

Lifting the coronavirus lockdown: Procedure on safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic

Introduction

As the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown is eased, it is recognised that the University needs to return to normal operations where possible and adapt to new ways of working where required. This procedure explains the changes to the University's working environment and new ways of working.

These adaptations have been informed by the University's institutional COVID-19 risk assessment, the results of which can be found on the University's website. The University has consulted your trade union representatives about the changes.

Employees are encouraged to notify the University if they have any concerns, have identified any potential risks, or have any suggestions for further adaptations we can make. Employees can do this by raising concerns or making suggestions to their line manager or to the HR department.

In advance of your return

The University has identified the minimum number of employees needed to operate safely and effectively, while maintaining social distancing, on the campus. As the Government's guidance changes the University will adjust its measures.

The University are currently only asking employees to attend work where their role requires their physical presence. Employees who can work from home should continue to do so until further notice. Some of our workforce are on furlough as a result of our reduced capacity/temporary reduction in the need for certain roles.

Employees with serious underlying health conditions

Employees who are clinically extremely vulnerable, who have been advised by the NHS to shield against coronavirus should continue to for the duration of the shielding period specified by the NHS. These employees will continue to work from home, either in their current role or in an alternative role.

Please refer to the government guidance for further information -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy#annex-b-summary-table-covid-19-vulnerable-groups>

Please provide HR with a copy of the correspondence you were issued by the NHS for our records.

If this is not possible due to the nature of their work, or personal circumstances, other options may be considered:

- a period of furlough leave;
- temporary redeployment or alternative work;
- alternative leave options;
- sickness absence.

Each case will be considered separately by HR and the employee's line manager.

Employees in other vulnerable groups, such as those with underlying health conditions, pregnant employees and those aged 70 or over, should consult with the University's Health and Safety Officer

and/or HR Business Partner (details shown below) individually about potential adaptations to their role.

- John Duff – Health and Safety Officer
- Victoria Burrows – HR Business Partner (Academic Engagement)
- Tara Shaw – HR Business Partner (Professional Support and BG Lincoln Ltd)

Employees should also speak to their line manager or HR Business Partner if they have any specific needs around their working patterns, for example because of childcare responsibilities or travel difficulties.

If you or someone you live with has coronavirus symptoms

It is absolutely essential that if you or anyone you live with develops:

- a fever, particularly a high temperature (i.e. a temperature of 37.8 degrees or over); and/or
- a continuous cough,
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste,

you do not attend work and self-isolate in accordance with the Government's guidance at www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection

This is also relevant to those who have had close recent contact with someone who has coronavirus. Employees must self-isolate if the NHS test and trace service advises you to do so.

Further guidance is found here - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

In line with our sickness absence reporting procedure, you should notify your line manager by telephone before you are due to start work, or as soon as possible if that is not practical. Please refer to the University's Sickness Absence policy, or speak to your HR Business Partner, if you have any queries about pay in these circumstances.

Travel to and from work

The University encourages employees to minimise their use of public transport using walking or cycling where possible. If travelling by car, you must not car-share with anyone outside your household.

Please speak to your HR Business Partner regarding the University's Cycle to Work scheme.

Where employees need to use public transport where possible stay two metres away from others and avoid touching surfaces. If you can, wear a face covering on public transport.

Employees using public transport may find it helpful to refer to the Government's guidance at www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers

and www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering

Employees should wash their hands thoroughly when they arrive at work, using the handwashing facilities or hand sanitisers provided. They should also wash their hands thoroughly as soon as you get home from work.

Working patterns

To reduce the risk of infection spread, the University have introduced the following measures:

- staggering the workforce's start/end times and breaks;
- working remotely where the employee's job allows for the period advised by the Government;
- using "fixed teams or partnering" so each person works with only a few others;
- rotating groups of employees, for example via a shift system or short-time working; and
- removing hot-desking arrangements where possible.

You should speak to your line manager or HR Business Partner if you have any specific needs around your working patterns, for example because of childcare responsibilities or travel difficulties.

