Guidance for Returning to work for Teaching Social Distancing SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19)
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1. Introduction

1.1 In the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, this guidance outlines the University’s high-level policy for enabling staff to return to teaching. This guidance does not extend to laboratory facilities or residential settings and separate guidance is available for these areas. This document complements existing Government guidelines on maintaining social distancing measures, to minimise the spread of the novel coronavirus on campus.

1.2 This policy pertains to the immediate measures being put in place to ensure employees can safely return to teaching in teaching rooms, lecture theatres and laboratories, as designated in the relevant School or Division risk assessments. It will also cover how these processes can be implemented in the long term to ensure compliance for the foreseeable future.

1.3 This guidance exists in addition to all legal obligations, current policies and guidance for safe working within such settings. In these challenging and unprecedented times, the temptation from a person’s health and safety perspective may be to solely focus on the risks aligned to the spread of Covid-19. It must not be forgotten that all current health and safety policies and guidelines for safe working within the workplace must still be followed.

1.4 Stakeholders, including Heads of Schools, Directors, Trade Union representatives, members of Estates and Facilities (EFM), University Health & Safety (H&S) team, Heads of Professional Services (HoPS), the Chief Technical Officer and members of the University H&S Committee will have the opportunity to review and comment on this document.

1.5 This specific guidance for return to work within office spaces and similar working environments has been aligned with the core principles outlined in the COVID 19 - Business Resumption and Recovery Plan and follows current Government guidance on working safely in offices during Covid-19.

1.6 Guidance for Returning to work in Research Laboratories Social Distancing SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) mirrors the advice and guidance within this document but is tailored for research laboratories.

1.7 Returning to work in Office and Low Hazard Spaces Social Distancing SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) mirrors the advice and guidance within this document but is tailored for office and low hazard areas.

1.8 General advice to minimise risk associated with Covid-19 is as follows:

1.8.1 If you or a member of your household are displaying symptoms, you must self-isolate and inform your line manager and complete the UoS Covid reporting form. The period of self-isolation should follow the government guidelines. Additional guidance on self-isolation can be found here.

1.8.2 Social distancing of 2m should be the minimum standard and School and Division plans should be developed to achieve this. Wherever this is not achievable a risk assessment and proposed mitigating actions are outlined in the General Teaching Space risk assessment.

1.8.3 Social distancing of 1m can be considered with additional controls, this includes facecoverings and or screens.

1.8.4 Clinically vulnerable individuals, or those living with clinically vulnerable members of their household are advised at this time to continue working remotely. Please refer to the online
guidance for further details of the self-assessment tool. Those who cannot work remotely should be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles, enabling them to maintain social distancing guidelines.

1.8.5 Wash hands regularly with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds.

1.8.6 Coughs and sneezes should be covered with a tissue and disposed of immediately (into your elbow if no tissue) followed by the washing of hands.

1.8.7 Staff must maintain social distancing when greeting others, this includes avoiding shaking hands.

1.8.8 Anyone who has travelled from overseas must abide by Government self-isolation requirements before coming into campus buildings, including test to release programs.

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.

2.2 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.

2.3 Alternatively home test kits can be order from UK Gov here. Either home testing or on campus testing are acceptable means of testing

2.4 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.

2.5 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.

3. Safe Access to and Egress from Buildings

3.1 Where safe to do so, the creation of a one-way system within buildings using just one door for entry, and one door for egress to help control the flow of persons in and out of building should be adopted. However, individual building design and circumstances should be taken into account. For example, in some areas it may be appropriate to use one door for access and one (or multiple if deemed more appropriate) for egress at a single point whereas other buildings may use a doorway to the side of, or back of a building. This planning will be carried out on a building by building basis by EFM.

3.2 Final exit doors on fire escape routes should all remain operational as per normal (pre Covid-19) circumstances. Where required they can be used as part of one way routes in some buildings.
3.3 EFM will install signs to remind persons of the social distancing that is expected to be adhered to (see Figure 1) at all entrance points to buildings.

3.4 Where required directional arrows will be included within the building to communicate one way and two way routes.

3.5 EFM will install hand sanitiser dispensers at all approved entrance and exit doors to provide staff with the opportunity to sanitise their hands on entering and leaving a building, in order to reduce potential contamination risks.

3.6 For buildings occupied by more than one School or Division, it is expected that a joint building risk assessment and plan will be produced to ensure the maximum proposed occupancy levels can be safely managed.

3.7 Staff are encouraged to use hand sanitisers which have been made available at access points within buildings.

![Figure 1 – Typical suggested signage to be used at entrances to buildings](image)

2 METRES
Please maintain social distancing at all times

4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

4.1 The use of PPE is specified within the relevant risk assessments linked to the methodologies required to carry out particular types of work. This is particularly relevant in laboratory and related teaching activities.

