

Maynooth University Covid-19 Return to Campus Policy

14 March 2022

Polasaí um Fhilleadh ar Champas de chuid Ollscoil Mhá Nuad le linn Covid-19

14 Márta 2022

This policy is subject to change in response to the changing situation, Government decisions, and public health advice.

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Relevant Information

Publication	Link
Maynooth University Covid-19 Guidance Webpage	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/coronavirus
Transitional Protocol: Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of Covid-19	https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/63ba6-transitional-protocol-good-practice-guidance-for-continuing-to-prevent-the-spread-of-covid-19/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/
HSE Covid-19 Guidance	https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/?source=banner-www
HSA Covid-19 Guidance	https://www.hsa.ie/enq/topics/covid-19_coronavirus_information_and_resources/
DPER Information for Civil and Public Servants	https://www.gov.ie/en/news/092fff-update-on-working-arrangements-and-leave-associated-with-covid-19-fo/
Government's Covid-19 Webpage	https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/c36c85-covid-19-coronavirus/
National Standards Authority of Ireland Workplace Protection and Improvement Guide	COVID-19 Workplace/Retail Protection and Improvement Guides - Galway City Community Network
MU Covid-19 Operational Response Plan	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/coronavirus/staff/return
A safe return to on-site further and higher education and research	https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/bcd91-a-safe-return-to-on-site-further-and-higher-education-and-research/

1. Purpose¹

From 24 January 2022, the requirement to work from home unless necessary to attend the workplace in person ended. This means a phased return to physical attendance on Campus can commence. The purpose of this policy is to set out the processes involved in the phased return and to assist all employees to return to their place of work on campus in a safe manner.

This policy will provide direction and guidance to University employees on the steps being put in place to give effect to the following documents:

- [Transitional Protocol: Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19](#);
- [Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19 in relation to working arrangements and temporary assignments across the Public Service \(3 February 2022\)](#);
- [Implementation Guidelines for Public Health Measures in Higher Education Institutions](#); and
- [A safe return to on-site further and higher education and research \(30 November 2021\)](#).

This document also needs to be read in conjunction with the 2021/2022 [MU Covid-19 Operational Response Plan](#) which set out the procedural steps of the reopening of Maynooth University.

2. Definitions

Return to Campus

The phrase “return to campus” is the process of University employees returning to their place of work at Maynooth University.

Public Health and Safety Advice

The term “public health advice” shall be understood to mean advice from the HSE, the HSA, the Government and/or its agencies.

Lead Worker Representatives

A Lead Worker Representative (LWR) is a University employee(s) who voluntarily agrees to be appointed to work collaboratively with the University to assist in the implementation of measures and monitor adherence to the measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

¹ This policy will be updated as required and in line with public health advice.

At-Risk Employees

Covid-19 can make anyone seriously ill, but for some people, the risk is higher. The HSE identifies those who may have a higher risk of becoming seriously ill if they contract Covid-19. For further information, please see the following link to the [HSE website – People at Higher Risk](#).

Physical/Social Distancing

The practice of implementing measures to maintain safe distances for preventing the spread of disease.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Equipment used to protect an individual from the risks of Covid-19.

Covid-19 Response Plan

This is a process to identify and isolate employees who develop symptoms of Covid-19 while on campus.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments document the overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation. Departmental risk assessments are available from each Head of Department or on request from return.to.campus@mu.ie.

3. Scope

This policy applies to Maynooth University employees who are comprehended by the scope of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science guidance document dated 15 June 2021 and updated on 30 November 2021.

This policy is subject to change to reflect the latest directions from the University Executive, Government and/or public health advice.

4. Principles

University Responsibility

In implementing this policy, Maynooth University will prioritise the safety and wellbeing of its employees and students at all times. As such, the University will be guided by the latest public health and safety advice.

In keeping with the wider approach in society in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, it is recognised that the successful implementation of this policy can only be done on a cooperative basis with shared responsibility between all members of the University Community.

Flexibility

The University recognises that there can be no certainty in relation to the future trajectory of the disease, and further contingency plans may be necessary. The University will have a contingency plan in place in the event of a more restrictive public health environment.

Personal Responsibility

It is the personal responsibility of all members of the university community to follow the latest public health advice. Employees must also adhere to the provisions of this policy and other University policies.

Failure to adhere to this policy and guidance from the University regarding Covid-19 or public health and safety advice may, in certain circumstances, lead to disciplinary action.

Physical Distancing

The requirement for physical distancing has been removed effective 22 January 2022. The limits on capacity in venues have also been removed. This means that there is no longer a need to limit the numbers in teaching spaces, meeting rooms or at events. The Library can return to normal capacity, and staff meetings can resume on campus. Non-essential events on campus, including book launches, seminars and guest lectures can also resume.

Although the requirement for physical distancing has been removed effective 22 January 2022, public health advice notes that physical distancing continues to be good practice. Therefore, the University will encourage physical distancing wherever possible, such as in meeting rooms or coffee and communal spaces..

Although the new guidelines announced on 21 January 2022 allows for the possibility of larger lectures returning to on-campus teaching, for now, to prevent disruption to both students and staff, class sizes will remain limited to no more than 250 participants.

5. Key Contacts

Query	Department	Contact
Those who consider themselves to be in the very high-risk group (as set out by the HSE Guidelines).	Human Resources	humanresources@mu.ie
For risk assessments, or any issues relating to infrastructure, training, guidelines or the return to campus.	Return to Campus Office	return.to.campus@mu.ie
Suspected/confirmed cases of Covid-19.	Covid Response Team	covid.response@mu.ie or call extension 7999.
Local queries connected to the implementation and adherence of Covid-19 control measures.	Covid Response Team Lead Worker Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • covid.response@mu.ie • Peter Hodson - peter.hodson@mu.ie • Anne-Marie Parkes - annmarie.parkes@mu.ie • Elaine Bean - elaine.bean@mu.ie • Austin Power - ap.power@mu.ie • Ria Walsh - ria.walsh@mu.ie • John Maloco - john.maloco@mu.ie • Amanda Bent - amanda.bent@mu.ie • Catherine Heslin -catherine.Heslin@mu.ie • Paul Davis - paul.davis@mu.ie • Sue Crofton - sue.crofton@mu.ie • Gemma Brazil - gemma.brazil@mu.ie • Helen Kirrane - helen.kirrane@mu.ie • Caroline Edwards - caroline.edwards@mu.ie
Car Parking Permits	Traffic Management Office	parking@mu.ie
Staff ID Cards/MyCard	Maynooth MyCard	mycard.staff@mu.ie dooraccess@mu.ie

6. Process of Returning to Campus

An employee's return to campus will be informed by the Government's [Transitional Protocol: Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of Covid-19](#).

