

Subject: Coronavirus Update
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Coronavirus Update

Wednesday 10 February 2021

Dear colleagues,

The sudden change to COVID-19 restrictions in Victoria last week took many of us by surprise and left some staff wondering whether it impacts our transition to campus plans. Further to our communications last week, the COVID-19 Transition Control Group has looked closely at the changes and reflected that these do not have a significant impact on our transition to campus.

The majority of Federation University's staff will continue to return to campus throughout February, with many choosing blended workforce arrangements, as planned.

Our culture must be student-centric. Seeing vibrancy return to our campuses after the first lockdown almost a year ago is an exciting moment. We can't wait to see our students and staff enjoying our spacious regional campuses once again.

Keeping up to date with restrictions

Over the past year, we have seen that restrictions change quickly when there are outbreaks, even with just a single case. Federation has always committed to follow the directives from the Victorian and Queensland Governments and we continue to do so.

As members of the community, we are all expected to be aware of the restrictions and rules in place to protect our community. If you're not sure how to keep up with the immediacy of the changes, here are some links to useful resources to follow:

- Daily check of the following government websites for changes and alerts at www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au or www.covid19.qld.gov.au
- Download the **VicEmergency app** on Android and Apple devices. There is a link on the home screen to Pandemic Advice for Victoria and notifications are issued to your phone when this advice changes
- You can also follow health authorities on social media for regular updates including the [Victorian Department of Health and Human Services](http://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-department-of-health-and-human-services) and [Queensland Health](http://www.health.qld.gov.au)
- Read, listen and watch the news. Most are broadcasting government updates as they happen.

Face masks on campus

We understand that there is some frustration around the wearing of face masks when working indoors on campus – and how quickly this situation changed last week.

We cannot opt out of Victorian government directives. We have seen that mandating face mask indoors is one of the quickest and most effective ways of protecting the community when positive cases are confirmed, and the government will choose to use this measure.

Please be patient, as we have also seen that the government will quickly ease this requirement when the risk passes.

Blended Workforce Principles

Federation University endeavours to provide a flexible and supportive work environment. The [Blended workforce principles](#) outline the process and principles for how we can work together to keep our campuses COVID safe, through a variety of work arrangements. These outline:

- Flexible working arrangements – the different options available
- Requests for flexibility – how to formally apply for flexible work and what factors will be taken into consideration
- Position suitability – checklist of factors that may not make flexible work feasible
- Facilities and equipment – the equipment you need to work effectively on campus or at home (the university is not obliged to provide office and computer equipment for two locations)
- Space management provisions – desks and physical space requirements
- Approval processes and renewals – forms and checklists to apply and formalise your arrangements.

As students return for Semester 1, 2021, if your role is needed on campus for face-to-face student interaction and advice, you will need to return to campus to ensure our students services are appropriately resourced.

Events and meetings

As restrictions ease there is more scope to hold small face-to-face events, but virtual events will also continue in 2021, in particular for large audiences or for events that reach across campuses.

If you are looking to hold an event, you must comply with our [COVIDSafe Plan](#) and have a [COVIDSafe HIRAC](#) in place (approved by the Dean or Director in the relevant area) to make sure you comply with density limits for the spaces you are using, physical distancing, hygiene measures, notifications to attendees, Facilities and Security, and having a first aider on campus in the case of an emergency. We also ask you to consider whether the event could be held outside (weather permitting).

Orientation 2021 is a great example of this. The main Orientation event will be held online, with a series of much smaller events held over the first half of Semester 1 targeting students' Schools and interests.

We ask that staff meetings continue to be held online for the time being. This is particularly important with our blended workforce arrangements in place and staff working across campuses. It helps ensure no-one misses out on important updates.

Contact tracing and QR codes

As we start to move around campus more, it is critical that your work area and your classes are covered by a COVIDSafe HIRAC, or are listed in our timetabling system, so we know which staff members and students are on campus and when.

This ensures that if someone is diagnosed with COVID-19 and has attended our campus in the past 14 days, we can quickly get in touch with any close contacts of that person. These records are also used to support contact tracing by health authorities.

In communal spaces around Federation University, such as cafes and libraries, you will also see QR codes are in place for contact tracing purposes. Please use these when you use any facilities outside of your usual offices or teaching spaces. We recommend you download the *Service Victoria* app for ease-of-use of the QR codes.

Facilities requests – staff transition to campus

With many offices unoccupied for almost a year, you may have additional requests for Facilities Services to fix problems that may have developed over this time, due to disuse of the facilities, in particular communal kitchens.

Please speak to your manager about who is best placed to put in a [PULSE request](#) (formerly BEIMS) to organise for maintenance and other services.

Further advice about our transition to campus

We have recently updated the Coronavirus Response webpage for 2021, with general advice and links to government authorities for more information.

Under [COVID-19 transition to our campuses](#), you can find further information about the use of staff kitchens, the four basic principles for a safe transition, how to complete the staff induction before you return, and some useful tips on moving computer equipment from home to the office.

We encourage you to have a look at the page and the government links above, as we return to campus for a fresh start in this COVID Safe Summer.

Stay safe.

On behalf of the COVID-19 Transition Control Group

