



INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SLIGO COVID 19 RESPONSE PLAN

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1. Purpose

The revision of the IT Sligo Covid-19 Response Plan has become necessary to ensure that it reflects the Government's Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with Covid-19 as well as "a safe return plan for a safe return to onsite further and higher education and research in 2021/2022". This Covid-19 Response Plan identifies the infection prevention and control (IPC) measures and other measures in place to prevent the spread of Covid-19 at IT Sligo. The Covid-19 response plan also covers the measures needed to both ensure the safe operation of the Campus and the reopening of the campus following temporary closure due to local and regional restrictions.

The protocol has been compiled in consultation with IT Sligo staff via the lead worker representatives.

Exposure to Covid – 19 is a public health risk which affects all citizens. IT Sligo will always operate within the parameters of public health and safety advice.

We all have personal responsibility in reducing the spread of Covid-19.

Be aware of [Symptoms of Covid-19](#)

Be aware how [Covid-19 is spread](#)

The Institutes Covid-19 response plan is based on the latest interpretation of national guidelines and is a live working document. It will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and amended to consider new government guidance. Feedback from staff via lead worker representatives as our experience of living with Covid-19 develops, is welcomed.

2. Scope

This document applies to staff, researchers, students, contractors, and visitors of IT Sligo.

The institute is committed to a significant increase in on campus activity for students. Blended delivery will be in operation for semester 1 as timetabled with a view to increasing on campus activity as the year progresses. Remote working should continue for all that can do so in line with the needs of the institute and with direction and agreement with line managers.

The safety and wellbeing of staff and students is paramount.

3. Covid-19 Response Team

A Covid-19 Response team has been set up by the executive, to coordinate the operation of IT Sligo campus, in line with the Government's Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with Covid-19, as well as "a safe return plan for a safe return to on site further and higher education and research in 2021/2022".

See Appendix 1 for Team Members of the Covid-19 Response Team.

4. Lead Worker Representatives

IT Sligo have identified several nominees to act as the campus lead worker representatives whose role is to work collaboratively with the IT Sligo Covid-19 Response Team, to assist in the implementation of measures and monitor adherence to prevent the spread of Covid19.

The lead worker representatives will be responsible for

- a) Communicating, consulting with, and soliciting feedback from staff in relation to this protocol
- b) Collaborating with the IT Sligo Covid-19 Response Team to ensure that all the actions in this protocol are fully adhered to in order to ensure the suppression of Covid-19 on campus.

See Appendix 2 for IT Sligo Lead Worker Representatives

5. Campus Activities

IT Sligo is committed to remaining compliant with prevailing public health guidelines and implementing the plan "a safe return plan for a safe return to on site further and higher education and research in 2021/2022".

IT Sligo will continue to develop, update, consult, communicate, and implement changes on campus, and update its policies and procedures to ensure compliance with Covid-19 obligations.

[The return to campus](#) process will be followed in the event of closure of the campus due to Covid-19, this process will also be implemented with all new starts or personnel returning to campus following an extended leave of absence who previously have not completed the return to campus process.

- Managers / Supervisors

Heads of Functions and Senior Managers have a key role in ensuring that safe working practices are adhered to by following this plan.

- Staff, Researchers, Students

Everyone is required to follow all guidelines issued by IT Sligo and in accordance with the government guidelines.

6. Vulnerable staff and students

IT Sligo will provide for the needs of vulnerable staff and students where vaccination is medically contraindicated or where individuals fall into the very high risk / vulnerable category.

Capacity for remote working and blended learning will be considered for staff and students who cannot attend on campus for medical reasons.

As the Covid-19 vaccination programme is rolled out and further evidence of the efficacy of vaccinations becomes available, it is now possible to consider a return to the workplace for many staff; however we recognise that certain staff are more vulnerable to Covid-19 infection. For staff who deem themselves to be very high risk/vulnerable should contact HR to seek an appointment for an individual Health Risk Assessment by Occupational Health, followed by a Workplace Risk Assessment if appropriate.

