Guidelines for resumption of activities in Universities in Sri Lanka

By the

University Grants Commission

in collaboration with the

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1. Background

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The outbreak spreads by person-to-person contact, and the potential public health threat posed is high. The COVID-19 virus infects people of all ages. However, evidence to date suggests that two groups of people are at a higher risk of getting severe COVID-19 disease. These are older people and those with underlying medical conditions. The global spread of COVID-19 was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 30th January 2020 and was later declared a Pandemic.

The pandemic continues to evolve. As of 25th April 2021, more than 146 million cases have been reported in 223 countries and territories, resulting in over 3,092,497 deaths (WHO Corona virus-COVID-19 Dashboard). Transmission of COVID-19 is highly clustered resulting in transmission of infection to a large number of people from a relatively small number of cases. Thus the 16 Universities and other Higher Education institutes in Sri Lanka, which are situated in all nine provinces and 11 districts island wide and are governed by the University Grants Commission were compelled to change the mode of teaching, from a hybrid practiced blended learning to a complete online teaching, as Sri Lanka went into lockdown on the 20th of March 2020.

With an escalating number of COVID-19 positive patients, deaths, and primary contacts, a travel restriction was imposed in Sri Lanka on the 21st May 2021 further restricting the administrative and academic activities in the Universities. As mentioned in the Global Education Meeting held on 22 October 2020, to accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4, Sri Lanka too pledged to safely reopen educational institutions based on scientific evidence.

Although online distance teaching learning activities continue, the Universities should return to the 'new normal' activities with the travel restrictions being lifted. Thus, at this stage, while it is essential to keep the emergence of new cases to a minimal level to help the health care system, it is also prudent that we prepare the universities for academic and research activities.

2. Core principles of COVID-19 prevention

	Basic Principle	Explanation
	EVERYONE should cover their mouth and nose in the presence of other people.	**Single most effective intervention that would prevent the spread.** N95 masks are best protective. Other mask types reduce the risk of becoming infected and may reduce the severity of illness.
	EVERYONE should keep their hands clean	Hand hygiene and use of sanitizers reduces the risk of contact transmission.
	EVERYONE should avoid eating around other people.	Talking generates aerosols increasing the risk of transmission to others. Without mask at any point increases risk.
	EVERYONE should keep their distance from other people.	A minimum of 2 meters.
	EVERYONE should minimize the duration of contact with other people.	Keep encounters as brief as possible. Risk of infection is higher if cumulative contact exceeds 15 minutes.
	EVERYONE should avoid sharing airspace with other people.	Enclosed spaces with poor ventilation increase infection risk. Outdoors are safer. Large rooms are safer than small rooms for the same number of people. Indoor spaces need maximum air exchange.
	Everyone within the University should be vaccinated against COVID-19 (unless there is a medical reason to not be vaccinated)	Vaccination is a vital strategy to prevent disease and death. It helps develop immunity to COVID-19 and can minimize outbreaks.
	People with symptoms or history of contact with a COVID-19 patient should quarantine away from other people.	People who might be infected with COVID-19 should stay away from other people for at least 14 days.

3. Summary of different functional areas in the university and potential risk

	Functional areas	Potential Risk
1.	Lecture Halls	• Usually more than 100 students • Minimal ventilation and air conditioned • Gathering for more than half an hour • Seating accommodation at less than one meter • Students mixing from high and low risk areas • Frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs
2.	Examination Halls/rooms	• Usually more than 100 students • Minimal ventilation and air conditioned • Examination for more than half an hour • Students mixing from high and low risk areas • Frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs
3.	Meeting rooms/ Scrutiny or results board room	• Large meetings such as Faculty Board meetings with more than 100 academics • Minimal ventilation and Air conditioned • Gathering for more than half an hour • Seating accommodation at less than one meter • Frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs
4.	Canteen/ Rest rooms of staff and students	• Large gatherings during rest time • Minimal ventilation • No masks when eating • Sharing of meals • Gathering for more than half an hour • Seating accommodation at less than one meter • Students mixing from high and low risk areas • Frequently touched surfaces, such as door knobs
5.	Hostel	• Few students as roommates in one room due to lack of facilities • Roommates from different districts • Roommates from different faculties/units • Gathering of different roommates during dinner/lunch time • Many students using one wash room • Minimal ventilation • No masks • Sharing of personal belongings • Distancing at less than one meter

