



COVID-19 Return to Working on Campus Policy



Introduction

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 began with Phase One on 18th May, from which point the country will re-open in a slow, phased way.

Employee and student safety and wellbeing remains the University's highest priority as we continue to adapt and make changes, in accordance with Government guidelines, to return to campus based working.

Purpose

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

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the University who have permission to return to on-campus working on a phased basis.

As we follow all Government protocols during the gradual phase back period, the number of employees and students that can be facilitated on campus will remain low. The importance of operating with new health and safety measures in place will mean that approximately 20% of employees will be on campus at any given time. Prioritisation of the roles required on campus will be made at a Faculty / School / Research Centre / Unit level. Each employee will receive an update on what the arrangements will be for their area from their Line Manager.

Policy Statement – Operating Principles

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.

A) Working Safely

In line with government protocols, and the new health & safety measures required for a return to on-campus working, the majority of employees will be expected to continue to work from



home. This will facilitate the University in implementing the necessary measures to take care of employees when they are expected to work on campus. At a School / Unit level, schedules to facilitate a controlled and rotational return to on-campus working will be developed and communicated. The purpose of this approach is to ensure the maximum capacity of shared office / Laboratory / 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 being vigilant to behaviour on campus that results in non-compliance with control measures and being prepared to speak out when necessary.

In addition, some employees will be asked to take a more active role in ensuring that the control measures are operating effectively.

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) University Oversight

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. This policy and the University's Phased Return to Campus Safety Protocol are subject to change as national public guidelines are updated.

E) 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 Return to Work Protocol

F) 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.



G) Human Resources Department

The Human Resources Department liaises with Medmark, the University's medical advisors, in supporting staff in the event of long-term illness or when there are concerns arising regarding an individual's health, safety and overall wellbeing in the workplace.

Guidance and support will be available to Line Managers and Employees in relation to employee health & well-being, particularly COVID-19 high risk categories, referrals to Occupational Health, and the implementation of management best practices.

H) Health & Safety Committee & the Health & 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 the [Phased Return to Campus Safety Protocol](#).

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 will be extended to include SIPTU and IFUT representation for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Employee

All employees, with the exception of those required to be on campus, will continue to work remotely and will adhere to the guidelines contained in the University's [Remote Working Policy](#). Employee's roles and responsibilities under this policy are set out below in sections 1 – 5.

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) Each employee required to return to campus will be asked to complete a [Return to Work Form](#) confirming that, to the best of their knowledge, they have no symptoms of COVID-19 and also confirming that they are not self-isolating or awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test. The form must be submitted to their Line Manager **at least 3 days before** arriving on campus.
- (c) Permission to return to the campus must be received in writing by an employee prior to their return to the campus for work.



- (d) Employees who do not have permission in writing to return to campus must not do so under any circumstances.
- (e) If an employee is unclear as to whether or not they are required to return to campus they should liaise directly with their line Manager / Department Head for advice and clarification.

2. Return to Work – High Risk Categories of Staff

The HSE has classified High Risk into two categories, full details of which can be viewed at this link.

- (a) **Very High Risk** – in line with HSE advice, this category of employees should cocoon. This category of employee is extremely vulnerable and as a result shall be facilitated in working from home.

An employee must self-declare to their Manager and HR if they fall into the very high risk (extremely vulnerable) category. Medical verification may be required from the employee's GP or the HSE. The University may also require that the employee attend Medmark, the University medical advisors, for a consultation (currently this is carried out over the phone).

Where an individual employee is deemed Very High Risk and must 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.

- (b) **High Risk** – in line with HSE advice, this category of employees should take extra care in protecting themselves from the Corona Virus. High Risk employees do not need to self-isolate, but need to take extra care by staying at home, social distancing and washing hands regularly.

Employees in this category should, through agreement with their line manager, work from home where possible. If working from home is not possible, they can return to the workplace, but should take extra care in line with HSE Guidelines to Protect Yourself from Corona Virus

If there is any query as to whether an employee who is returning to campus falls into either the High Risk or Very High category, advice will be sought 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 addition, if any COVID-19 related concerns or issues are raised at any stage by an employee or their Line Manager, occupational advice may be sought as appropriate from Medmark.



