

Social Distancing Guidance for Staff

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Social Distancing Guidance for Staff

Introduction

This guidance has been produced to outline the University's procedures in relation to employees and other persons returning to the workplace. Prior to any return to campus following lockdown, it is essential to ensure that returning staff are able to operate in a healthy and safe environment and that all returns must be compliant with up to date Government regulations and guidance in relation to Covid-19. Government guidelines focus on maintaining social distancing measures, but this document will also serve to provide additional guidelines aimed at preventing the spread of the coronavirus on campus.

General Advice to Minimise Risk Associated with Covid-19

Please remember that anyone who experiences Covid-19 symptoms should not come onto campus. You should self-isolate, inform your Line Manager and should seek medical advice immediately.

Working from home where possible continues to be the preferred option, however, where this is not possible, staff returning to work at the University must follow the guidance provided in this document be able to operate in a healthy and safe environment and be compliant with Government regulations and guidance in relation to Covid-19.

Staff who cannot work from home will be given priority to return to campus first and must ensure that they follow this social distancing guidance when doing so.

Remember to wash your hands regularly with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds. 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.

Remember to maintain Social Distancing at all times.

Social Distancing Guidance in Buildings

Following Social Distancing Guidance is essential to maintaining a safe environment. Government and Public Health England guidelines for social distancing recommend that a distance of 2 metres (6 feet) is maintained between individuals in all directions. If this cannot be maintained due to an activity or task that requires closer contact, this can be reduced to a 1 metre + but other control measures must be taken such as wearing a face covering, using a screen or working outside for short periods. However, a 2 metre distance is the aim in the majority of circumstances. This applies whilst seated or moving around your building and in other 'common areas' on campus such as kitchen and toilet facilities.

Access to and egress from buildings

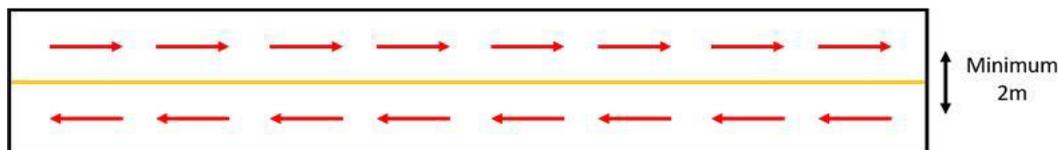
Where safe to do so, the use of just one door for general access and one door for general egress to help control the flow of persons in and out of building has been considered, though building design and circumstances should be taken in to account. For example, in some areas it may be appropriate to 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. Fire doors should remain operational and only used in emergencies.

At all entrance points to buildings, information should be in place to remind persons of the social distancing that is expected to be adhered to.

It may be necessary to regulate entry so that buildings do not become overcrowded. Where hand sanitisers have been made available at access points or within buildings, you are encouraged to use these.

Social Distancing in Corridors, Staircases and Lifts

Building users should be respectful and apply a common sense approach in corridors, on staircases and when moving around campus. Where possible, a one-way system has been designed that persons should follow when moving around buildings. If corridors are sufficiently wide (exceeding 2m in width), a marking down the corridor centre should be made to provide two 'lanes', in which a one-way system should be implemented (e.g. always keep left) as illustrated below.



In areas where queues are likely to form, there are markings, to encourage social distancing whilst queueing.

In most buildings, more than one stairway connecting floors will be present; wherever possible stairways are now designated as an 'up route' or a 'down route' to prevent face-to-face interaction of persons, and to ensure 2m distancing is maintained as far as is reasonably practicable.

Using lifts should be avoided unless absolutely necessary 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. All lifts are currently designated as single occupancy only.

Service Desks

Many departments and teams across campus offer customer facing services such as receptions, library services, printing services and catering outlets. Within these areas, appropriate queuing arrangements should be clearly laid out for customers. Examples include, where to queue from, tape (or similar) on the floor to keep 2m between persons as they queue and clear signage. Railings, barriers or tape are required where longer queues are likely to form.



Please queue here
and keep 2 metres
from the person in
front at all times!

To ensure good practice, high contact surfaces such as service desks and communal computer equipment will be cleaned frequently. Frequency of cleaning should increase with increased usage but a minimum of twice daily is suggested where possible.

