

On-campus Education: Principles & Practices 2020/21

Principles

1. Our guiding principle is to provide Covid-19 secure spaces for our community of staff and students to engage in world-class educational activities.
2. We will maintain a dialogue with our students and staff to continually improve teaching and learning, align expectations and manage behaviour in 1m+ physically distanced spaces, seeking feedback throughout and adapting provision accordingly. Group sizes will be kept under review as part of a staggered start to term to assist planning, especially for Term 2.
3. Pedagogical decision making is encouraged at the module, departmental and College levels. To achieve this, Departmental Teaching and Learning Norms are to be referenced alongside the safety information outlined below in all decision making regarding the provision of teaching activity to be either on campus or online.
4. All teaching staff will be provided with clear information on the safe use of all teaching spaces, including specialist spaces that will be individually risk assessed. Information will include:
 - a. Departmental Teaching and Learning Norms
 - b. Safe Teaching guidance document from H&S for general teaching spaces
 - c. Individualised risk assessments for specialist spaces (e.g. labs).
 - d. Our Safe Community Charter
 - e. SharePoint site containing detailed safety information for every teaching space
5. Following the application of safety mitigations, where pedagogical queries arise in relation to the realisation of departmental norms:
 - a. Staff are to contact their Director of Education and Head of Department to discuss alternative arrangements or to gain further guidance on the norms.
 - b. Additional pedagogical guidance and support can be sought from Education Executive via College ADEs.
 - c. Safety guidance must be adhered to at all times.
6. In timetabling on-campus activities, we are prioritising the timetabling of those activities that require specialist facilities (labs, performance spaces, etc.) and will ensure that for these activities, all students and staff are able to enter and exit with dignity.
7. Where an activity occurs on campus, there must be an alternative online activity, providing an equivalent learning opportunity. This may include a recording, organisation of students into online and on-campus groups, a repeat seminar, live-streaming, and so forth.

Practices (please also refer to the Safe Teaching Guidance)

8. Tasks in the teaching session that incur touch points (e.g. rock handling, use of products) should be risk assessed so that safe ways of carrying out the tasks can be set in advance.
9. Academic staff are to be provided with a “teaching pack” of equipment to avoid sharing items with others.
10. Rooms will either be laid out in front facing rows for groups >12 or in Horseshoe or Boardroom style for seminars <12. Layout diagrams will be provided.
11. When using lecture theatres, seating will be staggered on each row and seating will be marked up to indicate where to sit at a safe distance.
12. Teaching spaces are to be used for timetabled sessions only and are not available for use as study spaces between teaching sessions.

Responsibilities of staff

13. All teaching staff are to wipe down the lectern, keyboard and chairs that they come into contact with before the teaching session.
14. In order to allow for sufficient ventilation in teaching spaces all teaching staff are asked to keep the windows open. In rooms with non-mechanical ventilation (signified by instructions on the windows), please keep windows open to at least 15cm. Where this is not possible, please open windows to their maximum capacity.
15. All teaching staff are to sanitise their hands before and after handling all AV and technical equipment.
16. All teaching staff are to prompt students to make note of their seat number, room number and building name to assist track and trace by PHE.
17. Where possible, academic staff are to be at a 2m safe distance at all times, however any personal support offered to students can be done by maintaining the 1m distance for a maximum of 5 minutes per person. Ensure no skin to skin contact and no sharing of touchpoints.
18. All teaching academics will have access to a face visor and three face coverings, one of which should be worn if/when moving out of the marked 2m teaching zone which is identified in every teaching space. Academic colleagues can of course choose to wear the face covering /

visor at all times during teaching. In other places, face coverings will be required as part of the local risk assessment for the location or activity, if this is the case there will be clear signage and teaching staff may be reminded to wear a face covering by local staff.

19. In consultation with affected students, teaching staff are asked to please consider best placement options for those with hearing, vision or mobility impairments.
20. All staff are requested to show compassion to those who may need some extra time and/or support entering, settling into and exiting teaching spaces.
21. All teaching staff are to ensure that the windows are closed at the end of the day by the last person to teach in the space.

Responsibilities of students

22. All students are expected to wear a face covering, unless they have an exemption.
23. All students to maintain 1m+ social distancing from each other. (Please see Appendix A for tips on communicating in socially distanced spaces).
24. All students are requested to show compassion to those who may need some extra time and/or support entering, settling into and exiting teaching spaces.
25. All students to wipe down desk space and chairs before the teaching session.
26. Having taken a seat, all students are to comply with the prompt by the member of teaching staff to scan the QR code on their desk with their phone, so this information can be used for contact tracing if necessary. If they don't have their phone or are not sitting at a desk, students should make a note of their location in the room.
27. Every session to commence with a COVID secure guideline slide as a reminder of how to remain at a safe distance and what rules to observe.

Good Communicating While Wearing Face coverings/visors and Social Distancing

The University has recommended that staff and students wear face coverings or visors and follow social distancing guidelines to minimise the transmission of Covid19.

This presents some new challenges and can inhibit clear communication. This can be a problem for everybody, but especially people with difficulty speaking, hearing or interpreting the intended meaning of speech without visual cues.

How face coverings and masks can make it harder to communicate:

Speech understanding is in two ways. By covering the mouth they restrict visual speech cues and:

1. alter the acoustic properties of speech (some masks can lead to a 30% decrease in audibility for someone with normal hearing).
2. reduce the ability to read lips and see facial expressions.
3. speaking with a mask can be harder for people with communication problems, such as aphasia or voice problems.

How physical distancing can make it harder to communicate

The recommended minimal distance between people is 2 meters, which is approximately twice the distance of many normal conversations. As a result, the speech signal already reduced, making an already difficult conversation even more challenging.

1. Speech can sound quieter because sound levels drop with distance.
2. Focusing attention on speech can be harder at a distance with background sounds in the environment.
3. It's not possible to get closer, or use other similar strategies, to help fix a communication breakdown.
4. It's more difficult to see visual cues, such as facial expression and speakers' lips, at a distance.

Tips for communicating while wearing a mask or socially distancing

- Make sure you have the attention of the full group before beginning.
- If you're talking with someone new/a new group, ask if there's anything you can do to make communication easier.
- Always face the people you are talking to.
- Communicate in good lighting, making sure your face is lit.
- Speak slightly louder but naturally. Do not shout or over-enunciate – talking very loudly is not sustainable and often distorts the quality of speech.
- Speak at a normal or slightly slower pace.
- Allow a little more space between your words to enable listeners to better follow you.
- Rephrase rather than repeat words that were not understood.
- Use your hands and your body language.
- Frequently check for understanding from the group; where you have not been heard or understood, try saying it in a different way or write it down.
- Use a different communication method like a pen and paper or smartphone with speech-to-text recognition if needed. But remember that speech to text functions on smart phones are not full proof and be ready to clarify words or phrases that don't seem to make sense.