Employees can access the campus with no specific permission required. Employees are no longer required to complete the return to campus form. (see **Appendix 1**).

IT Advice

IT Services has created a webpage to provide staff with IT advice on the steps they should take before and during their return to campus. This webpage is available here <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/it-services/staff/it-advice-for-rtc>.

Departmental Risk Assessments

Departmental risk assessments are being updated to reflect the new Government advice that was issued on 21 January 2022. These are available from each Head of Department or on request from return.to.campus@mu.ie.

Work Pods/Rota

The requirements to adopt pods of 6 for indoor events have been removed, and workplace pods/rotas are no longer required.

7. Ventilation

There are two types of ventilation systems in operation in Maynooth University; mechanical and natural ventilation. Some workspaces operate a combined model of both mechanical and natural ventilation. All shared teaching spaces have been reviewed and assessed by Campus Services as to the type and extent of ventilation present.

Mechanical Ventilation

Mechanical ventilation supplies and exhausts air into and out of a space using an air handling system. In general, larger teaching spaces, labs, workshops, toilets and lecture theatres are mechanically ventilated, with supply and/or extract grilles fitted to the ceiling or walls.

Mechanical ventilation systems on campus have been serviced and have been set to run at a higher rate (i.e., introduce more fresh air than usual) for longer periods than would normally be the case, both starting earlier in the day and running for longer periods in the evening where appropriate. Any systems with the potential for air recirculation between spaces have been set up to provide fresh air supply only (i.e., 100% of supply air is drawn from outside of the building).

Mechanical ventilation systems are monitored using the campus Building Management System. This system monitors the operation of ventilation systems to ensure that they are functioning properly.

Natural Ventilation

Natural ventilation is the introduction of fresh air into a space via an open window (and, in some cases, an open door). This type of ventilation is generally found in smaller teaching spaces, office/workspaces, etc.

Natural ventilation depends on the use of windows; Campus Services are reviewing naturally ventilated teaching spaces to ensure that there are openable windows present

in every such space and that such windows are working correctly in order to provide adequate ventilation.

Carbon Dioxide (CO2) monitors

The CO2 level is an indicator of the rate of ventilation/air exchange from a space. CO2 monitors are built into the more modern buildings and assist in the management of mechanically ventilated or automatically ventilated spaces.

In the naturally ventilated teaching spaces CO2 monitors are being installed in the rooms which will be centrally monitored. These monitors can provide a useful general indication that areas/rooms may not be adequately ventilated and enable occupants to become familiar with the impact of activities, outdoor weather and window openings on levels of good ventilation within a room. It is important to keep windows open in these rooms.

While ventilation reduces the amount of virus in the air and the aerosol risk, it will have minimal impact on droplet transmission where people are within 2 metres of each other, or contact transmission (touching surfaces), which is why it is not a standalone measure and continued adherence to other Public Health advice is essential. Employees should avoid the use of ceiling-mounted, desk and portable fans where possible as they may only recirculate the virus droplets rather than remove them.

8. Maintaining a Blended Working Arrangement

With effect from Monday 24 January 2022, the public health advice is that a phased return to the workplace can begin.

Most employees have been working under some form of blended working arrangement² since 21 September 2021, as agreed with their Heads of Department. Staff can continue to operate under that arrangement for the moment. However, staff who wish to return to the office immediately can do so.

Please note, the rules on whole-time remote working³ remain in place, and whole-time remote working will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Where a member of staff requests to work remotely during this period, Heads of Department should liaise with Human Resources to discuss these requests.

9. Community Settings

² Blended working is where a member of staff works on campus for part of the week and from home for the other part of the week.

³ Whole-time remote working is where a member of staff works off-campus full time and comes on campus by arrangement.

Employees are strongly encouraged to follow all public health advice and guidelines at all times, including travel advice.

The legal requirement for wearing a face covering on public transport, in taxis, shops, schools and all other indoor public areas has been removed effective 28 February 2022. Public health advice is that face coverings should continue to be worn on public transport and in healthcare settings. This means that it is no longer required to wear face coverings on campus, except when visiting the Student Health Centre. However, to continue protecting the University community, especially those with underlying health conditions, the University still recommends face coverings in lecture theatres, libraries, tutorials, and labs.

Employees, who have yet to be vaccinated, should make themselves aware of and keep up to date with the information in relation to the National Vaccination Programme roll-out.

10. Campus Visitors

The requirement to keep records of attendance for contact tracing purposes has been ended. This means that departments are no longer required to keep a list of contact details for any visitor or contractor that visits their department.

11. On-Campus Meetings

The limits on capacity in venues have been removed. This means that employees no longer need to limit the numbers in meeting rooms, and staff meetings can resume on campus.

12. On-Campus Events

As the limits on capacity in venues have been removed, non-essential events on campus, including book launches, seminars and guest lectures can resume.

13. On-Campus Interviews

As the limits on capacity in venues and physical distancing requirements have been removed, on-campus interviews can resume.

14. Staff kitchens and coffee areas

Staff are asked to take care when using staff kitchens and coffee rooms. In principle, all social distancing requirements have been removed. However, employees are advised to maintain reasonable distance in the staff kitchen and coffee areas.

15. Health Status

University employees must not return to campus if:

- They are showing signs of Covid-19 or have done so in the last 48 hours⁴;
- They have been diagnosed with Covid-19 within the last seven days or are awaiting test results; and/or
- They have been advised to isolate or are in the 'Very High Risk' category and are not vaccinated.

Employees should refer to **Appendix 3** for further information on working arrangements relating to Covid-19.

Employees are reminded of their legal obligations under Section 13 of the [Safety, Health and Welfare Act](#) to comply with all requirements outlined in this policy.

16. Special Leave with Pay (used in lieu of sick leave for Covid-19)

Special leave with pay is used in lieu of sick leave for Covid-19. This arrangement applies to individuals advised to self-isolate because they are displaying symptoms of Covid-19 and/or have received a positive PCR test result for Covid-19, or, in certain circumstances as outlined on the [HSE website](#), an antigen test.

The application of special leave with pay changed on 7 February 2022. The rationale for using special leave with pay continues to be to assist in the prevention of the onward spread of Covid-19 in the work premises. The change is to take account of revised isolation periods and the current public health advice. Special leave with pay for Covid-19 will be applicable for a maximum of 10 consecutive calendar days for all new cases.

If an employee is unable to return to work after 10 consecutive calendar days, they will move to ordinary sick leave arrangements.

Employees must follow the procedures set out in **Appendix 4** in order to avail of special leave with pay.

If any employee has any questions in relation to Covid-19 related absences and special

⁴ See section 18 for information on what to do if symptoms of Covid-19 develop.

leave with pay, they should contact HR at humanresources@mu.ie.

