

Guidance for managers and staff who are required to work, or are returning to work, at College premises during COVID-19

1. Key Points

- 1.1. Currently, the expectation is that all those who can, should continue to work remotely.
- 1.2. The health, safety and well-being of all staff and students at College is paramount and managers should speak to their staff about the requirements of them working on campus or of any plans to ask them to return to College premises as early as possible, if they have been working remotely
- 1.3. Staff should not work at College premises unless they have been instructed to do so by their line manager and have had the opportunity to discuss the requirements.
- 1.4. Some staff are needed to attend campus to carry out work that cannot be done from home, for example laboratory research and delivering and supporting teaching and our student experience. Those staff asked to come back to campus to undertake all, or some of their work should do so.
- 1.5. This guidance aims to ensure all managers and staff are clear about what should be discussed prior to attending or returning to the workplace.
- 1.6. Some who come to campus to work will need more support and flexibility.
- 1.7. The College will regularly review and update this guidance, taking into account Government guidance, relevant public health advice, and scientific evidence as appropriate to ensure safe practices are followed to protect staff and students.

The application of this guidance will be in accordance with the College's commitment to equality, with all members of staff given equal treatment and considered fairly, free from bias in relation to age, ethnic origin, gender, gender reassignment, disability, religious belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy or bias on any other grounds. Part-time staff, staff on family-friendly leave and staff on fixed-term contracts will not be treated any differently from other staff.

2. Discussing the requirement to work at a College premises

Managers are expected to undertake a careful analysis of their operational requirements, along with a COVID-19 Risk Assessment (see section 4) when deciding whether their staff are physically required to work at College premises.

Where there is a requirement for staff to physically attend College premises for all or some of their role, managers will need to speak to their staff at the earliest opportunity and explain the reasons for this requirement. There will need to be flexibility by both parties when working through the discussion points below.

Regular communication and review of the arrangements put in place will be essential to support staff during this time.

3. Suggested topics to discuss with staff

- 3.1. Explain the rationale and requirement to work at College premises.
- 3.2. Discuss when they are expected to work, which days and hours they are expected to work. Consider whether staggered working times, shift work or rotas with their colleagues is appropriate or feasible.
- 3.3. Discuss travel arrangements and consider flexible hours to avoid peak time travel. Where possible, staff should be encouraged to consider alternative modes of transport for all or some of their commute, such as walking or [cycling](#). Be mindful that some staff may encounter difficulties because their usual transport is still operating at a reduced capacity. Managers may refer to specific [guidance for staff travelling to and from campus during national lockdowns](#).
- 3.4. Accommodation in College halls, if available, will be provided to staff and students who need it.
- 3.5. Discuss the Health and Safety processes and requirements (see section 4), including Departmental specific procedures or arrangements. This should include a discussion around the use of a [face covering](#) which is now essential in most locations. Information about the local issuing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should also be provided. If a member of staff indicates that they are not able to wear a face covering or other piece of PPE, advice should be sought from Occupational Health.
- 3.6. Discuss the duties/work they are expected to undertake. This should include any changes to procedures or to the service usually provided, as well as any other changes to their usual work duties or tasks. It is anticipated that most changes to usual work duties or tasks will be for a temporary period and for the majority of cases, it is expected that managers and their staff can agree to these changes informally as part of the working on College premises discussions. In cases where major changes to an individual's work duties are being considered on a longer-term or permanent basis, managers should discuss this with their HR Partner, who may refer to the College's Change Management Policy and Procedure.
- 3.7. Some staff may request greater flexibility to their work pattern or want to discuss a new or temporary working arrangement, especially if their domestic situation has changed because of COVID-19. Further guidance can be found within the [Flexible Working Policy](#) and within the temporary [Carer's leave for staff who have increased caring responsibilities](#) guidance document.
- 3.8. It is expected that managers and departments endeavour to reassure and support their staff as they adjust to work on campus during this pandemic. Both parties are expected to be flexible and open to alternative suggestions. Informal requests for alternative working arrangements will need to be considered carefully in relation to operational requirements and implementation will be at the line managers discretion.
- 3.9. Discuss any other adjustments and/or ongoing support to facilitate effective working at College premises. Be mindful that new and changing guidelines, processes and procedures will mean familiar workplace routines will feel very different. Some may take more time than others to adapt and it is likely that most people will need a period of readjustment, especially those who may have been working remotely for a long period
- 3.10. If staff are worried or anxious about their safety, managers will need to encourage staff to talk to them about any concerns and try to resolve them together. A number of temporary options may be explored with staff including working reduced hours (where it is practicable for some work to be managed from home) or annual leave. Members of staff may wish to refer to other sources for support. Details of these can be found on the [advice and support webpages](#).
- 3.11. In the event that concerns about working at College premises cannot be resolved, managers will need to discuss this with their Strategic HR Partner for advice on

how to resolve the issue and provide further guidance. Any decisions related to a member of staff's return to work will be made by the line manager.

