

<b>File name:</b>	UoE Covid Risk Assessment		
<b>Risk assessment</b>	Covid Strategic RA001	<b>Version number:</b>	13 reviewed and updated 24/02/2021

## Risk assessment

<b>Description of activity / area being assessed</b>	<b>University of Essex Strategic Risk Assessment</b> against the additional risks that the Covid-19 Pandemic has presented. (This is intended for the <b>Advanced Protection</b> level).		<b>Location</b>	University of Essex Colchester, Southend and Loughton Campuses.
<b>Manager responsible</b>	Lara Carmel	<b>Signature &amp; date</b>	Lara Carmel 24/02/2021	
<b>Assessed by (name &amp; role)</b>	Richard Green Senior Health and Safety Adviser for Estates and Campus Services	<b>Signature &amp; assessment date</b>	Richard Green 24/02/2021	

**This Risk Assessment has been updated due to the new variant being more transmissible and further emerging evidence that it may have a higher mortality rate across all age ranges.**

### Note on the Assessment of the “Consequence” of becoming ill with Covid-19.

COVID-19 is a life-threatening illness. To date (24/02/2021), over 121,000 individuals have died in the UK within 28 days of a COVID + test result. Each of these cases is a personal tragedy where the consequences of the disease have been catastrophic. COVID-19 impacts individuals in very different ways, with some people remaining asymptomatic and, according to Public Health England, “for most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a [mild illness](#)” especially amongst younger age groups where the consequences of contracting the disease are typically less severe. Given the spectrum of consequences that can result from contracting the disease, this risk assessment has determined that the most appropriate rating of the risk consequence of COVID-19 is a “Major” Consequence on the University of Essex risk assessment. [A new variant of SARS-Cov2](#) (COVID-19) (VU1-202012/01) has been identified. Evidence has demonstrated that this variant has a higher transmission rate and with some emerging evidence of a higher mortality rate than other variants in current circulation. It has been estimated to

<b>Consequence</b>	Catastrophic	Medium	High	Very High	Very high	Very High
	Major	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
	Moderate	Very low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	Minor	Very low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
	Insignificant	Very low	Very low	Low	Low	Low
	<b>R = LxC</b>	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Fairly likely	Likely	Very likely
<b>Likelihood of hazardous event</b>						

be between 30% to 70% more transmissible. The way to control the virus is the same, it will not spread if we avoid close contact with others. Wash your hands, wear a mask, keep your distance from others, and reduce your social contacts. In order to ensure that we can keep our distance from others and reduce the risk of transmission, the Government initially set out a local county tier system to control the virus, however due to the increased cases of infection being reported on a daily basis the Government has now placed the Country in 'lockdown'

Listed below are Public Health England controls that support "Major" as the most appropriate risk rating at this stage of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

- i) The Government has set out a local tier system to control the COVID-19 virus. To date (04/01/2021), there are 4 tiers for local restrictions. Essex and the surrounding area plus much of the Country were recently under Tier 4 COVID-19 control measures (Currently the highest level of control). As of 06/01/2021 the Country is under a "Lockdown". Measures under the Lockdown include:
  - No social meeting indoors or in private gardens with others that are not in your household.
  - Individuals can only meet with one other person that is not in their household in a public place for exercise only.
  - Closure of gyms, pubs, bars, non-essential shops and restaurants except those providing take-away meals or drinks.
  - Schools are shut to all students excluding vulnerable children and children of essential workers.
- ii) NHS Test & trace is now in place for anyone symptomatic, including children under 5, meaning medical assistance can be secured more quickly than at the outset of the pandemic. In addition, enhancements to track and trace have meant that people who may have come into close contact with a COVID-19 infected person will be informed and will be able to take the appropriate action of self-isolation and testing, thus protecting others including any extremely vulnerable people from becoming ill with this disease.
- iii) Hospital treatments developed in the last 9 months have reduced the likelihood of a fatal outcome from that during the March / April 2020 peak of infections. It should also be noted that more recently concerns have been raised about possible long-term health effects of some patients following COVID-19 infection (labelled as Long Covid). The University will recognise Long Covid as a condition, with a doctors fit note. The University recognise that some people may take longer than others to recover we will adopt a flexible approach to work while they recover.
- iv) UK Government guidance requires everyone (Staff and Students) returning to University to be COVID-19 tested on return in January 2021. The tests being offered by the University are NHS test and trace approved Innova Antigen Lateral flow tests (LFT's). (Returning students will be instructed to have a rapid antigen test on the day of return to campus and then a further test 3 days and twice a week thereafter. Any students and staff with access to campuses will be required to undergo COVID-19 Innova [Lateral Flow testing on a](#) twice weekly basis. It should be noted that these tests are carried out by Health Professionals and are not "self-administered". Using Health Professionals increases the reliability of these tests).