17. Self-Isolation

The most important intervention, after vaccination, and the one most effective in interrupting transmission is to self-isolate and seek a test if any symptoms develop that are suggestive of Covid-19.

Common symptoms of Covid-19 include:

- a fever;
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry;
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties;
- loss or change in sense of smell or taste; –
- runny or blocked nose;
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea;
- aches and pains or tiredness;
- sore throat;
- headache;
- rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes; and/or
- red or irritated eyes.

An individual may not have all of these symptoms, or symptoms may be mild. Symptoms may vary for different age groups or variants of the virus. Employees should contact their GP if they are in doubt regarding any symptoms they have.

Employees must inform their Head of Department or nominee where HSE or medical advice is that they must self-isolate in the first instance.

Subject to the provision of the appropriate HSE/medical certification and completion of the process set out in **Appendix 5**, special leave with pay will be granted by the University when an employee is advised to self-isolate, is displaying symptoms of Covid-19 and/or has received a positive test result.

Special leave with pay does not apply to individuals who are restricting their movements or are self-isolating due to being a close contact of a variant of concern.

18. Covid-19 Diagnosis

Employees must inform the University where they have tested positive for Covid-19. They should contact the Covid Response Team at covid.response@mu.ie in such instances and inform their Head of Department. Subject to the provision of the appropriate HSE/medical certification and completion of the process set out in **Appendix 6**, special leave with pay may be granted by the University. To avail of

Special Leave, employees should contact Human Resources.

19. At-Risk Groups

Covid-19 can make anyone seriously ill, but for some people, the risk is higher. There are two levels of higher risk: (1) high risk and (2) very high risk.

In some cases, certain conditions that were previously said to be very high risk may now place an employee in the high-risk category or the normal risk category. Further to this, an employee's risk categorisation may now have changed due to vaccination and/or history of recent confirmed Covid-19 infection.

More information on the at-risk groups can be found on the [HSE's website](#), and if an employee considers themselves to be in an at-risk group, they should consult that website for guidance.

More information on the process for returning to campus for at-risk groups is set out in **Appendix 7**.

20. Pregnant Employees⁵

All employees are encouraged to get a vaccine to protect themselves from the virus if they are:

- pregnant;
- trying for a baby or might get pregnant in the future; and/or
- breastfeeding.

Research has shown that pregnant women are at no greater risk of contracting infection than their colleagues but may be at greater risk of severe illness because of Covid-19 infection.

Most pregnant women who get the virus get mild to moderate symptoms. They give birth as planned, and the risk of passing on Covid-19 to their baby is low. However, pregnant women are more likely to get very unwell and need treatment in intensive care than a woman who is not pregnant. The virus may also cause complications for their baby. Employees should read the latest HSE advice on this issue here <https://www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/get-the-vaccine/pregnancy/>.

⁵ The University's approach to pregnancy employees is based on the HSE's "Education Sector Guidance on Employees in the Covid-19 Higher Risk Categories, including Pregnant Employees" document available here https://hse.drsteevenslibrary.ie/ld.php?content_id=33695306 (July 2021).

An employee should notify HR as soon as they become aware that they are pregnant so that the relevant supports can be put in place.

Pregnant Employees working on campus.

Prior to 14 weeks gestation, pregnant employees can work on campus unless they fall into the very high-risk category due to comorbidities not related to their pregnancy. In such instances, the employee should not work on campus.

Pregnant employees from 14 weeks gestation, who do not have significant vaccine protection,⁶ and who do not have underlying comorbidities, will be categorised as high risk.

Pregnant employees from 14 weeks gestation, who do not have significant vaccine protection and who have underlying comorbidities, will be referred to Occupational Health to determine if they are either high risk or very high risk.

The risk category of very high-risk pregnant employees who have significant vaccine protection will reduce to high risk.

The risk category of high-risk pregnant employees, who have significant vaccine protection, will reduce to similar risk to the general population.

In summary, if an employee is more than 14 weeks pregnant and are:

- vaccinated, they can work on campus; or
- not vaccinated or have other medical conditions which present a risk, they need to be assessed in line with the provisions of the University's maternity leave policy.

21. Employees with caring or childcare responsibilities or living with a high risk or very high-risk individual⁷

As special leave with pay is not available for an employee who has Covid-19 related caring or childcare responsibilities, or for an employee who is living with a high risk or very high-risk individual, flexible working may be considered on a case-by-case basis, including working from home and/or adjusted hours, based on business needs.

However, an employee who wishes to avail of existing relevant leave entitlements will

⁶ For the purpose of this policy, "significant vaccine protection" is defined in the "Guidance on the impact of vaccination on contact tracing" available here https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/contacttracingguidance/Guidance_impact%20of%20vaccination%20on%20contact%20tracing%20guidance.pdf.

⁷ For the avoidance of doubt, this section, like the rest of this policy, only applies while covid restrictions are in place.

have such requests considered by the University. When considering such an application, the University will take account of the relevant policy on employee absences. All such requests will be considered in line with the business needs of the University, and the welfare and educational needs of University students will take precedence over all such requests.

Employees who live with a very high-risk individual should attend the workplace and should follow the HSE guidelines to protect themselves and to minimise the risk of transmission. The implementation of the Return to Work Safely Protocol and related procedures are intended to minimise the risk of transmission in the workplace.

22. Restricted Movement not including international travel

If an employee needs to restrict their movements, they should follow the process set out in **Appendix 8** and **Appendix 9**.

23. Restricted Movement following Non-Essential Travel Overseas

An employee does not have to quarantine when they return to Ireland, regardless of whether they are vaccinated or not. Employees who are entering Ireland should be aware of the current [Government travel advice](#) and the requirements which are in place on their date of return to Ireland. All passengers arriving in Ireland should now conduct antigen testing, on a daily basis, for a period of five consecutive days commencing on the day of arrival.

Travel Insurance cover is no longer automatic. Prior to undertaking any University-related travel, the Health and Safety Office must be contacted, and confirmation received that insurance cover can be arranged and is in place.

More information on international travel is available on the [University's website](#). Please also see **Appendix 17** for further information on international travel.

24. Contact Tracing

The requirement to keep records of attendance for contact tracing purposes has been ended. This means that signing in, and use of the MU Check In app are no longer required.

25. Mental Health and Wellbeing

The University has in place supports for employees who may be suffering from anxiety or stress during this period. Please see **Appendix 10** for further details of these

supports.

26. Lead Worker Representative

A Lead Worker Representative (LWR) assists in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and assists in the implementation of the procedures identified in the Return to Work Safely Protocol. The LWR have played a key role in the University since the pandemic began. Therefore, the LWR role will be maintained to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the workplace, by promoting the shared responsibility of all employees, for an appropriate transition period. Further details of the LWR are available in **Appendix 11**.

