



Safety Note

Updated: 6 July 2020

Physical distancing in general UQ work areas – reducing the transmission of COVID-19

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 or awaiting COVID-19 test results, 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 to the extent possible).

Principles of physical distancing while working in general work areas at UQ

- Stay at home if you are sick or awaiting test results for COVID-19.
- Practise reasonable social distancing to the extent possible which means avoiding unnecessary close contact with others and by attempting to keep a distance of at least 1.5 metres between people.
- 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 or are awaiting COVID-19 test results.



2. If you, are a vulnerable person, discuss this with your supervisor.
3. Consider staff working patterns and using the entire span of hours to allow work to be staggered across these hours.
4. Consider spacing within the physical environment. Maintain 1.5 meters between you and others to the extent possible. Keep a spare space or seat between you and the next person if possible.
5. Avoid sharing equipment as the virus can live on surfaces including pens, keyboards, table tops etc.
6. Stop the practice of handshaking as a greeting.
7. Have good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene and use hand sanitisers and soap and water often.
8. Take lunch outside rather than at a desk or in the staff room.
9. Limit food handling and the sharing of food in the workplace.
10. Regularly wash your hands before and after eating and after going to the toilet as a minimum.
11. Avoid queuing at coffee shops or food outlets, pre-order if possible.
12. Dispose of tissues immediately in the general waste bin, don't leave rubbish on tables.
13. Have face to face meetings as short as possible and consider the use of technology such as Zoom rather than having meetings in person. Check out our fact sheet on [Meeting Protocols to manage the risk of COVID-19 transmission.](#)
14. Avoid touching your face with your hands.
15. If food outlets provide the relevant apps, order coffee and meals via the app to avoid queuing.

Resource and links

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources>

Chief Health Officer public health directions- <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers>