

Social Distancing Guidance; SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19)

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Introduction

This guidance has been produced to outline the University's general procedures in relation to persons returning to the workplace after the Covid-19 lockdown. This document will serve to provide guidelines aimed at minimising the spread of the novel coronavirus on campus.

This guidance exists in addition to all current policies and guidance. In such moments, the temptation from a person's health and safety perspective can be to concentrate solely on the primary focus. It must not be forgotten that all health and safety policies and guidelines must still be followed.

General advice to minimise risk associated with Covid-19 is as follows:

1. If displaying symptoms, you must self-isolate, inform your line manager and book in for a test.
2. Avoid touching your face and wash your hands regularly with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds. Use hand sanitiser where it is not possible to wash your hands.
3. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and dispose of immediately (cough/sneeze into your inner elbow if no tissue is available) followed by washing your hands.
4. Maintain social distancing wherever possible. Where maintaining 2m from others is not possible, wear a face covering in line with both government and university policy and guidance, and minimise the time spent closer than 2m from others.

Before returning to work, it is recommended that staff complete the [Covid-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to assess their vulnerability level. You will need to be logged into Office365 using your University log-in details to access the tool.

Face Coverings

Wearing face coverings is now required at Loughborough University when indoors, except in a few circumstances. These are:

1. If you are exempt from wearing a face covering. If this is the case, you will need to wear a 'face coverings exempt' lanyard so others are aware of this and are able to keep their distance.
2. Where the use of face coverings is not possible (e.g. when eating or drinking). If in these areas and not eating or drinking, you must put your face covering back on.
3. Laboratories, workshops, and similar practical teaching spaces (where a local risk assessment states that they are not required).
4. In offices (including multiple occupancy offices) when working at your desk.
5. In offices/meeting rooms **where social distancing of 2m or more can be reliably maintained.**
6. In block teaching sessions **where social distancing of 2m or more can be reliably maintained.** This will be at the academic's discretion with the agreement of all persons present.
7. Certain, marked, private study areas **where social distancing of 2m or more can be reliably maintained.**
8. When delivering lectures, as a minimum of 2m distancing or additional mitigations (e.g. Perspex screens/face shields) should be in place.
9. University cleaning staff working in empty offices, where social distancing can be maintained.
10. University grounds and gardens staff working outside, where social distancing can be maintained.

Physical distancing, hand washing, and respiratory hygiene are the most important and effective measures we can all adopt to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Therefore, the wearing of facial coverings is an additional safety measure and must not be used as an alternative to any of these other precautions. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, high temperature, loss of smell/taste) you and your household should isolate at home: wearing a face covering does not change this.

This applies to all staff, students, contractors, and visitors to the university.

Further information on the use of face coverings on campus can be found in the University's [Face Coverings Policy](#) and [Face Coverings Guidance](#).

Entering, Exiting, & Moving Around Buildings

One-way systems have been, or are in the process of being, put in place in buildings on campus and must be adhered to. These have been designed to control the flow of persons around areas to reduce the risk of large crowds forming, and to keep everyone safe. Signage has been placed around buildings to highlight the routes to be taken and to give information on the measures you should be taking to keep yourself and the Loughborough community safe. Look out for directional floor arrows and wall signs telling you where to go.

In some areas, two-way systems have been implemented. These are typically in areas where one-way systems are not possible or where corridors or spaces are large enough to facilitate movement in more than one direction (e.g. James France exhibition area). Unless signage specifies otherwise, where two-way systems are in place, you should keep left; if you need to cross a one-way system, ensure the way is clear before doing so. In some cases, maintaining 2m social distancing in these areas may not be possible, however with all persons wearing face coverings and the time in proximity to others being kept to a minimum (e.g. a few seconds to pass someone in a corridor), the risk of transmission is minimal.

In some cases, you may find that a route you would normally use to enter or exit a building is now unavailable, and this may take a little getting used to. Fire exit doors may also have been utilised as exits from buildings or teaching spaces where they would not usually have been used. Entrances and exits to buildings and rooms have been marked out and designed to make moving around buildings, and the wider campus, as safe as possible.

The use of lifts in buildings should be avoided at all times where possible and used only by disabled persons or for the transport of large/heavy/hazardous materials where transport on stairways would not be possible or safe.

