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 teaching 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 during Covid-19. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-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:


1.8.2 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 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...
1.8.4 Where people performing non-essential roles can continue to work from home this should still be strongly encouraged. Please see the guidance about essential roles for further guidance.

1.8.5 Line managers of staff performing essential roles should be flexible about helping individuals to fulfil their caring responsibilities if they would normally be required to work on campus.

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

1.8.7 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.

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

1.8.9 Anyone who has travelled from overseas must abide by Government self-isolation requirements before coming into campus buildings [https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control](https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control).

2. Reoccupation of General Teaching Space and Related Spaces

2.1 A phased return to work is being designed to facilitate research, teaching and key University activities which requires presence on site or at external field sites. This will be followed by the gradual resumption of other activities in office and associated spaces, in a managed and approved process, whilst the lockdown from Covid-19 begins to ease.

2.2 Buildings can only be reoccupied on completion of work by Sussex Estates & Facilities (SEF) to ensure that services and infrastructure are safe to occupy following a protracted period of closure. The University uses a combination of natural and mechanical ventilation systems. The mechanical ventilation systems on site are maintained as part of the planned preventative maintenance schedule.

2.3 Prior to reoccupation, a full risk assessment by relevant School(s) and Divisions will take place based on proposed numbers of staff on site within buildings, and the activity/ duration of required works on site.

2.4 Schools and Divisions will look to devise plans to ensure staff who are asked to, or those who wish to return to work, are able to do so in a safe manner and in line with evolving Government guidance.

2.5 Areas where ongoing research into Covid-19 continues may be designated as a priority by the relevant Head of School or Director.

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-url)
The official NHS technique illustration is provided below (see Figure 2):

**Alcohol handrub hand hygiene technique – for visibly clean hands**

1. Apply a small amount (about 3 ml) of the product in a cupped hand
2. Rub hands together palm to palm, spreading the handrub over the hands
3. Rub back of each hand with palm of other hand with fingers interlaced
4. Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced
5. Rub back of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked
6. Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand using a rotational movement
7. Rub tips of fingers in opposite palm in a circular motion
8. Rub each wrist with opposite hand
9. Wait until product has evaporated and hands are dry (do not use paper towels)
10. The process should take 15–30 seconds

*Figure 2 – NHS alcohol handrub hand hygiene technique – for visibly clean hands*
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 Face coverings will be required in communal indoor spaces on the University of Sussex campus where 2m social distancing cannot be achieved.

5.2 This policy means that all students should wear a face covering in seminar rooms and other teaching spaces, including computer clusters, and the University will provide face visors for teaching staff to wear during classes. Academics should be able to maintain a 2m distance from the front of the class and so do not need to wear cloth face coverings; visors are an added protection that will allow students to see the academic’s face. Academics are asked to deliver their session entirely from the front of the class and should not walk around the class.

5.3 Other common areas where staff and students are asked to wear a face covering – such as foyers, corridors, toilets, stairs, lifts and the Library – will be identified with signposts.

5.4 An example of the type of signage that may be used is shown below.
5.5 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.


5.7 It is recommended that face coverings are made from multiple layers of fabric. An alternative face covering with multiple layers can be made simply using a no-sew method. Diagrammatic instructions for making this covering are shown below and the CDC has published an instructional video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPx1yqvljf4).

5.8 Materials Needed:

- Bandana (or square cotton cloth approximately 50cm x 50cm)
- Rubber bands (or hair ties)
- Scissors (if you are cutting your own cloth)

Instructions for several other face coverings can also be found on the BBC News Website (https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52609777).

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
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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 changed using local control points.

7.2 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:

7.2.1 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.

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

7.2.3 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.

7.2.4 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 lecturn, therefor staff will be unable to to do this when using blended learning as it will mean that students viewing remotely will not be able to receive information.

7.2.5 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.

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

7.3 Communications will be provided in three ways.

7.3.1 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.

7.3.2 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.

7.3.3 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.

7.3.4 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)

9.1 Some teaching may take place in meeting rooms in the form of a seminar. The Guidance for Returning to work in Office and Low Hazard Spaces Social Distancing SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) may be used in setting maximum occupancies and seat layouts to ensure appropriate social distancing. Many staff work in open plan offices which will make social distancing guidelines difficult to implement under normal practice. The use of office space should be kept to a minimum, and the default position should be that where possible, if not delivering face to face teaching or essential student services that can only be delivered on campus, people should continue to work at home rather than in an office.

