Physics and Astronomy Phase I and II COVIDSafe Return to Campus plan
28 May 2020

The Department of Physics and Astronomy is required to implement a plan for administering the return of its members to campus during Phase I and II of Macquarie University’s COVIDSafe return to work on campus plan. All staff and students wishing to work on campus require prior approval by the FSE executive on advice of the Head of Department or Department Manager.

All staff and students are advised to monitor the MQ Coronavirus page¹ for the latest information and are strongly encouraged to install and run the COVIDSafe app² on their mobile phones.

Principles
This Department plan has been developed to ensure compliance with the Macquarie University COVIDSafe plan³, the Return to Work on Campus plan⁴, and the Return to Work Research Plan⁵

The University’s COVIDSafe Plan prioritises

- maintaining 1.5m physical distance during all activities and interactions
- practising hand and respiratory hygiene during all activities and interactions
- frequent cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, areas and equipment
- staying home if unwell and not conducting or participating in activities
- a cautious and stepwise COVIDSafe Plan for research that shares responsibility across the DVCR’s Office, Faculties, Departments, Research leaders, teams and facilities

The University’s Return to work Research Plan prioritises

- time-critical research work
- time constraints and needs of HDR students, especially MRes Year 2 students
- projects with non-negotiable, externally driven milestones or deadlines
- equity of access and opportunity especially for those disproportionately impacted (e.g., women researchers, ECRs).

Compliance
It is a requirement of attendance on campus that guidelines laid out in this document and those detailed in relevant University Plans be observed in full by all staff and students. To facilitate contact tracing in the event of an outbreak and to ensure that we are satisfying University on-campus attendance limits, all people who plan to attend campus must first be granted authorisation. Those who have been granted authorisation to attend campus will be required to complete a compliance declaration. Department members found to be attending campus without authorisation, or who fail to comply with relevant COVIDSafe guidelines may be asked to leave campus immediately.

¹ https://www.mq.edu.au/about/coronavirus-faqs
⁴ https://www.mq.edu.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0013/989698/Return-to-Work-on-Campus-Plan-18-May-2020-FINAL.docx
⁵ a copy can be obtained from the Head of Department or Associate Dean Research; online copy not available at the time of publication of this document
Approvals and load monitoring
The University’s Phase I plan requires an on-campus presence of less than 25% of normal Department numbers. Phase II allows up to 50% of normal numbers. Particularly in Phase I, we expect requests for on-campus time to exceed the allowed limit and we will have to ration and prioritise access.

New requests for regular patterns of attendance (in labs and/or offices) for individuals or groups should be submitted to the Head of Department through this webform. Short one-off visits to offices may be arranged by contacting the Department Manager at least 24 hours in advance.

To ensure equity of access to campus while also ensuring that we meet occupancy limits, the following information will be considered when assessing access requests:

- expected days and/or fraction of attendance
- approximate reason for on-campus attendance and any special conditions or circumstances
- current actual on-campus load

Individuals won’t need separate approval for each space or lab that they may intend to access. Department members approved to attend campus for lab-based work may access all labs for which they are qualified and authorised, subject to the approval of the lab manager/academic supervisor and in compliance with occupancy rules and any roster system in place for those spaces. However, to facilitate contact tracing, all labs that are likely to be accessed by an individual must be included in the access request. Any amendments required following approval should be addressed to the Head of Department.

Following assessment of a request for access, departmental notification of approval to attend campus (whether granted to an individual or a research group) will include indication of the maximum number of on-campus attendance days per week that have been granted. Staff and students will be required to comply with that allowance.

In the event of illness
**Do not attend campus if you are unwell. Do not remain on campus if you begin to feel unwell.**

If you feel ill while on campus you are required to depart immediately. Notify your supervisor/line manager and the Head of Department (michael.steel@mq.edu.au; 9850 8916) or Department Manager (emma.hastings@mq.edu.au; 9850 8911) by phone or email so that relevant MQ contact teams can be informed and health safety protocols can be activated.

