

Protocols for HE – review end of summer term

1. University leaders and union representatives will work together to ensure that staff returning to the workplace are supported and enabled to do so via a system of safe operating procedures based on local risk assessments. University leaders will consult with union representatives in a timely manner on plans which will be developed in line with Welsh government advice and guidance, and Management of Health and Safety Regulations¹.
2. Any return to the workplace will be managed sensitively and will take account of the potential individual concerns and anxieties of staff.
3. Staff with specific concerns or particular anxieties about a request to return to the university, or other workplace, should speak with their line manager and support and guidance will be offered in each instance. Where evidence can be produced that supports an 'increased risk' to the individual member of staff or their family, there will be a discussion with the institution on how this risk can be mitigated and the individual's requirements can be accommodated.
4. Individual risk assessments should be undertaken by a 'competent person' (as defined by health & safety regulations²), involving health and safety reps where possible.
5. Where it is practicable, for employees/workers who were formally shielding or assessed as being at a higher risk should be encouraged to work from home.
6. Universities must inform all staff of eligibility for testing; provide information on how to book a test and clear instructions regarding non-attendance in the workplace pending test results and to follow government guidelines on self-isolation.
7. When the alert level announced by government changes universities will operate in line with Welsh Government guidance and review their safe systems of working in line with the requirements of this protocol, and take the necessary actions where possible, particularly in relation to staff previously shielding.
8. Universities must keep the appropriate maintenance records for their ventilations systems and share those with trade union reps when requested.
9. Account must be taken of the evidence that regular air exchange is crucial to ensure a safe working environment. Where possible all windows/doors/shutters are open to help with the ventilation to the area. Fire doors should not be wedged open. Where the teaching spaces are not suitably ventilated, the air in each teaching space must be changed by opening the windows wide every twenty minutes, to protect against infectious particles.

1 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/3242/contents/made>

2 <https://www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/competentperson.htm>

10. Regular air exchange is crucial to ensure a safe working environment. Where the competent person identifies a teaching or work space where there may be a lack of fresh air because it is an enclosed space and not suitably ventilated, a risk assessment should be undertaken to establish protocols such as ensuring time to change the air in those spaces before, during and after teaching as appropriate.
11. Wearing face coverings is not a suitable mitigation for properly ventilated teaching spaces. However, ventilation will have little or no impact on droplet or contact transmission routes. **Therefore, face coverings of a minimum standard of three layers, should be worn by all students and staff in indoor public spaces during all alert levels.**
12. While working in shared offices where there is adequate ventilation and a minimum 2m distance between desks, staff can make the personal decision to remove face coverings when seated for reasons of comfort or practicability (eg during online meetings).
13. Suitable and sufficient cleaning procedures must be in place and detailed in an appropriate document, including the timings of the ventilation protocols.
14. Students and staff attending the university will be required to comply with the requirements and safe systems of work put in place and to help ensure the guidance for the return to university is followed.
15. Universities will share government guidance with staff, students and unions.
16. Universities will conduct equality impact assessments to ensure the needs of different types of students are considered in determining access to facilities.
17. Figures are sent weekly to Welsh government and HEFCW on reported Covid-19 cases of students and staff who are or have been on campus. Also, to union branch officers.

These protocols should be used in conjunction with **Welsh government's HE guidance.**