

Phased Return to Campus (RTC)

Safety Protocol

Ensuring a Safe Campus
Environment for Staff
and Student

Version 1

PHASED RETURN TO CAMPUS (RTC) SAFETY PROTOCOL

ENSURING A SAFE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

As Ireland continues to deal with the COVID-19 crisis, we have prepared this guide to enable Unit Heads and staff plan for an easing of the current travel/work restrictions and a gradual return to on-campus work and ultimately for the start of a new academic year in September/October.

We will be living with COVID-19 for at least the next 12 months and hence we will have to adapt how we work and deliver education, research and associated campus services in that period.

In May 2020 the Government published a [*Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business*](#) to ease the COVID-19 restrictions and reopen Ireland's economy and society in a phased manner. The roadmap outlines 5 phases starting with on 18th May, from which point the country will re-open in a slow, controlled way. The University emphasizes very strongly that people should continue working from home where possible through all 5 phases.

This protocol sets out areas and control measures which need to be considered by managers of schools/units in preparation for phased return of staff/researchers to campus. Each school/unit will need to translate this into the specific actions it needs to take, depending on the nature of their operations, including the size and type, how it is organised, operated, managed and regulated.

We hope this protocol gives you a practical framework to think about what you need to do to restart operations in a phased way during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please be assured that advice and guidance is available from the Health & Safety and Estates Offices throughout this process. These guidelines are subject to change as new advice and evidence emerges.

The health and wellbeing of our staff and students remains our top priority while we all work to ensure we continue to deliver a high quality education and research. We would like to acknowledge the co-operation and understanding of staff over the past few weeks when we have had to switch to an on-line delivery of all our programmes and their assessment/examinations and for working from home. We are asking for your further co-operation and understanding as we all work together to put in the necessary arrangements to allow for a resumption of on-campus working and the start of the new academic year in unprecedented challenging circumstances.

DCU PHASE A

DCU will seek to re-open work on campus on a phased basis starting in June with researchers and associated support staff that require access to campus facilities. Phase A will commence on the following basis:

- Any decisions to re-open shall be done in compliance with Government and public health advice
- Wherever feasible, remote working will be maintained
- RTC will be on a phased basis starting with lab/specialist facilities-based researchers and associated essential staff e.g. technicians
- Physical distancing guidelines will be maintained (2m rule)
- Transmission risks are minimised through prevention control measures
- Statutory preventative maintenance programs have been maintained throughout the shutdown period by the Estates Office and faculty technical staff
- All buildings have been deep cleaned
- The risks associated with staff/students arriving into Ireland from overseas will be managed in accordance with Government guidelines.

This document provides guidance to Heads of Schools/Units in relation to steps that should be considered in order to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. It is supported by a [checklist](#) which will guide Schools/Units through the preparation phase of RTC operations.

To help you decide which actions to take, you need to carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, just as you would for other health and safety related hazards. The Health & Safety Office have created [a template](#) and a [completed example](#) to support this process; if you require any assistance, please contact safety@dcu.ie. You should share the results of your risk assessment with your staff by means of the Local Safety Statement which you should also consider publishing on a local drive.

Central to this DCU RTC Protocol is ensuring processes and procedures are in place to protect the health and wellbeing of all our staff and students. These are unprecedented circumstances for all of us. They will require co-operation and understanding, strong communication and a shared collaborative approach.

Each School/Unit will be asked to nominate a person(s) to act as the COVID-19 Coordinator (Refer to Appendix A) who will work closely with the Health and Safety team, Estates and their own staff to ensure a safe work environment is created and maintained.

3 elements that need to be considered:

1. The Person
2. The Workspace
3. The Physical Environment

1. The Person

Personal responsibility is paramount in minimizing the risk of infection transmission. Observing respiratory etiquette, social distancing, good hand hygiene and following the local infection control protocols are critically important.

