

# Return to Campus

## Quick Guide for Staff

19 August 2021

### 1. Introduction

With the start of the new academic year and with teaching and research being designated essential activities within higher education, we expect that most university teaching will be on campus, and the services will return to near-normal operation, but with additional precautionary measures. Public Health guidelines will continue to inform our decisions, with the health and safety of our staff and students being paramount.

This quick guide is based on public health advice at the time of writing. As such, this guide may change at short notice.

All queries on this document should be directed to [humanresources@mu.ie](mailto:humanresources@mu.ie).

### 2. Vaccination of Staff

It is strongly recommended that you get vaccinated unless advised otherwise by your Doctor. However, this is a personal decision, and the University does not oblige any member of staff to get vaccinated.

More information on vaccines is available on the HSE's website here <https://www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/>.

### 3. Returning to work on Campus

#### Who should Return to Campus

In general, all staff required to deliver teaching, research and associated support services should be preparing to return on campus for the start of Semester 1.

All staff may return to the campus from **30 August 2021** provided they follow the pre-return to campus steps outlined in *Section 5* of this document.

### **Individual Offices**

If you do not share an office, you can return to Campus. Once you have returned, you should continue to practice the precautionary measures (set out below).

### **Shared Offices**

If you work in a shared office, please get in touch with your Head of Department to confirm your return to work date before returning.

If your shared office does not have 2 metres distancing or barriers (screens) in place, you should adopt the attendance protocols confirmed in the Risk Assessment for the room.

### **Exceptions to Returning to Campus**

You must not return to campus if you:

- are showing signs of Covid-19 or have done so in the last fourteen days;
- have been diagnosed with Covid-19 within the last fourteen days or are awaiting test results;
- are a close contact of someone who has been diagnosed with Covid-19 in the last fourteen days, unless you are vaccinated, in which case you should follow HSE guidelines;
- have been advised to isolate or are in the 'Very High Risk' category and are not vaccinated; and/or
- are required to restrict their movements following overseas travel in line with public health advice.

## **4. 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 very high risk may now be in the high-risk category or the normal risk category. Further to this, your 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 <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/people-at-higher-risk/overview/>, and if you consider yourselves to be in an at-risk group, you should consult that website for guidance.

### **High-Risk Group**

If you are in the high-risk group, you are advised to take extra care to practice physical distancing and hand hygiene. The use of face coverings and personal protective equipment may also be considered where maintaining social distancing is difficult.

Notwithstanding the fact that you consider yourself to be in the high-risk group, if you are not ill, you may attend the workplace if required to do so.

### **Very High-Risk Group**

If you consider yourself to be in the very high-risk group, you should contact the Human Resources Department ([humanresources@mu.ie](mailto:humanresources@mu.ie)) and provide certification from your GP and/or treating consultant. Where necessary, the Human Resources Department will then contact you with details of the University's occupational health provider and will organise an appointment for you to be assessed.

## **5. What you should do before you Return to Campus**

<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	Confirm with your Head of Department your planned date of return to campus.
2	Make sure your return is in line with the Risk Assessment completed for your working area.
3	<p>If you have previously completed the Return to Campus Process, then you should watch the Return to Campus Video available here <a href="https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/a7dca28c-0189-48e4-90d7-31a2c1c3f71b">https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/a7dca28c-0189-48e4-90d7-31a2c1c3f71b</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <p>If you have NOT completed the Return to Campus Process, then you should watch the Return to Campus Video and Complete the Questionnaire available here <a href="https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=zPVUFDW7hUa72YYh_YBVyR3S9rp_jzxtOoLuq2704VkxUQTFGVUtFQIBDOEdYOEEyNThGUjdMUUZMRy4u">https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=zPVUFDW7hUa72YYh_YBVyR3S9rp_jzxtOoLuq2704VkxUQTFGVUtFQIBDOEdYOEEyNThGUjdMUUZMRy4u</a></p>
4	In advance of your return date, you should ensure that you have all the equipment you need, that you have your travel pass/car park permit in place and that your Employee ID Card remains active.

## **6. Maintaining a Blended Working Arrangement**

Blended working is a form of flexible working that allows employees to split their time between working on campus and working remotely.

There will be staff who would prefer to continue to work remotely for part of their working week. The University will approach our transition to a more blended workforce in two phases:

- The first phase will be interim during September – December 2021: and
- The second phase will be a pilot phase between January – August 2022.

Therefore, if you wish to continue working in a blended capacity for the interim period, you should discuss and agree this with your Head of Department no later than 20 September 2021.

Heads of Departments may agree blended arrangements for an interim period if the following conditions are met:

- Offices that are externally facing (that provide a service/contact point) are staffed during the standard working week;
- The service delivery is shared equitably among the staff;
- The work can continue to be carried out effectively from home; and
- The overall work, productivity and integrity of delivery can be maintained.

These interim arrangements will remain in place no later than 31 December 2021 and will be subject to the discretion of the University.

## 7. Whole-Time Remote Working

Whole-time remote working is where a member of staff works off-campus full time and comes on campus by arrangement. Whole-time remote working will be permitted in exceptional circumstances during the interim period.