The Institute is committed to supporting students in the "Very High Risk" category with regards to Covid-19, where feasible, to commence or continue with their studies.

Students please complete the following form if you are deemed "Very High Risk".

[Student Health Declaration Form](#)

A pregnant staff member should talk to their manager to arrange a risk assessment and to agree future work arrangements.

7. Social Distancing and Working Pods on Campus

To break the chain of transmission of Covid-19, avoid crowded places, mass gatherings and socialise at a distance as much as you can.

IT Sligo recommends that staff and students establish working pods of groups of individuals who they work and take breaks together with.

Groups should be as small as is reasonably practicable and stagger attendance to facilitate minimising of contacts where possible.

The focus remains on minimising contacts and exposure as much as possible. Therefore, the need for non-essential face-to-face meetings for all staff and students should continue to be minimised.

There is no strict national baseline with regard to physical distancing in higher education, however we recommend that staff and students demonstrate physical distancing of 2m where feasible.

The institute has a suite of controls in place to mitigate risk including promotion of the vaccination program, ventilation, entry and egress systems, hand sanitising and the wearing of face coverings.

8. Third Party Companies, Contractors and Visitors

All third party companies and visitors to campus must complete [IT Sligo Visitor form Covid-19](#) and submit to their host for review with the exception of companies base on the campus

If you have a contractor/ visitor from outside of Ireland and they travel here for work, you will need to provide them with all national public health advice. This is subject to continuous change, please be aware of the restrictions in place at the time of travel. A Covid-19 [risk assessment](#) must be documented for this and approved by your manager.

Notification of arrival of all visitors to campus must be provided to reception to permit access. Visitors must always be escorted by their host, wear a face covering and follow all IT Sligo guidelines.

9. International Students and Travel

International students, staff and visitors returning to IT Sligo from abroad should be treated in the same way as any individual travelling to Ireland and no exemptions can be considered. In that context, all advice from the government on international travel should be followed in respect of international students, staff and visitors travelling to Ireland. This is subject to continuous change, please be aware of the restrictions in place at the time of travel.

The requirements for International Student Protocol Academic year 2021/22 will be complied with on campus for International Students and Researchers.

10. Educational Trips / Field work

Educational trips and field work within Ireland may be undertaken but will require an individual risk assessment and approved by the Head of Function on a case-by-case basis. It will be necessary to keep a record of attendance and of close contact groups. International trips must be approved by the President.

Outreach and recreational activities are permitted in line with current health guidelines. A careful review of the appropriateness of the activity is required to be undertaken and where it is appropriate, risk assessment to record how it can be organised safely is to be documented. All public health restrictions apply.

[\(SAF001 Off Campus Activities\)](#)

11.Strategy to Manage and Minimise the Risk of Covid-19

Do not attend campus if you have any [symptoms of Covid-19](#), if you have been confirmed as Covid-19 positive, or have been asked to restrict your movements by the HSE contact tracing team, or have returned from a country requiring restricted movement.

Accessing Campus

- Everyone is required to wear a face covering in all public spaces and communal areas on campus, in shared office spaces and in teaching environments
- Ensure areas are well ventilated
- Follow signage and information posted on campus and adhere to the stay left and one-way systems in place (Appendix 4 IT Sligo Common Policies)
- Congregation is to be avoided
- Wash your hands frequently
- Maintain physical distancing where feasible
- Do not shake hands with others
- Adhere to good respiratory and hygiene practices
- Structure your day to minimise contact with others
- Use virtual meeting software applications such as MS teams
- Only use lifts where required and 1 person per lift
- Limit your footfall across the campus to essential areas
- Staggering of breaks to minimise interactions and take breaks with personnel in your work area. Avoid mixing with others outside of your direct work group.
- Bring your own food and drinks when the catering services have been suspended.
- Do not bring any family members to campus
- Everyone is responsible for maintaining a clean work environment and should frequently clean items they have touched
- Ensure that any critical medication is always on your person such as an inhaler
- Maintain a daily contact log ([HSE Covid-19 tracker app](#))
- Avoid sharing of personal items

(See appendix 5 Control of spread of virus related to teaching, learning and research activities)

12. Vaccination Programme

Covid-19 vaccines are effective. They can keep you from getting and spreading the virus that causes Covid-19.

