COVID-19: Essential information for the return to our campuses

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Planning your return to on-campus working

As the University will enter Targeted protection level from 13 September increased numbers of students as staff will be returning to campus and various activities will restart on our campuses. We all have a role to play in combating the spread of COVID-19 at the University of Essex and creating a safe environment for all of us. In this short guide you will find information to help you plan your return to working on campus during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

What will be different?

 Returning to campus will feel a little different and we will all need to make adjustments to our daily routines and working practices. When you come to campus you will see information notices and signage that alert you to the measures we have put in place and help you with how they should be followed at all times.

Together we need to be aware of what has changed and how we can all help protect those who may be at greater risk. Respect and courtesy for each other remains at the heart of our University community.
What measures are we putting in place?

- Guidance which explains what to do, and that you should stay at home, if you feel unwell, have
- a temperature or any other symptoms of COVID-19
- Provision of COVID-19 testing facilities on our campuses
- Coordinating vaccination programs for students
- University contact tracing service
- Monitoring and responding to COVID-19 related queries 7 days/ week
- Individual clinician based COVID-19 risk assessments with staff and students
- Bespoke advice on self-isolation for close contacts
- Advice about self-isolating and how to contact NHS 119 to book a test if you display any COVID-19 symptoms
- Reminders for frequent and effective handwashing or sanitising
- Help for our community to maintain physical (social) distance at all times and to follow specific local arrangements where needed
- Requests for our community to wear face coverings when on campus in public areas, where distancing is not possible, and in accordance with campus signage
- Frequent cleaning and sanitising of shared equipment and spaces
- Carrying out risk assessments for work practices
- Carrying out risk assessments for individuals
What else can I do to help?

- Regular COVID testing through campus or home-testing
- COVID-19 vaccination
- Early reporting to the COVID-19 inbox
- Self-isolate when necessary
- Allow yourself more time when moving around campus
- Be patient when accessing facilities and services
- Avoid sharing of food and drinks
- Maintain good hand hygiene including regular hand washing and/or use of hand sanitiser
- Follow any risk assessments in place for your health and safety
- Follow guidance and signage in place around the campus, including for one-way systems where they are in place
- Report all accidents and incidents to Workplace Health Safety and Wellbeing
Wearing face coverings on our campuses

Face coverings help us protect each other and reduce the spread of the disease when we are in an enclosed space where social distancing is not possible and where we meet other people.

We are asking that face masks/face coverings are worn in all public campus areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain or where we indicate the need. This is most likely to be for short periods indoors, in crowded areas, corridors, shops, food outlets and travelling on public transport to the University.

Face coverings will only be effective if they are worn properly covering the nose and mouth and fitted snugly. They can be washed in your washing machine or by hand. Please make sure you change your face covering daily and wash your hands when taking it off your face.

For more guidance on our approach to wearing face coverings please read our guide on Adapting our individual behaviours.
What do I need to do before returning to campus working?

- Complete your COVID-19 essential Moodle training course, ‘Keeping us safe on campus’. This will ask you to read and sign your Staff agreement
- Complete your Individual work activity assessment
- Complete your online Individual Covid Age Health Risk Assessment for COVID-19
- Complete all COVID-19 relevant forms that your manager has requested
- Ensure you are aware of the policies and procedures in place to protect staff from COVID-19
- Ensure you have been authorised by your Head of Department or Head of Section to return to campus

Policies and Guidance for Returning to Campus

To ensure a safe return to campus for its staff, students and contactors, the University has developed a range of policies and guidance.

- COVID-19: Policy statement
- COVID-19: Health, Safety and Wellbeing Responsibilities
- COVID-19: Premises policy
- COVID-19: Adapting our individual behaviours on our campuses

The COVID-19 ‘Keeping us safe on campus’ Moodle training course will provide you with the key information needed to support your safe return to campus.
What do I do if I have any concerns?

In these unprecedented times there are many new policies and procedures being put in place covering our work activities. Many of these documents are living procedures and may need to be changed over time.

As we return to campus, it is important that all staff have a voice to raise any safety concerns they may have. Staff feedback and suggestions can be sent to covid19@essex.ac.uk and any concerns should be raised with management or union representatives; by working together we ensure nothing is missed.