Where a member of staff requests to work remotely during this period, Heads of Department should liaise with Human Resources to discuss these requests.

## 8. Summary Phases of Returning to Campus

This table offers an overview of the upcoming phases of returning to campus and the transition to blending working. Please note, this table should be read in conjunction with the remainder of this document.

Phase	From	To	Action <sup>1</sup>
<b>Returning to Campus</b>	30 August 2021	19 September 2021	Staff can return to campus if they wish. Those who can carry out their roles remotely can continue to do so without express permission from their Head of Department.
	20 September 2021		Staff should return to campus except in circumstances where they have agreed not to return with their Head of Department.
<b>Transition to a blended workforce</b>	21 September 2021	31 December 2021	Heads of Departments may agree blended arrangements for an interim period if certain conditions are met. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Pilot Blended\Remote Working Schemes</b>	1 January 2022	31 August 2022	A Pilot Blended\Remote Working Policy will be published in October of this year.

<sup>1</sup> In all instances, staff who work in shared office spaces should liaise with their Head of Department prior to returning to campus. Staff who have concerns about returning to campus due to being in the very high-risk category should see Section 4.

<sup>2</sup> See Sections 6 and 7.

## 9. When on Campus

### **Precautionary Measures**

While you are on campus, we expect you to take reasonable health precautions to prevent the spread of the virus. The key measures are:

- Please maintain distancing wherever possible;
- Please wear a face-covering in public areas. You can remove your face covering when outdoors, when in a private office, when in a shared office with appropriate distancing or barriers;
- Wash your hands properly and often with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser;
- Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve;
- Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands;
- Let fresh air into your workspace by opening windows, doors and air vents as much as possible; and
- Follow all public health advice.

These measures may be changed as public health guidance is updated.

### **Personal Responsibility**

Each member of the University community has a responsibility to minimise the spread of Covid-19, and you must take personal responsibility for your actions during this period. You must adhere to the latest public health and safety advice and guidance from the University.

### **On-Campus Meetings**

Meetings may be held in person on campus once the room is appropriately sized to allow reasonable spacing (2 metres) and ventilation. Meeting room capacities have been revised, and room capacity will be displayed on the booking system and at the door of the meeting room. As a guide, the largest meeting room on campus can accommodate 11 people. Meetings larger than this should be held remotely unless there is a very specific reason to have the meeting in-person and on campus.

Departments are asked to maintain records of attendance at meetings and events (other than timetabled teaching), and individual staff are asked to keep records of personal meetings.

Currently, it is not appropriate to have buffet-style catering for meetings. If refreshments are to be provided, they must be served.

### **External Visitors**

Visitors and contractors may access campus as needed. Departments should keep a record of any Visitors or Contractors they have.

### **Kitchens and coffee areas**

Each employee coffee room will have a maximum capacity to allow spacing. You are asked to take care when using departmental kitchens and coffee rooms and abide by the maximum capacity limits.

You should use their own mug/cup where possible and hygiene measures to be adopted in using shared items such as kettles, coffee machines and water fountains (cup dispensers not available).

### **Facilities on campus**

The Phoenix Restaurant and the MSU and Londis Shops are currently open. Other campus restaurants will open at the beginning of term in line with current guidelines, which may change over time.

The sports centre and gym facilities plan to open at the start of term, in line with guidelines prevalent at the time.

The coronavirus webpage <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/coronavirus/staff> contains further information and advice.

## **10. 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 are being 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, offices, 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 (CO<sub>2</sub>) monitors**

The CO<sub>2</sub> level is an indicator of the rate of ventilation/air exchange from a space. CO<sub>2</sub> 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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.

## 11. Lead Workers

The University has appointed Lead Workers whose role is to work with the University to assist in implementing Return to Campus measures. You may contact the Lead Workers with relevant questions or concerns connected to Covid-19.

More information can be found on the role of Lead Workers in the Government's Work Safely Protocol available here <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/bb7fd-work-safely-protocol/>.

## 12. 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 videos and questionnaires.	Return to Campus Office	return.to.campus@mu.ie
Suspected/confirmed cases of Covid-19.	Covid Response Team	<a href="mailto:covid.response@mu.ie">covid.response@mu.ie</a> or call extension 7999.
Local queries connected to the implementation and adherence of Covid-19 control measures.	Covid Response Team Lead Worker Representatives <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• covid.response@mu.ie</li> <li>• Peter Hodson - peter.hodson@mu.ie</li> <li>• Anne-Marie Parkes - annmarie.parkes@mu.ie</li> <li>• Elaine Bean - elaine.bean@mu.ie</li> <li>• Austin Power - ap.power@mu.ie</li> <li>• Ria Walsh - ria.walsh@mu.ie</li> <li>• John Maloco - john.maloco@mu.ie</li> <li>• Amanda Bent - amanda.bent@mu.ie</li> </ul>
Car Parking Permits	Traffic Management Office	parking@mu.ie
Staff ID Cards/MyCard	Maynooth MyCard	mycard.staff@mu.ie dooraccess@mu.ie

<sup>3</sup> Additional Lead Workers Representatives will be appointed in the coming weeks.