27. Health and Safety Representatives/Committees

Local Health and Safety Representatives and/or Committees have a key role to play in the ongoing implementation of all infection prevention and control measures throughout the University. Further information on the University's Health and Safety Representatives/Committees is available in **Appendix 12**.

28. Covid-19 Response Plan

University employees should not attend work if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. However, in the event of an employee developing the signs and symptoms of Covid-19 while on campus, **Appendix 13** sets out the procedure to be followed.

29. Outbreak of Covid-19

An outbreak of Covid-19 is when two or more cases are linked by time, place or person. The local Departments of Public Health are responsible for managing outbreaks of Covid-19 and bringing the outbreak under control. In order to do this, the Department of Public Health requires continuous and effective communication between the employer, the LWR, employees, and in particular, any workers that were involved in the outbreak. Outbreaks that occur in a single workplace can quickly spread to the wider community if it is not brought under control quickly.

Additional advice on dealing with an outbreak is available from the [HPSC](#) website.

See also **Appendix 6 and 12** for more details on Covid-19 Diagnosis and the Covid-19 Response Plan.

30. Cleaning

Cleaning of work areas, washroom facilities and communal spaces will be conducted at regular intervals. Any high touch/high traffic areas, such as turnstiles, door handles, locker rooms etc., will be cleaned at least twice per day. Washroom and toilet facilities will also be cleaned twice per day.

In cases where a workspace or equipment is shared, individuals will be expected to take an active role in keeping their workspaces clean and ensuring that they clean equipment and workbenches before starting work and at the end of their time at work.

All employees are encouraged to utilise the cleaning products provided to conduct wipe downs of their own work areas regularly.

In general, Campus Services will make provision for the regular cleaning of workplaces. However, in areas with restricted or limited access, such as some research laboratories, cleaning regimes will have to be implemented by the occupants.

31. Hand, Respiratory and General Hygiene

Employees should ensure that they are familiar with and follow hand, respiratory and general hygiene guidance and advice. More details on hand, respiratory and general hygiene are set out in **Appendix 14**.

32. Changing Work Practices

Due to the impact of Covid-19, work practices may need to be changed to facilitate a safe and effective return to campus. More information on this topic can be found in **Appendix 15**.

33. Personal Protective Equipment

When PPE is used correctly, it can help prevent some exposures to Covid-19. However, PPE should never take the place of other preventative measures such as the measures mentioned in this policy. Examples of PPE include gloves, goggles, and face shields. Details of relevant PPE can be found in **Appendix 15**.

34. First Aid

It may not be possible to maintain a 1-metre distance when first aid is required. Employees who are first responders must attend training for an update on infection

prevention and control principles. This training will include hand hygiene and appropriate use of personal protective equipment when delivering first aid.

35. Vaccinations

Vaccination offers excellent protection against infection. The best available evidence suggests that if an individual is vaccinated, their risk of becoming infected is perhaps 20% of what it was prior to vaccination, and their risk of becoming seriously ill is about 5% of what it was prior to vaccination. Furthermore, where a vaccinated person does become infected, the evidence is that they are only half as likely to transmit the virus. The very high levels of vaccination that have been achieved in the community mean that the risk of anyone becoming infected or ill is very much reduced. However, the risk is not eliminated, and each individual will need, for some time to come, to observe basic hygiene measures that further limit the risk of transmission.

As such, it is strongly recommended that all employees get vaccinated unless advised otherwise by their doctor. However, this is a personal decision, and the University does not oblige anyone to get vaccinated.

A 'booster dose' is the extra dose of Covid-19 vaccine used to give better protection to people who have already had their first round of Covid-19 vaccination. The booster dose should be given 3 months (at least 90 days) after the first round of Covid-19 vaccination.

If an employee has had Covid-19 since they were vaccinated, they are encouraged to get their booster dose at least 3 months after their positive test result.

Further details on vaccinations can be found in **Appendix 16**.

36. Antigen tests

The University is offering 3 free antigen tests to employees. The tests can be picked up from the Student Helpdesk in the John Hume Building, opposite the main entrance. Employees should remember to bring their staff card.

Employees should refer to the [HSE website](#) for details on who should book a Covid-19 test. If an employee takes an antigen test, and it is positive, the employee should register the positive test with the HSE and self-isolate for 7 days. If the antigen test is negative, the employee should self-isolate until 48 hours symptom-free.

When using antigen tests, general public health advice regarding handwashing, wearing face coverings, respiratory etiquette, and ventilation must be adhered to in full. In addition, if an employee is symptomatic and receives a negative antigen test,

they must still self-isolate and not attend campus until they are symptom-free for 48 hours.

37. What is open on Campus?

The catering facilities on campus are in operation. The requirement for an EU Digital Covid cert for entry to venues has been removed. This means that checking of EU Digital Covid certs has ended in catering venues.

The [coronavirus webpage](#) for staff contains further information and advice.

38. Roles and responsibilities

All Employees

- Make themselves aware of their obligations under this policy and public health guidelines;
- Discuss their return to campus with their Head of Department;
- Ensure that they do not come on campus if they are unwell or have been advised to self-isolate;
- Be aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and know when to self-isolate;
- Follow the public health advice regarding self-isolation, restricting movement, testing and what to do if identified as a close contact;
- Report to their manager immediately if any symptoms develop during work;
- Inform their Head of Department if there has been a change in their circumstances since returning to campus;
- Make sure their contact details on ESS are up to date;
- Cooperate with any Public Health personnel and the University for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their workplace;
- Cooperate with any testing as advised by public health and put in place by the University in accordance with this advice;
- Be proactive in identifying how their roles can be performed effectively in their new working environment; and
- Report any problems, defects or areas of noncompliance to the Lead Worker Representative.

Heads of Department or nominee

- Make themselves aware of their obligations under this policy and public health guidelines;
- Promote awareness of this policy and relevant guidelines within their Departments;

- Have open discussions with employees to resolve and address any concerns that may arise;
- To disseminate the risk assessment with employees in their department and to advise Campus Services if the work activities of the department have changed since the original assessment was carried out; and
- Continue to be responsible for the allocation of teaching and other duties, in line with University requirements.

Human Resources

- Make themselves aware of their obligations under this policy and public health guidelines;
- Provide policy and general advice and guidance to all employees;
- Provide ongoing communication to employees regarding Covid-19 updates;
- Make referrals to Occupational Health Providers where necessary; and
- Maintain up-to-date information (name, address and contact phone number) on all employees. This information will be needed by the Department of Public Health in the event of a confirmed case or outbreak.