Covid-19 vaccines also help in keeping you from getting seriously ill, even if you get Covid-19.

Getting vaccinated yourself, may also protect people around you, in particularly people at increased risk of severe illness from Covid-19.

[Register to get a Covid-19 Vaccine \(HSE.ie\).](#)

13. Covid-19 Monitors

Covid-19 monitors are in place on campus. These individuals are identifiable by hi-vis vest. They are on campus to ensure compliance with IT Sligo Covid-19 guidelines. They will be patrolling the campus and requesting compliance of these measures. Please co-operate and follow their guidance.

14. Case Management

Personal Procedure

It is strongly recommended that you download the [HSE Covid-19 tracker app](#) and are updating daily.

If you have symptoms of Covid-19, do not attend campus, self-isolate and book a Covid-19 test online or attend the walk-in centre (if available).

[HSE Covid-19 test centres - HSE.ie](#)

Be aware when to self-isolate or restrict your movements, see link for self-isolation or restricting movements. [Quick isolation guide](#)

- Self-isolation – (stay in your room). Self-isolation means staying indoors in a room on your own.
- Restricting movement – (stay at home). Restricting movements means staying at home and avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible.

On Campus

If you develop symptoms of Covid-19 on campus, leave campus immediately if able to do so and self-isolate. Organise a Covid-19 test online or at a walk-in centre (if available).

([HSE Covid-19 test centres - HSE.ie](#)).

If students require assistance with accessing a PCR test, contact student services nurse on 087 996 1873 or 087 739 2626.

If you are unable to leave campus and self-isolate safely please contact the case management team on 5333 or 071 91 55333 giving details of suspected COVID 19.

You will be assessed and assisted by a case management team member.

Isolation rooms are available on campus to be utilised if required.

If you are confirmed with Covid-19 continue to self-isolate and follow all public health advice given to you and cooperate in providing all relevant information requested.

Case Managers

If you have any queries or concerns you can contact:

- Case Manager Staff – [Health & Safety](#) (087 9961875)
- Case Manager Students – [Student Services Nurse](#) (087 996 1873 or 087 739 2626)

Case Management Team

IT Sligo designated First Aiders are trained to respond to a member of staff / student presenting with suspected Covid-19. All instructions issued by First Aiders must be followed.

IT Sligo will cooperate with the local Department of Public Health if a case of Covid-19 and/or an outbreak is confirmed on campus and implement any follow up actions required including support for tracking and tracing

15.Contact Logging

Casual Contact – spending less than 15 minutes of face-to-face contact within 2 metres of another person or being in the same room for less than 2 hours while adhering to social distancing.

Close Contact – spending more than 15 minutes of face -to-face contact within 2 meters of another person or being in the same room for 2 or more hours while adhering to social distancing.

The Contact log is required to be completed electronically every day, even if no contact on a given day and be available for review by your manager/ supervisor. Please see contact log sheet (Appendix 3).

Please ensure to fill in the Contact Log Forms on visiting the canteen.

Class attendance records need to be maintained for the teaching environment (appendix 5).

16.Cleaning

Regular cleaning and disinfection in accordance with government guidelines.

Cleaning will be carried out after the close of business (after 8pm) each evening except at weekends.

Individual functions/staff will need to formulate a plan to clean/sterilise common touch points in the areas for which they are responsible during the day and between classes.

Staff / Researchers should be provided with cleaning materials by their function to keep their own workspace hygienically clean and advised to regularly clean any personal items brought in from home.

17.Ventilation

Good ventilation has been identified as best practice for the prevention of the spread of Covid-19.

IT Sligo have undertaken a Ventilation Risk Assessment of all rooms on campus to identify any additional controls required to ensure adequate ventilation is maintained.

