



Coronavirus Update

Wednesday, 28 October 2020

Dear colleagues,

Over the past week, the COVID-19 Transition Control Group (TCG) has been closely monitoring the Victorian Government announcements in relation to the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

While there are still many restrictions in place, we are pleased to see that our staff and students can start to engage in some of their favourite activities and see family and friends. We are encouraged by the very low daily case numbers.

We strongly encourage you to read the restriction information for [Melbourne metro areas](#) and [regional Victoria](#) for detailed advice.

Transition to campus commences November to February

The TCG is receiving many formal and informal requests for staff to return to campus.

Working from home will continue for most staff as directed by the current Victorian Government restrictions, but we will start to transition small groups of staff that wish to return to campus for a variety of reasons. This may include rostering where practical.

Our *Three-stage plan for a safe start on campus* had this process beginning on 23 November but we are now in a position to bring this date forward to 16 November – with a view to having the majority of staff back on campus by mid-February.

In regional Victoria, we can start this process sooner due to fewer restrictions but we must await further easing of restrictions before starting this process for our Berwick campus. This will commence as soon as the government allows.

In Brisbane, the majority of our staff have successfully returned to campus and this process is largely complete.

Next steps in transition to campus

This will be a phased process, guided by Deans and Directors, based on the need for some staff to work from campus rather than from home and recognising the needs of staff in high-risk categories to work from home for longer. We must emphasise that

returning to campus will initially be for a relatively small number of staff until restrictions are further relaxed.

For staff working on campus the following principles will continue to apply:

- physical distancing and available space requirements
- increased record-keeping for contact tracing. We are currently looking into the use of QR codes on campus, which are being rolled out at UniSports, in addition to our tracking applications already in place, to meet increased Department of Health and Human Services requirements
- no staff can return until appropriate Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control plans (HIRAC) are approved by the TCG for each staff member or groups of staff. You must be named on a HIRAC before transition to campus
- completion of the return to campus induction module
- appropriate workstation is available as hot desking will not be appropriate
- wearing of face masks on campus and additional cleaning requirements.

The TCG is asking all Deans and Directors to start discussions with their staff and teams to determine the order of who returns first and what challenges they may face that could delay their transition to campus.

Rostering of staff on different days could also be possible to keep numbers low but only where staff will have appropriate workstations and office equipment available to allow this to occur.

Staff will need to work cooperatively across business areas, in shared office environments, to ensure that physical distancing is maintained and ensure staff that support student activities can be prioritised.

HIRAC submission – completion and deadlines

Every staff member must have an approved HIRAC in place before transitioning to campus.

Even if your area has a HIRAC in place, you cannot return until your name is listed against that HIRAC including the date of your return, approved by the TCG.

You can find the *COVIDSafe TTC HIRAC* under [Risk, Health and Safety forms \(3. Hazards Management\)](#). If you need assistance in completing your HIRAC, we encourage you to speak to your area's Health and Safety Implementation Team (HSIT) representative for advice or [contact Risk, Health and Safety](#) directly.

As advised previously, the TCG requires five clear working days to assess and approve a HIRAC. The following HIRAC submission deadlines are relevant in the lead-up to Christmas.

STAFF RETURN DATE	SUBMIT TO TCG BY:

Monday 16 November	Thursday 5 November for Tuesday TCG
Monday 23 November	Thursday 12 November for Tuesday TCG
Monday 30 November	Thursday 19 November for Tuesday TCG
Monday 7 December	Thursday 26 November for Tuesday TCG
Monday 14 December	Thursday 3 December for Tuesday TCG
Monday 4 January 2021 Monday 11 January 2021	Thursday 10 December is the FINAL DAY to submit HIRACS for approval by the TCG in 2020

Please note, the TCG meets on a Tuesday and a Friday. Submission to a Tuesday meeting allows time if elements of your HIRAC need further assessment before approval.

Final steps to transition to campus

Once your HIRAC is approved, the TCG will notify your Dean or Director and Human Resources.

From HR you will receive:

- *Transition to campus induction online module* to complete
- an online form to confirm that you are returning all of the computer hardware, desks, chairs etc. that you used when working from home.

Both of these must be completed before you return. If you need assistance to bring any equipment back, you can contact Risk, Healthy and Safety via the contacts above for advice.

Increased DHHS contact tracing requirements

DHHS now requires us to keep enough information to be able to identify secondary contacts if there is a COVID-19 case on campus.

Currently a close contact is someone who has spent the following time with a person who is confirmed as having COVID-19:

- 15-minutes face-to-face
- two hours in the same room.

A secondary contact is someone who has spent this amount of time with a close contact.

Now that case numbers are so low, DHHS is increasing its contact tracing requirements to make sure that the virus does not re-emerge in the community and we all need to play our part by keeping accurate records to assist this process.

How do you feel about the transition to campus?

For many staff this news will come as a welcome relief, while for others, it may cause some apprehension and anxiety. It is completely understandable after adjusting to working from home over the past eight months, there will be some readjustment.

Most of us are much knowledgeable at running classes, meetings and events in virtual environments and that will continue, so we can maintain physical distancing and also work more inclusively across our campuses.

Supporting the health and wellbeing of our staff at Federation University and Federation TAFE has been an important priority throughout the pandemic and this continues.

You can find these resources on the Federation website via our [COVID-19 Support for staff](#), [Health and wellbeing](#) and [Coronavirus response](#) webpages.

Remember, if you are confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19, even if your symptoms are mild, it is vital that you remain isolated, do not come on campus and let us know.

- During business hours: call the **COVID-19 Hotline on (03) 5122 6300** (8:30 am to 5:00 pm).
- Outside business hours: call the **Emergency phone number 1800 333 732** for confirmed cases (positive test result). Call the COVID-19 Hotline for suspected cases and negative COVID-19 test results (leave a message to be followed up the next morning).

If you are COVID-free and must attend campus for a one-off visit, please [contact Security](#) via the campus numbers listed online.

Stay safe.

On behalf of the COVID-19 Transition Control Group

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