



Safety Note

21 January 2022

Risk Assessments – Reducing transmission of COVID-19

A risk assessment evaluates the risk of illness to staff and students through the transmission of COVID-19. While the best way to mitigate the risk of transmission is to maintain physical distancing of at least 1.5m and decrease the time spent in close contact with others, this may not always be possible. The risk assessment is a tool to enable other measures to be considered.

What happens when physical distancing is not always possible?

Generally, if physical distancing is not possible, then a risk assessment should be undertaken to assess the contributing factors to the risk and mitigate them as far as practicably possible. A risk assessment can be completed online through [UQSafe Risk](#) and guidance can be found on the [HSW website](#).

Who is responsible for undertaking the risk assessment?

Courses Work

The Course Coordinator is responsible for completing a risk assessment. They are then to ensure that the lecturer, supervisor, tutor, event coordinator or research leader has a copy of the risk assessment and is aware of the controls.

Events

Event organisers are responsible for ensure their events comply with Queensland Government and UQ requirements. Information for events on campuses can be found on the [Events Advice](#) page.

Who can assist me with the risk assessment?

Each Faculty, Institute or Central Services Division has a HSW Safety Manager or Safety contact that can assist with this process – a list of local contacts can be found [here](#).

Who is responsible for monitoring that people are doing the right thing?

The person in charge of the class, activity or event. This may be the lecturer, supervisor, tutor, event organiser, research leader etc, they are responsible for ensuring the action items from the risk assessment are implemented and that people in their class, activity or event follow the protocols.

What factors should I consider?

The most effective control measures are to facilitate safe physical distancing (1.5 m) between people, and staff and students must stay home if they are unwell . In teaching and learning environments physical distancing can be effectively managed through appropriate timetabling which will avoid placing students in teaching venues above their safe maximum capacity. For other work environments, it is important to consider how the physical work environment and work processes may be modified to facilitate physical distancing and minimise transmission of COVID-19.

Each area is different but some of the common factors include:

- Number of people.
- Shared equipment.



- Duration of activity
- Whether the activity has a practical component using equipment or whether it is instructional in nature.
- Size of the room/space.
- Access to hand washing facilities/hand sanitising.

What controls could be considered?

The risk of transmission may vary from area to area and from activity to activity. See the Safety Note – Government requirements and guidance: Reducing the transmission of COVID-19 in teach, learning, research and meeting environments.

Controls that can be considered include:

- Using technology to demonstrate or instruct e.g. Teams, Zoom, prepare a short video, FaceTime, etc.
- Modify the teaching space by adjusting furniture to allow more space in the environment.
- Reducing the duration of the activity by splitting the activity into a face to face and an online component.
- Use of PPE if there is a requirement to be in an enclosed area for an extended period of time or in close face to face proximity (ensure adequate training in use of PPE and ensure PPE is suitable for the purpose).
- Ensure participants wash their hands before and after activities.
- Wiping down shared equipment between users.
- At the beginning of the session/activity the person in charge to remind everyone to physically distance themselves, use the hygiene stations (wipes and sanitiser) to wipe their areas and sanitise their hands, wipe any shared equipment.
- People who have symptoms to leave the UQ location.

Resources

Keep COVID safe - <https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/how-you-can-help-keep-queensland-covid-safe>