Hygiene and cleanliness

General measures

To reduce the risk of infection spread, we have introduced the following measures:

- installing additional handwashing facilities/hand sanitisers, including at entrances and exits. All employees are to regularly wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap and water and properly dry them with paper disposable towels;
- cleaning work areas and equipment frequently;
- having signage and posters to provide regular reminders to employees to maintain hygiene standards. Posters and notices are provided to remind employees and students to avoid touching their face/eyes/nose with unwashed hands and use disposable tissues/crook of elbow when sneezing/coughing;
- removing waste and belongings from the work area at the end of shifts;
- regular cleaning of communal toilet facilities.

Playing your part

While we are taking these stringent additional measures, the University would like to remind employees to play their part by:

- washing their hands often and thoroughly;
- avoiding touching their face, particularly their eyes, nose and mouth; and
- coughing or sneezing into a tissue, and disposing of it safely, or into their arm if a tissue is not available.

Social distancing measures

General measures

While at work, employees must maintain social distancing of two metres wherever practical. Any breach of the 2-metre rule must be kept to the absolute minimum and for the shortest period of time possible.

Signage is provided to remind all persons to maintain social distancing.

If this cannot be sustained due to a working practice or the confinement of the space available, a further risk assessment is required to identify;

- Is the task required and why?
- Can the task be postponed or abandoned?

- Can the activity be carried out differently, for example outside?
- PPE is to be worn.

To assist with social distancing, the University have introduced the following measures:

- spacing workstations out;
- working back to back or side to side (rather than face to face) where possible;
- introducing one-way systems to reduce instances of employees having to pass each other in close proximity;
- timetabling adaptations to enable safe 'traffic flow' in and out of rooms, buildings and around the campus;
- employees should observe social distancing around communal equipment such as photocopiers;
- having signage and posters advising on limits to numbers entering specific areas such as lifts, break areas, toilets, showers and changing rooms.

You should continue to practice social distancing in common areas, including at workplace entrances and exits/in lifts/in break areas/in toilets, showers and changing rooms.

Meetings

As part of our social-distancing measures, employees should conduct meetings remotely where possible. When physical meetings are necessary:

- only essential participants should attend the meeting;
- meetings should be kept as short as possible;
- social distancing of two metres should be maintained throughout;
- objects such as stationery should not be shared; and
- meetings should be held outdoors/in a well-ventilated room whenever possible;
- where measures are not possible, meetings should be engaged remotely.

Hand sanitisers are provided in meeting rooms and areas where meetings frequently take place. Floor markings are also provided to help employees to maintain social distancing.

Driving Tasks

In the majority of cases, driving tasks should be carried out by one person to allow for social distancing. However, in the event that two persons are required to be in the vehicle for a task, PPE is to be worn.

- Face mask and disposable gloves as a minimum.
- The passenger is to sit in the rear seat and on the passenger side.
- At least one window is to be open (weather permitting) to allow for air flow through the vehicle.
- These journeys are to be pre-planned and authorised by the Estates Officer.
- All interior surfaces are to be cleaned and disinfected on completion of the journey using the appropriate cleaning products.

Customers and visitors

To reduce the risk of infection spread, we have introduced the following measures:

- restricting the number of visitors allowed in at any one time, bearing in mind the space available and the need to maintain social distancing;

- introducing other infection-control measures for visitors, such as contactless-only payments and screens or barriers to separate employees from visitors;
- suspending or reducing customer services that cannot be undertaken without contravening social-distancing guidelines;
- providing clear guidance to visitors to our campus, such as delivery workers;
- allowing for non-contact deliveries, for example via pick-up and drop-off points;
- changing delivery patterns, for example ordering supplies less often but in larger quantities.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Our approach to additional PPE

In line with our COVID-19 risk assessment, the use of additional PPE (such as face masks) is not required as an infection-control measure while at work except for in specific circumstances as specified within the University's risk assessment.

Face coverings

The use of a face covering (which is not considered PPE) is a matter of individual choice. If you choose to use a face covering, you must follow the Government's advice at www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering. This advice includes that you:

- wash your hands thoroughly before putting a face covering on and after removing it;
 - change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you have touched it; and
 - change and wash your face covering daily.
- The use of face coverings is not a replacement for observing our social distancing rules.