An employee who confirms on the *Return to Work Form* that they have been advised by the GP to cocoon will not be permitted to return to campus. They will need to provide the appropriate certification from their GP and may also be referred to the University's medical advisors.

3. Employees 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

Every employee member must complete the on-line [COVID-19 Induction Training](#) before arriving on Campus and also attend the unit level COVID-19 Training covering control measure specific to their place of work.

(c) Vigilance

All employees who have written permission to work on campus are asked to be vigilant to behaviour on campus that results in non-compliance with control measures and being prepared to highlight issues / concerns with the COVID-19 Co-ordinator for their department and / or the Department Manager when necessary.

(d) Management of Time on Campus

The number of employees and students that can be facilitated on campus at any given time will remain low. Employees, therefore, should liaise with their Manager to limit their time on campus, carry out tasks that cannot be undertaken remotely and leave the campus once these tasks have been completed. When on campus employees should also minimise their geographical footprint, both within buildings and across the wider campus.

(e) 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.



4. 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 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. 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. Further Information can be found on the [HR COVID-19 Information Webpage](#).

The Manager

Manager's roles and responsibilities under this policy are set out below in sections 1 – 11.

1. Oversight & Implementation of Local arrangements

The Manager has responsibility for putting in place the required control measures 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 possible, arrangements must be put in place to ensure that employees only work with the same group of people when on campus.

3. Risk Assessments

Risk Assessments and local Safety Statements are an integral part of DCU's Safety Management System. The Department Manager will carry out a COVID-19 Risk Assessment prior to permitting employees to return to campus for work and update their Department's Safety Statement to take account of control measures. The Safety Statement must be available to all employees of the Unit.



4. Task Specific Measures

It may be necessary to implement additional measures in certain units, such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This must be documented, by the Department Manager, in the appropriate Risk Assessment. It must be noted that while correctly using PPE can help prevent some exposures, it should not take the place of other preventative measures as outlined in the University's Return to Work Safety Protocol. The Department Manager should liaise with the Health & Safety Team if they have any queries regarding additional measures that may be appropriate for their School/Unit.

5. Health & Safety Preparedness Checklists

Each Department Manager should refer to the University's Phased Return to Campus Safety Protocol [Checklists](#) which are available from the Health & Safety Office as a support to Managers when implementing the above control measures.

6. Appointing COVID-19 Local Co-ordinator/s

The Department Manager is required to appoint a COVID-19 Local Co-ordinator/s and also to have a back-up in place in the event of an absence. The person appointed should already be in a role that is required to be on campus and not working remotely. Details of the appointment and the role of the COVID-19 Co-ordinator must be communicated to all staff within the department. Please refer to the Appendix A of the Phased Return to Campus Safety Protocol for a full description of the COVID-19 Co-ordinator role.

7. Safezone App

All employees are required to download and use the Safezone App when physically on campus. It is the Manager's responsibility to ensure that employees in their department are compliant with this control measure.

8. Social Distancing

Social distancing is an important control measure that is in place across Irish Society during the Covid-19 crisis. This control measure must also be maintained at all times when on campus.

9. 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.



10. 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.

Information relating to subsequent changes or further updates regarding the wearing of Face Coverings will be available on the [HR Covid-19 webpage](#).

11. 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.

Information relating to future updates regarding Covid-19 control measures will be available on the [HR Covid-19 webpage](#).

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	Return to Work Safely Protocol	Click Here
4	HSA COVID-19 Advisory Information	Click Here
5	NSAI COVID-19 Workplace Protection & Improvement Guide	Click Here
6	DCU Remote Working Policy	Click Here

Contact

Any queries regarding this policy should be directed to the Human Resources Department.

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

Document Name	COVID-19 Return to Working on Campus Policy	
Version Reference	V1.0	
Owner	Human Resources	
Approved by	DCU Executive	
Date	August 4th 2020	

End.