4. Broad strategies to be adopted for prevention and control of COVID-19 in Universities and Higher Education Institutes

4.1 Promotion of individual protection measures based on DReAM

Individual protection measures against COVID-19 taken by university students, academics, non-academics and support staff should comply with the recommendations of the campaign 'Towards a New Normal' initiated by the Ministry of Health to create awareness among all Sri Lankans and local organizations, reinforce existing knowledge, and build favourable attitudes and practices that conform to DReAM, especially in public activities and work settings. The campaign focuses on crucial prevention measures, captured in the acronym DReAM.

D -	***Distancing***	Maintain a physical distance of at least 1-2 meter from others; avoid public gatherings, crowded places, close-contact settings and confined and enclosed spaces
Re -	***Respiratory etiquette***	Cough/sneeze into your elbow; stay at home and contact a doctor if you have fever, cough and/or sore throat
A -	***Aseptic techniques***	Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol; avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth; regularly disinfect frequently touched surfaces
M -	***Mask***	Wear a face mask, ensuring you put on, take off, and store your mask properly; make sure it covers both your nose and mouth at all times

In additional to following DReAM, everyone should **avoid the 3 C's – Crowded places, Close-contact settings, and Confined and enclosed spaces[1].**

In facilitating the above recommendations at individual level, the following strategies are proposed.

Promote safe behaviour among students, university staff and support staff	1. Before resumption of the university, an educational session should be conducted (including the development of educational material) in collaboration with the COVID-19 safety committee for students and staff of all categories. ***Key messages:*** • Correct hand washing and cough etiquette would save lives. • Tips for physical distancing • Proper way of wearing a facemask and disposal (demonstration video clip) • Wearing gloves (especially cash handlers) is not a substitute for hand hygiene (owing to cross contamination) • Use the lift only for a medical reason • Limit the use of common tables and floors unless essential; after doing so, to clean hands • Strictly no communal meal partaking in departments or canteen • Keep the facemask on always • No gathering especially in poorly ventilated areas/ air-conditioned (AC) rooms 2. Every student and staff member should be given access to an e-copy of the brochure. 3. Students, academic staff, and non-academic staff and support staff (security, cleaning, maintenance) should be regularly updated on the latest and correct information on the pandemic situation, and the guides and protocols used. 4. Students should be made aware of their expected behaviour in common areas through awareness programs; marshals to undertake random checks on students; through posters displayed in such places which highlight the social responsibility; and their duty towards preventing COVID-19 spread in their own university. 5. As an amendment of the university by-laws, if a student violates the safety practices with regards to physical distancing or other preventive measures such as masks etc., disciplinary action will be taken appropriately by the relevant authorities.
Safety measures at the entry points to faculty	1. No student or staff member should be allowed to enter the university premises without a facemask and without going through the safety procedures indicated at the entrance (e.g., facemask, physical distancing, and temperature check). 2. Security staff and marshals should supervise the above procedures. 3. No student or staff member should enter the university premises if having 'flu like symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, sore- throat).

Aseptic techniques	1. It is mandatory for every person to clean hands using hand washing facilities (foot/knee operated wash basins with running water and liquid soap dispensers) or hand sanitizers installed at the entrance to main buildings of the faculty including the main gate. 2. Hands should be cleaned with sanitizer/alcohol rub after using the fingerprint machine and common surfaces. 3. It is recommended that every person carries a bottle of sanitizer with them (or soap). 4. The used face masks/tissue should be discarded into the foot operated waste bins that are lined with yellow biohazard bags, which are installed at key places in the faculty. 5. Marshals and student networks should regularly monitor student behaviour.
Physical distancing	1. Students and staff should strictly follow physical distancing measures (of at least 1 meter) especially in lecture halls, study areas, restroom/common room, lunchroom/canteen, laboratories, department and hostel, including during travel (to and from the faculty) and accommodation. 2. Students and staff should not use the chairs/seating marked with a cross in workstations or common areas (canteen, meeting rooms). 3. When queuing up, students and staff should take the standing positions indicated by the image of a cross/footstep. 4. No student or staff member should enter areas that are identified as restricted to congregate and interact. 5. Teachers are encouraged to adopt online teaching for large group classes; and not exceed the number recommended by the government at the time for small group classes. 6. Students and staff members should avoid unnecessary gatherings and limit events/meetings that require close contact (e.g., student clubs, recreational activities, student meetings, department meetings) 7. If a meeting is essential, the staff should conduct it with a limited number of attendees (as per the guidelines applicable by the Government at the time) 8. When conducting department meetings, it should be done separately for academics, non-academics and postgraduates or together using online modes. 9. Students and staff are discouraged of using AC/ confined spaces for gatherings. 10. Marshals and student networks should regularly monitor student behaviour.