Additional hand sanitiser stations have been installed around campus. Please use these regularly to reduce the risk of infection. NHS instructions on how to correctly use hand sanitiser are outlined in Figure 1



Alcohol handrub hand hygiene technique – for visibly clean hands

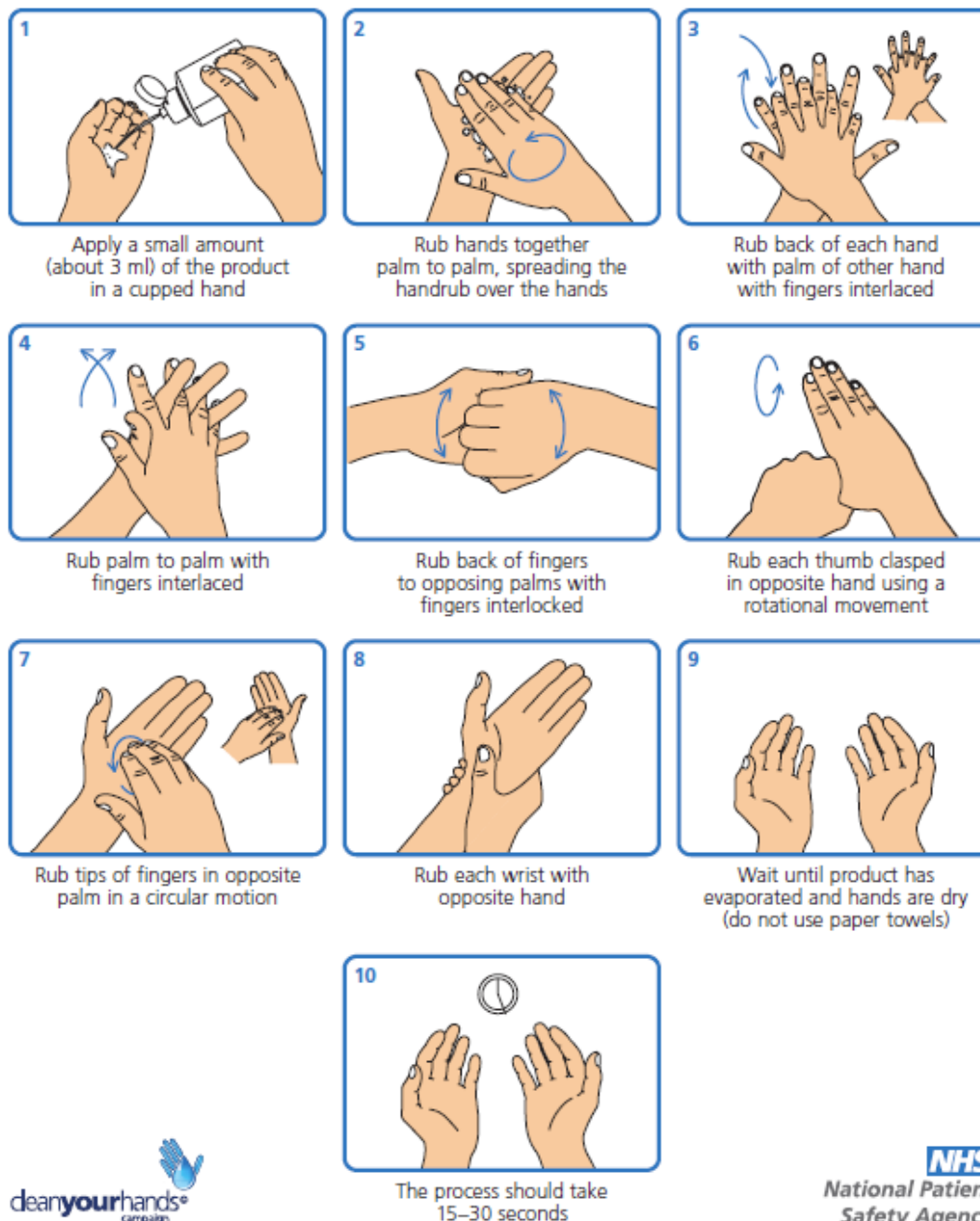


Figure 1. NHS hand sanitiser instructions.