4.2 Staff and students should continue to wear the relevant PPE 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.

4.3 Gloves should be worn if specified as per the relevant practical teaching laboratories risk assessments.

4.4 When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what usually would be worn is not
beneficial. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks normally faced in a workplace, and needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams or partnering, not through the use of PPE.

5. Face Coverings

5.1 Government guidance states that use of face coverings is still required in Libraries, Shops, Taxis and other areas. If in doubt check the list via the link above.

5.2 In University buildings that are not accessible by students and do not contain facilities on the government mandated list of services that require face coverings, occupants can choose to make face coverings optional in these areas based on the risk being low due to the small number of occupants and adequate ability to maintain social distancing. This must be clearly communicated to all users of the building and updated if this changes as a result of increased occupancy.

5.3 An example of the type of signage that may be used is shown below.

5.4 A cloth face covering should cover your mouth and nose while allowing you to breathe comfortably. It can be as simple as a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head.

6. Students accessing and egressing for teaching rooms

6.1 Safe access and egress routes to teaching spaces will be subject to detailed reviews to ensure safe queuing and routes. Controls will include but not be limited to marked one way routes, additional support staff on hand where required, information to students and staff, planning to maintain social distancing, face coverings, etc. Introducing this level of control may mean that some access and egress routes will function at a reduced capacity. These assessments will be supported by Health and Safety, and Estates and Facilities.

6.2 Every reasonable effort will be made to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable). Where the need to consider risk mitigation where 2m is not viable, it will require a specific risk assessment and may include measures such as desk moves to avoid face to face positioning, use of protective screens, activity planning to minimise contact time, face coverings.

6.3 Hand sanitiser gels are available in every building for both students and staff to use.
7. Teaching Rooms

7.1 Plans for max occupancy in line with social distancing guidelines (1 metre plus mitigation). These have been created by Estates and Facilities Team and include the following mitigation.

7.1.1 Side by side seating to minimise the likelihood of face to face transmission.

7.1.2 Face coverings to worn by students.

7.1.3 Student desks generally set at approx. 1.5m apart (set side by side), however this may be less in some areas due to structural configuration of a room. It is important that desks are not moved. In addition desks have been laid out to ensure enough space to safely transit through the teaching room.

7.1.4 Students provided with sanitiser wipes to wipe down their desk before use.

7.1.5 Each room is different and ventilation systems (natural or mechanical) should not be altered. This means that windows should not be closed and the settings for mechanical ventilation, where present, must not change using local control points.

7.1.6 The rooms have been laid out to enable the lecturer to maintain 2 meter separation at the front of the class. The rooms have largely been set for blended learning with some students accessing the class from online platforms so it is also important that the lecturer is mindful of positioning for those viewing and listening online. Additional mitigations include:

7.1.7 The lecturer should generally enter the room first to support them being able to maintain their two meter social distancing at the front of the class.

7.1.8 Sanitiser wipes to clean down AV before you use the equipment.

7.1.9 Lecturers have the option of visor if requested. This may provide reassurance to students in the front row as well to lecturers. However the primary controls is the 2 metre separation that has been planned into the room.

7.1.10 Should the lecturer wish to leave the 2 meter separation area laid out in the class room they must follow the following procedure.

- They must consult with the class and only proceed if the class consent
- They must maintain 1 meter social distancing and wear a cloth or fabric face covering. The visor is still optional when working in this way
- This activity can be undertaken when an individual member of staff wishes to due to their teaching methodology. It cannot be seen as an expectation that all teaching staff will operate in this fashion.
- The video and audio provided to students watching remotely will only function when next to lecturer, therefor staff will be unable to do this when using blended learning as it will mean that students viewing remotely will not be able to receive information.

7.1.11 The lecturer will need to ensure that the students operate in line with the rules set out for the room to ensure their own safety and that of others.

7.1.12 It will be a requirement to have a register of who attended the session should track and trace be required.

7.2 Communications will be provided in three ways.
7.2.1 There will be room specific information posted in room including information on room layouts. Where rooms have more than one door information in a will be included on how to access and egress the room. Section 18 shows an example of the information displayed in teaching spaces.

7.2.2 No food and only resealable bottled drinks are permitted in teaching spaces, these cannot be shared and an individual’s mask must be returned to its fitted position after drinking.

7.2.3 An induction or training for lecturers on how teaching will take place in a COVID-19 secure way. It will cover the detail contained within this guide.

7.2.4 There will also be a student induction which supports the Student commitment to encourage everyone to cooperate to keep the Campus safe.