Before returning to work, the following pre-return to campus steps must be put in place and completed:

- All employees must seek approval from their manager in the first instance before returning to campus by email or by an alternative GDPR compliant system. The text in appendix B may be emailed by managers to employees scheduled to RTC. This must be returned via email by the employee at least 3 days in advance of RTC confirming that they have read the email contents, that they fully understand the contents and that they will adhere to the new health and safety requirements associated with COVID-19 (Refer to Appendix B).
- Managers must ensure that safe practices, based on these guidelines, are in place before authorising return to campus and in certain instances will require the advanced scheduling of times when staff are on campus to ensure the maximum capacity of shared office/lab workspaces is not exceeded.
- If, after returning to campus, an employee develops symptoms or they have come in contact* with an infected case, they must not present for work on campus and must inform their manager. They should immediately follow the self-isolation recommendations. All information provided by the employee must be treated confidentially. If symptoms present during working hours, follow the Response to suspect COVID-19 case (Refer to Appendix C).
- Mandatory RTC induction training is made available in advance to employees. This training will at a minimum include the latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health: what a staff member should do if they develop symptoms of COVID-19; details of how the workplace is organised to address the risk from COVID-19; an outline of the COVID-19 response plan; identification of points of contact from the employer and the employee; and any other sector specific advice that is relevant.
- [Safezone](#) "check in" on mobile or desktop will be mandatory for all staff while they are physically on campus to enable the University comply with government regulations on contact tracing (Refer to Appendix D).

2. The Work Space

In the context of ensuring social distancing measures are put in place to minimise the risk of coronavirus transmission, that workspaces that are multi-occupancy e.g. open plan offices, will have to be modified to reduce the maximum occupancy at any one time. Signage will be used to clearly indicate entry/exit routes and circulation routes within the space, with appropriate PPE/cleaning supplies provided and the introduction a clean desk policy to facilitate hot desk arrangements.

The following control measures should be considered:

- The number of persons sharing a workspace has been determined in advance in conjunction with Estates and Health and Safety based on room dimensions and layout to ensure social distancing is maintained. (Refer to Appendix E)
- A booking or communication system is in place to share the rota/schedule; this will ensure there is no confusion about scheduling of space.
- Units should ensure that teams are split into smaller groups to ensure separation of critical personnel in order to limit joint exposure and protect the business function.
- In so far as is reasonably practicable, a full complement of skills and expertise should be available on each shift/team.
- Switching of employees from one shift to another is to be avoided.
- In order to support contact tracing, the unit manager is responsible for ensuring daily attendance records are maintained.
- A staggered start and finish time is in place to allow for phased entry exit of the workspace.
- Internal doors (except fire doors) may be left open to minimise contact with handles and push plates. Before doing this, consider rooms that require air pressures to be maintained due to fumehood or ventilation needs.
- If possible, separate designated entry/exit points with clear signage are in place.
- If required to maintain social distancing (i.e. 2m separation distance) a one-way system should be considered to limit the potential for overlap. Check building arrangements particularly in relation to stairwells and lift operation (rule of thumb, walk on the right flows).
- In line with [Department of Health Guidelines](#), consider the use of face coverings, in areas where staying 2 metres apart from people is difficult - for example, in corridors or other public spaces
- A hand sanitising station is located at entry and exit point to the building; staff will be instructed to sanitise hands at each point.
- Units that are public facing are not expected to return to operation in phase 1, but in the unusual circumstance that they are required, a physical barrier(s) such as an acrylic screen is in place to reduce contact.
- A detailed assessment and plan of workstation/position layout is in place.
- A clean desk policy is in place, all items are removed from desk and space dividers to allow for cleaning. PC and telephone only to be left on the desk at the end of the work day.
- Sharing of equipment such as printers is not permitted unless post use decontamination procedures are in place and supervised e.g. wipe down with disinfectant. Equipment would also include vehicles or other outdoor equipment used by multiple staff.

