

Restricted Access Guidelines

1. Priority access should be facilitated in line with the 'Principles for Access' document which can be found on the Research Business Continuity Team page on the RSS website.
2. National guidelines must be adhered to within all buildings. Currently guidelines have been issued by the Government ([Return to Work Safely Protocol](#)), NSAI, HSE and HPSC but other national guidelines may be made available in due course.
3. Use of re-opened buildings should be restricted to essential work that cannot be conducted remotely. All other work including meetings should continue be conducted remotely via Teams etc. Use of write-up areas should be minimised.
4. A letter of authorisation must be secured from Head of College and VPRI to enable access to UCC buildings.
 - a. The following plans and assessments must be completed by local research leadership (Director of RICU or Head of School/Dept) and sent to the relevant Head of College (HoC), and Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI) to apply for the letter of authorisation.
 - i. A COVID-19 Response Plan (including details on density of occupancy). This plan must comply with UCC's [Health and Safety Policy](#), Compliance Checklist / Access Protocol from Safety Officer, and the Government's [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#).
 - ii. A full Risk Assessment must be conducted for all research activities for both Covid-19 public health pandemic risks and for Occupational H&S Risks. Template to be found on the RCBT webpage.
 - b. Once the HoC and VPRI have approved School/Dept/RICU level plan, PIs of individual groups accessing the building should be asked to complete letters of assurance that acknowledge basis of access and commit to adhering to local and national measures in place. The letter template can be found on the RCBT page.
 - c. Names of researchers who will be accessing the building along with a timetable for access to be supplied to HoC to enable letters of authorisation to be issued.
 - d. Researchers must have a copy of the letter of authorisation with them at all times.
5. Local research leadership must put the following measures in place before allowing access to a building, School/Dept or RICU. Plans must adhere to all Fire and Occupational H&S Regulations and emergency preparedness and should be discussed with the Health & Safety Office and Buildings and Estates in advance. The unit's Safety Statement should be updated in the context of the COVID-19 social distancing requirements and the impact on the work environment, including limited occupancy and the impact on safety and the ability to deal with an incident.
 - a. The person responsible for Health and Safety of the unit will have responsibility for overseeing access, monitoring enforcement of measures and will be the contact point for any queries.
 - b. Occupancy levels should comply with national social distancing guidelines. Maximum occupancy of individual spaces should be determined and clearly displayed on the door to that space. The 2-metre rule should be adhered to when operating normally within a space.
 - c. Access to the space should be recorded electronically. The use of pens and paper for sign-in must be avoided.
 - d. Buildings should be divided into zones with personnel allocated to work within each zone. Movement between zones should be minimised and controlled at all times.

- e. If necessary, a rota or booking system should be put in place to ensure efficient use of space. Time should be allowed between shifts/bookings to minimise interaction between staff.
 - f. Separate entry and exit points to the relevant building, School/Dept or RICU should be identified and clearly marked where practicable. Local research leadership should consult with Buildings and Estates on this matter.
 - g. If additional PPE equipment is required due to the nature of the research activity, this needs to be acquired at local level. Where additional PPE is not required, national guidelines should be adhered to.
 - h. A system should be put in place for the delivery of goods that restricts social contact. All deliveries should be by appointment only within a restricted time frame. Handling of delivered goods by staff should be delayed where possible.
 - i. A system should be put in place to ensure maintenance of equipment and monitoring of health and safety regulations. Where possible offsite monitoring should be facilitated.
6. These measures should be directly communicated to researchers who are granted priority access by local research leadership. Note that the Government's [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) requires that induction training is put in place for all employees returning to the work place.
7. It must be clearly communicated to all staff entering campus that **they need to stay at home if demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19**. Note that the Government's [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) requires that employers must issue a pre-return to work form for workers to complete at least 3 days in advance of the return to work to seek confirmation that the worker, to the best of their knowledge, has no symptoms of COVID-19 and also confirm that the worker is not self-isolating or awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test. For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the [HSE Website](#).
8. The following general protocols should be put in place in all buildings before access is permitted:
- a. Sanitising stations should be set up at entry and exit points. Local research leadership should consult with Buildings and Estates on this matter.
 - b. Lone working within research groups is forbidden.
 - c. Sharing of equipment/desk space should be discouraged.
 - d. Staff should regularly sanitise their workspace and equipment. This should be clearly communicated, and necessary supplies made available.
 - e. Restrict access to shared social spaces e.g. kitchen/canteen. Stagger access and ensure social distancing is adhered to by removing chairs/tables where necessary. Provide hand-sanitising facilities in the space. Encourage staff to bring in their own lunch. Consumption of food and water within labs is strictly forbidden.
 - f. Staff are encouraged to stay within one building for the duration of their access.
 - g. Encourage single occupancy of lifts, stairwells and other confined spaces where possible using posters and floor markings.
 - h. Door handles should be sanitised regularly throughout the day. B&E will have responsibility for this in public areas. Staff will be responsible within their own labs/research spaces.
 - i. Consideration should be given to separate entry and exit points where practicable. Entry/exit points plus one-way traffic flow should be indicated using floor markings and posters. A visual reminder of the 2-metre rule should be displayed at the

entrance to all buildings. Local research leadership should consult with Buildings and Estates on this matter.