Spaces and relevant protocols
Department members are advised to contact the leadership team if they identify and need to use a space not covered below.

Hand sanitiser and/or hand wash will be made available in common spaces; research groups will be required to maintain stocks of the same for their labs and facilities. Regular cleaning by MQ Property will continue in non-lab spaces and is to be complemented by all staff and students conducting spot cleaning, especially after use of common spaces. The leadership and technical teams will be on campus
daily during Phases I and II and will conduct regular visits to common and office spaces, and irregular
visits to research spaces.

All on campus attendance (whether in labs, offices or common spaces) will be conducted between the
hours of 7am and 7pm Monday to Friday; weekend access will be authorised by the Head of Department
only in exceptional circumstances.

The following protocols apply:

Common areas (including kitchens, lounge areas, meeting spaces, toilets)
- observe occupancy rules (maximum allowable people)
- observe standard physical distancing and hygiene guidelines
- regular spot cleaning by all users to complement regular MQ Property cleaning regime
- stagger mealtimes where practicable
- NO leaving an untidy area (zero tolerance for dirty kitchen, meeting spaces)
- NO use of high touch point appliances such as coffee machine

Offices and open plan areas (including shared offices and HDR desking)
- limit occupancy of small offices to maximum two people at any one time
- observe standard physical distancing and hygiene guidelines
- avoid occupying adjacent or opposite desks where practicable
- NO hot-desking or shared computers
- NO meals in shared offices or open plan areas

Small group research labs (individual labs typically accessed by no more than 5 people with a single
common supervisor)
- observe occupancy rules (maximum allowable people)
- observe standard physical distancing and hygiene guidelines
- ensure appropriate internal and external signage of the above is posted
- observe working alone guidelines including agreed buddy contact systems
- observe an agreed plan for appropriate cleaning and PPE. The plan should address availability of
  hand wash and/or hand sanitiser, availability of gloves and masks, daily cleaning procedure and
  disinfecting of high touch surfaces/equipment where practicable
- research group lead/supervisor leads a regular discussion of COVIDSafe compliance and related
  issues in a group meeting at least fortnightly
- seek advice from Department leadership where occupancy limits/physical distancing and other
  safety requirements conflict (e.g. moving heavy equipment in teams, or procedures that
  normally involve multiple people)
- observe special procedures for lab inductions or equipment inductions as detailed in the
  guidelines below

Multi-group research labs (typically wet-lab, prep or fume hood spaces used by a significant number of
people, often with a lab manager separate from academic supervisors)
- observe all guidelines as indicated above for Small group research labs
- lab manager is to maintain a weekly roster and attendance records
Lab inductions and new procedure training

Laboratory and equipment inductions often require participants to be close together for a period of time. If training is sought for a one-off use of a lab or piece of equipment (e.g., measuring a small number of samples on a UV spectrometer) and the time involved is not large, it is preferred that another member of the group with existing training perform the experiment.

If an induction can be performed with standard physical distancing maintained at all times, it may be requested and proceed as normal.

Where some period of close proximity is required to ensure correct usage, the following procedures should apply:

1. All inductions and training are to be considered on a case by case basis with a relevant risk assessment and need assessment in place. Approval is required from the lab manager/supervisor before proceeding with the induction or training.
2. Trainer and trainee will be granted the opportunity to discuss any concerns with their supervisor in advance of the induction or training.
3. Trainer and trainee will only proceed in the case that both are in good health and neither are experiencing symptoms of cold or flu at the time of induction or training. (In which case that person should not be on campus).
4. While we are not recommending the use of face masks or gloves during inductions, this is permissible providing this is not in conflict with other PPE necessary for safe use of the laboratory or instrument.
5. Trainer and trainee will stand at a practical distance during the induction subject to maintaining good viewing of demonstration (trainer) and practice (trainee) procedures.
6. Trainer will report back to lab/manager supervisor following the session with any suggested changes to the above protocols.