- Sharing of office equipment/consumables is to be avoided e.g. staplers, pens, white board markers.
- Management to advise and facilitate, as much as possible, minimal movement in and around the workspace.
- Ventilation should be maximized through natural ventilation e.g. opening of windows
- Face to face meetings and supervision are minimized through the use of Zoom etc.
- Lunch/tea breaks are staggered, staff are encouraged to bring their own packed lunch and cutlery including cups.
- In so far as is reasonably practicable, toilet breaks are staggered or a local arrangement is in place to maintain social distancing.
- Similar arrangements as above should be put in place for laboratory workstations.
- A revised cleaning protocol is in place to allow for decontamination of the space at the end of each working day/shift
- Management of deliveries - agree a delivery protocol/arrangement with suppliers to ensure that all delivery transactions enforce physical distancing.
- Cleaning protocols are in place to allow for decontamination of the workspace at the end of each working day/shift, with particular emphasis on frequent contact points such as keyboards, telephone.

3. The Physical Environment

The Estates team in conjunction with the support of the Health & Safety Office will be responsible for assessing and maintaining control measures in relation to the built environment.

The following control measures will be in place as required:

- Information signs in relation to COVID-19 symptoms posted
- Water systems have been flushed/sterilised
- Fire alarm detection and control systems are “in-test”.
- Emergency Evacuation response plan has been reviewed
- Assembly point locations are retained supplemented by advice on maintaining distancing
- Parking facilities have been reviewed with rules in place to respect social distancing.
- Entry/exit points to buildings plan in place with appropriate signage to allow clear understanding of flows
- Spaces that require one-way systems have been identified and signage has been put in place to allow clear understanding of same e.g. one-way stairwells
- Hand sanitising stations are located at entry and exit points to buildings.
- Cleaning protocols are in place to allow for decontamination of the building at the end of each working day/shift, with particular emphasis on frequent contact points.
- Drinking water is available – if shared, a cleaning protocol is in place to decontaminate at appropriate intervals
- Estates will ensure that HVAC systems are configured so that no air recirculation will take place in open plan spaces.

The operations and effectiveness of this protocol will be overseen on behalf of the University Executive by the University's Health and Safety Steering Committee in consultation with the Health and Safety Consultation group.

Any concerns regarding the implementation of the requirements of this protocol , which cannot be resolved locally, may be escalated to DCU Health and Safety Office.

This protocol is subject to change as national public guidelines are updated.

Appendix A - The COVID-19 Coordinator

Units/Schools must assess how many COVID-19 Coordinator(s) are required depending on size, number of shifts, environment, number of personnel and the work activity to be monitored.

It is important that the right candidate is appointed as a COVID-19 Coordinator.

A backup COVID-19 Coordinator must be available in the event of the person being off sick.

Details of the assigned COVID-19 Coordinator and their role must be communicated to staff.

Role of a COVID-19 Coordinator

The role of a COVID-19 Coordinator is to monitor day to day activities to ensure specified control measures are being maintained to protect health and reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

- The person undertaking the role must receive training in what the role will entail.
- The role is supported by all site management and employees as failure to take it seriously could result in an outbreak of COVID-19.
- In instances where there is non-conformance with specified control measures such as social distancing, the COVID-19 Coordinator has authority to intervene.
- The specified person(s) should at all times promote and coach good hygiene practices to all personnel in their unit/school.
- The person should make management aware of any COVID-19 concerns raised by staff.
- Report any areas of non-compliance to their manager to ensure these are addressed.
- Assist in contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the unit/school.
- Assist in the monitoring and replenishment of sanitizing and cleaning agents as per agreed protocol.

The Chief Operations Officer, Health and Safety and the Estates Office will liaise closely with the COVID-19 Coordinators to ensure good practices are implemented and Coordinators are kept up to date in any changes in regulations etc.

Appendix B – Return to Work Declaration

The following text must be emailed by managers to staff members scheduled to RTC. This must be returned via email by the staff member at least 3 days in advance of their RTC.

Dear [staff member],

In accordance with the new Government Health and Safety regulations, it is a requirement that each staff member reads and acknowledges that they have received and read the following information at least 3 days before returning to work on-campus. These new measures have been put in place to protect all staff members while allowing, on a phased basis, a return to work on campus.

- *Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days? **Yes/No***
- *Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days? **Yes/No***
- *Are you a *close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (i.e. less than 2m for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day)? **Yes/No***
- *Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time? **Yes/No***
- *Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time? **Yes/No***

If you have answered YES to any of the above you must not return to work on campus at this time.

