**COVID-19**

**Individual Health Risk Assessment (Staff)**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

The Individual Health Risk Assessment is the University’s 3 stage approach to facilitate a safe return to campus for all staff based on current [government guidance](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-individual-risk-assessment-for-the-workplace/). This assessment offers guidance to self -assess your own individual risk to returning to work on campus.

There are 3 things that should be considered when undertaking an Individual Health Risk Assessment:

1. The local prevalence of the virus and the Public Health measures taken to reduce the risk of infection.
2. The nature of your work and workplace risk and control measures.
3. Your individual health risk to coronavirus.

Please consider the following information to help you identify any factors that you may need to discuss with your manager to ensure that your own individual circumstances and requirements are met when returning to work on campus. The outcome of the assessment will also highlight if any extra support or actions are needed to support your safe return.

1. **Local prevalence of COVID-19**

The higher the prevalence of COVID-19 in the community the higher the chance of contracting the virus (independent of vaccine status). The Scottish Government introduced 5 graduated [COVID-19 protection levels](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/) (Level 0-4) to try and supress the virus to low levels. These levels of mitigation aim to ensure that the restrictions in place remain proportionate and necessary and consider the broader harms that restrictions cause. Due largely to the successful roll out of the vaccine programme and by public compliance with national Public Health advice Scotland has now been able to move beyond the Protection Levels system. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, is not over and we must continue to focus on suppressing the virus to a level consistent with alleviating its harms while we recover.

All staff have a personal responsibility to adhere to government and public health guidance regarding travelling, social distancing, hand hygiene, ventilation, cough etiquette, face coverings and [COVID-19 testing](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested/) through the NHS . We also advise staff who are hesitant over [vaccination](https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine) to consider the substantial benefits to them compared to the very low risk of significant adverse effects of any of the vaccines.

Currently the expectation is that the ongoing vaccination programme and regular testing will offer the opportunity for more staff and students to return to work and study on campus. However, the situation is still uncertain, new strains of the virus are emerging, and it is likely that COVID-19 will remain a public health concern and that we may need to live with it as a permanent feature for the immediate future. The protection levels may need to be reinstated and change at times in response to any local surges or reduction of the virus, and society and workplaces will need to be flexible to respond quickly to these changes.

Working and studying from home has been an effective control measure for reducing the spread of COVID -19. However, there are risks as well as benefits of home working and it may be desirable for some to return to campus working to maintain mental and physical wellbeing as well as fulfil practical working arrangements. At Levels 0 - 3 you can return to the workplace if necessary, even if you have previously been [shielding](https://www.mygov.scot/support-shielding) but it is dependent on implementing and maintaining effective workplace risk assessments and control measures. Where work allows, and in agreement with your manager it is worth considering a future hybrid or [agile working](https://www.strath.ac.uk/whystrathclyde/peoplestrategy/agileworking/) pattern that includes working at home for part of your working week. This will support ongoing efforts to minimise transmission rates on campus and enable the University to adapt quickly to any potential local surges in future that may necessitate increased restrictions.

1. **Workplace transmission risk and control measures**

Irrespective of vaccination or previous infection, the continuation of recommended infection control measures is key to stopping the spread of COVID-19 on campus and is central to the risk assessment process. [Current information](https://www.strath.ac.uk/coronavirus/) is available and [University guidance](https://www.strath.ac.uk/safetyhealthwellbeing/safereturntocampus/) has been developed to maintain safety on campus and enable departments to develop adequate local risk assessments and implement control measures relevant to their working environments and work activities. Workplace risk assessments should be communicated effectively to all staff prior to returning to work on campus and will remain under frequent review. Prior to your return to campus, you should be aware of University wide and local procedures in place to keep you safe. You have a responsibility to comply with these arrangements and inform your manager of any deficiencies. Your manager will provide any department specific information and relevant risk assessments directly to you.

1. **Individual health risk from COVID-19**

Due to certain individual risk factors some staff are more vulnerable than others to the impact of contracting COVID-19 and it may make them seriously ill. It is important to consider these risk factors so you can identify which category, low, moderate, high, or very high, applies to you, using the COVID-Age tool. This categorisation forms part of your Individual Health Risk Assessment and will enable you to take appropriate action to protect your health.

COVID-Age is an evidence- based tool which translates the risk factors of age, ethnicity, gender, body mass index and any health conditions into years, which is then added to your actual age to produce your COVID- Age. Your COVID-Age identifies a risk category. Please note your COVID-Age **does not** take into account your vaccination status, it is a risk calculation of the impact the virus can have on your health, **if** you acquire it. We know the vaccine offers significant protection, but there is not enough evidence of exactly how effective it is, particularly for those with underlying health conditions.  The vaccination therefore is considered a control measure, and while it may not impact on your COVID-Age calculation, it will contribute to risk reduction for your individual health risk**.** We recommend you calculate your COVID-Age if you were previously advised to shield or if any of the following factors apply:

|  |
| --- |
| * are 70 or older
* are 55 or older and identify as a member of a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group (BAME) and have a chronic health condition
* have a lung condition that is not severe (such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis)
* have heart disease (such as heart failure)
* have diabetes
* have chronic kidney disease
* have liver disease (such as hepatitis)
* have a condition affecting the brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy)
* have a condition that means you have a high risk of getting infections
* are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids)
* very obese (a BMI of 40 or above) [Body Mass Index Calculator](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator/)
* are pregnant

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees><https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/> |

**Please note** – you do not need to calculate your COVID-Age if none of the factors apply to you, you are assigned the low -risk category.