Service Desks

Many departments and teams across campus offer customer facing services e.g. admin receptions, library services, creative and print services etc. Within these areas, appropriate queuing arrangements should be clearly laid out, and customers must adhere to the systems in place; floor markings will be in place to indicate where to stand. At high traffic times, the entry to areas with service desks may be regulated, and you may be asked to wait outdoors until there is space available inside for you to queue.

To ensure good practice, high contact surfaces such as service desks and communal computer equipment should be wiped down frequently. Frequency of cleaning should increase with increased usage but a minimum of twice daily is suggested where possible.

For those working behind the desks and subject to unavoidable face to face contact, the university can provide appropriate shielding. Sizes and shapes will vary greatly for the various points across campus. Staff working in these areas need to measure the size they will need and consider whether free standing or semi-permanent screens are required. The university will not replace damaged furniture or infrastructure where screw holes and alike have been made for fixings. Where screens are in place, please ensure you stay behind these to ensure the safety of persons on both sides.

When measuring the dimensions for a Perspex screen to be made, please ensure that the minimum width of the screen should be no less than 1m across per user sitting behind the screen, and the top of the screen should be no less than 2m from the ground. Once measured, your request needs to be sent to facilities management via [Archibus](#).



Figure 2. Basic Perspex Shield.

Open plan/communal offices

Many staff and researchers work in open offices which may make social distancing difficult to implement under normal practice. In many cases, desks are large enough to allow more than one worker to sit at a bank of desks whilst maintaining social distancing, however this should always be measured before implementation. Screens between workstations may be an option if 2m distancing cannot be achieved and all other options are unsuitable.

Figure 3 shows a typical 4-desk layout; if distances between people are at least 2m, workers may sit diagonally from one another (A&D or B&C) or side by side (A&B or C&D). Sitting opposite (A&C or B&D) should be avoided.

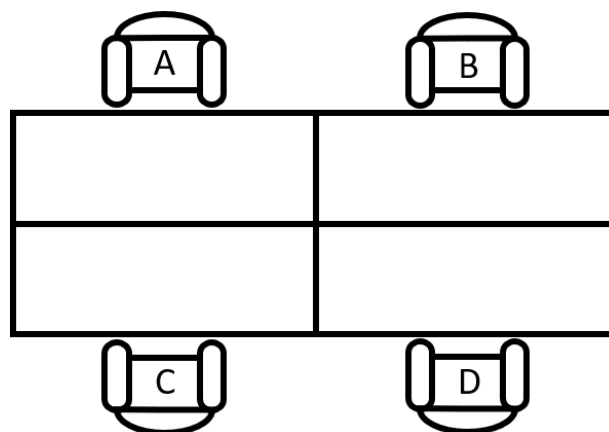


Figure 3. 4-desk seating layout.

Similarly on a 6-desk layout (Figure 4), where distances are greater than 2m, workers could be sat in diagonal seats (A&C&E) or side by side (A&B&C).

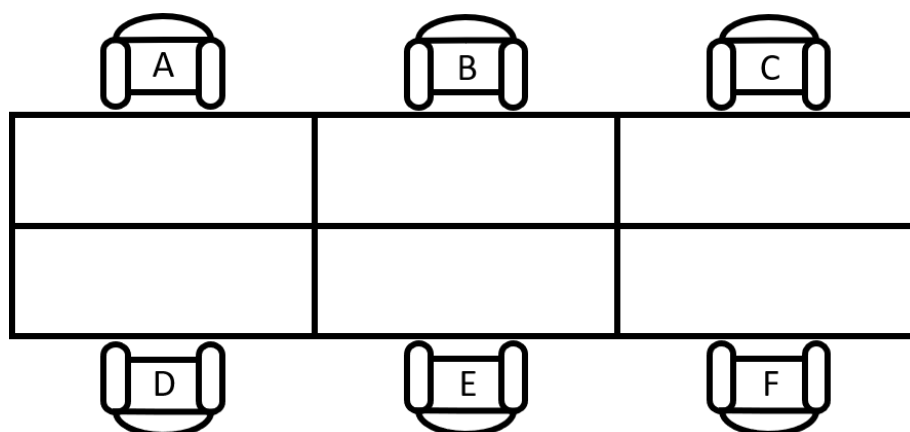


Figure 4. 6-desk seating layout.

In offices where there is ample space to do so, and access to utilities (power and internet connections) are able to be accessed safely, offices may be rearranged as outlined in Figure 5. By turning two workstations (C&D) 180° and spreading out, all workers may be greater than 2m from one another and have the additional precaution of working face-to-back instead of face-to-face. In these scenarios, occupancy is not limited.