9.2 Students will also have access to study spaces which will be planned by the school, with support from Estates and Facilities; and Health and Safety using the principles of the Office and Low Hazard Spaces Guide referred to in 11.1. The following paragraphs discuss some typical set ups that can be considered in these spaces.

9.3 Where study spaces and informal spaces are used by a number of students but with no obvious area owner they should be referred to Health and Safety to allow them to be evaluated and plans for the safe use of the area to be implemented.

9.4 Figure 8 shows a typical four worker station. It would be most appropriate to limit areas such as these to one person to ensure compliance with social distancing. In these cases, the above

suggestions should help teams arrange how this can be facilitated.

Figure 8 – Typical four worker station layout at reduced capacity

9.5 Where larger desk areas are in place, students should be staggered as illustrated in Figure 9. Where maintaining the recommended 2m separation during passing is not possible, the addition of a screen between desks and the removal of seats (red crosses in Figure 9) will allow for social distancing to be observed. However, consideration should also be given to the corridor or access walkways to the left of “B”. If it is not possible to maintain 2m separation between an individual walking down the corridor and the individual sitting at desk “B”, then it should not be used.
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.
Typically cluster and computer desks facing a wall do not need screens if appropriate side to side social distancing can be maintained.

11. Single/accessile 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)\(^2\). This is covered by the images below

\(^2\) https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=20200528-guidance-doc-for-return-to-research-lab-facilities.pdf&site=332
13. Corridors, Foyers, Stairwells and Lifts

13.1 EFM will plan how to utilise buildings safely on a building by building basis. Maintaining social distancing in the corridors of buildings will involve several factors. Where possible, corridors which are sufficiently wide (i.e. exceeding 2m in width) should have a marking made down the centre to provide two ‘lanes’ where staff can always keep left, as illustrated in Figure 5. If a corridor is less than 2m wide a one-way system should be designed in the building for high traffic areas to create a series of loops that persons should follow when moving around buildings (Figure 6). For areas of low traffic, or for reasons specified in building risk assessment, an alternative system of allowing people to pass by each other and maintain a 2m distance is acceptable.

13.2 Signage should be placed at regular intervals along corridors, reminding persons to maintain a distance of at least 2m from others. In sections of corridors where queues are likely to form (e.g. outside kitchen areas, toilets etc.), corridors should be marked at 2m intervals to ensure social distancing is maintained whilst queueing. Consideration should be given as to whether these areas should not be used for through traffic in order to avoid congregation and maintenance of 2m distance. Schools and Divisions should work with SEF Building Managers to collate signage and floor markings. Where 2 meters is not a viable solution all individuals must wear facecoverings and adhere to 1 meter social distancing measures. This is a similarly effective control as 2 metre distancing.

13.3 The use of lifts in buildings should be avoided at all times where possible and used only by disabled persons, or for the transport of large/heavy/hazardous materials where transport on stairways would not be possible or safe. It is likely that in most research buildings there is more than one stairway connecting floors. If lifts must be used, then they should be single occupancy to avoid aerosol transmission in a confined space and to maintain 2m separation.

13.4 If at all feasible, stairways will be designated by EFM as an ‘up route’ or a ‘down route’ to prevent face-to-face interaction of persons, and to ensure 2m distancing is maintained. These should be adequately signed to assist with the smooth movement of staff between floors as/when required.

13.5 Where only one stairwell to a floor is present, and the width of the stairwell is in excess of 2m it is acceptable to create an up and down side to the stairwell (clearly demarcated and with appropriate signage) to ensure staff may pass each other safely. If, as in a number of our buildings, the staircases are narrow and passing would result in close proximity (or if using a one-way stair system increases risk, such as when transporting hazardous materials), a verbal alert procedure (i.e. shouting “Is anyone using this stairwell?”) should be put in place before using a stairwell to ensure there is not another person already using it.

13.6 This will be linked to the overall access plans for teaching rooms and lecture theatres.

![Figure 14 – Suggested two-way system to be implemented for wider corridors of more than 2m width](image-url)
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.

15.3 The official NHS technique illustration is provided below (see Figure 16):
Figure 16 – NHS hand-washing technique with soap and water
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. Process for to Reopen General Teaching Space

17.1 Estates and Facilities; and Student Experience will approve opening of general teaching spaces and computer cluster spaces once they, and the building, are fully prepared for the return of teaching. Records of readiness will be available.

17.2 Teaching laboratories will be approved via the route used for research laboratories.

17.3 Locally controlled spaces e.g. student spaces and school meeting rooms used for teaching will be reviewed and approved as part of the general building risk assessment.
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/hs0/specialist/covid19symptoms