



Returning to Campus – Line Manager/Head of School/Unit Guidance Document

We are working on our plans for returning to Campus in September 2021 in line with the Government position to increase on site learning for students in Higher Education for the coming academic year.

With this in mind, I am sure that you will have a number of questions with respect to returning to campus. For some staff it will be almost 18 months since we last worked on campus.

We have put together some questions and answers for managers in anticipation of some of the queries that may arise. We have also put together an advice document for staff.

1. How do I decide on the return to campus for staff?

The decision on returning to campus should be done in a planned manner. This should be led by the activities and work that needs to be done on campus to maximise the on-site learning and to support the teaching, learning and research activities on campus. The business needs for on-campus attendance should be decided by the unit and unit manager and then communication of the plan and any details should be provided to staff.

2. What date are staff likely to be coming back to Campus?

It is likely to be from 30 August 2021 onwards. It will depend on the area and the nature of the work. Some areas may come back before 30 August and others may be after that date. The return will be dependent on the nature of the work to be undertaken.

3. What if a staff member advises they are in a high risk category and cannot return to campus?

In circumstances where a staff member advises that they are in at risk categories, or staff who are pregnant and have not yet been vaccinated, and have concerns about returning to Campus, they may be referred to our Occupational Health Service to be reviewed. We would ask that you advise the level of on-campus activity the individual staff member is being asked to undertake, and the work that is being undertaken. This will help to inform the Occupational Health Service to advise more clearly. In addition, if the employee has a letter for a GP or Consultant this should also be provided to the Occupational Health Physician. Once a report has been received back from Occupational Health then a meeting with the employee will be required. HR support will be available for the Line Manager/Head of School/Unit in relation to the next steps and the necessary conversation to be had with the staff member.

4. Will staff be required to complete a Return to Campus form?

In compliance with Health and Safety Guidelines, **all staff** will be required to complete a return to campus form at least 3 days before their return to campus. The form will be to ensure that they are not symptomatic, or required to isolate at that time. This year the form will have less questions and will not ask staff for medical status i.e. whether an employee is deemed high risk or not. Where an employee is high risk and has concerns, these should be discussed directly with the Line Manager or Head of School/Unit. [You can find the form here](#) (note NUI Galway staff will need to log in with their Office 365 credentials to access the form).

5. Does the Line Manager/ Head of School/Unit have to conduct all of the return to work discussions? This could be difficult in cases where there are large teams.

Whilst in the majority of cases any discussion around returning to campus will be facilitated by the Line Manager/Head of School/Unit, it is recognised that for larger schools or units senior management may need to assign an alternative manager to support the local planning process so as to ensure every staff member has access to this support.

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6. What do I do if a staff member advises that they have any symptoms?

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu.

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

If an employee advised that they have any common symptoms of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), they should self-isolate, and phone their GP straight away to see if you need a free COVID-19 test. They should inform you as Line Manager/Head of School/Unit that they are unwell, and have contacted their GP and are awaiting a test. Where they can work remotely, they should continue to work if they are feeling well enough. If they are unwell and unable to work then they will be required to provide a medical certificate.

Once an employee has the results of their COVID-19 test they should inform their manager. If they have a positive test, then it will be recorded as COVID related leave with pay. Any other absence will be recorded as normal sick leave.

7. What should I advise staff if they are requesting to apply for Remote/Hybrid Working?

At this time, we are working on a Remote/Hybrid Working Policy which we hope to have approved by the end of September. In the meantime, we would see that in returning to campus for the coming academic year it is likely to be a hybrid-working model, with staff working a number of days on campus and some days remotely at home depending on the need of the unit. At this time, we are not being prescriptive in what that working arrangement should be; it will depend on the business needs. What we would ask, however, is for there to be fairness and transparency in any decision that is made.

8. Can a staff member work remote outside of the Country?

All staff whether their role requires them to be on campus or they are working from home should be residing in the Republic of Ireland.

9. What are the Public Health Measure to be in place for the return to campus?

The advice around mask wearing while in indoor spaces and hand hygiene remains in place. You should continue to make yourself aware of the changes to Public Health Measures as they arise. Advice will also be available on the University Building & Estates website.

10. What supports will be available to staff returning to campus who may be nervous?

The Occupational Health Provider (OHP) and Employee Assistance Service (EAS) are available to staff if they are worried or concerned about any aspect of returning to campus and wish to discuss those concerns and worries with someone.

11. What is the UniCov project?

We have advised staff that they have the option to partake in the university project as NUI Galway is part of an important new, on campus, COVID-19 testing research study.



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The aim is to assess rapid testing for COVID-19 and develop an early warning system for outbreaks in universities. Ultimately, the findings could prove to be a vital part in the planning for as many students and staff to be back on campus.

To succeed, we need staff and students to take part, even if fully vaccinated. You will have the opportunity to be tested twice a week.

You might also like to remind staff of this project. The details for participating in the UniCoV study can be found at <https://unicov.org/join-the-study-nui-galway/>

12. What is the position with the Covid Vaccination?

We will not be requiring staff to show that they have been vaccinated. We would of course encourage staff to avail of the vaccination.

The HSE Vaccination portal is now open and you can register at <https://vaccine.hse.ie/>

To register online you will need your Personal Public Service (PPS) number, your Eircode, a mobile phone number and an email address. After registering on the website or by phone, you will receive an appointment 3-7 days before your vaccination at a HSE vaccination centre.

The HSE have also have walk-in vaccination centres operating as well if staff wish to avail of that option.

Note: Employers and staff must keep themselves up to date on Public Health information as this will be updated on a regular basis.