Campus Services

- Make themselves aware of their obligations under this policy and public health guidelines;
- Ensure that the appropriate supply of cleaning equipment is available;
- Provide relevant training to employees;
- Ensure that there is a good supply of hand sanitiser across campus;
- Ensure that there is a good supply of bins across campus;
- Keep Covid-19 Response Plan up to date;
- Arrange for waste such as used wipes and cleaning material to be disposed of in the appropriate manner and on a delayed basis; and
- Display Covid-19 guidelines across campus in relevant areas.

Lead Worker Representatives

- Keep up to date with the latest Covid-19 advice from the Government and assist in keeping colleagues up to date with the latest advice;
- Report any problems, defects or areas of noncompliance to the Director of Campus Services or the Health and Safety Office;
- Maintain awareness of what to do in the event of someone developing the symptoms of Covid-19 while at work; and
- Listen to any Covid-19 control concerns or suggestions of colleagues and raise same with the Director of Campus Services or the Health and Safety Office.

Appendix 1 - Process of Returning to Campus

From 24 January 2022, the requirement to work from home unless necessary to attend the workplace in person ended. This means a phased return to physical attendance on Campus can commence.

Risk Assessments

Each workplace within the University has been subject to a risk assessment, and the required measures have been put in place in line with public health advice. Existing risk assessments will be updated to reflect the revised guidance. This will not require a re-survey of rooms.

However, workplace risk assessments are based on information to hand at the time of compilation. In some instances, it may be necessary to carry out a revised risk assessment if the working practices and/or guidelines have changed to such an extent that the circumstances require a new risk assessment.

If an employee has a concern or question about a workplace risk assessment, they should discuss their concerns with their Head of Department or nominee or the Return to Campus Office.

Appendix 2 - Campus Visitors & Contractors

Visitors and Contractors are free to access campus as needed.

There is no longer a requirement for visitors to wear face coverings in indoor spaces. However, to continue protecting the University community, especially those with underlying health conditions, the University still recommends face coverings in lecture theatres, libraries, tutorials, and labs.

Appendix 3 - Quick guide on working arrangements

	Scenario	Employee	Special leave with pay	Sick leave	Home working / remain available for working at home	Return to work premises
1	COVID-19 symptoms – employee is awaiting a HSE COVID-19 test (over 55)	Self-isolate until outcome known	Yes - until outcome known, then assess and follow subsequent advice (see below scenarios)	No	See footnote 9 below	Cannot be determined until outcome known (see other scenarios)
2	COVID-19 symptoms – employee received positive PCR test result (55 and over) or registered a positive antigen test with HSE (under 55) and is not well enough to work.	Self-isolate for 7 days and take extra care for another 3 days to reduce the risk of passing COVID-19 on.	Yes – up to day 10 if required	Yes – after day 10.	No	Following self-isolation period and additional 3 days if required.
3	COVID-19 symptoms – employee required to self-isolate and subsequently receive a negative COVID-19 test result (over 55) or antigen test (under 55)	Continue to self-isolate until 48 hours after symptoms are gone or mostly gone	Yes - up until date of negative test	Yes - after date of negative test if employee continues to be not well enough to work.	Where the employee is well, symptoms have resolved and awaiting the end of the 48-hour period - they can work from home/remain available for work for that period.	48 hours after symptom are gone or mostly gone
4	Advised to self-isolate pre-surgery.	Restrict movements	No	Yes – during/following surgery	Yes, for self-isolation period pre-surgery. Person needs to be available for work for period pre-surgery.	When sick leave finishes post-surgery.
5a	Overseas travel where a quarantine period is required	Restrict movements (quarantine)	No	No	No - Annual/other unpaid leave must be taken.	
5b	Overseas travel where no quarantine is required	Can return to work	No	No	Not required	Yes
6	Possible reaction to COVID-19 vaccination	If an employee is unfit for work, then usual sick leave rules apply	No	Yes	N/A	As per provisions of sick leave, if required

Appendix 4 - Special Leave with Pay

Where an employee is diagnosed with Covid-19 or recommended to self-isolate, they should contact the Covid-19 Response Team on (01) 474 7999 or covid.response@mu.ie in the first instance and advise their Head of Department.

An employee may be granted special leave with pay if they have been advised to self-isolate **and** are displaying symptoms of Covid-19 and/or have had a positive test. Employees are required to complete the '*Application for Special Leave with Pay Form*'. This form is available through Human Resources (humanresources@mu.ie). Special leave with pay will apply only from the date of a positive test result.

As the public health advice allows for self-referral for Covid-19 testing when someone has Covid-19 symptoms, special leave with pay may also be granted to employees in this scenario, providing they produce the results of their PCR test or antigen test as confirmation.

Special leave with pay does not apply to individuals who are restricting their movements or are self-isolating due to being a close contact of a variant of concern. In such instances, the employee should, if possible, work from home. Special leave with pay does not apply to individuals who are in an at-risk category and are cocooning.

Special leave with pay only applies to employees who are due to be working. Special leave with pay cannot be substituted for other forms of leave, for example, annual leave. If employees are on annual leave and have a valid certification, they can opt to apply for sick leave as per the normal rules.

The employee must provide HSE/medical confirmation, to the University, of the need to self-isolate and/or a diagnosis of Covid-19 i.e., a positive PCR test or registered positive antigen test on the HSE portal. Any forms and/or certification relating to a Covid-19 absence should be forwarded by managers to Human Resources and retained on the individual's personnel file and should be subject to audit.

Special leave with pay granted by the University will not count as part of the employee's sick leave record. Employees availing of special leave with pay are excluded from claiming the DEASP Covid-19 illness benefit payment.

An employee is not entitled to days in lieu for bank holidays whilst in receipt of special leave with pay.

Special leave with pay for employees who are not required to work due to a Covid-19 diagnosis will be based on basic salary and fixed allowances only.

Similar to the general principles applying to the management of sick leave, the employee must contact their Head of Department or nominee as soon as possible, in accordance with the normal absence reporting arrangements. Where circumstances or diagnosis change, the employee must also inform their Head of Department or nominee immediately.

It is considered good practice in maintaining a positive wellbeing culture in the workplace to have appropriate contact between the Head of Department or nominee and the employee during periods of leave. The nature of this contact should focus on the welfare of the employee

and the facilitation of a successful return to work.

Special leave with pay may continue for up to 10 consecutive calendar days, for all new cases on or after 7 February 2022, if necessary. This absence must be supported by a positive Covid-19 test, as well as ongoing medical certification. The University's Sick Leave policy will apply for an employee who continues to be unwell in excess of 10 days.

If an employee states that they feel well enough to work but have tested positive for Covid-19 or are self-isolating because they were symptomatic, the University may facilitate working from home instead of special leave with pay, if this is feasible and agreeable to both parties. The employee must not attend campus and must also follow medical and HSE advice as it relates to self-isolation.