The Risk Assessment is available for [review here](#).

The following measures should be implemented

- Where natural ventilation is available, windows/doors should be open

- Where mechanical ventilation is available, it will operate with fresh air only, be serviced and maintained
- CO2 monitors are to be utilised in some areas as per Ventilation Risk Assessment, the use of CO2 monitors can provide a useful general indication that areas/rooms may not be adequately ventilated and can prompt occupants to take action to improve ventilation.

Please note CO2 monitors do not detect the presence or otherwise of the virus in the environment.

Where no ventilation is available by natural or mechanical means then reduced capacity as indicated on the door is required or the use of HEPA filtered air cleaners are recommended.

HEPA Filter Units will clean the air and remove any potential contaminants present in the air. A CO2 meter will not be utilised with these as these do not remove gases from the air so a CO2 reduction will not be seen.

18. Use of Personal Protective Equipment

Each function will be responsible for procuring their own PPE.

Requirement for PPE will be identified while performing risk assessments.

Each manager is responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are documented and approved in their area. Staff have a responsibility for collaborating with their manager in documenting a risk assessment.

This assessment will identify all the control measures that will be required to minimise employee and student exposure to Covid-19, including the use of PPE.

Where PPE has been highlighted as a control measure, employees will need to be trained on its proper use and disposal.

[How to safely don a face mask](#)

19. Face Coverings

Face Covering must be worn in all public spaces, communal areas, and shared office spaces on campus.

Face coverings are required for all class activities, classrooms, and labs.

Medical grade masks are to be provided for IT Sligo staff & students.

Full Face visors are not acceptable in place of cloth face coverings. Face visors should only be used in the exceptional circumstances as outlined below:

- Where people have breathing difficulties or are unable to remove masks/face coverings without help
- In settings where people who have learning difficulties or hard of hearing or deaf are present
- Face visors may be worn in addition to a cloth face covering for additional protection.

IT Sligo acknowledges that face coverings are not suitable for all individuals, for example those with breathing problems or with special needs.

Under exceptional circumstances where an individual is required to attend campus but cannot wear a face covering, these individuals will be issued with an “Exempt from Face covering” Lanyard to provide a visual aid of exception.

The lanyard can only be obtained by providing a medical certificate of exceptional circumstance to HR (Staff), Student Health Services (Students) in line with [HSE guidance](#).

IT Sligo HR and IT Sligo Student Health Services will maintain a log of all badges issued.

Advice from the Department of Health on the safe use of face coverings can be found [here](#).

It should be noted that the wearing of face coverings is an additional measure to other public health guidelines which must be followed including hand washing, respiratory etiquette, and maintaining good ventilation

[How to safely wear a face covering](#)

20. Clean Desk Policy

A Clean desk must be maintained, all items other than your PC must be removed from your desktop at the end of the working day to facilitate cleaning to help prevent or suppress the spread of Covid-19 on campus.

21. Working from Home

All staff to continue to work from home where possible and by agreement with their line manager.

A Remote Working Policy has been provided to staff. [Covid-19 Remote Working Procedure](#)

All staff to complete the Remote working risk assessment within the policy and return to their manager/supervisor.

22. Health and Wellbeing

Employee Assistant Program (EAP)

IT Sligo offer a confidential support service for staff to assist them to resolve personal or work-related concerns, through telephone support, specialist information and telephone or face to face counselling.

The service is provided by Inspire Wellbeing. It is confidential and no referral is needed. Support is available in a wide range of areas.

The free-phone helpline is available 24/7 by calling 1800 201 346.

Other HSE Resources.