#### **Mental ill health and anxiety due to the COVID Pandemic:**

- A mental health COVID risk assessment has been raised that considers stress caused or aggravated by the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Staff and students can be supported through Workplace Health Safety and Wellbeing ([WHSW](#)) and student support ([SWIS](#)).

#### **Display Screen Equipment (DSE) whilst working from home:**

- An evaluation of DSE risk has been carried out.
- Staff are supported through Workplace Health Safety and Wellbeing ([WHSW](#)).
- Guidance available from the Staff Directory.

**Vaccinations:**

- Some staff have now received their first COVID-19 vaccination dose and other staff in priority groups 5 to 9 are due for their first COVID-19 vaccination by mid-April 2021. The University will support and encourage staff to take the COVID-19 vaccination when available and will also support and encourage students to take the COVID-19 vaccination after their cohort start date. (The over aged 18 cohort is due to start COVID-19 vaccination by 31 July 2021).
- It is understood that vaccinating staff and students will help to reduce the COVID-19 transmission risk both locally and within the University of Essex community.

Hazard hazardous event consequence	Who might be harmed	Current controls	Current risk LxC=R	Additional controls needed to reduce risk	Residual risk LxC=R	Target Date
General Covid-19 transmission risks for the University of Essex	Anyone at the University of Essex	<p><b>Covid Policy.</b></p> <p>Departmental Covid-19 Risk Assessments are to be completed before staff return to campus.</p> <p>All returning Staff will have to complete UoE training on controls to limit the spread of COVID-19 before returning to campus.</p> <p>Staff will sign the “<b>Staff agreement for a return to our campuses during the covid-19 pandemic</b>” before the end of the first day back on campus.</p> <p>Work from home to continue for all who do not need to attend campus to carry out their work.</p> <p><b>Visitor COVID-19 Agreement</b></p> <p><b>Contractor COVID-19 Agreement</b></p> <p>COVID-19 antigen LFT testing facility, for students and staff (on campus) who are not exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, is in place and available to all students at the start of the term and end of term this will continue weekly throughout the spring term.</p> <p>Where a clinical need has identified (i.e. symptomatic Covid-19 person or a person with a positive LFT Antigen result) a</p>	U x Maj = Med			

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		<p>PCR test will be recommended the person will be advised to book the test through asked to call NHS 111 online and will be asked to self-isolate until the result of the PCR is known. The clinical OH team will contact them for follow up. Temperature tests will be taken by nursing staff at the COVID-19 antigen testing location, anyone with a raised temperature will be refused entrance to the University testing location and will be advised to go and get an NHS PCR test.</p> <p>All non-teaching meetings will be conducted remotely during academic year 2020-21. Such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formal committee meetings</li> <li>• committee related events like Away Days</li> <li>• staff, section and departmental conferences</li> <li>• induction and networking events</li> <li>• training that would otherwise be delivered in person</li> <li>• team meetings</li> <li>• catch-ups and 1:1s</li> </ul> <p>(Except were operationally not practical or where a need for face to face meeting has been identified as essential to communicate a message more clearly. Stringent measures of infection control (following risk assessment for meetings) will need to be followed and understood by all attendees those attending face to face meetings will have needed to complete their individual risk assessment).</p> <p>COVID Marshals are deployed on Colchester campus, between 19:00 and 03:00 every evening / night, to promote good COVID behaviour and break up any non-compliant group sizes. These Marshals are in addition to the University of Essex Patrol Officers already on this shift.</p>				

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		<p>Colchester campus has an NHS appointment only walk-in centre for Covid-19 PCR testing, giving easy access to symptomatic students and staff.</p> <p>The Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing department are running a contact tracing system within the University of Essex. The contact tracing team rapidly track down “contacts” of students or staff who have COVID-19 symptoms or COVID-19 + test results to ensure that they isolate for the 10 days required.</p>				
<p>Risk of high touch and other surfaces harbouring Covid-19 leading to possible exposure to Covid-19</p>	<p>Anyone at the University of Essex</p>	<p>Cleaning material is suitable for destroying the Covid-19 virus.</p> <p>Work from home to continue for all who do not need to attend campus to carry out their work.</p> <p>Enhanced cleaning of high touch surfaces, in occupied areas. (Detailed in the University of Essex – Premises Policy Guidance document).</p> <p>Local managers will provide hand sanitiser pumps and or wipes in offices.</p> <p>The UoE are following Public Health England guidance on hand washing social distancing and wearing of face coverings in all buildings. Backed up with signage and comms.</p> <p>The use of shared computers for employees will be limited as much as possible. If shared use is necessary, then managers will provide cleaning products that will kill the COVID virus.</p> <p>Drinks fountains have signage to give guidance on Sanitising hands before and after use.</p>	<p>U x Maj = Med</p>			

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		<p>Additional hand sanitizer points have been fitted, including near photocopiers, drinks fountains and lifts with signage to instruct people to clean hands before and after use.</p> <p>There is additional signage on hand hygiene including wash hands regularly.</p> <p>Kitchenettes have hand soap and hand towels or sanitiser dispenser or wipes dispenser. There is also signage to wash or sanitise hands before and after handling taps, kettles, microwaves, fridges etc.</p> <p>Staff will avoid sharing pens, other office equipment, or anything else that may be handled by more than one person, as detailed in the <b>Staff Agreement</b>.</p> <p>Contactless payment is used where practical.</p>				
Risk of Covid-19 spread from person to person from breathing, speaking, coughing or sneezing.	Anyone at the University of Essex	<p>The UoE are following Public Health England guidance on social distancing and hand washing. Backed up with signage and comms.</p> <p>(Social distancing at 1 metre+ has been increased to 2 metres and this will be applied across all face to face teaching venues, offices, communal areas, labs. Previous Departmental and specific activity Risk Assessments previously approved will require review and where an activity is proposed at less than 2 metres social distancing a new risk assessment will require approval both by Faculty/Department Management and also by the Health &amp; Safety Team and Estates, where applicable”).</p> <p><b>University of Essex – Premises Policy Guidance Note PGN-Covid-19 Premises</b> has been formalised.</p> <p>Two washable Face coverings are available for all University of Essex employees and students.</p>	U x Maj = Med			

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		<p>Working from home continues for all who do not need to attend campus to carry out their work.</p> <p>Managers will ensure that desk occupation follows the requirements of the COVID-19 Premises Policy.</p> <p>Windows should be open whenever possible, as detailed in the COVID-19 Premises Policy.</p> <p>Ventilation systems adjusted to maximise “fresh air” input and minimise/remove air circulation. Supplementary stand-alone air filtration units to be deployed in “windowless” teaching spaces where air changes considered to require additional support</p> <p>Managers should put “<b>authorised access only</b>” signage on relevant doors as appropriate.</p> <p>Screens will be in place, in relevant areas, before affected staff return.</p> <p>Face coverings will be worn in <b>all</b> areas where social distancing is not possible, <b>including</b> corridors when travelling around campus, on entry to cafes and restaurants, when in shops and when visiting kitchenettes, toilets and travelling in lifts. (This is a requirement in the Staff Agreement) (<b>Social Distancing must take precedence to face coverings</b>).</p> <p>Face coverings will be worn by students in lectures. The lecturer will be required to wear a surgical face mask unless otherwise specified in the relevant teaching activity COVID-19 risk assessment.</p> <p>There is an exemption to wearing face coverings where a person has a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability. Those exempt from wearing a face covering due to medical reason will need to be approved through</p>				

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		<p>Occupational Health and will need to wear a lanyard issued by Occupational Health stating exemption. For students, lanyards can be issued through Include team in SWIS and the Health Centre.</p> <p>There will also be some face covering exemptions through specific risk assessments for specialist teaching. The risk assessments will need to detail mitigations to compensate for not using face coverings and will need to be signed off by senior management.</p> <p>Some teaching may be necessary with zero social distancing and detailed specific risk assessments, detailing additional mitigations will be needed with senior management sign off.</p> <p>Face to face meetings replaced with Zoom meetings where practical, even if participants are in the workplace.</p> <p>Face cover signage has been placed on floors and walls in relevant areas.</p> <p>The maximum level of occupancy in a lift at any one time is limited to one person, excepting in accommodation blocks where lifts can be shared by households from individual flats. Monday – Friday 08:00 – 18:00 lifts on campus, except for those in residences, must not be used by staff, students, visitors or tenants, except for those with mobility impairment or staff transporting items of equipment that cannot be safely transported via stairways. All lifts have been fitted with air filtration units.</p> <p>Kitchenettes limited to one person at a time and signage fitted.</p>				
Risk from Covid-19 due to crowding	Anyone at the University of Essex	<b>University of Essex – Premises Policy Guidance Note PGN-Covid-19 Premises</b> has been formalised.	U x Maj = Med			