8. Lecture Theatres

8.1 Lecture theatres only differ to teaching rooms in their physical size. Detailed plans will be developed to allow safe access and egress for larger groups. The internal capacities have been assessed and determined by Estates and Facilities. To ensure safe use of these spaces, detailed access and egress plans will be developed in partnership between Estates and Facilities and Student Experience with support from Health and Safety.

9. Meeting rooms and other Open Plan Spaces (including offices)

10.1 For guidance on meeting rooms and office areas please see the guidance document for office and low hazard spaces guidance.

10. Cluster Computer Rooms

10.1 Computer cluster rooms follow all of the controls of a standard teaching room with additional set of controls to ensure appropriate separation of students who will typically be positioned face to face. Measures such as screens will be used in addition to the standard controls to ensure social distancing. Figures 10-12 illustrate some of the layouts that can be implemented by Estates and Facilities. In Figure 12 a layout is shown where now screens are required.
Figure 10 shows screening between desks on all sides.

Figure 11 Screens used down the centre of a cluster desk.

Figure 12 Desk layout set so no screens required

Typically cluster and computer desks facing a wall do not need screens if appropriate side to side social distancing can be maintained.
11. Single/accessible facilities

11.1 In the case of single, lockable facilities, please leave the facility in a respectable condition. If waiting to use such a facility, ensure you stand at least 2m from the door to allow the previous occupant the appropriate space to leave without breaking social distance guidelines.

12. Teaching Laboratories

Teaching laboratories will be assessed and set up using the process and guidance introduced for the return to research laboratories. Guidance for Returning to work in Research Laboratory Facilities; Social Distancing SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19)¹. This is covered by the images below Figure 13 Photograph of a teaching laboratory set to ensure social distancing.

Figure 14 Photographs showing safe positions and areas not to be used.

13. Corridors, Foyers, Stairwells and Lifts

14.1 For guidance on general areas please see the guidance document for office and low hazard spaces guidance

14. Teaching space cleaning

14.1 EFM along with SEF will determine which areas need enhanced cleaning regimes in line with Government guidance.

15. Toilets

15.1 Toilet facilities within buildings differ greatly, ranging from single, lockable WCs to larger communal facilities.

15.2 In all cases, please respect good hygiene, ensuring you wash your hands effectively. Flushing lavatories with the lids closed helps to reduce the spread of viruses and germs; users should close lids before flushing.

Figure 11 – Suggested one-way systems for larger kitchens
16.  Signage

16.1 The SEF building manager of the area, in liaison with line managers in case of any specific requirement, should collate the signage requirements. A list of signage that the School would want to employ is below:

- Single use rooms – maximum number of occupants for multiple user rooms
- Along corridors
- Entrances and exits – both social distancing and hand washing
- Lifts
- Staircases
- Outside Kitchens
- Outside Toilets

16.2 Note: Some of the figures, and some sections of text within this document are courtesy of the excellent guidance document produced by H&S colleagues from the University of Loughborough.

17.  Escalation for non-compliance within General Teaching Space

17.1 Students, staff and any other person using general teaching space should be following the rules outlined above.

17.2 In the hopefully rare case where members of the University are not adhering to the rules in these spaces please follow this escalation process.

Step 1  Check to see if the individual has a badge and lanyard indicating that they may not be able to wear a mask (see 18.4 below for examples).

Step 2  At a distance, politely remind an individual to wear a face covering or to sanitise their hands or desk. If an individual is uncomfortable ask if they would prefer to discuss the reason in the corridor or other more private area.

Step 3  Have a conversation with the individual explaining that these measures are required in general teaching space and that if a person is ill, online sessions are available.

If any individual does not have a mask please indicate that these may be purchased from the Co-op at Bramber House and suggest to them that they do so and then return to the session.

If possible, sitting an individual two metres or more away from all other people is acceptable, assuming that this can be achieved without rearranging the room layout.

If they are unwell enquire if they have considered attending this session online. When considering another person’s health consider the primary symptoms of Covid-19 which are;
- A High temperature
- A continuous cough, with an unknown cause
- A loss or change to your sense of taste and smell
Of these only the cough is likely to be visible to others. While temperature can be assessed by seeing if someone is warm to the touch this is not recommended in a teaching or workplace setting. An individual shivering is not in itself an indication of a temperature. Other symptoms of cold, flu or hay fever such as red eyes, sneezing and a runny nose are not typically symptoms of Covid-19. These symptoms may make it difficult to wear a mask. Masks are still required in general teaching space under these circumstances it may be that it is not possible to attend an in person session for reasons of comfort or practicality.

Step 4 If the student is unable or unwilling to do undertake the above measures or is displaying potential symptoms, staff should ask the student to leave the session.

Step 5 If the student refuses to leave the session then you may close the session if you are uncomfortable continuing. In the hopefully rare occasions where an individual with a persistent cough is present, and who refuses to leave the teaching session, the session should be ended on safety grounds.

