

Subject: Coronavirus Update - changes to restrictions and density quotients
Date: Friday, 26 March 2021 11:17:00 AM



Coronavirus Update

Friday 26 March

Dear colleagues,

Today Victoria has reached 28 days of no community transmission of COVID-19 – the measure of virus elimination. Currently there are zero active cases in the state.

This week, the Victorian Government announced really encouraging changes to restrictions that will allow all of our staff to return to campus, working normal hours or a 60:40 blended arrangement, and much more freedom on campus for students.

As of 6:00pm this evening, Friday 26 March, the main changes to restrictions are:

- All workers in Victoria can return to work (removal of 75 per cent cap) and the total number of people allowed in a space changes (known as the density quotient)
- Learning and classroom spaces – no density quotient
- Staff and public areas – one person per 2 sqm – as long as electronic record keeping is in place in public spaces, such as QR codes. It is no longer one person per 4 sqm.
- Face masks are no longer required in supermarkets or shopping centres or indoor public spaces – but you still need to carry a mask and wear it on public transport, taxis, ride share, and in airports, hospitals and aged care settings
- Up to 100 can visit your home and outdoor public gatherings increase to a limit of 200 people

- Density quotient of one person per 2sqm but the removal of other limits on class sizes for outdoor and indoor physical recreation or fitness classes.

Following COVID safe measures like using QR codes, physical distancing and COVIDSafe HIRACs will continue to be important to our return.

You can learn more about the restrictions and read the government statement at [COVIDSafe Settings](#) or see the [full list of restrictions](#) at coronavirus.vic.gov.au.

Learning/classroom spaces – no density quotient

Density quotients no longer apply in learning/classroom spaces.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Portfolio) will meet with Deans and provide specific guidance to schools, requesting that as many classes as possible are brought back to face-to-face teaching for the second half of semester one and beyond (from after the Easter break).

However, small class sizes will remain in place for many of our courses and large lectures will remain online, as these benefit our students. The university is keen to bring face-to-face teaching back for as many courses as possible.

The Victorian Vice-Chancellors' Committee has also found from student feedback that students' mental health is significantly improved when they interact face-to-face.

We have excellent facilities on campus, and we want our students to enjoy the full university experience, rather than being stuck at home behind a computer screen.

Staff and public areas

Density limits have been increased to one person per two square metres in offices, shared staff areas and public spaces across campus. The current maximum occupant signage is being updated over the next fortnight to reflect the new increased maximum number of occupants.

QR codes are placed in all public areas and must be scanned when using these areas to enable full contact tracing information if needed.

Facilities can help you check the spacing between workstations if they have not done so already and we can have more staff together in the office.

Meetings online

Please continue to keep staff meetings online via Teams, even if you have a group of staff sitting together in the same office.

Most schools and directorates have staff working across campuses and it ensures that everyone is equally involved in your meetings – it's a practice that the university should embrace from now on as a multi-campus institution.

Physical distancing and face masks

Physical distancing should be practiced where possible. Face masks are no longer mandatory in education settings but are recommended when a minimum 1.5 metres distance cannot be maintained.

Practical help from Human Resources

Blended workforce arrangements are still available for staff looking to work a minimum of 60 per cent of their time in the office and some hours from home.

The [blended workforce principles](#) document also provides specific guidance on making arrangements with staff in high-risk health categories.

Human Resources can assist staff who may be in a high-risk health category or require special consideration in planning their safe return to campus.

The university regularly helps staff to return to work following illness or injury, whether personal or work related. Any staff experiencing concerns about returning to campus are encouraged to discuss these with their manager so we can ensure they are well supported through this transition.

On a final note, the anecdotal feedback to the TCG is that many people are feeling energised and productive, returning to the office and seeing colleagues, even if they were at first apprehensive. While the pandemic is not over, we are in an enviably safe position in Australia, that allows us to return to a more normal life.

The university welcomes these changes to the Victorian Government's [COVIDSafe Settings](#) as it sends a strong signal to our community that it is now safe for our staff and students to return to campus by following COVID safe principles.

Stay safe.

On behalf of the COVID-19 Transition Control Group

Federation University footer