Appendix 5 - Self-Isolation

Where an employee is recommended to self-isolate, they should contact the Covid-19 Response Team in the first instance and advise their Head of Department. Employees may be eligible to avail of special leave with pay, in lieu of sick leave for Covid-19, when an employee is advised to self-isolate **and** is displaying symptoms of Covid-19 or has had a positive test.

Employees seeking to avail of special leave with pay are required to complete the “*Application for Special Leave with Pay Form*”. This form is available through Human Resources (humanresources@mu.ie).

The employee must then arrange a Covid-19 test as soon as possible and inform the University of the Covid-19 test result. Both vaccinated, and unvaccinated employees must self-isolate while they await the results of the Covid-19 test.

Where the Covid-19 test result is positive, the employee must self-isolate for seven days, even if fully vaccinated. The employee will remain on special leave with pay, subject to the provisions in **Appendix 3**, and this must be recorded by the University as a ‘Covid-19 Diagnosis’ on the relevant HR system.

These arrangements do not preclude an employee from working from home, if this is feasible, depending on the individual case. In such instances, where an employee is working from home, then they are no longer on special leave with pay, and this will be treated as normal working time.

Where the employee does not return to work/campus following a ‘not detected’ Covid-19 test result, the terms and conditions of the Sick Leave scheme apply.

Appendix 6 - Covid-19 Diagnosis

Where an employee is diagnosed with Covid-19, they should contact the Covid-19 Response Team in the first instance and advise their Head of Department. Employees are then required to complete the “*Application for Special Leave with Pay Form*”. This form is available through Human Resources (humanresources@mu.ie).

In such instances, an employee is required to wait for seven days post-onset of symptoms and also be 48 hours symptom-free (which may run concurrently) before returning to the workplace.

It should be noted that the seven days is from the onset of symptoms or when asymptomatic, from the day of the Covid-19 test. The seven days is not from the date of receiving a positive Covid-19 test result.

These arrangements do not preclude an employee from working from home, if this is feasible, depending on the individual case.

Medical advice must be sought where an employee is absent in excess of seven days from the onset of symptoms and prior to their return to campus to confirm it is safe to do so.

Appendix 7 - At-Risk Groups

At-Risk Groups

Employees should familiarise themselves with HSE information on [at-risk groups](#).

In some cases, some conditions that were previously said to be very high risk may now place an employee in the high-risk category or in the normal risk category. Further to this, an employee's risk categorisation may now have changed due to vaccination and/or history of recent confirmed Covid-19 infection. A referral to occupational health for an updated Covid-19 risk categorisation may be appropriate for some employees.

Employees in at-risk groups should also follow public health advice in relation to mask-wearing, including wearing a surgical or FFP2 mask when in crowded indoor settings. If face coverings are worn, they should be clean and they should not be shared or handled by other colleagues.

Employees who have concerns about their return to work due to being in a high risk or very high-risk category should contact humanresources@mu.ie to discuss their situation.

High-Risk Group

Where an employee considers themselves to be in the 'high risk' group but is not ill, they must attend the workplace unless advised otherwise by the University's Occupational Health Provider.

As per HSE Guidelines, most people in this category will be protected against the virus once they are vaccinated and have received a booster. If an employee has not been offered a vaccine or booster, they should contact their GP who will help them get a vaccine as soon as possible.

As set out above, University employees will be returning to work on campus gradually, in line with Government advice. The University has measures in place that include enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols, provision of PPE for staff (face coverings, hand sanitiser stations, etc.), the Covid-19 Response Team and modifications to building ventilation systems. This will ensure that the University campus is a safe environment for all staff and students. The University will also continue to follow the latest Government advice.

Employees in the high-risk category should take extra care to practice physical distancing and wash their hands regularly and properly. The use of face coverings and personal protective equipment may also be considered where maintaining physical distancing is difficult. Should an employee require specific personal protective equipment, they should discuss these requirements with their Head of Department and the Return to Campus Office. Each individual should follow the advice of their GP, where necessary, and the [advice of the HSE](#) on how to protect themselves from Covid-19.

When on campus, employees should follow the up to date advice and guidance to protect themselves. Employees should make themselves aware of the University's Covid-19 webpage which outlines the extensive measures the University has put in place to protect the health of the University community in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Very High-Risk Group

Employees who consider themselves to be in the 'very high-risk group' should contact the Human Resources Department and provide certification from their GP and/or treating consultant. The Human Resources Department will contact the employee with details of the University's occupational health provider and organise an appointment for the employee to be assessed.

Following this appointment, the University will receive a report from Occupational Health stating one of the following:

- The employee is fit to return to campus;
- The employee is fit to return to campus provided certain specified measures are taken;
- The employee should cocoon and is fit to work from home; or
- The employee is not fit for work.

The University approach will be informed by the report from Occupational Health.

If an Occupational Health appointment cannot be secured within a reasonable timeframe, as an interim measure, an employee is required to provide a copy of a valid GP certificate stating one of the above four options while waiting for the Occupational Health assessment.

Where Occupational Health advises that an employee should cocoon and is fit to work from home, the employee is required to follow this recommendation. This period will be recorded on the University's HR system.

In accordance with DPER guidance, where an employee at a very high risk of serious illness from contracting Covid-19 and is fit to work from home, the University will prioritise alternative working arrangements to the maximum extent possible e.g. working from home. However, if remote working in an employee's current role is not feasible, then the assignment of work may be outside of their usual core duties.

Where medical diagnosis changes, the employee must inform Human Resources.

Where an employee who is at very high risk of serious illness from contracting Covid-19 and Occupational Health advise that they are not fit for work, the terms and conditions of the Sick Leave scheme apply.

Appendix 8 - Restricted Movement Summary⁸

If you have symptoms of COVID-19

Who you are	Testing requirement
If you are aged aged 55 years and older AND unboosted	Self isolate and get a PCR test. Follow public health advice on test result
If you have a high-risk medical condition	Self isolate and get a PCR test. Follow public health advice on test result
If you are immunocompromised	Self isolate and get a PCR test. Follow public health advice on test result
If you live in the same household as a person who is immunocompromised	Self isolate and get a PCR test. Follow public health advice on test result
If you provide care or support for person they know to be immunocompromised	Self isolate and get a PCR test. Follow public health advice on test result
If you are pregnant	Self isolate and get a PCR test. Follow public health advice on test result
All others	No test required but self-isolate until 48 hours after symptoms resolve

If you are a close contact

Who you are	Testing requirement
If you are a healthcare worker identified as a household close contact	Repeat antigen testing is required, unless you have recovered from COVID-19 in previous 3 months
All other close contacts	No test required if not symptomatic, self- isolate if symptoms develop

⁸ Available here <https://assets.gov.ie/213312/05da4283-db67-41ed-ba8c-0327fb181186.pdf>

Appendix 9 - Restricted Movement not including international travel⁹

If an employee is a close contact with no symptoms, they will no longer need to restrict movements or take a Covid-19 test. This means that close contacts can continue to come to work as normal. However, the University recommends that close contacts of confirmed cases should be cautious, consider wearing face coverings in crowded spaces, and work from home.

