

Coronavirus Update

Tuesday, 26 July 2022

Dear colleagues,

The COVID Operations Group continues to monitor the evolution of the pandemic. In the current stage, staff are reminded of the importance of speaking to your line managers and/or local leadership (in the institutes, directorates, research centres) regarding any aspect of your workplace and working arrangements relating to COVID safety.

We also wanted to issue an important clarification to the close contact isolation requirements for staff, outlined below.

At this current 'living with COVID' stage of the pandemic it is a balancing act between maximising our presence on campus to ensure we provide the excellent education and services our students deserve, while also ensuring business continuity.

Our university and TAFE line managers and local leadership are empowered to make decisions to protect the safety of our staff, as they best understand the needs and risks specific to your work group.

Clarification – close contact isolation requirements for staff

If you find out you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (close contact means more than four hours in a household or similar setting) you must tell your line manager and discuss your options.

In most circumstances, the university or TAFE leadership will decide that you must work from home, to limit the potential of COVID transmission within work groups.

If you are caring for a member of your household who has tested positive for COVID-19, isolation leave is available to you.

If in those discussions it is determined that you can come to campus, you must follow the government requirements before leaving isolation – as outlined below.

In Victoria, you must:

- Wear a face mask in all indoor settings when outside of your home, including at all times indoors in the workplace

- Undertake five Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) during the self-quarantine period with a negative result each time, with a minimum of 24 hours between each test
- A close contact must not attend certain settings – such as a hospitals or care facilities – unless they have approval from a relevant hospital or care facility executive or unless they are a worker of those facilities then special requirements apply. If attending a placement or work at these facilities, please confirm their workplace requirements before attending
- Go to <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-contacts> for more

In Queensland, the following applies:

- It is recommended that you work or study from home if you can during the 7-day close contact period
- If you have any COVID-19 symptoms during the close contact period, you need to get tested and isolate while the symptoms clear
- Go to <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/stay-informed/exposed-to-covid/close-contacts> for more

Face masks

While wearing a face mask indoor and in crowded settings is not mandated in most university settings, it is strongly recommended to protect yourself and the most vulnerable. There is a mandatory requirement to wear a face mask in the following settings: visiting an on-campus medical centre or childcare centre, for healthcare practicals, care facilities, rideshare/taxis and custodial settings.

Staff and students are strongly encouraged to wear face masks while indoor and when they cannot maintain 1.5m distance from others.

Workplace flexibility

There are a number of reports in the media about private companies moving back to working from home arrangements, but there is no government mandate that reflects this, and it is for employers to consider what is most appropriate for their workplace.

On campus and practical teaching, learning, research, and student services are a core part of our business, as well as providing a welcoming campus environment.

While we will not be returning to working from home, if you have concerns you can raise these with your line managers or local leadership for consideration, regarding flexibility around hybrid working arrangements or rostering of staff in a way that limits the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

COVID safety on campus

Federation has implemented a major program of work to make our campuses safe.

This includes physical distancing, hand sanitiser stations, cleaning products for shared spaces, increased ventilation measures (mechanical and building automation) and the COVID-19 hotline **(03) 5122 6300** to report a positive case.

We also require that staff **do not come to campus if you are sick**. Even if you have tested negative for COVID-19, if you are sick, please stay at home.

Our Victorian campuses are spacious environments and very different to crowded campuses of city universities. Our Brisbane Campus is also spacious, as well as a modern facility with modern ventilation systems.

You can find detailed information on current Victorian pandemic orders at coronavirus.vic.gov.au/how-we-work-current-restrictions and Queensland COVID-19 restrictions at [COVID-19 restrictions in Queensland | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/covid-19-restrictions).

You can also find more information via [People and Culture Toolkits](#), including Staff FAQs, our [Coronavirus Response webpage](#) and the university's [COVIDSafe Plan](#).

Stay safe and stay well,

On behalf of the COVID-19 Transition Control Group

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