**Assess your COVID-Age risk category**

Use the online [COVID-Age Calculator](https://alama.shinyapps.io/Covid_Age/) to calculate your COVID-Age. Here is a [More detailed outline of the methodology](https://alama.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Methods-at-200827.pdf) .

Please note that it is recognised that there are some limitations to the COVID-Age Calculator, particularly with some serious, complex, or less common health conditions that the calculator will not address. In this instance we recommend you consult with the Occupational Health Service or your doctor for advice regarding returning to work on campus.

The Calculation converts your COVID-Age into a risk category. If you are in the low, moderate, or high COVID-Age categories, you can work on campus if required to do so, provided appropriate workplace controls are in place and current local prevalence allows. If you are in the very high- risk category, you are still likely to be able to work on campus but extra precautions may be needed and we advise you consult with the Occupational Health Service.

**Your Individual Health Risk**

Your risk is reduced, and you help protect others if you;

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **COVID- Age risk category** | **Individual Health risk**  |
| Low, moderate, high | Your risk of returning to work on campus is considered **acceptable** and you can return to campus working provided you are able to comply with the workplace risk control measures and local prevalence of the virus allows.  |
| Very high | Your risk of returning to work on campus is **increased** especially so if you have not been double vaccinated or aspects of your role prevent compliance with workplace risk control measures. We recommend a referral to the Occupational Health Service  |

* [get the vaccine](https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine) when you are offered it
* wear a face covering, clean hands and surfaces regularly
* [self isolate and take a PCR test if you have symptoms](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-get-a-test-if-you-have-symptoms)
* [take regular tests if you don’t have symptoms](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-get-a-test-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms) to reduce the risk of spreading the virus
* meet outside if you can, and open windows when indoors
* keep your distance from people not in your group
* work from home, or do a mixture of home and office working if possible
* use the [Protect Scotland](https://protect.scot/) and [Check-in Scotland](https://www.mygov.scot/help-qr-check-in) apps
* comply with University guidance to stay safe at work

Recognition is given to the fact that there may be any number of reasons why a staff member may not want, or is not able to return to work, besides health concerns. We wish to support all staff returning to work in a way that ensures we consider your health and well-being, take account of the fact you may be caring for someone or if you are concerned for your mental health. If you have been asked to return to work on campus but are reluctant, worried, or feel you cannot, please discuss the reasons with your manager to identify if any of your concerns can be addressed, what your expectations are, and if there are alternative work options.

**Please complete and submit the following form to your line manager prior to returning to work on campus.**

*You do not need to disclose or discuss medical information with your manager, but it is beneficial to discuss any concerns so they can take appropriate action if required.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  **Individual Health Risk Self- Assessment outcome**; | **Y/N** |
|  I require an Occupational Health Assessment prior to working on campus because I am in a very high- risk category. |  |
| I am unfit for work and I will submit a Fit Note from my GP (or equivalent). |  |
| I have a disability which may prevent me from complying with University guidance on staying safe on campus and I require further advice. |  |
| I am pregnant and require a New and Expectant Mother’s Risk Assessment prior to returning to work on campus. [Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for pregnant employees](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees) |  |
| There are other issues that may impact on my ability to return to work on campus which I need to discuss with my manager and/or Human Resources prior to return.***Please give further details***: |  |
| I have received and understood the information and guidance provided and I am able to return to campus working. |  |
| Employee Signature: Date: |  |
| **MANAGER SECTION (Complete applicable sections)** | **Y/N/NA** |
| Where staff have been/are currently off sick Fit note received.Date(s) of absence / return to work: |  |
| Appointment confirmed with Occupational Health occupationalhealth@strath.ac.ukDate of appointment: |  |
| [New and Expectant Mother’s Risk Assessment](https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/safetyservices/campusonly/localrules/Local_Rules_for_NEMS_2011.pdf) complete |  |
| Discussion with manager confirmed. |  |
| Issues highlighted. |  |
| **Outcome:** |  |
| Date to return to work on campus / /  |  |
| Not able to return to work on campus currently - review date / / |  |

**Next steps:**

Following the line manager and member of staff discussion, the completed form must be stored securely within the department’s electronic files under existing arrangements to comply with data protection legislation.

Each department must establish a suitable mechanism of communication to ensure that the Head of Department is kept informed of the number of staff who may not be able to return to campus.