Return to campus information for staff

Introduction

In line with the Scottish Government roadmap and guidance for universities, the university is implementing a planned, phased and flexible re-opening of campus.

The university aims to continue to deliver excellence in education and research as well as excellence in its services supporting these. We have adopted a hybrid approach to learning and teaching in academic session 2020/21, with the resumption of some in-person teaching activities on campus, supported by digital education.

In line with this approach, this document outlines how and when staff may be required to return to work on campus, albeit less frequently and in lower numbers than before the virus.

Additional guidance is available to support managers planning for return to campus and addressing any staff concerns, including risk assessments.

We also expect many of our staff who are not in front-facing roles to continue to work from home.

For many staff in professional services and support roles the Scottish Government’s Phase 3 restrictions mean that staff who are not needed on site will continue to work from home and should expect to do so for the foreseeable future. In general terms, we are unlikely to expect a return to campus before January 2021 for colleagues whose role is entirely ‘back office’ or whose role does not regularly involve student-facing work.

Existing guidance for staff working from home (remotely) and hybrid working are available here.

Key Points

The health, safety and wellbeing, both physical and mental, of our community will continue to be integral to our planning and decision-making.

We will resume academic activities on campus, giving overall priority to teaching and research, while also addressing professional service aspects of the student experience.

Our guidance will continue to align with Scottish Government and public health safety requirements and guidelines and will evolve as necessary to maintain that alignment. In particular, it will later reflect the shift from Phase 3 to Phase 4 of the Scottish Government Routemap out of Lockdown, when that progression occurs.

In Phase 3, return to campus will be required for activities that must be performed on campus to meet our academic objectives in a manner which supports well our high-quality academic offering. Working from home, where possible, will remain the default for many of our staff during Phase 3.

We are also aware that some staff have significant problems working from home and wish to return to site for mental health reasons or because they cannot physically work at home. We want to do everything we can to accommodate such needs within the restrictions placed on us by current Scottish Government guidance.

Work From Home Guidance for Managers
We will implement a range of health and safety measures to ensure a safe working environment for everyone on campus. Our approach is underpinned by comprehensive risk assessments, and measures include appropriate physical distancing, changes to the working environment and physical use of space, provision of appropriate PPE in selected environments, requirements to wear face coverings in our buildings and hygiene and hand washing facilities, additional cleaning, changes to working practices and guidance information for staff working on campus. There is information on the detail of these measures here and our Good Citizen Guide summarises our community’s responsibilities.

We will take account of the needs of staff who are vulnerable, or may live with someone who is vulnerable, and have increased risks associated with COVID-19, providing support and flexibilities where possible and appropriate. Individual risk assessments in such circumstances will be carried out with support from the Scottish Government tool; guidance for managers is here.

We will look to support staff with childcare or other caring responsibilities where possible and appropriate. We will ensure comprehensive equality analysis and review this analysis in line with any changes to guidance. We will continue to work constructively with our trade union colleagues throughout our phased approach to re-opening campus.

**Staff required to return to campus**

Any member of staff required by their managers to perform work activities on campus can be required to resume working on campus, in accordance with the requirements of their contracts, subject to consideration of any individual circumstances and any necessary risk assessments. Any requests by managers for someone to return to work on campus will be in line with government guidance as outlined above.

We understand that some staff may be anxious or concerned about returning. There may be particular challenges with the availability of public transport, and we will look to provide flexibility wherever possible and practical to limit the need for staff to travel at peak times. Managers may also make use of rotas: for example, by sharing necessary on-campus work amongst a team.

Staff should also be assured that any areas of campuses that have re-opened will have done so with robust health and safety measures implemented to ensure a safe and secure working environment.

**Raising concerns**

Staff and managers are expected to discuss and agree any mitigations or adaptations required to address the specific risk factors that may affect individuals. They should do so in line with this guidance/document and the individual risk assessment guidance provided. Where a member of staff feels they have discussed these mitigations and adaptations with their line manager already and are being required to return to campus without these in place, they should raise this with the next tier of management or with their relevant HR advisor.

Staff are also expected to raise and consider any options to allow them to return to work on site where continuing to work from home is not possibly or where it is injurious to their mental health.

