



**Return to
Working on Campus Policy
(COVID-19)**



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Introduction

We are living in unprecedented times with the Covid-19 Pandemic placing extraordinary demands on all members of Irish society. The advice and guidance from the Government and HSE are being followed at all times by the University, in order to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of our staff and students is prioritised. The Government has highlighted the need to keep all levels of the Education sector open as a priority, including Third Level, in order to minimise the impact on the delivery of teaching and learning.

A return to our on-campus community is also vitally important in our efforts to maintain the vibrant, cohesive staff community and culture as outlined in the *Our DCU Framework*.

As a result, Our DCU community is working together to deliver a hybrid model of campus-based and online teaching and learning for our students. This model of delivery requires staff across all areas to return to work on each of the University campuses. This approach will enable us to provide the best possible University experience for our students, whilst at the same time ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our staff.

The safety and wellbeing of our Employees and Students remain the University's highest priority, as we continue to adapt and make changes to enable us to return to campus-based working. The University's [Phased Return to Campus Safety Protocol](#) provides further details regarding the University's approach. As part of the University's plan, all employees are required to return to campus from 1st July 2021.

Policy Review & Ownership

The Human Resources Department will provide advice and guidance to employees and managers on the application of the provisions of this policy. This policy, and the measures therein, will be reviewed regularly and will stay in place until we have received new or updated information in line with HSE Guidelines and Government policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to complement the University's [Phased Return to Campus Safety Protocol](#), by providing clear guidance to all employees and managers regarding their roles and responsibilities. It also provides clarification in relation to University Oversight, engagement with staff and the role of HR and other key Departments, as they relate to the implementation of this policy.

Scope

As part of the University's plan, all employees are required to return to campus from 1st July 2021. The delivery of services will also follow a hybrid model with employees attending campus each week and working from home on alternative days in some instances.

The Return to Working on Campus Policy applies to all employees of the University. Prior to the return to campus, all employees will be required receive permission from their Line



Manager to return to work on-campus. Each employee will receive an update regarding the arrangements for their area from their Line Manager.

Policy Statement

The following basic principles apply to how the University will outline, implement and oversee the control measures necessary to enable the campus to reopen and facilitate a phased return to research, teaching and community operations.

Operating Principles

A) Working Safely

The University is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all employees and students by adhering to government guidelines when addressing our return to campus. Staff will receive information regarding the specifics of their return to campus from their relevant Line Manager/Unit Head. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that the maximum capacity of shared office, laboratory and/or work spaces is not exceeded, and employees can work safely.

B) Personal Responsibility

Every employee of the University has a personal responsibility and duty in minimising the risks of exposure to COVID-19 when working on campus. This includes observing the advice and guidance specified in the University's [Phased Return to Campus Safety Protocol](#). It also means promoting appropriate behaviour and supporting the local COVID Co-ordinators in their roles.

- **Social Distancing**

DCU's campuses and facilities have been set-up in so far as possible to ensure 2 metre social distance is maintained. All staff and students are required to maintain a 2 metre social distance, where feasible in all settings, both on and off campus. This is the most important health and safety measure we can all take.

- **Hand, Respiratory and General Hygiene**

Good hand, respiratory and general hygiene is vital for reducing the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19. Frequent hand washing is encouraged, and hand sanitizers are also available across the campus.

- **Face Masks /Coverings**

DCU will require the use of face coverings in indoor public spaces and in all University buildings, where it is difficult to practice social distancing, from the start of the 2020/2021 academic year.

C) School/Departmental Leadership

The successful implementation of control measures, to protect the health and wellbeing of all our employees and students, relies on proactive management at school / unit level. In



particular, Executive Deans/Directors of Units, Heads of Schools / Units, Directors of Research Centres and other Senior Managers have a key role in ensuring that safe working practices are in place for their areas and that these are communicated and adhered to. This will involve working closely with the Health and Safety Team, the Estates Office and Human Resources and following the detailed guidance set down in this policy and the University's [Phased Return to Campus Safety Protocol](#).

D) Health & Safety Office

The Health & Safety Team will provide advice and support to all departments in relation to control measures outlined within the University's [Latest Covid-19 Updates for Staff and Students](#).

E) Estates Office

The Estates Office, in consultation with the Health & Safety Team, will assist departments in modifying workspaces and the changes to building layouts to enable effective social distancing.

F) University Oversight - Health & Safety Committee & the Health & Safety Consultation Group

All operational control measures required to be in place and effectively maintained 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.

Employee representation is a vital part of the University's Safety Management System, which provides an opportunity for employees and managers to consult on safety, health and welfare at work issues. This is intended to extend to the COVID-19 control measures outlined in this policy and in the [Latest Covid-19 Updates for Staff and Students](#).

Strong communication, and a shared collaborative approach, is key to a safe and continued return to work for all employees. Membership of the Health & Safety Consultation Group has been extended to include SIPTU and IFUT representation for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis.