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internally on campus or in outdoor spaces, leading to possible spread of Covid-19.		<p>The UoE is following Public Health England guidance on social distancing and hand washing. Backed up with signage and comms.</p> <p>Staff numbers limited to allow distancing in open plan offices. Work from home to continue for all who do not need to attend campus to carry out their work.</p> <p>Managers should put “authorised access only” signage on relevant doors as appropriate.</p> <p>Risk Assessment for large teaching spaces limits occupation to a maximum of 60 people in total has been raised. Face Covering is also mandated when travelling within buildings and when in teaching spaces <b>but Social Distancing rules must also be followed</b>. Signage identifies locations where face coverings must be worn.</p> <p>Floor markings to support social distancing and direction.</p> <p>One way systems have been implemented in areas where practical both inside and outside.</p> <p>Maximum occupancy signs on teaching room doors.</p> <p>Running of lectures will be to strict time schedule to prevent crowing in corridors.</p> <p>Most teaching will remain on-line only, with effect from 4th January 2021, until further notice. Only teaching for which a face-to-face component is deemed essential and which is permitted under Government guidelines will be delivered in person.</p>				
Risk of vulnerable worker catching	Anyone at the University who is at increased	<p>Managers’ Guidance Covid-19: Return to on-campus working- activities risk assessment (stage 1 and stage 2).</p> <p>Following Public Health Guidance on control of COVID-19.</p>	U x Maj = Med			

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Covid-19 resulting in serious illness or fatality.	vulnerability of severe complications if contracting the virus	Staff who have undergone an individual COVID-19 risk assessment that been rated as a high or very high risk should avoid working on campus. If a staff member at high or very high risk is required to be on campus, they should contact Occupational Health to review their health risk assessment.				
Person developing / exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms, whilst on campus, leading to possible spread of Covid-19 and illness.	Anyone at the University of Essex	<p>Person exhibiting symptoms will follow Public Health Guidance on going home to isolate call NHS 111 to request a COVID-19 test and follow the actions given by NHS 111. They must also report this to the <a href="#">COVID in-box</a>.</p> <p>The “<b>Staff agreement for a return to our campuses during the covid-19 pandemic</b>” details the specific actions to be taken if they or someone they live with develops COVID-19 symptoms. This agreement must be signed off by the staff member before the end of the first day back on campus. This is also covered in Staff training and the University of Essex COVID-19 <b>Contact Tracing and Testing procedure</b></p>	U x Maj = Med			
Exposure to Covid-19 virus from living with someone who is demonstrating Covid-19 symptoms and bringing Covid risk to the University of Essex, leading		<p><b>Covid Alert Procedure</b> raised gives details of actions to be taken and to alert relevant personnel that an area may be contaminated with Covid-19. (This will prevent people entering the area for routine cleaning or maintenance before a Covid clean has been instigated).</p>				

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to spread of the virus.						
Risk of person passing on Covid-19 due to having many duties around the university buildings.	Anyone at the University of Essex	<p>The UoE are following Public Health England guidance on social distancing and hand washing. Backed up with signage and comms.</p> <p>Wearing of face covering when working in accordance with signage and in highly populated areas.</p> <p>Controls also outlined in the “<b>Adapting our Individual behaviours on our campuses</b>” paper.</p> <p>Managers should ensure that they and staff are limiting face to face contact.</p> <p><b>University of Essex COVID-19 Contact Tracing and Testing procedure</b></p>	U x Maj = Med			
Risk of person passing on Covid-19 due to seeing numerous people during their work, such as working in catering.	Anyone at the University of Essex	<p>The UoE are following Public Health England guidance on social distancing and hand washing. Backed up with signage and comms.</p> <p>Fitting of screens to reception areas and customer facing areas where appropriate.</p> <p><b>University of Essex COVID-19 Contact Tracing procedure Procedure for access to Accommodation Buildings during the COVID-19 Pandemic.</b> (This detail wearing of FFP2 masks in all accommodation areas).</p>	U x Maj = Med			
Travel to and from work where there is possible	Anyone at the University of Essex	The UoE are following Public Health England guidance on social distancing and hand washing. Backed up with signage and comms.	U x Maj = Med			

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exposure to Covid-19.		<p>Work from home to continue for all who do not need to attend campus to carry out their work.</p> <p>Face coverings now mandatory on public transport.</p> <p>Managers will work with staff to look at time scheduling to avoid the necessity to travel on public transport at peak times.</p>				