



## Safety Note

Updated: 6 July 2020

# Physical distancing in teaching space – 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 from people to the extent possible).

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 on physical distancing while attending teaching spaces on campus:

- Firstly - Stay at home if you are sick or are awaiting COVID-19 test results.
- Practise reasonable physical distancing which means avoiding unnecessary close contact with others attempting to keep a distance of at least 1.5 metres between people to the extent possible.
- Physical distancing for teaching spaces will largely be observed by adjusting room capacities during the timetabling process.



- 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. Consider spacing within the physical environment, to the extent possible maintain 1.5 metres between you and others.
3. If the teaching space 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.
4. Avoid sharing equipment as the virus can live on surfaces including pens, keyboards, table-tops, etc.
5. Stop the practice of handshaking as a greeting.
6. Avoid touching your face with your hands.
7. Have impeccable hand and sneeze/cough hygiene and use hand sanitisers and/or soap and water often.
8. Don't handle or share food.
9. Regularly wash your hands before and after eating and after going to the toilet as a minimum.
10. 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>

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>