Staff Wellbeing

DCU values the well-being of all staff and is committed to maintaining and promoting a work environment that supports the mental health and wellbeing of staff throughout their career with the University. In the current context it is now more important than ever that we take every opportunity to protect and enhance the mental health and wellbeing of all staff.

While there are a number of things we can all do personally to care for our mental health and wellbeing by acknowledging when we may need help, the University has a number of supports available to support staff which are now more important than ever given the current context.



The [DCU Employee Assistance Programme](#) (EAP) is a confidential service designed to support all DCU employees and their immediate family members (over 18) to resolve personal and work related concerns. The service includes a support Hub that provides instant access to a range of information, guidance and intervention tools, tailored specifically to help support your mental health and wellbeing.

Occupational Health is concerned with the prevention of ill health and work-related injury. In the context of the current Covid-19 pandemic the University will seek advice from the University Medical Advisors, Medmark to ensure the appropriate steps are taken to support staff who fall into the High Risk and Very High Risk categories as defined by the HSE. Further advice and support may also be available and/or sought to support staff who are diagnosed with Covid-19. The overall aim of this service is to support the health, safety, mental health and wellbeing of all staff.

Further information is available on the [HR Wellbeing webpage](#)

Return to Work – High Risk Categories of Employees

Commencing in July, staff will gradually be returning to work on campus in line with the advice and guidelines issued through the COO. The University has extensive plans in place that range from enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols, provision of PPE for staff (face coverings, alcohol hand gel stations, face visors if required etc), the training of over 200 COVID-19 co-ordinators and modifications to building ventilation systems to ensure no recirculating air is used in any University facility to ensure that campuses will be safe environments for staff and students and will be following the latest Government / National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) advice at all times.

It is widely recognised that certain people are at higher risk to COVID-19 than others. The HSE has classified higher risk into two categories, full details of which can be viewed at [High Risk and Very High Risk Categories](#).

Very High Risk Staff

If you are in the *Very High Risk* category, you should follow the general Public Health Advice and read the current [Government Health Restrictions on gov.ie](#).

As per [HSE Guidelines](#) most people in this category will be fully protected against the virus once they are vaccinated.

If you have not been offered a vaccine you should talk to your GP or hospital care team. They will help you to get a vaccine as soon as possible.

Employees who fall into the Very High Risk categories who are concerned about returning to campus should contact their Line Manager and HR (Susan.Healy@dcu.ie) in the first instance. They should provide certification from their GP and/or treating consultant. The University will also seek advice from the University Medical Advisors, Medmark to ensure



the appropriate steps are taken in the interest of the health, safety and wellbeing of the employee in advance of returning to work.

High Risk Staff

In line with HSE advice, this category of employee should take extra care by social distancing, washing hands regularly and wearing masks in link with HSE Guidelines, [Protect Yourself from Coronavirus](#).

Employees in this category who are not ill, should attend the workplace, unless advised otherwise by the University's Occupational Health Advisors.

Please note that occupational advice may be sought for any Covid-19 concerns raised by employees or their Line Manager.

Further information about COVID-19 and occupational health is available on the website of the [COO](#)

In the event, the University Occupational Health Advisors recommend that an employee in the High Risk or Very High Risk category should work from home, but their existing role in the University is not suited for this, the University reserves the right, in consultation with the employee and their Line Manager to adjust their role and responsibilities to facilitate them working from home.

Special Leave with Pay for COVID-19 Absences

Please note that should a staff member suffer an illness related to the Coronavirus it will be recorded as special leave and will not affect the individual's sick leave entitlement, subject to appropriate confirmation.

Special leave with pay is not available for an employee who has COVID-19 related caring or childcare responsibilities, or for an employee who is living with a high risk or very high risk individual.

However, an employee who wishes to avail of existing relevant leave entitlements is entitled to have such requests considered by his/her employer (e.g. Parental Leave/Carer's Leave). When considering such an application, the employer must take account of the employer's policy on employee absences where the welfare and educational needs of the student must take precedence over all other considerations.

Employees who live with a very high risk individual should attend the workplace and should follow the HSE guidelines to protect themselves and to minimise risk of transmission. The implementation of the Return to Work Safely Protocol is intended to minimize the risk of transmission in the workplace.



Further Information can be found on the [HR Covid Website](#)

Employees Roles and Responsibilities

From 1st July 2021, all categories of employees will be returning to campus in each area. For the moment, the delivery of services in shared spaces will follow a hybrid model with employees attending campus each week and working remotely on alternative days in some instances. Employees' roles and responsibilities under this policy are set out below.

