



Safety Note

25 March 2020

Physical distancing in lecture theatres – reducing the transmission of COVID-19 v2

What is physical distancing

Physical distancing includes ways to stop or slow the spread of infectious diseases. It means less contact between you and other people.

Why is it important?

Physical distancing is important because COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- direct close contact with a person while they are infectious or in the 24 hours before their symptoms appeared
- close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes, or
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

So, the more space between you and others, the harder it is for the virus to spread.

What you should do?

If you are sick, stay away from others and stay at home – that is the most important thing you can do.

You should also practise good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser, before and after eating, after going to the toilet and after sharing items.
- cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser, and
- avoid close contact with others (i.e. stay more than 1.5 metres away from people, ensure 4 square metres per person in enclosed spaces).

These simple, common sense actions help reduce risk to you and to others. They will help to slow the spread of disease in the community – and you can use them every day.

Principles physical distancing while attending lectures:

- Firstly - Stay at home if you are sick
- Practise reasonable physical distancing which, in this case, means avoiding unnecessary close contact with others attempting to keep a distance of at least 1.5 metres between people when you are on university sites.
- Reduce other opportunities for direct transmission e.g. sharing items, unnecessary touching.
- Ensure impeccable personal hygiene practices.



Recommendations / Actions

1. Most importantly, stay home if you feel ill.
2. Consider spacing within the physical environment. Maintain 1.5 meters between you and others.
3. The maximum number of students will be calculate based on the size of the lecture space to ensure each student has 4sqm.
4. If the lecture theatre is large – keep as much distance as possible between yourselves and others, at least a spare space or seat between you and the next person..
5. If possible, use available technology to remotely attend, such as Zoom.
6. If the lecture is captured – listen to it at home rather than coming into campus.
7. Take turns with classmates to record the lecture and share the recording amongst your peers.
8. Avoid sharing equipment as the virus can live on surfaces including pens, keyboards, table tops, etc.
9. Stop the practice of handshaking as a greeting.
10. Avoid touching your face with your fingers.
11. Have good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene and use hand sanitisers and soap and water often.
12. Limit food handling and the sharing of food in the lecture.
13. Regularly wash your hands before and after eating and after going to the toilet as a minimum.
14. Dispose of tissues and rubbish immediately in the general waste bin, don't leave rubbish on tables or the floor.

Resource and links

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-on-physical-distancing>

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