4. Health, Safety & Wellbeing

- 4.1. A key focus of the discussion should be health, safety and well-being. Staff should be reassured of the College Health and Safety guidelines that have been developed – including the use of sanitizer stations on entering the College, use of face coverings when moving through College buildings, enhanced cleaning of touch points, one-way systems – along with guidelines for shared kitchen and toilet areas, which are cleaned more frequently, personal hygiene standards.
- 4.2. Managers will need to inform staff of the relevant College safety policies and information along with discussing any local health and safety arrangements due to COVID-19.
- 4.3. Individuals working on campus or those due to return should familiarise themselves with the following safety policies and information:
 - [COVID-19 Guidance](#), which includes the [COVID-19 Risk Assessment](#) and the COVID-19 Office checklist
 - [The COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy](#), which covers measures the College is taking and staff responsibilities
 - [College re-opening COVID-19 Safety Guidance](#)
 - [The COVID-19 Contact Tracing Protocol](#), which covers what you should do if you develop COVID-19 symptoms when you have been on campus
 - [Frequently asked questions about safety on campus](#), including information on face coverings and fire safety.
- 4.4. Managers should also refer staff to the [Health and wellbeing webpages](#) for information and resources relating to physical and mental wellbeing during this time.
- 4.5. Managers may remind staff that financial support through the College's hardship funds will be available for those who need it.

5. COVID-19 testing for staff

- 5.1. Staff should [book a test](#) when they return to work on campus, and they should minimise social contact until a negative test result has been confirmed.
- 5.2. After that, staff who are required to attend campus during lockdown should [book weekly tests](#).
- 5.3. Staff can book a free test through the College's [gold standard testing service](#) which can detect COVID-19 including the new variant. Tests are [available to book](#) 15 days in advance.

6. Vulnerable staff

- 6.1. Staff who are classed as [clinically extremely vulnerable](#) or [clinically vulnerable](#) and have been asked to work on campus should speak to their line manager.
- 6.2. If staff declare an underlying health issue or are concerned about another factor (e.g. age, ethnicity, BMI) that may affect their own risk of getting seriously ill from coronavirus, they should discuss this with their line manager.

- 6.3. In these instances, managers can refer staff to Occupational Health for an individual [Health vulnerabilities assessment](#). The assessment will provide advice on fitness to work on site and further information on mitigating their risk.
- 6.4. Other members of staff feeling vulnerable or finding a return to work difficult are strongly encouraged to discuss their concerns with their manager.
- 6.5. If members of staff feel unable to talk to their line manager, they may contact the [HR Staff Hub](#) for advice. Staff may also wish to contact [Occupational Health](#) directly. Staff should be reminded of the College' Employee Assistance Provider, [Confidential Care](#) who can provide free professional and confidential help 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The College has also set out additional resources on the [Live well work well during COVID-19](#) webpages.
- 6.6. If staff are required to physically attend work and they live with someone who has been advised by their GP or the NHS to shield, they should discuss any concerns they have with their manager. Staff should be re-assured that the College has put in place measures to help prevent the spread of coronavirus to make our environment as safe as possible. Staff may be able to discuss the possibility of working some time from home. Where this is not possible, staff members may consider taking time as annual leave or unpaid leave, subject to manager approval. If necessary and appropriate, the staff manager and employee could discuss a temporary or permanent reduction in working hours if that is appropriate for the individual and the role.

7. Staff with caring responsibilities

- 7.1. Managers will need to discuss the working arrangements with their staff who have caring responsibilities. Managers will need to be flexible around this and be mindful that some staff may not yet have access to the same childcare/schooling for their children or care for other dependants that they had before COVID-19.
- 7.2. As and when childcare, schools and other care providers re-open, staff are expected to resume their use of these services where possible. If staff have any concerns about this, they should discuss with their line manager as soon as possible.
- 7.3. Refer to [Carers' Leave for Staff Who Have Increased Caring Responsibilities](#) for further information and guidance.

8. When working at College premises

- All staff should be aware of the common [symptoms of COVID-19](#):
 - **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
 - **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
 - **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- Staff should continue to take all necessary safety precautions when working on campus even without symptoms, as the virus can be carried asymptotically.
- If **you** have symptoms or have tested positive for coronavirus, you should [self-isolate](#) for at least **10 days**.
- You will need to self-isolate for **10 days** if:
 - someone you live with has symptoms or tested positive
 - someone in your support bubble has symptoms or tested positive

- you have been told by NHS Test and Trace that you have been in contact with someone who has coronavirus
- Please refer to [Policy Changes in response to COVID-19](#) for further information about self-isolation and sickness.
- If a member of staff lives in an area of the UK where restrictions impact their ability to attend work, they should contact their line manager at the earliest opportunity. If staff live in an area of the UK where a local lockdown is applied, it is expected that they work from home where possible. If homeworking is not possible and local lockdown restrictions advise against all but essential travel, the College does not expect staff to travel into their place of work. No pay will be deducted for this absence. Staff will be expected to resume work as soon as the restrictions allow.

In the event of any significant changes that impacts the operation of the College, communication will be sent out to all staff with the necessary advice and guidance.