1. Permission to Return to On-campus Working

- (a) Employees that are required to return to the campus for work will be notified of the arrangements for their department / work section.
- (b) Employees who have previously completed the Return to Campus Declaration Form and whose circumstances remain unchanged, will not be required to complete this form again prior to returning to campus. Those employees whose circumstances have change since they completed the Return to Campus Declaration Form will need to complete a new form.
- (c) Employees attending campus for the first time, following their appointment to the University, are required to complete the Covid-19 new starter self-declaration form and the Covid-19 induction training. The [Return to Campus Declaration](#) must be returned to the Line Manager **at least 3 days before** arriving on campus. The newly joined employee will also be required to download the University Safezone App. Full details of what is required is outline in the [New Starter Document](#).
- (d) Permission to return to the campus must be received by an employee from their line manager after the above necessary steps have been completed prior to their return to the campus for work.
- (e) Employees who do not have permission in writing to return to campus must not do so under any circumstances.

2. Working Safely on Campus

(a) SafeZone App

Employees are required to download the [Safezone App](#) onto their mobile phone or desktop and use the app to 'check in' when physically on campus. This measure is necessary for the University to be compliant with government regulations on contact tracing.

(b) COVID-19 Induction Training



Employees attending campus for the first time, following their appointment to the University, will be required to complete the [COVID-19 Induction Training](#). Employees who have previously completed the [COVID-19 Induction Training](#) are not required to review the training again unless they wish to re-familiarize themselves with the contents of the programme.

(c) Vigilance

All employees who have written permission to work on campus are asked to highlight issues / concerns with the COVID-19 Co-ordinator for their department and / or the Department Manager when necessary.

(d) Employees who have received permission to return to work on campus must not do so under any of the following conditions;

- they are showing signs of COVID-19 or have done so in the last 14 days;
 - they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 14 days or are awaiting test results;
- or
- they are a close contact of someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days. See [HSE Guidelines](#)

3. Showing symptoms of COVID-19 at work on campus

If, after returning to campus, an employee develops symptoms or has come in contact with an infected case, they must inform their manager immediately and go to the designated isolation room on campus to wait whilst arrangements to go home are organised.

The following spaces are designated isolation rooms for employees 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

4. International Travel

Work related international travel is not permitted at this time. Official government advice requires that any employee who undertakes non-essential travel overseas, must make provision for the 14- day period of restricted movement, by way of an annual leave or unpaid Leave in line with the normal terms and conditions. The University will however, facilitate staff working from home during the 14-day period of restricted movement where feasible and



where practicable. Any such arrangements must be discussed and agreed in advance with the Line Manager in consultation with the Human Resources Department. Where such an arrangement is not possible, cannot be accommodated or has not been agreed in advance with the Line Manager and HR, staff will be required to cover this period by way of annual leave or unpaid leave.

Manager Roles & Responsibilities

As staff are returning to campus from 1st July, the Manager will support employees and implement the necessary steps to facilitate a safe return to campus, this will involve:

- Ensuring the necessary measures and controls are in place to protect the health and wellbeing of employees using the [Return to Work on Campus Checklist](#).
- Maintaining consistent and ongoing communications to ensure employees are apprised of all necessary information regarding the return to campus.
- Have open discussions with employees with the aim of resolving and addressing any concerns that may arise.

Manager's roles and responsibilities under this policy are set out below.

1. Oversight & Implementation of Local arrangements

The Manager has responsibility to ensure the required control measures are put in place for their Department, prior to permitting staff to return to campus.

2. Working Practices

The Manager will change their department's work practices so that the contacts among employees are restricted to the minimum required to complete the task. Where a 'pod' arrangement is required, the manager will ensure that employees only work with the same group of people when on campus.

3. Health & Safety Return to Work Requirements

Line Managers must adhere to the advice and guidance on what is required regarding task specific measures, appointment of COVID-19 Local Co-ordinators, risks assessments, safety statements, Health & Safety Checklists etc. for their departments as advised and detailed in the University's [Phased Return to Campus Safety Protocol](#).

Communication & Cooperation

The successful application of effective control measures depends on communication and cooperation between all persons in the workplace. As with all University policies, employees are expected to fully comply with the workplace controls and infection prevention measures outlined in this document.



Advice and Guidance - FAQs

Please refer to your HR Business Partner for advice and guidance on any aspect of this policy. Please also note that a comprehensive list of FAQs for can be found under Return to Work on Campus Frequently Asked Questions- [here](#)

Further Updates on COVID-19

Information relating to subsequent changes or further updates regarding information on Covid-19 Latest Updates for Staff & Students can be found [here](#) and on the [HR Covid Website](#)

Related Documentation

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

No.	Document	Link
1	DCU Phased Return to Campus Safety Protocol	Click Here
2	Roadmap for reopening Society & Business	Click Here
3	Latest Covid Updates for Staff and Students	Click Here
4	HSA COVID-19 Advisory Information	Click Here
5	NSAI COVID-19 Workplace Protection & Improvement Guide	Click Here

Policy Review

This policy, and the measures therein, will be reviewed regularly and will stay in place until we have received new or updated information in line with public health direction in line with Government policy.

Version Control

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End.