



Safety Note

Updated: 31 March 2020

Meeting protocols to manage risk of COVID-19

Background

In March 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a pandemic of the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as the disease has spread rapidly around the world. In order to minimise the risk of transmission it is important to reduce avenues of transmission through direct touch, and practical physical distancing. As a large organisation, there are numerous and frequent meetings where people typically group together to carry out the business of the University.

Considerations must be given to the safe conduct of meetings in the current environment. Strategies are required to minimise risk of transmission to each other, as well as separating people in face-to-face meetings who are critical to operations due to their role, skill base, authority, or decision-making powers.

Aim

Organisers and participants of meetings must consider the potential risk from COVID-19, implement appropriate risk management strategies, and adhere to physical distancing requirements. The aim of this Safety Note is to provide advice to minimise the risk of transmission at meetings.

Principles

- Practise physical distancing by:
 - Avoiding in-person meetings by using technology wherever practicable to meet with people.
 - Keeping a distance of at least 1.5 metres between people.
 - Applying the one person per 4sqm in enclosed spaces.
- Ensure impeccable personal hygiene practices.
- Discourage high risk groups ([vulnerable persons](#)) from attending face to face meetings, by arranging appropriate alternatives. Vulnerable persons are those persons at higher risk of serious illness. Where vulnerable workers undertake essential work, a risk assessment must be undertaken. Risk needs to be assessed and mitigated with consideration of the characteristics of the worker, the workplace and the work.
- Where possible, avoid unnecessary close contact with others during this period.

Recommendations / Actions for consideration

- Cease non-essential face-to-face meetings that involve close personal contact (less than 1.5m). Use alternatives to meeting in-person such as meeting online via [Zoom](#) or teleconference.



- If in-person meetings are considered essential, strategies must be in place to apply physical distancing and good hygiene practices, including,
 - Minimise the number of people in physical attendance.
 - Ensure no more than 1 person per 4sqm in the room. The room must also be large enough to accommodate 1.5m between each person. Consider use of barriers to create space between workstations and seated areas – leave spare seats between participants.
 - Consider alternative venues, book larger meetings rooms - meet outside in the open air, if possible.
 - Reconsider the concurrent attendance of multiple staff from core skill groups at the same event to preserve the continuity of critical functions.
 - Keep meetings as short as possible – well under two hours.
 - Do not share equipment as the virus can live on surfaces including pens, keyboards, tabletops etc. Clean and disinfect shared high-touch surfaces regularly.
 - Provide and promote hand hygiene sanitisers for use on entry/exit, and provide suitable rubbish bins, with frequent cleaning and waste disposal.
- It is essential to practice impeccable hand and respiratory hygiene. Avoid touching your face with your fingers. Avoid handshaking and other physical greetings.
- Keep record of attendance.
- Remember – you should not be at work if you feel unwell.

Resource and links

[Safe Work Australia – Preparing workplaces for COVID-19](#)

[WHS Qld - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) workplace risk management](#)

[Qld Health – Social Distancing](#)

[WHO – Getting your workplaces ready for COVID-19](#)