

INFORMATION SHEET

Social Distancing

Why are we adhering to social distancing?

The University is required to comply with legal obligations to minimise the risk of exposure and transmission of coronavirus on their premises or when undertaking University organised activity.

Social distancing is crucial for preventing the spread of contagious illnesses such as COVID-19 (coronavirus). COVID-19 can spread through coughing, sneezing and close contact. By minimising the amount of close contact we have with others, we reduce our chances of catching the virus and spreading it to our colleagues, loved ones and within our community.

All public areas within the University, including the library, corridors, foyers, reception areas, shops, lifts, stairways and conveniences operate with 2m social distancing arrangements in place. Social distancing is everyone's responsibility at the University and requires individuals to demonstrate commitment to following good social distancing practices.

1. Social Distancing On Campus

The University, where feasible, has implemented a number of controls in our buildings, including our halls of residence to ensure social distancing can be maintained. These include;

- One-way systems in place wherever possible.
- Reduced capacity spaces.
- Limited lift occupancy.
- Appropriate signage e.g. keep left signs in 2 way corridors.
- Furniture has been removed/ rearranged to ensure social distancing can be maintained.

2. Learning and Teaching Environments

L&T spaces have been risk assessed and room capacity remains reduced, typically to between 50% and 65% occupancy. For centrally timetabled L&T spaces;

- Appropriate maximum capacities have been identified and this information is available at the entrance to the space.
- Seating arrangements have been identified and the seating plans are also available on the E&FM intranet page.
- Arrangements are in place to enable contact group teaching to take place.
- Arrangements to support contact tracing must be in place in L&T environments, see the SOP for Learning and Teaching for more information.

Contact groups can be;

- **A group of up to 30 students** present in an L&T space without social distancing measures in place. Whenever possible, contact groups should be fixed with the same 30 students allocated for the teaching group.
- **A group of 6 students** with 2m between each group of 6. Groups of 6 can vary from session to session but should remain fixed for the duration of the session.

All centrally timetabled rooms will be set up with either marked up seating for fixed seating or furniture positioned appropriately.

If the risk level moves to high and very high, within alert level zero, the University will review contact group measures and may be required to revert back to social distancing and remote learning arrangements.

3. Offices/ Research Laboratories

All areas where staff and PGR students are working, such as offices, have been risk assessed and 2m social distancing will remain in place where possible.

See [Staff H&S intranet page](#) or the [PG H&S MyUni page](#) for information and guidance on risk assessment and face covering information.

4. Fieldwork/ Offsite Activities

If activities are carried out on University grounds, all University guidelines must be adhered to.

Where field work/ offsite activities are organised at another premises (not owned/ controlled by the University), the responsibility to risk assess lies both with the owner of the premises and the organiser of the Field work. For example

- If using an external bus company to take students on a field trip, the number of people permitted on the bus would form part of the coach company risk assessment but should be considered in the field work risk assessment.
- If hiring a vehicle e.g. a car/ minibus, University guidance must be adhered to. See the [Staff H&S intranet page](#) or the [PG H&S MyUni page](#) for information and guidance on public transport and private hire vehicles.

5. Common Areas

All public, common and staff areas within the University, including shared offices, corridors, foyers, reception areas, shops, lifts, stairways and conveniences operate with 2m social distancing arrangements in place.

Social distancing **must** be maintained while using public/ common areas. Screens have been put in places such as reception areas.

Steps to be considered in your area/ department:

- Develop attendance rotas.
- Staggering break times to reduce pressure on break rooms or shared rest areas.
- Use outside areas for breaks.
- Create additional space by using other parts of the workplace that have been freed up by remote working.
- Encourage workers to bring their own food.
- Reconfigure seating and tables to maintain spacing and reduce face to face interactions.
- Encourage storage of personal items and clothing in personal spaces and lockers i.e. not sharing coat stands.

6. Meetings

The University must aim to reduce transmission due to face-to-face meetings and maintain social distancing in meetings. Anyone using a University space for the purpose of a meeting or training is expected to comply with the [University arrangements](#). The capacity of rooms has been significantly reduced as a result of social distancing. You must comply with the following when using any onsite spaces;

- Ensure that you maintain 2 metre social distance from others at all times. Not all spaces will be set out with 2 metre social distancing arrangements in place and it is the responsibility of the meeting organiser to ensure that all attendees are at least 2 metres apart.
- In spaces that have been set out with 2 metre distancing, use seating and furniture provided.
 - Do not alter space/ room layouts and do not add any additional seats or furniture to any space under any circumstances.
 - Do not sit together even if you are from the same household.
- Where applicable, comply with maximum room capacities that have been identified. This information will be available on/ near to the door to the space.
- In computer suites, the ISS team have disabled the keyboard and mouse on the computers that should not be used. These computers will remain switched on and these spaces will be used for remote access.

Where it is not possible to maintain 2 metre social distancing during a meeting or training activity, then a specific risk assessment is to be carried out by the organiser and appropriate control measures implemented.

The risk assessment must be documented and further controls should include;

- Minimising the time spent within 2 metres of others.
- Ensure good ventilation of the space.
- Avoid working face to face. Instead work side by side or back to back.

- Ensure that everyone present is wearing a face covering.
- Arrange people into permanent groups/ bubbles and maintain these for all activity within 2 metres.
- Keep a record of the members in the group/ bubble and the duration of the time spent within 2 metres.

Please see the [Staff H&S Intranet](#) or [PG H&S MyUni](#) page for the SOP - Internal Meetings and Training on Campus.

7. Accidents, Security and Other Incidents

Safety must be prioritised during any incidents. In an emergency, for example, an accident or fire, people do not have to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe to do so e.g. fire evacuation.

People involved in the provision of assistance to others during an emergency should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards, including washing hands. Please see the [Staff H&S Intranet](#) or [PG H&S MyUni](#) page for the Information sheet for first aiders

8. Managing Visitors and Contractors

The number of unnecessary visits must be minimised where possible. Visitors and contractors must adhere to social distancing whilst on campus. Please see the [Staff H&S Intranet](#) or [PG H&S MyUni](#) page for:

- SOP School Group Visits;
- COVID-19 Visitor Guidance Information Sheet.

Steps to be considered in your area/ department:

- Encourage visits via remote connection/ working where this is an option.
- Where site visits are required, site guidance on social distancing and hygiene to be explained to visitors on or before arrival. Provide the Visitor Guidance Information Sheet before the visit.
- Limit the number of visitors at any one time.
- Limit visitor times to a specific time window and restrict access to required visitors only.
- Determine if schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people, for example, carrying out services at night.
- Revise visitor arrangements to ensure social distancing and hygiene, for example, where someone physically signs in with the same pen in reception.
- Provide clear guidance on social distancing and hygiene to people on arrival, for example, signage or visual aids. Also consider before arrival, for example, by phone, on the website or by email.

- Establish host responsibilities relating to COVID-19 and provide any necessary training for people who act as hosts for visitors.
- Review entry and exit routes for visitors and contractors to minimise contact with other people.

Further advice can be accessed on the [Staff H&S Intranet](#) or [PG H&S MyUni](#) page.