If an employee is symptomatic, they should self-isolate. Symptomatic people are no longer required to get a test, unless they are over 55 and have not received a vaccine and booster, or they fall into a special category, as determined by the HSE. An employee can find out whether they should get a test [here](#). If they receive a negative test, or did not require a test, they can end isolation when they are 48 hours symptom-free. If they receive a positive test, the employee has Covid-19 and should self-isolate for 7 days. The employee should wear a well-fitted medical grade or FFP2 face mask, unless they are alone, for 10 days. If they end isolation after 7 days, they should continue to wear a well-fitted medical grade or FFP2 face mask for 3 days after ending self-isolation when they are with other people. These masks are available to employees from the student helpdesk, and employees can choose which type they prefer to wear.

An individual may not get the same level of protection from the vaccine as other people if they:

- are immunocompromised due to disease or treatment;
- have cancer; and/or
- have chronic kidney disease.

Where an employee is caring for someone in self-isolation, after receiving a positive Covid-19 test result, the employee (and the rest of their household) should follow [HSE advise](#) for restricting their movements.

If an employee is caring for someone (for example, a child) who is awaiting their test results, they should inform their Head of Department. Special leave with pay will not be granted in these circumstances. However, flexible working arrangements or other forms of existing relevant leave may be considered on a case-by-case basis. In such instances, the employee should, if possible, work from home.

The latest criteria for restricted movement and as updated by the HSE must be followed. The current advice on restricted movements is on the [HSE's website](#).

An employee who has been advised to restrict their movements must complete the “*Restricted Movement Declaration Form*”. This form is available through Human Resources (humanresources@mu.ie).

Where medical diagnosis changes, the employee must inform their Head of Department or nominee immediately.

An employee who has been advised to restrict their movements but who is medically fit for work, remains available for work. The employee should be assigned work for the fourteen-day

⁹ See Appendix 17 for information on international travel.

period by their Head of Department or nominee, and the employee must facilitate alternative working arrangements to the maximum extent possible, e.g. working from home. Where this is not possible, due to the nature of the work, the employee must facilitate and cooperate with all alternative working arrangements to the maximum extent possible, e.g. the assignment of work outside of their usual core duties.

An employee on restricted movement will be recorded as such by the University on the relevant HR system.

Appendix 10 - Mental Health and Wellbeing

If an employee is experiencing any difficulties, they are encouraged to avail of the [Employee Assistance Programme](#) available to them. Alternatively, employees may call Inspire Workplaces directly on 1800 201 346.

To support the wellbeing of all employees during this unprecedented period, Human Resources have a number of supports available. These include:

- Live webinars on wellbeing topics;
- E-learning courses on wellbeing;
- Guides on wellbeing while working from home;
- [Inspire Workplace Services](#) - An employee assistance programme which offers:
 - 24/7/365 Helpline Support 1800 201 346
 - Up to 6 sessions of counselling, as appropriate
 - Financial Information
 - Legal Information
 - Consumer/Citizens Information
 - Management Support via Helpline
 - Online Support Hub, with guides, resource library and online self-help courses.

For further information, please view the [Human Resources website](#).

Appendix 11 - Lead Worker Representative

More details on the LWR are available on the [University's website](#). Employees may also find the [HSA's LWR Poster](#) as a useful summary of the LWR's role.

The role of the LWR includes the following:

- Keep up to date with the latest Covid-19 advice from the Government and assist in keeping colleagues up to date with the latest advice;
- Report any problems, defects or areas of noncompliance to the Director of Campus Services or the Health and Safety Office;
- Maintain awareness of what to do in the event of someone developing the symptoms of Covid-19 while at work;
- Listen to any Covid-19 control concerns or suggestions of colleagues and raise same with the Director of Campus Services or the Health and Safety Office;
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette in accordance with public health advice;
- Maintaining physical distancing of 1 metre where possible; and
- Assist with the implementation of measures to suppress Covid-19 in the workplace.

Appendix 12 - Health and Safety Representatives/Committees

Further information on the Health and Safety Representatives/Committees in Maynooth University can be found on the [University's website](#) or on the [HSA's website](#).

The role of the Health and Safety representative includes the following:

- Report any defects or problems they encounter to H&S;
- Consult with employees on safety measures to be implemented in the workplace;
- Be the first point of contact for employees who have safety concerns; and
- Bring any concerns or suggestions regarding safety, health and welfare at the workplace to the Director of Campus Services' attention.

Appendix 13 - Covid-19 Response Plan

Covid-19 Response Team

A response team has been established to deal with a suspected case of Covid-19 on campus.

The Team is under the supervision of the Director of Campus Services. The Covid-19 Response Team will operate on an 'on-call' 24/7 basis to ensure a rapid response to any suspected cases of Covid-19 on campus.

While the Covid-19 Response team is led by Campus Services, operational support from Student Health and Registry may be provided where students are involved in the suspected case, and HR may provide support to the Team where employees are involved. Further details of what employees should do if they become unwell while on campus can be found on the [University's website](#).

All members of the University Community are required to follow the instructions of the Covid-19 Response Team. In all instances, when it comes to matters relating to Covid-19, the decision of the Covid-19 Response Team is final. Specifically, where an employee is directed to leave campus by the Team, the employee must follow this instruction.

Isolation Area

Designated isolation areas are located in the Casey Changing Rooms, Student Health Centre and the Phoenix Sports Centre.

These designated areas, and the access routes to same, are easily accessible and, as far as is reasonable and practicable, have been made accessible by people with disabilities.

The isolation areas are behind closed doors, ventilated and equipped with:

- tissues;
- hand sanitiser;
- disinfectant;
- PPE;
- Gloves;
- face coverings; and
- clinical waste bags.

Process Steps

In the first instance, where an employee develops symptoms of Covid-19 while on campus, they should notify their Head of Department immediately. Alternatively, the employee may contact the Covid-19 Response Team directly at extension 7999 or (01)474 7999 or by email at covid.response@mu.ie. The employee should follow the instructions given to them by their Head of Department or the Covid-19 Response Team. After informing their HoD/Covid-19 Response Team, the employee should leave campus immediately if they are well enough to travel home in a safe manner.

If the employee is not well enough to travel home, the Covid-19 Response Team should isolate the employee by accompanying them to a designated isolation area while keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic employee and also making sure that others maintain this distance.

The employee should be provided with a surgical or FFP2 mask to be worn if in a room with other people or while exiting the premises. There is no need for them to wear a mask while isolating in a room on their own.

