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| **Question** | **Answer** |
| Why are we bringing back face-to-face teaching in S2? | Many students found studying through an online mode challenging in S1 and are keen to return to on campus learning activities. That staff return to campus is in line with Phase 3 of the University’s Return to Campus plan which commences on 20 July.  To mitigate risk, the University has put in place a number of risk control measures, including:   * Keeping lectures online. For many students the face-to-face interaction in their unit of study has been reduced by as much as 2/3rds of their weekly class hours. * Keeping consultations online or via other forms of electronic communication * Reducing the scheduling and duration of some learning activities in some units of study * Exempting 170+ units of study from delivering a campus-based learning activity and, where possible, increasing the utilisation of those approximately 225 units already scheduled for fully online asynchronous delivery only.   Allowing students in most units of study (except for those that have essential campus-based learning activities) to continue to undertake all learning activities online if that suits their personal circumstances. At present our working assumption is that about 40% of students will seek to continue to complete learning activities in synchronous online mode in S2. |
| Are we still implementing physical distancing requirements? | While we are exempt from the NSW Public Health Order relating to the so-called ‘Four Square Metre” rule, we remain obliged by WorkSafe guidelines to continue to maintain physical distancing where possible. The University has finalised a range of risk control measures where sustained physical distancing in specific teaching spaces and specific learning activities is not practical.  The University’s actions will be in line with government guidelines/rules and with the responses of other universities. |
| What are the risk control measures being put in place to deal with physical distancing? | The University is taking the following actions.  Any individual class scheduled for campus delivery and which has an enrolment of more than 50 students and does not require a specialist teaching space will be assigned a lecture space where physical distancing protocols will be implemented.  Where possible, general teaching spaces will have their furniture layout altered to enhance physical distancing. To facilitate timetabling and class registration in these reconfigured teaching spaces, Timetabling has reduced the capacity of these spaces to 75% in the timetable system. Further refinement of capacity will take place as spaces are reconfigured.  The reconfiguration of teaching space will not normally lead to a reduction in face to face class sizes as classes will be moved to larger rooms to accommodate the designated class size, e.g. your tutorial can still have 30 students for campus delivery, but may be assigned a larger room than you would normally expect to meet the physical distancing reconfiguration of the room.  Signage will be amended to reflect the new class capacity and guides and markings will be posted/affixed to advise students of ingress and egress protocols.  Automatic hand sanitiser dispensers will be stationed in the vicinity of all teaching spaces for staff and student use.  Antibacterial wipes will be available in teaching spaces.  Single use face masks will be available in all teaching spaces where physical distancing cannot be sustained for the entirety of the lesson.  If a unit of study requires further risk control measures for its safe conduct, a risk assessment will be completed with advice provided by the WHS unit and a risk mitigation plan will be devised for approval by the Executive Dean.  Further risk control measures will be implemented if and as required. |
| Is our approach to a return to on campus teaching risky? | Despite the recent outbreak in South Western Sydney, levels of COVID-19 community transmission in NSW remain very low. Thus, the risk of contracting COVID-19 in NSW remains extremely low.  We continue to follow the advice from NSW Health at all times, and key senior members of the University’s Executive Group who have expertise in this space are monitoring all advice from all key sources routinely. This includes regular direct communication with the NSW Chief Health Officer, and her Office.  We also continue to follow the advice of SafeWork NSW. The University will consult via the WHS committees and the representatives network on the measures being proposed to manage the risk under these changed conditions of management.  We are well placed to respond to any changed circumstances promptly. |
| How can I contribute to the decision-making process and express my views? | The assessment of risk and the mitigation strategies described here are open to your input and the University encourages you to provide feedback and express your view on the matter. |
| What are the plans to get people in and out of classrooms safely? | COVID physical distancing signs will be installed outside teaching rooms to provide advice about ingress and egress. |
| Will desks, lecterns, boards be appropriately cleaned between each use and how this will be accommodated in the schedule? | Disposable wipes will be provided for lecturing staff to use on their own desks and students asked to wipe their desks prior to use. Property will not be undertaking cleaning between classes. |