Facemasks and respiratory etiquette	1. Every person should wear a facemask, if within the faculty premises. 2. The faculty administration should ensure a continuous supply of face masks for sanitary labourers and security staff. 3. Posters demonstrating proper use and disposal of tissues/masks and cough etiquette should be displayed in common areas. **4.** Marshals and student networks should regularly monitor student behaviour.
Safety measures for canteen	1. Students and staff should strictly follow the safety measures prescribed for the use of canteen, which are displayed at the entrance to the canteen. 2. Students and staff should be encouraged to bring their own lunch box/container for serving food. 3. Students and staff should visit the canteen only during the times allocated for them (For example, the lunch hour should be staggered as 11-12, 12-1 pm) and managed by giving each student/staff member a meal token colour-coded for each meal type. 4. Persons other than students and staff members (such as patients attending laboratory services) visiting the university for services should use a separate entrance and dedicated area.
Safety measures for accommodation and travel	1. A common guideline on safety measures to be followed in hostels and during transport should be developed and distributed by each university to all deans, senior assistant registrars, wardens and students. 2. Prior to registering for hostel accommodation, every student should communicate their health/risk status through an online survey (if coming from a lockdown area, has had close contact with a case, etc.) 3. Every student requesting for hostel accommodation should sign a declaration form indicating that they would abide by the rules related to COVID-19 safety practices. 4. Students should strictly follow the hostel guide and the marshals and student networks should regularly monitor student behaviour. 5. Every student should be given a copy of the protocol that would be followed when a student is exposed to a COVID-19 patient or becomes a primary contact (this should include the contact details of the persons to be contacted; instances that students should not report to work). A similar protocol should be given to staff members as well. All should strictly follow the protocol.

4.2 Create an enabling environment for staff and students to practice DReAM

Surveillance Committee	• The surveillance system should be established and monitored by the University COVID committee, which would consist of Faculty COVID committee representatives. • A COVID-19 committee to be formed at each University, consisting of a - Chairperson, preferably with a medical background or the Vice Chancellor of the University - Minimum of two other members from a medical background - The Registrar of the University - The University Medical Officer - The Public Health Inspector/s - The Medical Officer of Health of the area - One representative, preferably the Chairpersons of the faculty COVID Committee • The faculty databases should be shared with the University COVID Committee • A Public Health Specialist to be assigned to a university, where possible. • A Faculty COVID 19 committee should be established at Faculty level.
Minimizing the number of staff/students at a time in the Departments	Consider accommodating staff /students only to carry out essential activities depending on the COVID situation and to prevent overcrowding within a closed environment.
Protective measures at the entry points.	1. Restrict entry/exit points of the faculty for different categories (e.g. student entrance, staff entrance, lab services). 2. Wall posters in all three languages at the entry points on do's and don'ts within faculty premises. 3. Supervision by security staff on physical distancing at the entry point by queuing up. 4. Do not allow anyone to enter the premises without masks. 5. Provide hand washing facilities and sanitiser liquid at entry points and in buildings. 6. Make hand washing a MANDATORY task when entering premises/buildings.