Once the employee has made their way to the isolation area, the Covid-19 Response Team should initially assess whether the employee may immediately be directed to go home, contact their GP, and continue self-isolation at home.

The employee should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the unwell individual to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze, and then put the tissue in the waste bag provided.

The Covid-19 response team will ask the unwell individual for information on their personal contacts and classes attended to facilitate contact tracing by the HSE. The Covid-19 response team may be contacted by the HSE to discuss the case. The HSE may advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.

Where it is not possible for the employee to leave campus immediately, they should remain in the isolation area and call their GP, outlining their current symptoms. In such instances, the Covid-19 Response Team will arrange transport home (by a person from their household or possibly an ambulance) or to hospital for medical assessment. Public transport of any kind should not be used.

Immediate action following a suspected case should include the closure of the isolation area until appropriately cleaned.

The Covid-19 Response Team will carry out an assessment of the incident, which will form part of determining follow-up actions for the University. Any such advice will be based on the outcome of this assessment.

The HSE may contact the employee directly to advise on isolation and to identify other contacts. The HSE may subsequently follow up with any close contacts of the employee to provide them with appropriate advice and take any necessary actions.

If the suspected case is confirmed

If a confirmed case is identified, colleagues who have had **close contact** will be asked to follow HSE advice.

Areas where the infected individual had been working will be isolated until cleaned and disinfected by a specialist team.

Appendix 14 - Hand, Respiratory and General Hygiene

Employees must ensure to:

- Wash their hands with soap and water regularly, particularly after coughing, sneezing, being in a crowd, etc;
- Wash their hands before and after preparing food;
- Wash their hands before and after being on public transport or when entering and exiting vehicles;
- Wash their hands before and after having a cigarette or vaping;
- Do not share objects that touch their mouth, for example, bottles or cups;
- Use own pens;
- Adopt good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette;
- Avoid touching their eyes, mouth, or nose; and
- Increase ventilation where possible by opening vents and windows.

Employees may also reference the [HSE guidelines on Hand, Respiratory and General Hygiene](#) for further guidance.

Appendix 15 - Personal Protective Equipment

PPE will be provided to workers in accordance with identified Covid-19 exposure risks and in line with public health advice.

Employees should be aware that non-medical face masks are not PPE, while respirators are forms of PPE that may limit exposure to Covid-19.

Face Coverings

As per [HSE guidance](#), the legal requirement for wearing a face covering on public transport, in taxis, shops, schools and all other indoor public areas has been removed effective 28 February 2022. It is still recommended that face coverings be worn on public transport and healthcare settings. This means that it is no longer required to wear face coverings on campus, except when visiting the Student Health Centre. However, to continue protecting the University community, especially those with underlying health conditions, the University still recommends face coverings in lecture theatres, libraries, tutorials, and labs.

Teaching staff may ask students to wear face coverings where students work closely together, however it is not compulsory, in line with government guidelines, and students who do not wish to wear face coverings should not be excluded.

If employees are concerned about the above, they should consider wearing a medical grade or FFP2 mask when on campus.

Staff who are medically vulnerable or a close contact are advised to wear a medical mask or a respirator (FFP2) mask. These masks are available to employees from the student helpdesk, and employees can choose which type they prefer to wear.

The HSE are advising that the FFP2 masks should not be reused for multiple days. Therefore, if an employee's preference is FFP2 masks, the helpdesk will give them a pack of 10.

Employees can obtain a washable face covering from the Return to Campus Office. Krok (door handle openers) are also available on request from the Return to Campus Office (return.to.campus@mu.ie).

When using a face covering, employees should:

- Wash their hands before putting the face covering on, and once on, they should not touch it.
- While wearing a face covering, employees should wash their hands before re-adjusting the face covering and wash their hands again immediately after.
- When removing the face covering, it should be removed from behind, using the ties or ear loops.
- If the face covering is disposable, it should be put straight into a bin. If the face covering is reusable, it should be put in a plastic bag, and the employee should wash their hands after handling it. Employees should then take it home and put it in a hot wash (over 60 degrees) with detergent.
- In all instances, employees must wash their hands after taking the face covering off.

Gloves

Where it is found that gloves are necessary, workers must not consider them as a substitute for hand hygiene, and employees must wash their hands whenever gloves are removed.

Additional PPE

If an employee requires PPE, they should contact their Head of Department or nominee, who should then request additional PPE for the department via the Return to Campus Office by email (return.to.campus@mu.ie).

Appendix 16 - Vaccinations

The HSE is responsible for the roll-out of the vaccination programme, and they have specific information and resources available on their [website](#).

Although the vaccination roll-out is now underway, Public Health infection prevention and control measures such as hand hygiene, and adequate ventilation are still required.

The decision to get a vaccination against Covid-19 is voluntary, and employees will therefore make their own individual decisions in this regard. The current Public Health advice is that all existing infection prevention and control measures must remain in place for individuals even following their vaccination.

A 'booster dose' is the extra dose of Covid-19 vaccine used to give better protection to people who have already had their first round of Covid-19 vaccination. The booster dose should be given 3 months (at least 90 days) after the first round of Covid-19 vaccination.

If an employee has had Covid-19 since they were vaccinated, they should get their booster dose at least 3 months after their positive test result.

If an employee is required to attend campus and is a close contact, in order for the University to make a decision in relation to health and safety requirements, the HoD or nominee may need to enquire if the employee has had their vaccine and booster, the date and type of vaccination, and other relevant health information. The University will need to determine on a case-by-case basis the level of detail that is required in order to make relevant decisions. At all times, the data collection and processing must be necessary, proportionate and safeguarded.

The national vaccination programme, the vaccine roll-out is currently a matter for Public Health and not the employer. Employees are encouraged to read about the Covid-19 vaccine and to get information from a factual, trusted source.

Please see the below links for further information:

- [Information about the vaccination programme and specific vaccines used](#)
- [Details on how to register to get the Covid-19 vaccine](#)
- [The Covid-19 Vaccination Strategy](#)
- [Information about the Covid-19 booster dose](#)

Appendix 17 - International Travel

International Work Travel

Travel is allowed once it is not against the advice of the Department of Foreign Affairs. When travelling to Europe, an employee should be in possession of the European Health Insurance Card and the EU Digital Covid Certificate.

Travel Insurance cover is no longer automatic. Employees must advise their Head of Department in advance of all University travel abroad and to include the dates of travel. Prior to undertaking any University-related travel, the Health and Safety Office must be contacted, and confirmation received that insurance cover can be arranged and is in place.

An employee does not have to quarantine when they return to Ireland, regardless of whether they are vaccinated or not. Employees who are entering Ireland should be aware of the current [Government travel advice](#) and the requirements which are in place on their date of return to Ireland.

Maynooth University Human
Resources Office
Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland.

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