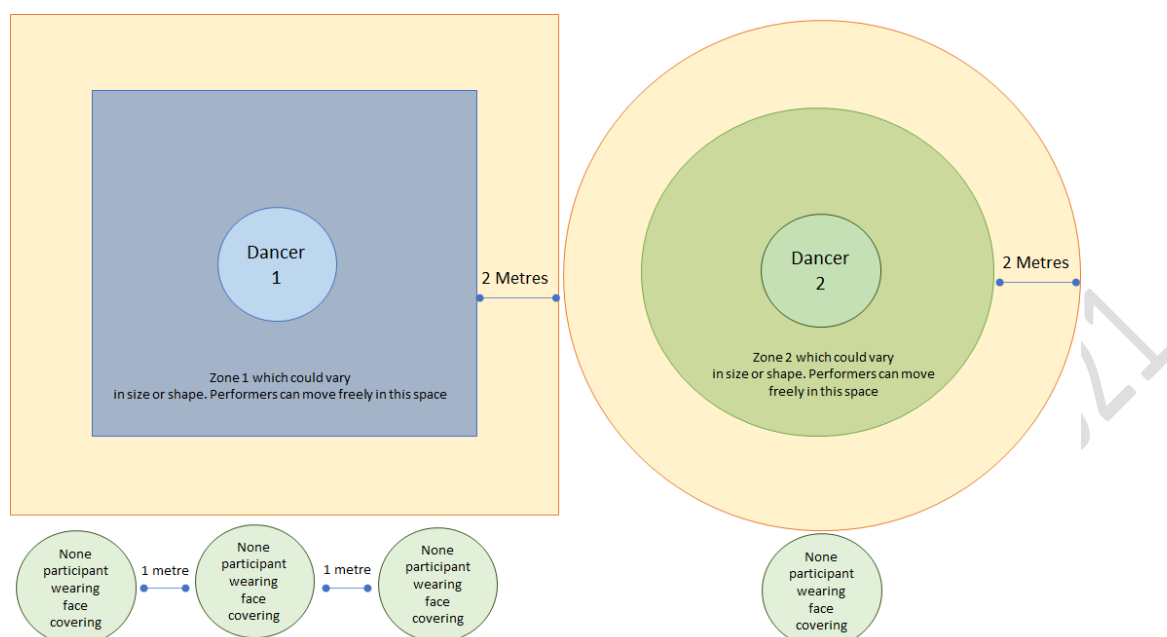


10.3 Strenuous exercise is likely to result in sweat and increased respiration. For this reason masks may not be compatible with certain activities. In these circumstances 2 metre distancing will be required. It is suggested that this could be done by marking out zones for each participant. A suggested way this would work is shown below in figure 4. This is as an example layout which can be adapted to specific locations or performance area shapes.

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Figure 4



11.5 **Hand contact:** where individuals are wearing masks it would be acceptable for individuals to have hand contact with another individual with outstretched hands so as to still enable 1 metre distancing between the main trunk of each person’s body. This is because covid-19 is a respiratory virus and it will not penetrate the skin. Gloves are not required for this activity. Any participants must refrain from touching their face during this activity and must wash or sanitise their hands before and after. Where individuals are uncomfortable with this activity this should be respected.

11.6 Shared equipment and props. Where props are used the hierarchy of controls below should be used. This should also apply to fixed or large pieces of equipment like ladders, rostra staging or other surfaces.

- Can performers have their own prop that is not shared? If so this should be done to eliminate the route of transmission
- Can a prop be quarantined for 72 hours between uses by different individuals? This will decrease the likelihood of transmission. Consideration will have to be given on how the next time the prop can be used will be communicated, will it be stored in a specific area or labelled with a date when it can next ben used.
- Consider if the prop can be wiped down with a sanitising wipe between uses. This will not be possible for fabric or other materials or shapes that are difficult to wipe down and should only be considered for props that have smooth surfaces. Current evidence is that covid-19 does not remain viable on fabric or other absorbent surfaces for as long as on smooth surfaces, this is likely due to desiccation (drying out).
- If none of the above is not possible then ensure that individual users of the prop wash or sanitise their hands before and after use and avoid touching their face while handling or having handled the prop. Gloves are not a recommended control for this work but can be used if users are more comfortable with them.

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In some circumstances props may need to be passed between performers or picked up from a surface. This is acceptable, however performers must not touch their face while handling or after handling the prop until they have sanitised or washed their hands. Performers should sanitise or wash their hands before and after handling shared props.

- 11.7 Where a floor or surface is in contact with bare feet no additional controls are required as Covid-19 is a respiratory virus and its deemed unlikely that it will be transferred from an individual's foot to their mouth or anyone else's. If students are concerned it would be recommend to replace shoes when leaving the area and to shower once they have returned home.

## 12. Costumes

- 12.1 Costumes should not be worn by another individual until after they have been washed or quarantined for 72 hours. A standard wash for the items cleaning instructions with soap or detergent will be sufficient. If in doubt revert to the 72 hour quarantine. The washing of costumes can be carried out by someone other than the wearer. When doing so transport the costumes in a plastic bag that has been tied shut and ensure that you have washed or sanitised your hands after handling dirty costumes.

## 13. Hair and Makeup

- 13.1 Where possible individuals should apply their own makeup or hair styling. If this is not possible follow the close contact work guidance on the University Health & Safety Covid-19 resources page.

## 14 Audiences

- 14.1 As of the 17<sup>th</sup> of March a number of services will reopen including theatres and other relevant venues.
- 14.2 It is a requirement that audiences wear face coverings when they enter the building when the performance is being carried out.
- 14.3 This should be checked by a member of staff managing the entrance. When considering a performance and any associated risk assessment consideration should be given as to what support is available to staff carrying out this duty should attendees respond negatively to being challenged. This should include a quick method of contacting other staff in the local area (phone or radio) and ensure that all staff are aware of how to contact security in an emergency.
- 14.4 If there is a reasonable expectation that a que will form at the entrance to the venue then the organiser must make provision for a social distanced que and management of the que by members of staff or deputised students that have received an induction from a member of staff.
- 14.4 Guidance on que management for performances is available from Uk Gov [here](#)

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/905062/S0628\\_NERVTAG\\_Assessment\\_of\\_transmission\\_of\\_COVID-19\\_through\\_musical\\_events.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/905062/S0628_NERVTAG_Assessment_of_transmission_of_COVID-19_through_musical_events.pdf)

ii <https://medicine.uiowa.edu/iowaprotocols/wind-instrument-aerosol-covid-era-covid-19-and-horns-trumpets-trombones-euphoniums-tubas-records>

iii <https://schoeps.de/en/knowledge/knowledge-base/microphone-use-covid-19.html>

iv

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/905062/S0628\\_NERVTAG\\_Assessment\\_of\\_transmission\\_of\\_COVID-19\\_through\\_musical\\_events.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/905062/S0628_NERVTAG_Assessment_of_transmission_of_COVID-19_through_musical_events.pdf)

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