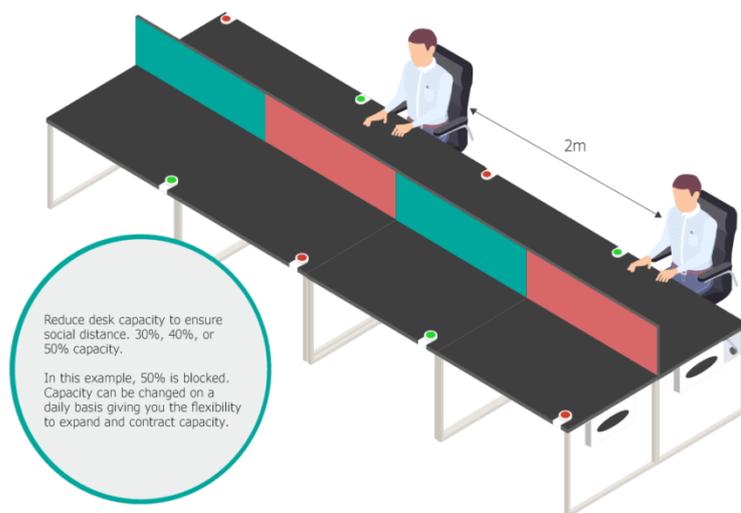
For those working behind the desks and therefore at higher risk due to unavoidable face to face contact, the University will provide appropriate shielding screens. These screens may be fixed or free standing, sizes and shapes will vary greatly depending on individual requirements. Senior Management Teams should liaise directly with Campus Services to identify the requirements within their individual areas.

Social Distancing in Open Plan & Communal Offices

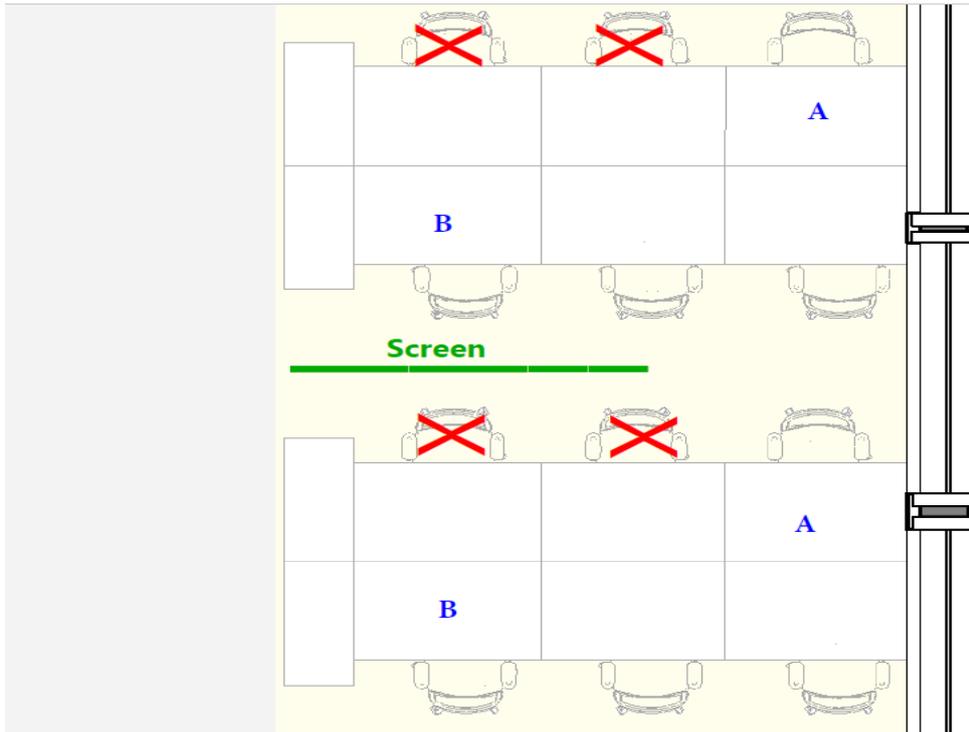
Many staff work in open plan or communal offices that make social distancing guidelines difficult to implement under normal practice. To overcome this Senior Management Teams must make suitable arrangements to facilitate appropriate social distancing in open plan and communal offices.

Whilst the University is working with a reduced capacity on campus those colleagues situated in open plan offices may be allocated to a red/blue rota for onsite working. Splitting staff into groups or teams will limit the number of different people workers can encounter. Scenarios across campus will differ but under normal working conditions, workers may need to pass others at a distance of less than 2m to get to their desks, and systems such as those suggested within this guidance aim to minimise the risk associated with Covid-19 as far as is reasonably practicable. Staff must use their allocated desk only and no hot-desking is currently permitted. However, where staff share an office space or desk due to working on alternate rotas, all surfaces, IT equipment and stationery must be wiped down before and after use by an individual. Stationery should not be shared and should be stored in desk drawers when not in use.

In order to maintain social distancing within offices, staff must be seated at 2 metre intervals to achieve the required distance between them. We recommend that, where practicable, side-to-side or back-to-back seating arrangements are implemented. Direct face-to-face seating should be avoided where possible, even if the 2 metre spacing is achieved.



Where larger desk areas are in place, seating arrangements should be staggered as illustrated below and in places where maintaining a 2m separation during passing is not possible the introduction of screens and the removal of chairs will allow for social distancing to be observed.