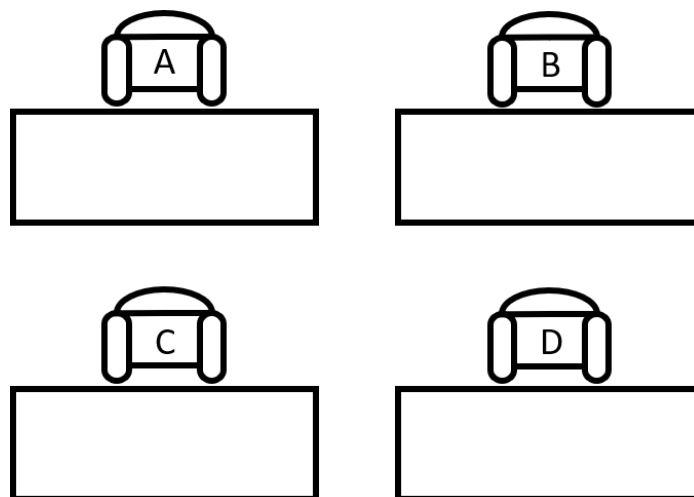


Figure 5. Alternative furniture layout for spacious areas.

Where offices are shared and workers have no option but to hot desk, the workstation should be kept clean and tidy, and cleaned down after use as per the University's [Cleaning IT Equipment Guidance](#) to ensure that the area is safe to use for the next person.

While staff are being encouraged to return to campus, it is likely that rotas may continue to be in effect to reduce the number of persons in an area at any given time and to allow staff to become more comfortable with the systems in place across campus prior to returning to campus full time.

Communal Kitchens

Many buildings on campus have small, communal kitchen areas for use by members of staff and research students. To ensure social distancing measures are adhered to, communal kitchens should operate on a reduced capacity, with the number of persons permitted within the area being limited. Due to the variation in size and layout of communal kitchens across campus, the maximum occupancy of these areas will be set locally. One-way systems may also be in effect within these areas.

Any persons who would fall outside the maximum occupancy of a kitchen area should form a queue in the adjoining corridor, with the start of the queue being set 2m away from the entrance to the kitchen area to allow persons to exit the area whilst maintaining a 2m distance from persons queueing.

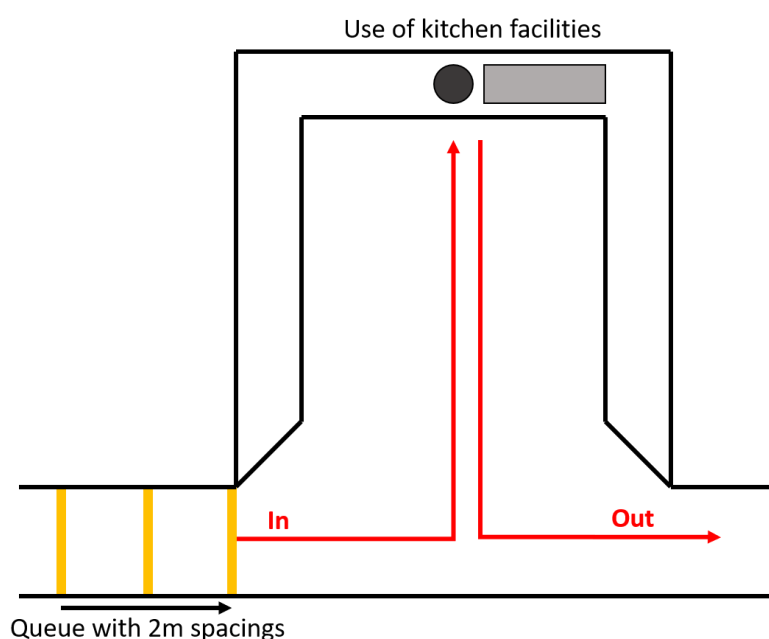


Figure 6. Use of communal kitchen facilities.

It is highly recommended that communal cutlery/mugs etc. should not be used, and personal ones be taken home to be washed, not left in communal areas. Where this is not possible, communal cutlery/mugs etc. should be washed thoroughly using soap and warm water, dried using a paper towel or towel designated for this purpose (not a hand towel), and put away immediately to reduce the risk of transfer of contamination to other persons.

