Guidance for Returning to work in Research Laboratory Facilities; Social Distancing SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19)
1. **Introduction & General points**

1.1 This document outlines the University high level policy for enabling research staff to operate in laboratories following the removal of specific Covid controls justified by the reduction in covid risk due to ongoing vaccinations programs. The universities current [covid risk assessment](http://example.com) can be found on the health and safety covid resources page.

1.2 This document complements existing government guidelines and requirements.

1.3 In the event that you develop symptoms of Covid-19 or test positive you must [self isolate](http://example.com), inform your line manager and complete the [UoS Covid reporting form](http://example.com).

1.4 As of the 16th of August 2021 close contacts of covid positive persons are not required to self isolate if they are under 18 or have been double vaccinated. If you do not meet this criteria then you must self isolate and report as described in section 1.3 above.

1.5 Staff should wash their hands regularly with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds.

1.6 Anyone [traveling to the UK](http://example.com) must ensure that they are following the required testing and or quarantine arrangements for new arrivals as determined by the covid status of their country of origin and or regions they have travelled through.

1.7 Individuals that have been informed by a medical professional that they are unlikely to be protected by the vaccine due to not producing relevant antibodies should contact their line manager and HR about reasonable adjustments and may require an occupational health referral.

1.8 It is strongly recommended that any member of the University of Sussex that is able to be vaccinated against covid-19 does so. Line managers and supervisors should be flexible where possible to enable staff to attend vaccination appointments when required.

1.9 Tissues used due to a sneeze or cough should be covered with a tissue and disposed of immediately into a standard waste bin.

2. **Testing**

2.1 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. LFD tests are available via the following routes
- From the UoS run test center (when operational)
- From on campus home testing kits [distribution points](http://example.com)
- From the [on campus pharmacy](http://example.com)
- Direct home delivery from [UK gov](http://example.com)

2.2 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.

2.3 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
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self isolate unless they have a negative PCR test after the initial LFD test. PCR tests can be ordered here

3 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

3.1 The use of PPE within a laboratory environment is specified within the relevant risk assessments linked to the methodologies required to carry out the particular work.

3.2 Staff should continue to wear protective clothing, eye protection and gloves as determined by the relevant risk assessment as a minimum. These should not be shared with another person and procedures for the continued safe use of these items should be included in the local School plans, and risk assessment. The use of face masks within Containment Level 2 laboratories is not recommended unless the protocol risk assessment dictates that these should be worn. If this is the case then the appropriate face mask with required filters should be worn.

3.3 Home-made face masks and other personal items such as laptops should not be worn or used in Containment Level 2 labs to avoid cross contamination between the laboratory environment and external areas such as home and public transport etc.

3.4 Gloves should be worn in the laboratory as per relevant risk assessment, but should not be worn in communal areas such as corridors etc.

4 Face coverings

4.1 Face coverings are not mandated in University of Sussex operated buildings. With the exception of the Clinical Imaging Sciences Centre due to it being a shared NHS facility and the presence of patients.

4.2 Face coverings are recommended in large gatherings where it is not possible to distance yourself from other persons. Examples of this would included but is not limited to too
- Public transport
- Crowded internal corridors of shopping centers, bars and relevant areas on campus
- Sporting events
- Theatres

5 Shift Working

5.1 For critical services requiring work on site line managers may consider shift working to ensure that any isolations do not cause members of staff to isolate at the same time as outlined under points 1.3 and 1.4 above.