**Essential work on campus**
Essential work during the lockdown period and the first two phases of the Scottish Government Routemap was very limited: this meant that only a relatively small number of staff, largely in Professional Services, were on site.

The University is now including in that definition any work that must be performed on campus in order to meet the core priorities of the university to deliver education, student support and research of high quality. The following list is not exhaustive but is illustrative of the types of activity to be undertaken on campus at this time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>On campus delivery of in-person teaching, including workshops, tutorials, seminars, laboratories and practical sessions and some personal tutoring or academic advising sessions and Welcome Week or cohort-building activities. It also includes the small number of lectures which are not scheduled to be delivered digitally.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On campus capture of online content where domestic facilities are unsuitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking part in those elements of student assessment which need to take place on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Research which can only progress by activity that requires presence on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Services</td>
<td>Roles or services which can only be performed on campus and are critical to campus operations and/or the student experience (for example: security, cleaning, AV technicians, catering, research facilities, health &amp; safety)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roles required to support any education, student support or research activity, or other professional service activity, which must take place on campus to provide the high quality of service to which we are committed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roles requiring on campus access to core systems that create business continuity risks when operated off campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student-facing advisory and guidance roles that need to take place in person to be performed effectively in support of a high-quality education and student experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the above, we recognise the need for colleagues in leadership positions to be on campus at appropriate points and this guidance assumes that they will adopt all relevant safety measures in executing their functions.

Accessing campus

While we are gradually re-opening the campus, staff access to buildings and returning to work on campus remains limited. Staff can only return to campus if asked to do so by their line manager. We are still operating within Phase 3 of the Scottish government Routemap and we do not have certainty about when we will move to Phase 4. This means that many of our colleagues who are not in front-facing service roles will be expected to continue to work from home, possibly into the 2021 calendar year. In general terms, we are unlikely to expect a return to campus before January 2021 for colleagues whose role is entirely ‘back office’ or whose role does not regularly involve student-facing work. We will update our guidance on this as and when Scottish Government guidance changes.

Health and safety

Health and safety information and guidance for staff returning to campus, including the adaptations being made to provide a safe working environment during the current pandemic, can be found here. It is important that all staff familiarise themselves with this guidance and comply with all aspects of the policy while on campus. Appropriate risk assessments have been carried out by our building review groups in line with our guidance on controlling the risk of Covid-19 on all campus space that is re-opening. Local facilities teams will have full detail of each building to share with users of that building as required. Any breach of the
university’s COVID-19 safety measures will be discussed with the individual concerned in the first instance. The relevant guidance will be highlighted and discussed to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the procedures in place and their importance. Persistent failure to follow these safety measures may result in disciplinary action against the employee. Where an individual ignores safe working practices and puts others at risk leading to a more serious breach then the disciplinary process will be followed immediately.

**Staff and manager responsibilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managers have a responsibility to:</th>
<th>Staff have a responsibility to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within the framework outlined above, determine the operational needs for working on campus and which roles may need to return to campus and when. Ensure a fair and equitable approach to return to campus for their teams as far as possible, conducting individual risk assessments where necessary and appropriate. Ensure that health and safety measures and protocols are well understood by colleagues returning to campus, making swift interventions to tackle any breaches. Undertake the University’s online induction for return to work</td>
<td>Work with their line manager to establish whether and when they should return to the campus, and co-operating on the completion of an individual risk assessment where necessary and appropriate. Comply with all health and safety measures and protocols in place while working on campus. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action. Undertake the University’s online induction for return to work Reporting symptoms of Covid-19 and/or self-isolation in accordance with the flowcharts here. Any staff who feel unwell while on campus should leave work immediately and inform their line manager, either by email or phone. Staff who are self-isolating should review the university’s Sickness Absence policy for details of how their absence will be managed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Local lockdowns**

Where a member of staff is subject to a localised temporary enforcement of lockdown restrictions, they should discuss with their line manager as soon as possible. Staff under local lockdown arrangements will not be required to work on campus and should work from home, where possible.

**Review**

As with all University guidance developed at this time, our approach will continue to be adaptive to the changing requirements of government and public health bodies and to take account of our developing experience of resumption of on-campus activities. Colleagues should therefore check the FAQs frequently for updates to this information.

September 2020