Prior to the handling of communal items in the kitchen, such as kettles and cutlery, all persons should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds in accordance with government guidance to prevent contamination of surfaces (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pm94ChOPw50>).

In addition, consideration should also be given to staggering mealtimes to avoid crowding.

Toilets

Toilet facilities across campus differ greatly, ranging from single, lockable WCs to larger communal facilities. Face coverings are now required in all toilet facilities across campus. In all cases, please respect good hygiene, making a conscious effort to wash your hands effectively. Please see the advice in the university video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pm94ChOPw50>

The official NHS technique illustration is provided below.

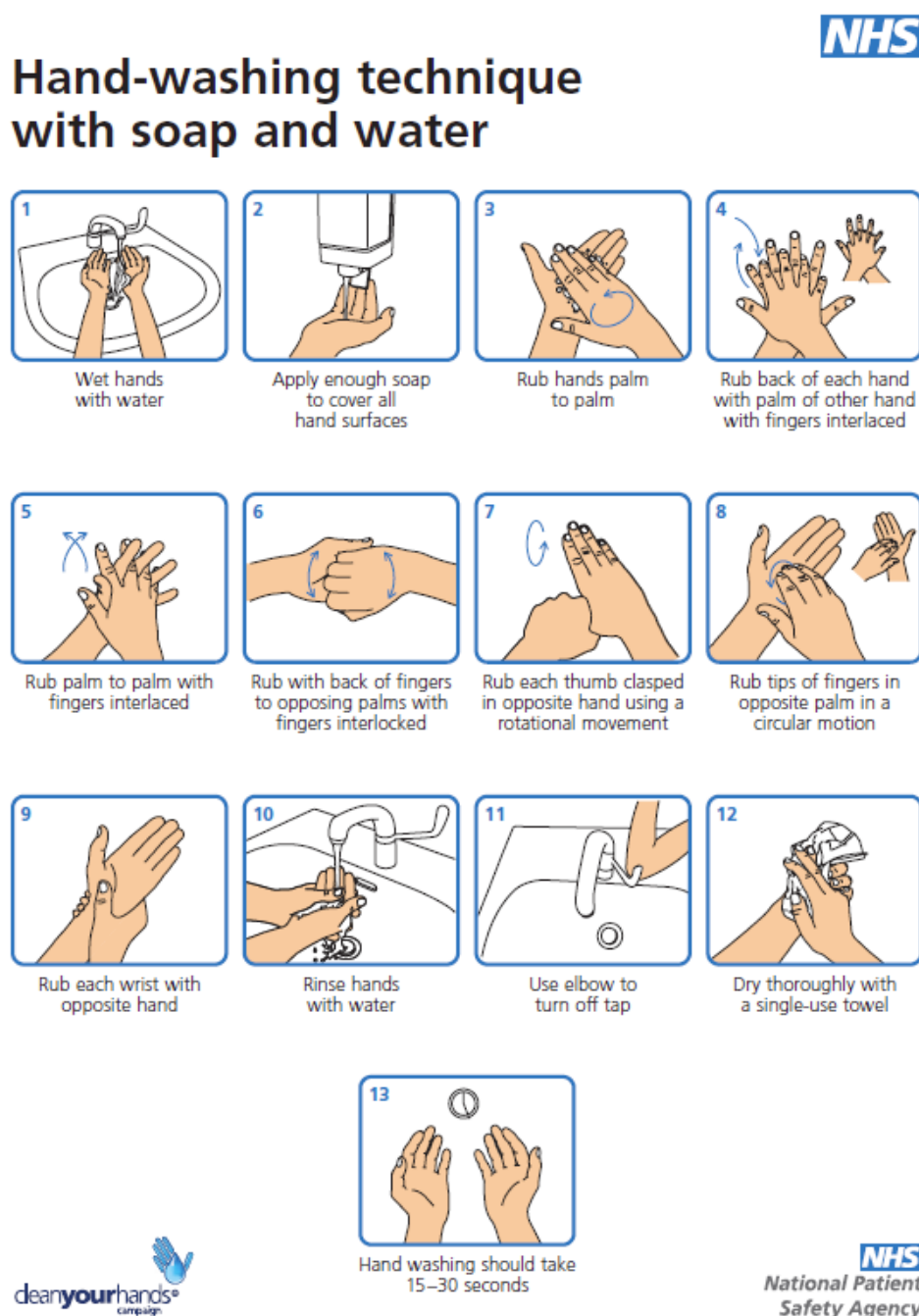


Figure 7. NHS hand washing technique with soap and water.