- j. Posters should be clearly displayed throughout all open buildings that highlight guidelines on social distancing and hygiene protocol. Care should be taken to display these posters at sanitising stations. HSE approved posters can be found [here](#). Buildings & Estates also have posters available.
- k. General access to buildings and cleaning of shared areas should be discussed with Buildings and Estates.
- l. As per the Government's [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#), each research facility must put in place a response plan for dealing with suspected cases of COVID-19. Please see appendix below for further information.

All protocols and compliance plans must adhere to UCC [Health and Safety Policy](#), Compliance Checklist / Access Protocol and the Government's [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#).

Appendix 1

DRAFT: Preparing for and Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 in the University

Background

On 01st May the Government published the “[Roadmap for Re-opening Society & Business](#)” which sets out how the COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted. Subsequently, on 09th May they published the “[Return to Work Safely Protocol](#)” which supports “employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace when the economy begins to slowly open up”.

Significant work is underway through the Campus Business Continuity Team, the Research Business Continuity Team and the Academic Leadership Forum to safely restart activity on campus in a measured and phased way in line with the :

- [Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business](#) (1st May 2020)
- [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) (9th May 2020).

This Standard Operating Procedure follows the recommendations in the [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) as to how to prepare for and deal with a suspected case of COVID-19 at work.

Developing a Response Plan

Prior to an activity restarting on campus, the Head of School/Department/Research Centre must put in place a response plan, in advance, for dealing with a suspected case that may arise during the course of the activity. The following steps, based on the [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) , outline the steps involved in developing a response plan:

The Head of School/Department/Research Centre must:

1. include a defined response structure that identifies the team(s) responsible for responding to a suspected case in their COVID-19 response plan.
2. appoint an appropriate manager(s) for dealing with suspected cases.
3. allocate staff members to be part of the response team and train them in what actions to take.
4. consult with Buildings and Estates to identify a designated isolation area(s) in advance of any activities restarting on campus. The designated area should preferably be one with a door that can be closed. The designated area and the route to the designated area should be easily accessible and as far as is reasonable and practicable should be accessible by people with disabilities. First Aid Rooms or similar may be suitable as isolation areas.
5. take into account the possibility of one or more persons displaying the signs of COVID19 and have additional isolation areas available or another contingency plan for dealing with same.

6. ensure the designated area has the ability to isolate the person behind a closed door.
7. provide as far as is reasonably practicable:
 - ventilation, e.g. fresh air ventilation/ability to open a window
 - tissues,
 - hand sanitiser,
 - disinfectant and/or wipes,
 - gloves, masks,
 - clinical waste bags,
 - pedal-operated, closed bin

Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

While any staff member or student should not attend the University if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, if a person displays symptoms or believes they may have COVID-19 whilst at the University, the line manager and the local response team must:

1. ask the individual if they feel well enough to travel home. If they do, immediately direct them to go home and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
2. facilitate the individual remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor.
3. isolate the individual and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times.
4. provide a mask for the individual if one is available. The individual should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
5. advise the individual to avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
6. advise the individual to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue(s) provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue(s) in the waste bag/bin provided.
7. arrange transport home or to an assessment centre if directed to go there by their GP. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
8. advise the individual not to go to their GP's surgery or any pharmacy or hospital.
9. advise the individual to continue wearing the face mask until they reach home.
10. carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
11. advise your line manager of the incident.
12. for reasons of patient confidentiality, please do not use e-mail or social media to seek assistance for a colleague who may be displaying symptoms/seeking help.

13. take the individual's work area(s) and isolation area(s) (if used) out of use immediately.
Arrange for appropriate cleaning and disinfection of the area(s). Cleaning and disinfection should not commence until at least one hour after the affected individual(s) has left the building. Contact General Services by phone on 021 4903111 and ask to speak with a Duty Officer to arrange cleaning.
14. inform student health of the incident on 4902311.
15. provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE.

Further Information

<https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/>

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_and_checklists/employers-checklist-no-41.pdf