

**11 January 2022 2:10pm**

**All staff email from Professor David G. Lloyd, Vice-Chancellor and President**

Dear Colleagues

Welcome back and happy 2022!

I do hope that you managed to get some quality downtime over the holiday break. I'd also rather hoped I wouldn't have to write many more emails on the topic of Covid-19 this year but it seems to be the gift that keeps on giving. What we have seen epidemiologically is certainly encouraging. Vaccination is clearly suppressing the severity and duration of illness for those displaying symptoms, affording protection and minimising the hospitalisation risk for those who are fully jabbed – which is good – and underpins the importance of vaccination for us all.

Of course, given that we have seen a shift in the impact of Covid-19 societally since borders reopened and with increasing case numbers, it's appropriate that we would clarify how the University is approaching business continuity and operations in the coming weeks.

Firstly, I want to emphasise that we will no longer be 'reacting' to Covid-19 exposure or cases as exceptional events – we are moving to recognise the endemic nature of the virus and to normalise our reaction to its occurrence in our population. We will manage Covid-19 in accordance with all applicable health regulations and advice, and as we would any other communicable illness that may occur within a population as large and diverse as the University community.

**The following arrangements are in effect until close of business on 31st March 2022.**

During this period:

The University remains open for business for our teaching, research, support and administrative functions. Where you can carry out your duties remotely or from home, have the appropriate line management approvals in place and should you choose to do so, you have the flexibility to work remotely. Where you are required to carry out your duties from an on-campus location, all applicable Covid-19 management protocols will be in effect.

- All lectures will be delivered online. Where practicums and tutorials or other teaching, learning or research activities can be delivered online, this should also be facilitated.
- Where specific teaching, learning or research activities require face-to-face delivery, they will be delivered face-to-face in accordance with all applicable Covid-19 management protocols.
- Student placements will be managed in accordance with the applicable regulations of the placement partner.

**From close of business tonight and until further notice, facemasks will be mandatory for all attendees of all on-campus activities unless medically exempted.**

- All staff, students and visitors will be required to wear facemasks in all University settings – including all public, shared office or administration, meeting, library, laboratory, teaching, learning and research facilities. This approach will mitigate ‘close contact’ risk for our entire community.

In terms of other elements of day-to-day Covid-19 management, I believe it is important for us to recognise and collectively normalise the reality of living with Covid in our community in as safe, pragmatic and trust-based way as possible and as such, the following considerations apply.

- You do not need to book leave to get a Covid-19 vaccination or booster, just inform your line manager, who will be as accommodating as possible.
- Similarly, you do not need to book leave if you need to get tested for Covid-19 . Again, please inform your line manager, who will be as accommodating as possible.
- If you are deemed a close contact and subject to an isolation order, please follow the [Reporting Protocol](#). You should be able to continue to work remotely during the applicable period.
- Should you test positive for Covid-19, we also ask that you follow the [Reporting Protocol](#) as soon as practicable to ensure your line manager is informed and we can manage any business continuity considerations as we would with any instance of personal illness.
  - You should not attend physically at work for 14 days after returning a positive Covid-19 test result.
- If you are Covid-19 positive and symptomatic, or even if you are Covid-19 positive and asymptomatic, during the applicable isolation period you are fully entitled to avail of sick leave.
- If you choose not to avail of sick leave while subject to an isolation period and would rather wish to work remotely, you can continue do that.
- If you are caring for someone who is Covid-19 positive, you can avail of carer’s leave or family responsibility leave – that’s what those provisions are there for.

From tomorrow, the University will no longer be enacting internal ‘contact tracing’ nor will we maintain live listings of exposure sites where Covid-19 positive cases may have attended. In any instance where a positive case is known to have been on campus in our facilities, the appropriate sanitisation measures will be applied.

Students should inform their Course Coordinators directly (and HDR students their supervisor(s)) if they have returned a positive Covid-19 test result or if they are required to self-isolate by virtue of having been deemed a close contact, and again the supports and consideration ordinarily afforded in any occurrence of personal illness will apply.

Collectively, these measures afford us a risk minimisation framework for dealing with endemic Covid-19 in our community. The approach is practical and equitable and mirrors that enacted in the wider general community. These measures will be continually reviewed and as we approach SP2 Census Date (31st March 2022) further advice will be forthcoming.

Thank you for your continued forbearance and patience, I’m hopeful that we are turning the corner on this one and that we will return to conducting business as usual on campus in the short term.

Best regards