Suggested staggered working position arrangement where chairs are removed to allow person A to access desk behind screen.

Staff must familiarise themselves with any revised layouts in their working area, this may include one-way systems and a requirement to follow any instructions provided by signage and floor markings around desks and in office walkways that indicate a safe distance on approach to or when passing seated staff.

Staff who have their own individual offices and are able to return to campus on a non-rotational basis but must still strictly adhere to social distancing practices in the communal areas of their work area.

The distancing requirements around photocopiers/printers will be clearly marked and employees should not approach a machine when another employee is using a machine and wait behind the 2 metre marked area if necessary.



Cleaning wipes area available to sanitise desks, drawer handles, keyboards and mice before use each day and before leaving the office.

Social Distancing in Communal Areas

Staff must not congregate around common areas including kitchens/tea-points, catering outlets, toilets and copier/printers. Use of these areas is limited to one person at a time and suitable signage and demarcation lines are in place to reflect this requirement. When using seated break-out areas, staff must maintain a safe distance and avoid seating next to or face-to-face with other employees and adopt a staggered approach, leaving a suitable distance between them.

Kitchens

To ensure social distancing measures are adhered to, communal kitchens should employ a 'one out, one in' procedure, with no more than one person being in the area at any time. Employees will be required to take staggered breaks to avoid using kitchens/break-out areas together and to prevent crowding. Use of kitchens will be limited to one person at a time.

Prior to the handling of communal items such as kettles, all persons should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds in line with current government guidance to prevent contamination of surfaces. Crockery and cutlery utensils must not be shared and staff should ensure they use their own items which are cleaned and stored in desk drawers or taken home before leaving the office.

Toilets

Toilet areas will have reduced capacities that employees must adhere to. Staff must ensure that they do not use any taped off cubicles, urinals and sinks. This will ensure safe distances are maintained. Toilet areas that are identified as single occupancy only will have appropriate signage to indicate this.



Regular handwashing is important to help control the spread of the virus. Please respect good hygiene, making a conscious effort to wash your hands effectively. Signage will be provided in all toilet facilities to remind colleagues.



Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds to prevent the spread of viruses

The official NHS Hand-washing technique illustration is provided below.

NHS

Hand-washing technique with soap and water

The illustration consists of 13 numbered steps, each in a blue-bordered box with a corresponding illustration and text description:

- 1** Wet hands with water
- 2** Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces
- 3** Rub hands palm to palm
- 4** Rub back of each hand with palm of other hand with fingers interlaced
- 5** Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced
- 6** Rub with back of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked
- 7** Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand using a rotational movement
- 8** Rub tips of fingers in opposite palm in a circular motion
- 9** Rub each wrist with opposite hand
- 10** Rinse hands with water
- 11** Use elbow to turn off tap
- 12** Dry thoroughly with a single-use towel
- 13** Hand washing should take 15–30 seconds

cleanyourhands campaign

NHS
National Patient Safety Agency

Meetings and Training

Colleagues are encouraged to avoid face-to-face meetings, utilising Microsoft Teams or telephone conferencing when practicable. If a meeting can operate safely using social distancing measures this must be maintained at all times and seating must be positioned to allow for the required space. Surplus chairs should be removed from rooms where possible or signage put in place to remind staff that seating must not be moved. Numbers of attendees must be strictly limited and even if the room allows for larger gatherings, these should be avoided. To avoid unnecessary movement between buildings you should only attend face-to-face meetings in your allocated building.

Laboratories and Workshops

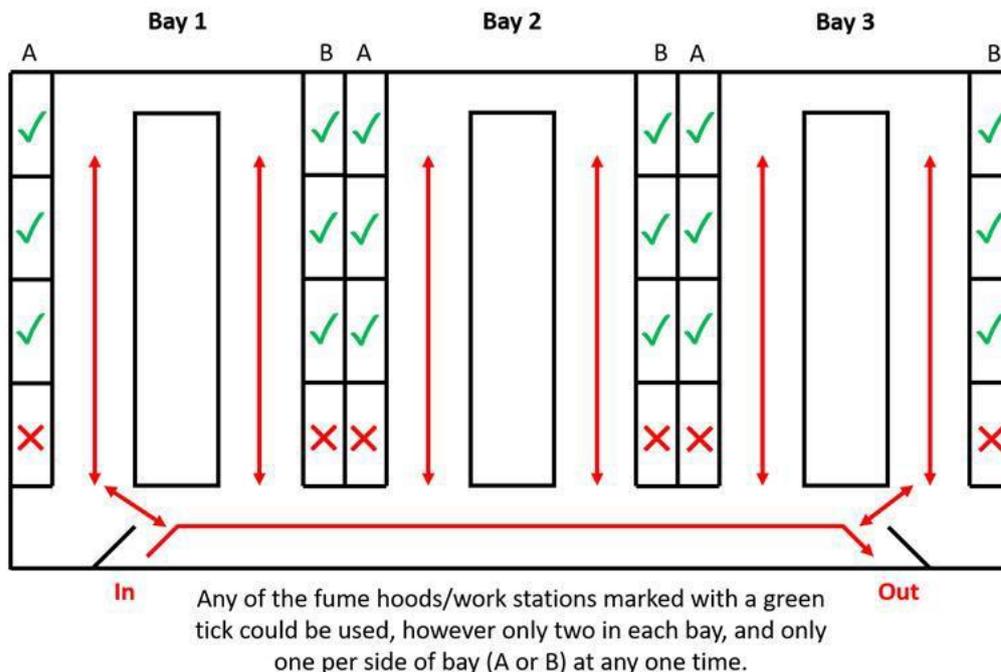
For School specific areas such as workshops or laboratories, rather than a Campus-wide risk assessment, changes in the way work is done will appear in local Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work that must be updated as circumstances change.