Single/accessible facilities

In the case of single, lockable facilities, please leave the facility in a respectable condition. If waiting to use such a facility, ensure you stand at least 2m from the door to allow the previous occupant the appropriate space to leave without breaking social distance guidelines.

Communal/multi-occupancy facilities

With the University now requiring face coverings in all indoor public areas, larger toilet facilities across campus are now able to move towards multiple occupancy. If you enter a toilet facility and social distancing cannot be maintained due to a reasonable occupancy having been reached, please wait outside the facility (at least 2m from the doorway) until someone has left before entering.

Laboratories, Workshops, Computer Suites & Studio Spaces

This guidance is in addition to standard Health and Safety guidance; a degree of common sense will be required when undertaking work in laboratories or workshops. For example, if a spillage of a toxic chemical in a lab resulted in the blockage of a designated exit route of a one-way system outlined in this guidance, persons should not attempt to cross the spill to evacuate the area. The use of another, non-designated route would be permissible as the risk associated with the spill would likely be higher than that of using a non-designated route. An attempt should still be made however, to ensure a 2m distance between persons evacuating by the new route.

With the high variation in laboratories, workshops, computer suites and studios across campus, a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not appropriate. Most of the research spaces on campus have reopened in some capacity and the safe use of these spaces will have been outlined in a local risk assessment and checked by the University Health & Safety Service.

Spaces used for teaching are in the process of reopening and will be subject to local risk assessments that will be checked by the University Health & Safety Service. Maximum safe occupancies for these areas will be determined on a case-by case basis in accordance with social distancing guidelines, timetabling requirements, and additional mitigations that may be implemented to allow for safe working (e.g. availability of LEV, installation of Perspex screens, appropriate PPE and RPE etc.).

Certain considerations are to be made with regards to bringing students back to PLEs:

- The movement of people in, out and around of buildings. This may require staggering start/finish times and/or using alternative to access areas or allocating certain building entrances to specific areas of buildings.
- Movement of staff and students within the area.
- The degree of social distancing in place (2m, or 1m+ where 2m cannot be implemented) and how this may impact the number of students that can practically be within a space.
- Pinch points within teaching spaces (e.g. around pieces of equipment that all students will need to use).

One-way systems should be in place within teaching areas where necessary to control the movement, and to ensure the safety, of all persons within the areas.

Further information on the use of practical teaching spaces can be found on the University's [Practical Teaching Guidance](#).

Lecture Theatres and Seminar Rooms

Signage (Figure 8) will be on the entrance to each teaching space. Where a set of doors is the only viable entry and exit point for a room, this signage will be the only sign needed. The interiors of lecture theatres do not need to have large numbers of signage placed around the room.



Figure 8. Teaching Room Signage.

Where there is an alternative exit for a teaching room (e.g. a fire exit that is safe for regular, general use) these can be utilised as exits which reduces the risk of large groups of students forming in corridors and moving in opposite directions. Entrance and exit signage should be employed on doors so this is clear and should also be noted on lectern instructions. Where fire exits are used as exits from teaching rooms and buildings, you may need to ask campus security to deactivate intruder alarms. Requests should be by email, so security have a written record of what has been disabled. Do not attempt to deactivate them yourself even if you know how to.

Sensible one-way systems should be put in place in corridors around teaching spaces to prevent the build-up of large groups of students; consider usual entry points to both buildings and rooms, and how the system for an individual room may impact the wider area. If it is well known how students typically move around areas, larger open spaces may be able to function safely without a one-way system (e.g. James France exhibition area).

In tiered lecture theatres, seats will be marked out as shown in Figure 9. Desks should bear a green “Please sit here” sticker (Figure 10). In irregularly shaped rooms, a layout as close to that shown in should be aimed for, taking into account students leaning forwards or backwards. An example is shown in Figure 11.