*If after returning to campus, you develop symptoms or you have come in *contact with an infected case, they must inform your manager promptly. You should immediately follow the DCU self-isolation recommendations.*

I acknowledge that in order to comply with Government requirements for the University to keep a log of staff that are on campus each day - I will stay 'Checked-in' on the DCU SafeZone app (via mobile phone or on the desktop) at all times while on campus.

All information provided by the staff member in this communication will be treated confidentially.

NOTE:

When on campus, please adhere to our on-campus standard processes/procedure regarding infection control, i.e. regular hand washing/hand sanitising, general coughing/sneezing etiquette and maintaining social distancing of 2m. The use of face coverings may be required, in line with Department of Health Guidelines, in areas where staying 2 metres apart from people is difficult - for example, in corridors or other public spaces as identified by risk assessment.

Appendix C - Response to a Suspected COVID-19 Case

When responding to a suspect case, there are number of actions that may need to be taken.

- 1) If someone becomes unwell in the workplace with symptoms such as cough, fever, difficulty breathing, keep at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times. Contact the unit COVID-19 Coordinator(s).
- 2) The COVID-19 Coordinator should initially assess whether the unwell individual can immediately be directed to go home, call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
- 3) Where the individual needs or requests an ambulance, isolate the area, call the ambulance advising of suspect COVID-19 case, stay with the patient (or call for First Aid Response on 5999) (at least 2m away) and comfort them until the ambulance attends.
- 4) Where the person does not require an ambulance and cannot return home independently or without using public transport (while maintaining 2 metre distance), the unwell individual should be directed to the campus designated isolation area (see below) and advised to call their doctor ,outlining their current symptoms. On route, advice should be given to the unwell individual to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or surgical mask if available. The following spaces are designated isolation rooms for staff and students:
 - Glasnevin Campus - Student Health Centre, Henry Grattan Building
 - St Patrick's Campus - Student Health Centre, Block A
 - All Hallows Campus - PG08, Purcell House
- 5) The COVID-19 Coordinator should notify management who should subsequently notify the Chief Operations Officer (COO).
- 6) The COVID-19 Coordinator should make available to the COO, records kept regarding Direct Contact to identify people who have been in contact with the individual. If COVID-19 positive is confirmed, the HSE may advise direct contacts on any actions or precautions that should be taken.

Appendix D - Safezone

As part of the Return to Campus Protocol, DCU requires all staff to use the SafeZone app. Staff are required to use the app's "check in" feature upon their arrival on campus, and must use the same feature to "check out" when leaving campus. This information will be available to DCU Health & Safety Unit (part of the Office of the Chief Operations Officer), in accordance with Paragraph 12.2 of the DCU Privacy Policy.

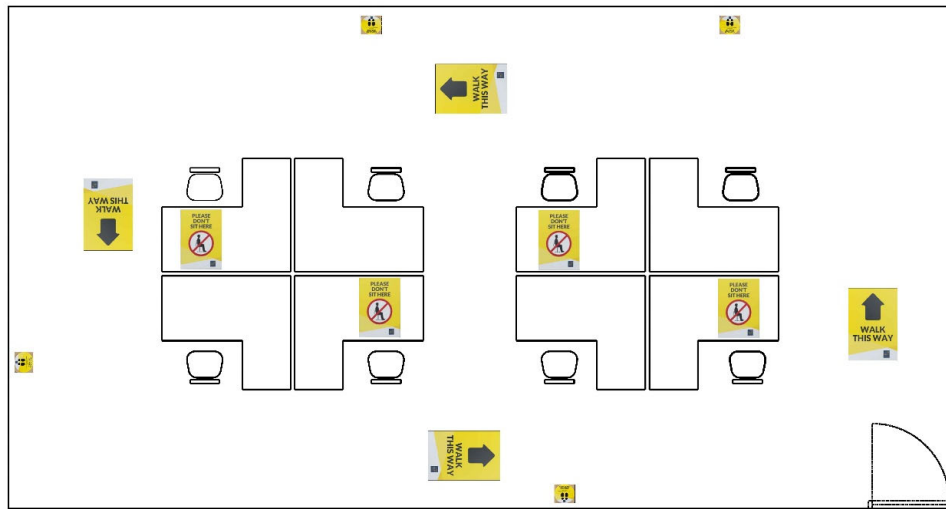
The reasons for this requirement is to ensure the health and safety of all staff, students and visitors to DCU campuses during the continued coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic restrictions issued by government. In the event that a member of staff becomes ill with Covid-19, the information from the SafeZone app will be used as part of the track and trace process, which is one of the measures recommended by the National Public Health Emergency Team to contain the virus during this pandemic.