[Minding your mental health](#)

[Coping with bereavement](#)

[Exercise at home](#)

[Eating well](#)

[Alcohol advice](#)

[Quit smoking](#)

[Dealing with fake health information](#)

Appendix 1: IT Sligo Covid-19 Response Team

IT Sligo Covid-19 Response Team	
Declan Flavin	Planning and Operational Excellence Manager
John Gannon	IT Manager
Aidan Haughey	Communications Manager
Barbara Mc Manemy	Health and Safety Officer
Rod Toner	Human Resources Manager
Chris O'Malley	Vice President, Research, Innovation & Engagement
Noel McLoughlin	Facilities Manager

Appendix 2 IT Sligo Lead Worker Representatives

	Name
1	Ursula Cox
2	Eileen Gillen
3	Veronica Cawley
4	Mairead McCann / David Roberts
5	Margaret Mulrooney

Appendix 3: IT Sligo Contact Logging Form



Daily Contact Log Sheet

Name:

Function:

Job Title:

Date:

	Name of Contact	Casual (<15mins <2M) (<2hrs >2M)	Close (>15mins <2M) (>2hrs >2M)	Duration	Location	Comment (e.g. Why?)
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

All individuals are required to keep a daily contact log sheet while on campus. Contact log to be completed every day, even if no contact on a given day. This appendix is a guide and all individuals may maintain their logs in a manner suitable to them. The objective is to minimise the number of close contacts daily. An electronic copy of the form is to be retained for each workday and made available if required by management to help minimise the potential spread of Covid-19.

[\(Electronic Version\)](#)

Appendix 4: Common Institute access policies

1. Entering the Buildings

- 1.1. Depending on the level of restrictions as defined by the government, access may be via the main entrance at reception or the innovation center only. This will be subject to ongoing review.
- 1.2. People entering may need to sign in/out on entering and exiting the campus.

2. Main Access Doors

- 2.1. The main entrance will operate as a shared entrance and staff are asked to comply with social distance when entering and exiting.
- 2.2. This will involve giving way to others and keeping a safe distance from other users.
- 2.3. It is intended to operate the sliding mode between 8.30 – 9.30 and 16.30 – 17.30 to facilitate peak traffic when students return.

3. Corridors & Circulation Areas

- 3.1. In most cases and where possible, shared corridors & stairs have been marked with a 'Keep to the Left' principle, i.e., the wall or balustrade will be adjacent to your left shoulder when walking.
- 3.2. All buildings will be marked with directional arrows and signage and staff are asked to observe these markings where it is reasonable and practical to do so.
- 3.3. In A Block, the main stairs at reception will be a down only stairs, the stairs at theatre A0004 will be an up only stairs. The stairs from the main corridor in A towards Science at B2031 will be an up only stairs.
- 3.4. In B Block 1st floor, there is a one-way system in place due to a combination of the expected footfall and the relatively narrow corridors. In addition to the up only stairs at B2031, the stairwell beside classroom B1202 will also be up only. All other stairwells in B will be down only and located as follows (numbers given are adjacent rooms); stairs at B2203, at B2054, at B2042, at B2120 and at B2100.
- 3.5. The stairs from the lower ground floor in E to the first floor in E (at E0017) will be up only. From first to second floor will be shared or two way.
- 3.6. All other buildings will have shared corridors and stairs.
- 3.7. Please avoid pausing on corridors or congregating generally.

4. Teaching Rooms (Classrooms, Theatres, Workshops and PC Labs)

- 4.1. Some rooms where possible will have a one-way system in place. Lecture theatres A0004, A0005, A0006, E0011, E0017 and B1094 will involve entering through one door and exiting through another door.
- 4.2. See appendix 5

5. Main Canteen and other food & beverage outlets

- 5.1. Canteen is for use only by staff, student and visitors who are accompanied by their host. Not for casual visitors.
- 5.2. The canteen seating is set up for maximum of six at each table. Do not move furniture from its set location.
- 5.3. It is recommended that people remain in their working pods and minimise their social interactions with other personnel in the canteen.
- 5.4. Complete the Canteen contract tracing log.
- 5.5. Follow all one-way systems and guidelines in place.

