

Department of Chemistry: procedures for operating after re-opening

Revised: September 14th 2020

As of 1st August the University has moved to a new phase in which a wider return to the workplace is envisaged (the University's statement can be read [here](#)). In summary '... the University does expect all staff to work with institution heads and their line managers to return for at least part of the working week – where possible and practicable – by the start of Michaelmas Term 2020.'

General principles

1. The aim of these procedures is to create a safe environment for the return to work. These procedures and practices will be consistent with, and guided by, the current advice from the Government and the University, adapted to local needs.
2. Key to reducing the risk of infection is the maintenance of 'social distancing' combined with effective hygiene measures, both personal and for the building. The extent to which any particular part of the building can be used, the way it can be used, and by how many people, will be determined by the need to comply with these control measures.
3. Social distancing is presently defined as maintain a separation of 2 m or, where this is not possible, a distance of 1 m combined with additional measures, such as the use of face coverings or other PPE.
4. Those whose work requires them to be in the building are expected to return, subject to their work area being suitable and safe as outlined above. This return will be regulated by line managers and PIs. The expectation is that those who can work at home will continue to do so for at least part of the time so as to reduce the occupancy of the building.
5. Those whose personal circumstances make it difficult to return to work in the building should consult with their line manager or PI and make suitable arrangements. The Department expects to be flexible in making these arrangements.
6. Anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 must request a swab (PCR) test by calling Addenbrooke's Hospital Occupational Health on 01223 216767 (08:30 to 16:30 Monday to Friday); you should state that you wish to be tested as part of the University of Cambridge's testing programme. If symptoms develop outside these times a test should be requested using the [NHS website](#). Those who have requested a test should inform their line manager or PI.
7. If a member of the Department receives a positive test they should immediately pass on this information to the Senior Team by emailing covid@ch.cam.ac.uk. The relevant line manager or PI should also be informed by email, text or phone, as appropriate. Once an email has been sent to this address you should expect an acknowledgement within 2 hours. If this is not forthcoming, then you should call James Keeler directly on 07590 503753 or, if there is no reply, Marita Walsh on 07870 295306.
8. If a member of your household has COVID symptoms, or you have been identified as a close contact by NHS Track and Trace, you should not come to work but should follow the current isolation procedures (detailed [here](#)).
9. Those working in the Department are required to comply with all local procedures and control measures.
10. These procedures and guidelines will be updated in the light of experience or changes in guidance from the Government or the University.
11. The Department will be open 08:00-23:00, 7 days per week.

Control measures: personal actions

When working in the building members of the Department must:

1. – practise social distancing at all times and in all areas
2. – frequently wash or sanitize their hands in line with Government guidelines
3. – wear a face covering¹ in all public areas and circulation spaces e.g. foyers, corridors, staircases, toilets. (Individual PIs or line managers will determine whether or not face coverings are required in their own research areas and in offices occupied by more than one person.)
4. – avoid touching surfaces more than is necessary
5. – not use the lifts unless they are unable to use the stairs due to a medical condition or they are transporting equipment that needs to be transported in the lift
6. – comply with the one-way system in operation in some corridors and staircases; if the corridor or staircase is two way observe 'corridor etiquette' (i.e. first check that the area is clear, then move quickly through)
7. – avoiding touching the handrail on staircases unless necessary for support
8. – avoid lingering in corridors and other public areas
9. – be especially mindful to behave appropriately at pinch points such as exterior doors and the entrance foyer; use the indicated doors and routes in and out of the building/reception area
10. – comply with additional rules prescribed for particular areas

Control measures: Departmental actions

In order to make the work environment as safe as possible the following actions will be taken across the Department

1. Additional PPE (e.g. gloves, face coverings) will be provided to those whose work requires it (e.g. those in high traffic areas or with higher levels of face-to-face contact) or who need to use public transport. (The gloves issued for these purposes will be in different colour to the purple gloves used in research areas: the latter are not to be used outside laboratories.)
2. Hand sanitizer is available at strategic points throughout the building.
3. In common areas such as stores and reception where there is likely to be frequent face-to-face contact protective screens are installed; floor markings are used to indicate appropriate distancing.
4. There is an enhanced program of cleaning and sanitation, focused especially on public areas. It may be necessary to close some areas for certain periods during the day to allow cleaners to operate freely. Cleaners will wear full PPE at all times after 07:00.
5. Cleaning materials are provided for the use in individual laboratories and offices. Additional supplies are available from floor technicians or the Support Services Manager

Services

1. Unless otherwise noted the full range of Departmental services will operate, as far as is possible within the COVID guidelines, and each according to its own published set of procedures. The hours of operation of Departmental services will not be extended.
2. Services will be provided with the minimum of face-to-face contact subject to social distancing rules.

¹ Some people are not able to wear face coverings because of underlying medical conditions: they are exempt from this rule.

3. The Cyber Café and 'Cambridge Blue' will restart service. Members of the Department may use the associated seating areas subject to social distancing rules.

Research groups

1. Each PI will establish procedures for work in their own areas. These procedures are in addition to the general Departmental procedures.
2. Each PI will be responsible for making sure that these procedures are obeyed.
3. In formulating their procedures PIs must pay close attention to the need to maintain social distancing, the additional risks of using shared equipment and air-conditioned spaces.
4. Social spaces embedded within research areas are not to be used.
5. Group meetings and seminars are permitted subject to the strict adherence to social distancing guidelines i.e. maintenance of 2 m social distancing (in effect this means that such meetings will need to take place in the lecture theatres and with strictly controlled numbers).

Visitors

1. Social visitors (including family members) are not permitted in the building.
2. Visitors with a bone fide scientific reason to be in the Department are permitted but PIs should keep the number of such visitors, and the duration of their visits, to an absolute minimum. Reception should be notified in advance of an expected visitor, and they should report to reception in the usual way. The visitor's host is responsible for ensuring that relevant procedures are obeyed.
3. Visiting students, sabbatical visitors etc are discouraged but permission can be sought, on a case-by-case basis, from the Head of Department.

Raising concerns

Members of the department who have concerns over the proper implementation of these procedures are invited to raise these matters with their line manager or PI. The Head of Department and Support Services Manager are also available to listen to your concerns on a confidential basis.