

Coronavirus Update

FRIDAY 27 MARCH, 2020

Dear colleagues

Please see below the latest daily update for staff with information and actions Federation is taking to respond to the coronavirus COVID-19 situation.

Building access

As we move to online delivery on Monday and a large number of staff are now working from home, we will be restricting access to buildings on all campuses. From today, we will change to public holiday and weekend mode. This means staff and students will only be able to gain access to buildings using their swipe cards. Staff and students who do not already have swipe access, will not be able to enter these building. There will be notices put up on building entry points today with a phone number for staff and students to call if they need access to a building.

Research activities to be scaled back

The university will begin scaling back research activities in anticipation of further stage three government restrictions, as flagged by the [Victorian Premier](#). Only laboratories mandated to be open by the government may remain open. Staff should begin an orderly closure of research laboratories, which must be completed by **Tuesday 31 March**. For laboratories that remain open, strict social distancing and occupational health and safety (OH&S) standards must be maintained.

Field work should also be scaled back and stopped by **Tuesday 31 March** as we prepare for the possibility of further restrictions on people's movements. Many research activities can continue through desktop access to library resources and data repositories. Supervisors are asked to provide guidance to higher degree by research (HDR) students and research assistants in these circumstances.

Research staff and students should ensure that research data is curated and stored in an approved repository according to our policy (RS1836) and in accordance with the revised Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2019).

For contract research, please inform the research office if these restrictions are likely to lead to missed milestones within a project. The grants and contracts team will then negotiate contract extensions and variations.

HR update

Our payroll team is responding to a large number of leave bookings and enquiries due to the current situation. Additional HR staff are now working with the payroll team to help them respond to you as quickly as possible. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we all do our best to adapt to this challenging time.

Please note, the additional leave categories for casual general/professional staff and TAFE sessional staff must include dates and hours being claimed to enable payroll to seamlessly process requests.

Some of our casual staff have enquired about separation certificates, the university has been notified by Centrelink that employment separation certificates will not be required during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure application processing is expedited.

Applications for financial assistance to Centrelink can be made through the [MyGov](#) website and applicants will be notified if further information is required. There is no requirement for initial applications to be made in person at the Centrelink offices.

UniSuper has also put together a helpful fact sheet with information about how to contact them to discuss your superannuation, as well the measures government has put in place around superannuation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The fact sheet is attached to this email.

With the majority of staff working from home from next week, the HR team has also put together the following toolkits to help staff and their manager's implement safe and effective working arrangements. This includes:

- [Working from home - information guide \(pdf, 242kb\)](#)
- [Managing remote workers - Manager toolkit \(pdf, 290kb\)](#)
- [Demystifying digital – information guide \(pdf, 126kb\)](#)
- [Professional development – virtual sessions \(pdf, 112kb\)](#)

These toolkits are available on the staff section of our [coronavirus response webpage](#).

If you do have any questions about types of leave, working from home arrangements or other HR questions related to the pandemic, please call our new COVID-19 HR hotline on (03) 5122 6300 between 8.30am – 5.00pm daily to speak to an HR team member.

On behalf of the Critical Incident Response Team