17.3 Scenarios

Below are some possible scenarios and guidance on what to do, this won’t cover all eventualities but the concepts can be applied in similar circumstances.

Scenario 1 I think someone is unwell

Step 1 The only visible primary symptom of Covid-19 is a new persistent cough. In this context a new cough means one that is not related to an existing condition for instance asthma or damage caused by smoking. It is not typically possible to tell if someone has an elevated temperature by looking at them. It is not recommended to touch or otherwise try to determine if someone is running a temperature. Shivering or being flushed may be caused by nervousness or simply being cold.

Step 2 If someone has other symptoms for instance a runny nose or a sneeze. These are not typically associated with Covid-19 they should be reminded that while unpleasant with such conditions they do need to wear a mask while in a teaching space. If they are unable to do so they should attend remotely. Details of what to do when someone is not wearing a mask appear below in scenario 2.

Step 3 Where someone has an obvious continual cough that is not linked to a known cause like asthma or choking on a drink, ask the student to leave the session.

Step 4 If the student will not leave the session and other options have been exhausted, then it is advisable to close the activity. Explain the reasons to the class and make a judgement if it is best for you to leave or for the class to leave and continue for those online.

Scenario 2 Someone is not wearing a mask

Step 1 Do they have a lanyard indicating that they cannot wear a face covering? If the answer is yes then no further action is required. This is acceptable as the purpose of masks is to reduce the infection rate as a hole, they are effective at doing so when most people wear one. This means that those that are unable to wear a face mask can still participate. You may want to suggest that this student sits 2 metres away from others where possible.
Step 2  Politely ask if the student has forgotten their mask and remind them that they are required during classroom activities. If the student doesn’t have one you can suggest that masks are available from the Co-op in Bramber House and that they should purchase one.

Step 3  If possible, sitting an individual 2 metres or more away from all other persons is acceptable, assuming that this can be achieved without rearranging the room layout. 2 metre distancing is an acceptable control to decrease the risk of transmission.

Step 4  If the above are not possible politely ask the student to leave the session.

Step 5  Under these circumstances it may be appropriate to close the activity if you are uncomfortable continuing, explain the reasons to the class and make a judgement on if it is best for you to leave or to have the class leave and continue for those online.

**Scenario 3 I am aware that someone should be self-isolating**

**Action**  It is not usual for this information to be available. However if you have concerns you can discuss with the student if they should be self-isolating. For more information on when people should self-isolate and when to leave self-isolation please see the guidance below.

- Guidance from the University on self-isolations is available on the Health & Safety Covid-19 Resources page. [http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hso/specialist/hscovidpage](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hso/specialist/hscovidpage)

18.4  **Examples of Lanyards**

18.  **Example of Information Displayed in teaching spaces**

**COVID-19 SAFETY GUIDELINES**
Please make sure you follow these guidelines when using this space. These guidelines are designed to protect all of our students and staff.

Please wash your hands upon entering this room. You should also wash your hands every time you readjust your face covering, and when entering the building.

You must wear a face covering while in this space. Please wear a face covering, unless you have a medical exemption, or you are presenting within the marked zone at the front of the room.

Always maintain safe social distancing. Be especially mindful when entering or leaving this space to avoid congestion in large groups. Remain in marked seats only when undertaking group or paired work.

Please do not relocate any furniture. Furniture should remain in the layout displayed at the front of the room. Please avoid moving between seats if possible.
Wipe down your desk when you arrive and leave.

This includes ITS equipment (mouse and keyboard) and any shared items. Cleaning materials will be provided during taught sessions.

Please avoid eating or drinking in this room.

If you need to drink, it should be from a closed container that is returned to your own bag or pocket. Dispose of rubbish in the bins provided at the end of the session.

Avoid sharing resources wherever possible.

Please avoid distributing paper materials. Staff will be expected to bring their own whiteboard markers. Please clean any items that need to be shared.
A red lanyard indicates medical exemption from wearing a mask.

If you believe you should have a red lanyard as you have a medical reason why you cannot wear a face covering, then please contact [contact e-mail/location]

Face visors are available for staff to maintain COVID-19 safety.

These allow for easier communication during a teaching session. We encourage all teaching staff to use face visors.

These are available at [contact e-mail/location]

The ventilation, sanitiser, and cleaning supplies in this room are checked regularly.

If supplies are running out, you need help working the ventilation system, or there are any other problems with the room please contact:

Face coverings are available for staff and students at:
If you feel unwell or have been instructed to self-isolate, please leave immediately and report your symptoms on the University Reporting Tool at:

www.sussex.ac.uk/hs/o/specialist/covid19symptoms