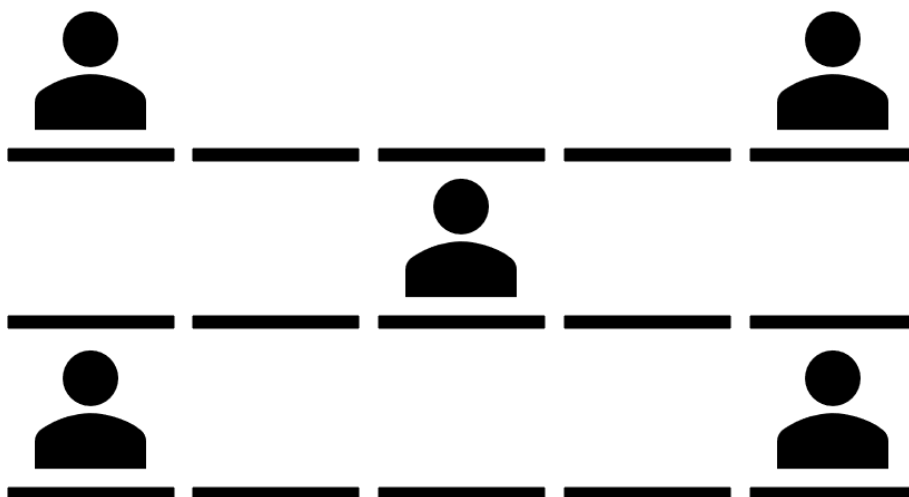


Figure 9. Tiered lecture room spacing.



Figure 10. Seat Sticker .



Figure 11. Example Room.

In flat teaching rooms (e.g. seminar spaces), furniture will be arranged in an exam hall style grid pattern unless a specific local risk assessment is in place (e.g. where group work is unavoidable) and has been agreed upon with the University's Health & Safety Service.

An area will be marked out around lecterns which indicates a minimum of 2m distance from where lecturers will be stood. This spot will be marked with the footprints floor signage, and will typically be positioned centrally behind the lectern.

Connect & Protect Service

The University is actively working to see how best it can support both the NHS and our Public Health colleagues. As part of this, the University will have a 'Connect & Protect' service for contact tracing within the University. This will support the NHS Test and Trace program.

More information will be available on the University's Connect & Protect service soon.

Self-Isolation FAQ (Staff)

- **I have been advised by the UK's Track & Trace service that I need to self-isolate, what do I need to do?**
 - You must self-isolate as required and inform your line manager that you are isolating. If you are well enough, you should work remotely to the best of your abilities and will be deemed not to be taking sick leave.

- **I have started displaying symptoms of Covid-19, what do I need to do?**
 - You should self-isolate immediately. Get tested as soon as possible, contact the University's Connect & Protect service, and inform your line manager that you are self-isolating. If you feel well, you should work remotely to the best of your abilities. If you are ill and unable to work, you should report your sickness normally.

- **I live with, or have had close contact with, someone who is displaying symptoms of Covid-19, what do I need to do?**
 - You should self-isolate immediately and not return to campus until the individual has been tested and had results back. Close contact is defined [here](#). During this period, you should work remotely to the best of your abilities. There is no need for anyone you have had contact with to self-isolate, unless they have had close contact with the same individual.

If the test comes back negative, you may return to work on campus. If their test comes back positive, you must continue to self-isolate for the remainder of the 14-day period which started when the symptoms of the person you live with started. Do not book a test and you do not need to notify the University's Connect & Protect service unless you begin to display symptoms yourself.

If you do develop symptoms in this 14-day period, you must self-isolate for 10 days from when you started showing symptoms. Book a test and contact the University's Connect & Protect service. Inform your line manager that you are having to self-isolate for an additional period. If you feel well, you should continue to work remotely to the best of your abilities. If you are ill, you need to report your sickness normally.

- **I live with, or have had close contact with, someone who has been told to self-isolate, but they aren't displaying symptoms of Covid-19. What do I do?**
 - You should come to work as normal. If the person who was told to self-isolate starts to display symptoms you should self-isolate until the person has had a test and had results back, and follow the procedure outlined above.

- **I have unexpected caring responsibilities as a result of a self-isolation occurrence, what should I do?**
 - We know that colleagues will do the best they can to balance their work commitments with caring responsibilities, and will seek to make arrangements that allow them to continue work to the best of their abilities, whilst supporting those they care for. Prioritise teaching or student facing activities where possible and have a conversation with your line manager on how this can be best achieved.