



INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SLIGO

COVID 19 RESPONSE PLAN

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1. Covid 19 Policy Statement

IT Sligo is committed to preventing the spread of COVID-19 in our workplace. We have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan and have reviewed it in line with the updated Transitional Protocol: Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19. A combined effort by managers, supervisors and workers is required to ensure the success of this Plan in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in our workplace. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and update this Plan in consultation with our workers and communicate the Response plan to our workers, once finalised
- provide up to date information to our workers on the public health advice issued by hse.ie, gov.ie and hpsc.ie
- ensure all workers receive a briefing on COVID-19 infection prevention and control (IPC) measures
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and other IPC measures
- facilitate the appointment of at least one Lead Worker Representative, in consultation with our workers and their representatives
- communicate the identity of the appointed Lead Worker Representative(s) and their role
- keep workers informed about the importance of adhering to IPC measures - hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and ventilation requirements
- adapt or continue to adapt the workplace to facilitate COVID-19 IPC measures. In doing so we will ensure that workers are not inadvertently exposed to additional occupational health and safety hazards and risks
- consult with our workers and their representatives in advance, where the introduction of a programme of Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Testing (RADT) is being considered
- Adapt or continue to adapt the workplace to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- take into account workers' individual risk factors
- take into account workers' fitness for work following COVID-19 (or a suspected COVID-19 case) absence
- ensure measures are in place to deal with a suspected case of COVID-19 in the workplace, or an outbreak of COVID-19
- provide clear instructions for workers to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work
- inform workers that they must stay at home from work if they have symptoms of COVID-19, to self-isolate, and get tested
- inform workers to follow Public Health advice in relation to their test result
- ensure contingency measures are in place to address the effects of COVID-19 in the workplace
- continue with the cleaning measures in place and disinfection measures, where necessary.
- comply with all GDPR requirements in relation to maintaining personal information.

All managers, supervisors, Lead Worker Representative(s) and workers will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions. Feedback / concerns can be communicated through Lead Worker Representative(s)

Dr. Brendan McCormack

President – IT Sligo

2. Purpose

The revision of the IT Sligo Covid-19 Response Plan has become necessary to ensure that it reflects the Government's announcement, effective from 28th February on the easing of restrictions together with the Transitional Protocol Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of 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 ensure the safe operation of the Campus.

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.

3. Scope

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

The institute is committed to providing a safe working and teaching environment on campus activity for staff and students. Blended delivery may be required in some circumstances where lecturers/students are unable to attend campus due to Covid-19. 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.

4. 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 Transitional Protocol Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of 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.

5. 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

6. Campus Activities

IT Sligo is committed to remaining compliant with prevailing public health guidelines and implementing the Transitional Protocol Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of Covid-19 .

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.

7. 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 Student Health Declaration form if you are deemed "Very High Risk". This can be received through Student Services.

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

8. Working Safely on Campus

Whilst the Government has announced the easing of majority of Covid-19 measures. 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, cleaning, respiratory etiquette, respecting each others personal space and the voluntary wearing of face coverings.

In this transitional period it is recommended that meetings continue to be held online using MS teams. Face to Face meetings can be held at the discretion of the manager if considered necessary.

9. 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 based 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, and follow all IT Sligo guidelines.

10. 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.

11. 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](#))

12. 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

- If you are COVID positive, self-isolate for 7 days, and DO NOT return to college for 10 days. The advice from the HSE is that after the 7 days of self-isolation is completed, a person needs to take extra care for another 3 days to reduce the risk of passing on Covid-19, hence the recommendation from IT Sligo for a 10 day break.
- Face coverings are not mandatory on campus but IT Sligo advise that all staff, students, and visitors wear face coverings in all indoor settings on campus.
- 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 3 IT Sligo Common Policies)
- Congregation is to be avoided
- Wash your hands frequently

- Respect the personal space of others
- Do not shake hands with others
- Adhere to good respiratory and hygiene practices
- Use virtual meeting software applications such as MS teams
- Only use lifts where required and 1 person per lift
- 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
- Avoid sharing of personal items

(See appendix 4 Control of spread of virus related to teaching, learning and research activities)

13. 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 particular people at increased risk of severe illness from Covid-19.

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

14. Case Management

Personal Procedure

It is 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 follow public health guidelines.

[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, self-isolate and follow public health guidelines.

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

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.

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](#)

The most recent changes to public Health advice has seen the removal of the need to maintain contact details, however employers and those in the educational sector may need to provide attendance as appropriate to the Department of Public Health in the event that they are investigating an outbreak on Campus.

[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

Whilst face coverings are not mandatory, we still advise all staff, students and visitors wear them in all indoor settings on campus.

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

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

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 not mandatory but it serves as 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.Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests (RADTs)

IT Sligo recognises the value of RADTs to combat the spread of Covid-19 and how they will mitigate the risk of an outbreak on campus. Staff have been provided with RADTs. Students will be informed periodically via electronic communication and on campus signage of collection points will be placed throughout the campus where they can avail of their RADTs'.

21.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.

22.Working from Home

A phased return to the workplace will commence by agreement with your line manager. For those that adapt a blended approach 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.

23.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
Adena Skeffington Christine Keaveny Barbara Mc Manemy	Health and Safety Advisor
Rod Toner	Human Resources Manager
Chris O'Malley	Vice President, Research, Innovation & Engagement
Noel McLoughlin	Facilities Manager
Daire Martin	ITSSU President

Appendix 2 IT Sligo Lead Worker Representatives

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

Appendix 3: Common Institute access policies

1. Main Access Doors

- 1.1. The main entrance will operate as a shared entrance and staff are asked to comply with social distance when entering and exiting.
- 1.2. This will involve giving way to others and keeping a safe distance from other users.
- 1.3. 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.

2. Corridors & Circulation Areas

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. All buildings are marked with directional arrows and signage which staff and students are asked to observe these markings where it is reasonable and practical to do so.
- 2.3. 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.
- 2.4. 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.
- 2.5. 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.
- 2.6. All other buildings will have shared corridors and stairs.
- 2.7. Please avoid pausing on corridors or congregating generally.

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

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. See appendix 4

4. Main Canteen and other food & beverage outlets

- 4.1. Canteen is for use only by staff, student and visitors who are accompanied by their host.
Not for casual visitors.
- 4.2. Follow all one-way systems and guidelines in place.

5. Toilets

- 5.1. It is not currently intended to close off cubicles or urinals.
- 5.2. All sinks are to be maintained to reinforce the medical advice to wash hands regularly.
- 5.3. 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.
- 5.4. Wash hands thoroughly and avoid shaking off excess water too vigorously to avoid casting droplets.
- 5.5. Please close toilet lid prior to flushing to prevent droplets being cast.

6. Reception Desk

- 6.1. There will be screens fitted at reception desks to protect staff from potential infection
- 6.2. 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 Keyboard covers, sanitation wipes provided. One-way system in operation. Individual study only in the general library areas.

Appendix 4: 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.
 - Face coverings are optional for all class activities, labs, and classrooms.
 - Medical grade masks are to be provided for IT Sligo staff & students upon request.
 - 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.
 - Vulnerable students, must declare this to student health services and measures put in place to facilitate them as maybe appropriate.

Appendix 5: 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	