6. Toilets

- 6.1. Signage to be placed to inform people to observe social distancing.
- 6.2. It is not currently intended to close off cubicles or urinals.
- 6.3. All sinks are to be maintained to reinforce the medical advice to wash hands regularly.
- 6.4. If it is not possible to maintain social distance at any given time, it is advisable to seek an alternative set of toilets further along the corridor or in adjacent building.
- 6.5. Wash hands thoroughly and avoid shaking off excess water too vigorously to avoid casting droplets.
- 6.6. Please close toilet lid prior to flushing to prevent droplets being cast.

7. Reception Desk

- 7.1. There will be screens fitted at reception desks to protect staff from potential infection
- 7.2. This may make two-way conversation more difficult due to the screen barrier. Please be aware of this and speak up if necessary, rather than seeking a gap in the screen through which to speak as to do so will increase the risk of infection.

8 Staff Offices

- 8.1 Staff may be required to work to a Rota to avoid full office occupancy if there are concerns about capacity.
- 8.2 It is required to leave windows open to provide fresh air.

9 Library

- 9.1 Screens have been fitted at reception
- 9.2 Pre-booked slots will remain in use (includes spaces with PCs which may be used for printing, photocopiers and seminar rooms with maximum capacity of 4). Bookings must be made at least a day in advance
- 9.3 A click and collect print book borrowing system will remain in place and the browse and self-service Quick Check Print book borrowing
- 9.4 Masks must be worn while in the Library. Keyboard covers, sanitation wipes provided. One-way system in operation. Individual study only in the general library areas.

Appendix 5: Control of spread of virus related to teaching, learning and research activities

Ventilation, face coverings, Hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and environmental cleaning are critical elements in minimising the risk of spread if an infected person is present in a teaching, learning or research group.

- Ensure the setup of the area in compliance with controls identified in the risk assessment
- Items for consideration on documenting risk assessment:
 - Ensure the entry and exit from teaching space and taking of seats is managed to avoid congregation at the entrance and exit. Classes should commence 5 mins after the hour and end 5 mins before the hour to facilitate this.
 - Record attendance for all on campus teaching activities and retain records for 4 weeks in case required for contact tracing purposes.
 - Face coverings are required for all class activities, labs, and classrooms.
 - Medical grade masks are to be provided for IT Sligo staff & students.
 - Physical distancing is encouraged as much as possible, where feasible.
 - Ventilation is a key control in preventing the spread of Covid-19. Where natural ventilation is available, windows should be open. Where mechanical ventilation is available, this must be on.
 - Students should be reminded at the start of each session that they should leave if they have symptoms of Covid-19, if you have been confirmed as Covid-19 positive, or have been asked to restrict your movements by the HSE contact tracing team.
 - On entering a teaching space, students are required to clean their workstation, desktops/ computer keyboards etc.
 - In post-graduate research, rotas may be considered to reduce the number of people present at any one time. If a rota system is used, the same group of people (pods) should consistently be rostered together to minimise mixing of groups of people.
 - Where group work is required (for example among students) the groups should be as small as practical and in so far as practical the membership of groups should be consistent over the semester for as many activities as possible (pods) to minimise mixing of people.
 - Vulnerable students, must declare this to student health services and measures put in place to facilitate them as maybe appropriate. [Student Health Declaration Form](#)

Appendix 6: IT Sligo expanded discretionary framework

In order to ensure coherence and consistency in planning and the implementation of public health advice into the future IT Sligo have developed an expanded discretionary framework based on a five-stage plan. Where public health measures are eased or further restrictions implemented IT Sligo will implement these stages.

IT SLIGO Code	Students	Practicals	Theory	Staff
1 Normal	Full Access	All on Site	All on site	Full Access - option to work from home
2 Blended	Blended	Mostly on site some Face to Face	Some on site Some Face to Face	Full Access - option to work from home
3 Practicals	Restricted	Mostly on site some Face to face	All on line	Work from home where possible
4 Essential-Time critical	Restricted	Essential-Time critical only	All on line	Work from home where possible
5 SITE CLOSED	Restricted	All on line	All on line	Essential-Time critical only