In order to carry out any such track and trace process, and only for such a purpose, some of the information from the SafeZone app will be shared with the relevant health authorities in Ireland, including the Health Service Executive (HSE). The information shared will be limited to only that which is required for the track and trace process to be carried out. All necessary organisational and technical safeguards will be employed to ensure the security of the information which is retained by DCU, and of the information which is shared by DCU with the relevant health authorities in Ireland.

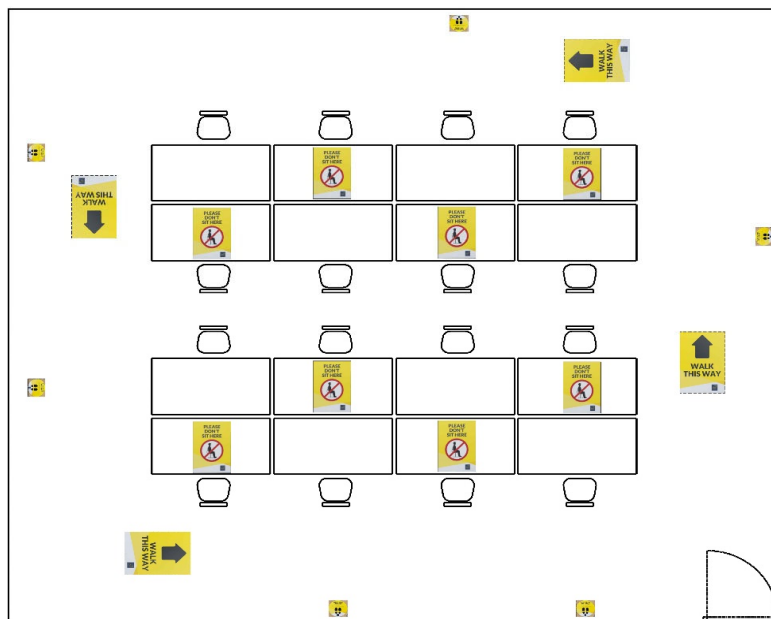
The lawful basis of processing personal data (i.e. information from the SafeZone app which may be used for the purposes of tracking and tracing) are in the vital interests of the data subject, in the public interest, to comply with a legal obligation imposed on DCU, Health & Safety legislation, emergency Covid-19 legislation, and the Universities Act 1997.

Each individual user of SafeZone has rights under data protection legislation, including the right to access a copy of your own personal data. The contact details for exercising these rights is the DCU Data Protection Unit, which can be contacted at: data.protection@dcu.ie. If you are not satisfied with the handling of your personal data by DCU, you have the right to complain to the Data Protection Commission, which can be contacted via www.dataprotection.ie

Appendix E – Example of Layout Drawings and Signage



EXAMPLE OFFICE LAYOUT WITH DESK PODS



EXAMPLE OFFICE LAYOUT WITH ROWS OF DESKS



Coronavirus COVID-19



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

Know the signs



High Temperature



Shortness of Breath



Breathing Difficulties



Cough

For 8 out of 10 people, rest and over the counter medication can help you feel better.

If you have symptoms, self-isolate to protect others and phone your GP. Visit [hse.ie](https://www.hse.ie) for updated factual information and advice or call 1850 24 1850.



Wash



Cover



Avoid



Clean



Stop



Distance

Protection from coronavirus.
It's in our hands.



Riailtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