Following appropriate risk assessment, the University will introduce measures to enable work in laboratories and workshops, including research to be conducted in a safe and responsible manner, following government guidance specifically designed to protect researchers in laboratories and other research facilities and spaces.

In all laboratories and/or workshops, the maximum occupancy of the room should be set at no more than 25% of the normal maximum occupancy (e.g. for a lab with 5 bays, each with 8 fume hoods, the total number of workers in the lab should not exceed 10). Schools should consider a booking system to facilitate Work being carried out in shifts, to allow the maximum number of workers to access a space, whilst maintaining a minimum number of persons working at any given time. Working space should be vacated upon completion of work, or where any significant period of delay is expected (e.g. a 3-hour experiment is running, and no other work can be completed during this time). During shorter periods of delay (e.g. a 30-minute experiment is running, and no other work can be completed during this time) the area should be vacated at the discretion of the worker, using common sense and consideration for other persons who may require the use of the space.

In laboratory and workshop environments, floors should be marked at 2m intervals to ensure persons are maintaining adequate distance from one another. Where work benches or bay systems are in place, there should be no more than one person per workbench and two persons per bay. Where multiple points of access and egress to the laboratory or workshop are present, a one-way system should be implemented, with certain doors being designated for entry only and others for exit only. Where possible, wide (greater than 2m) footways in bay-system laboratories or workshops should be marked into two 'lanes' to allow for movement in both directions, with

persons always keeping to the left. Where this is not possible, a communication approach should be maintained between all persons in a workspace, so movement of one individual can occur in either direction whilst other persons remain within the bays and maintain the 2m minimum distancing. All workers in bay-system laboratories or workshops should work at least 2m from any primary footways, and work facing away from the central reservation of a bay where possible to minimise any face-to-face contact between persons.



Classrooms, GPT's and Lecture Theatres

These areas will be subject to reduced capacity to allow for social distancing and where rooms have fixed seating, these will be clearly marked as not available for use.

Social Distancing when attending and leaving campus

Movement between buildings should be limited to essential activities only but such activities will include staff being able to access any catering points and/or take a break for fresh air or exercise over the lunchtime period.

When engaging in work activities any unnecessary movement between buildings and around campus should be avoided. Colleagues are requested to remain in their allocated buildings whilst at work.

Emergency Evacuations

There will be no planned emergency evacuations during the period where social distancing measures remain in place. However, in the event of an emergency evacuation of any occupied university building people do not need to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe, staff must still evacuate quickly and safely using a common sense approach. For example, if a fire resulted in the obstruction of a designated exit route on a one-way system as outlined in this guidance, persons should not attempt to remove the obstruction to evacuate the area. The use of another, non-designated route would be permissible as the risk associated from the fire would likely be higher than that of using a non-designated route. An attempt should still be made however, to ensure a 2m distance between persons evacuating by the new route. Once outside the building, staff should maintain social distancing around the assembly points and stay as spaced apart as practicably possible.

Exemptions

Every effort should be made to fulfil the requirements of this guidance. However, there will be circumstances where for practical reasons social distancing cannot be achieved. For any tasks or activities where the above Social Distancing Guidance cannot be followed a separate risk assessment will be required. Risk Assessments should be submitted to the health and safety centre for approval prior to the task or activity taking place.

Latest Guidance

This document will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that the most up to date advice and guidance is applied. Please make sure you are viewing the most up to date version of this document by checking the document control box at the end of the guidance and downloading the most up to date version from the [HR homepage](#).

See the links below for most up to date Government and Health and Safety Executive guidance:

[Government Guidance](#)

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/social-distancing-coronavirus.htm>

Document Title: Social Distancing Guidance			
Version No.	2	Document Owner	Health and Safety Manager

Created Date	18 th May 2020		
Effective Date	18 th May 2020		
Reviewed	14 th May 2021	Review Date	21 st June 2021