| Will masks or other PPE be required by teaching staff? | As noted above, masks will be available in those teaching spaces where physical distancing cannot be sustained due to the layout of the space or the activity engaged in.  With the current extremely low levels of COVID-19 transmission in NSW there is no need for masks or PPE within the university more broadly. Of course, this situation may change, and we would take appropriate action as required.  The essential actions for optimal protection from COVID-19 (and influenza and other respiratory viruses) remain to be 1) physical distancing (1.5m) where possible and avoiding large groups, 2) strict personal hand hygiene, 3) limiting contact with common surfaces, and 4) remaining at home if you have any respiratory symptoms at all. |
| I am particularly vulnerable to the risks of contracting COVID-19 – how will my situation be handled? | The advice from SafeWork Australia and the Australian Health Authorities is that the following staff are considered to be ‘vulnerable workers’ because they are at greater risk of more serious illness with COVID-19:   * Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions * people 65 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions * people 70 years and older * people with compromised immune systems.   The current advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee is that as the current level of COVID-19 cases is low, people, even those at higher risk of becoming severely ill from COVID-19, can return to work and other settings with appropriate precautions in place.  If you are in a high-risk category for COVID-19, please inform your manager of this to ensure that it can be considered in any planning and that reasonable accommodations can be made. Help, advice, and assistance is available to staff and managers from Workplace Health and Safety.  If a vulnerable worker is not comfortable returning to work on campus or they are in a student-facing role, they should seek further advice from Workplace Health and Safety. |
| What can I do to help mitigate risks? | It is very important that If you are unwell, you must not attend campus. Please stay at home to avoid putting your colleagues or students at risk. If you have respiratory symptoms, a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms you should get tested for COVID-19, as per National Guidelines. If you would like to speak with someone about your symptoms, [call your doctor](https://protect-au.mimecast.com/s/GOEcCjZ12RfgG13Wf1GGwJ?domain=healthdirect.gov.au) or contact the National Coronavirus hotline on **1800 020 080**.  If you get tested, please notify Risk and Assurance at [grant.whitehorn@mq.edu.au](mailto:whs@mq.edu.au) and notify us of the result (even if negative). You must not return to campus until you have received your result and it is negative. If you test positive, you will be required to self-quarantine per Government regulations.  You should always maintain good handwashing and cough/sneeze hygiene. Regular hand washing with soap and water is strongly encouraged. Hand sanitiser will also be provided across the campus. Links to Government guidance on how to wash hands and use sanitiser are included in the COVIDSafe Plan.  Rooms have been set up to ensure appropriate physical distancing, it is important that you use the rooms as they have been set up and do not make any changes to the room configuration. If you are attending a meeting or a teaching space, please do not linger unnecessarily. |
| What do I do if I’m due to teach and I’m unwell? e.g. cold symptoms | You should notify your Supervisor as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.  It is very important that if you are unwell, you must not attend campus. Please stay at home to avoid putting your colleagues or students at risk. If you have respiratory symptoms, a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms you should get tested for COVID-19, as per National Guidelines.  If you get tested, please notify Risk and Assurance at [grant.whitehorn@mq.edu.au](mailto:grant.whitehorn@mq.edu.au) and notify them of the result (even if negative). You must not return to campus until you have received your result and it is negative. If you test positive, you will be required to self-quarantine per Government regulations. |
| Will sanitizer be provided at or near entrances to classrooms? | Yes. |
| For specialised teaching spaces (laboratories, skills development areas), will the previously approved Business Recovery Plans (BRP) apply, or will pre-COVID Business as Usual (BAU) arrangements apply? | For some practical lab classes, studio activities or clinical practicums with existing BRP plans, these arrangements have remained in place. For others, changes have been made as per the above guidelines. Executive Deans have approved all cases. |
| What will happen if there is an outbreak on campus? In the community? | If there is a further outbreak that affects the University or our community, our response will be guided by relevant advice from government. Contingency plans for dealing for such circumstances are being finalised. Possible responses could include a short suspension of campus activity or in a worst-case scenario a reversion back to fully online teaching and learning. |