	7. If a student/ staff member is having fever and /or related symptoms, they should not report to work. There should be a mechanism (google form) to inform the situation to head of department/ clinical coordinator/ immediate supervisor). 8. Each entry point to have an infra-red thermometer check and train the security staff in taking temperature. 9. Develop a protocol to follow if a person with fever is detected.
Promoting online sessions instead of physical large group lectures.	***For the academics*** 1. Universities should provide good quality internet facility within the university and hostel premises to make the online sessions effective. 2. Staff development centers of the universities should conduct regular programs on the effective use of online platforms for teaching and learning sessions for staff. 3. Universities should have an effective ICT department to support the academics to solve the issues on online teaching. ***For the students*** 1. Sessions on using online platform for learning can be included in the existing ICT modules to improve students' knowledge, skills and attitudes towards online teaching and learning.
Promoting outdoor small group sessions.	1. Universities should assess the possibilities of making huts within the university premises depending on the availability of space. 2. The huts will facilitate good ventilation and a healthy learning environment.
Measures to be taken at canteen and common students' room and study areas.	1. Universities should assess the existing seating capacity of the canteens and should have a plan to improve it by providing extensions with adequate ventilation. 2. Advocate restricted use of lifts- Notices for staff, students and visitors not to use the lift unless for a medical reason. If using, only one or two (as sign posted inside the lift) is allowed. 3. Mobilise students to regularly monitor the student behaviour and liaise with the Faculty COVID Committee. 4. Marshalls to do routine checks within faculty premises on behaviour of students related to COVID-19 5. Establish penalties for those who violate instructions.

	6. With the university PHI, train the canteen workers and cleaning service staff on safety and follow-up. 7. Written instructions should be given to the canteen owner and cleaning supervisor. 8. The cleaning service contractor and canteen owner should be strictly instructed to keep a record of employees who work under them (information to trace a person) 9. A timetable for the canteen should be in operation esp. during lunch and breakfast time (two time slots allocated for b fast, lunch)- to reduce to 50%. 10. Images of crosses placed on the floor on how to queue up 11. Seating arrangements – reduce to 50% by images of crosses placed on chairs that cannot be used. 12. To sell only take away food (packaged meals) at the canteen Visitors/ outsiders are strictly prohibited inside canteens. 13. Canteen committee to monitor the canteen on a daily basis and report any misconduct to the COVID-19 response committee for action
Conducting written exams	1. Universities should have the statistics of the existing seating capacity of exam halls in each faculty and should have a plan on how to minimise overcrowding of the students during the exams. Halls should seat a maximum of 50% of the pre COVID seating capacity. 2. Exams can be conducted in more than one exam hall simultaneously if seating capacity restriction cannot accommodate all the candidates 3. Faculties should plan the additional number of supervisors, invigilators and hall attendants needed in advance. 4. Packaging of exam papers also should be done accordingly. 5. Alcohol based hand sanitiser should be available at the entrance as well as at the staff table to facilitate frequent hand hygiene by the staff. 6. Use of air conditioners in exam halls is not advised. However, if the use of an air condition (A/C) is essential, off the A/C from time to time and open the windows and doors to facilitate air circulation.
Modifying the existing lecture halls and tutorial rooms as "COVID safe"	Universities should assess the ventilation of existing lecture halls and tutorial rooms and should develop a feasible plan to improve the ventilation with the help of maintenance unit engineers and Technical Officers. (Example: Fixing exhaust fans at suitable places will significantly improve the ventilation).

Improving hand hygiene facilities	1. Hand cleansing facilities- Wall-mounted alcohol-based hand sanitisers near the main entrances, outside the lifts, common areas and corridors, at the department/unit entrances and inside the departments, in the canteen, outside washrooms and near fingerprint machines and to ensure they are regularly refilled. 2. Provide foot operated discard bins with yellow biohazard bags for used face masks/tissues at key places. 3. Display posters demonstrating the recommended steps of hand washing.
Cleaning and disinfection of touchable surfaces.	1. Frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, railings of stair cases and balconies, chair handles, table tops, etc. should be cleaned and disinfected with 0.1% Hypochlorite solution at least twice a day. 2. Common computer keyboards, mouse, telephone receiver and other sensitive items should be disinfected using 70% Alcohol at least three times a day. 3. Train the staff in using waste bins in departments for separate disposal of facial tissue and facemasks; and by end of each day, to collect it into yellow biohazard bags. 4. A monitoring mechanism for safe disposal of garbage including potentially infected waste (disposed facemasks, tissues). 5. Train the staff in using the toilets with minimum contamination/ Facilitate students to clean their own toilets in hostel.
Safety measures when transporting clinical samples for testing	1. Assign designated places at the receiving gate/s for sample collection. 2. Assign a security person to receive the samples at the gate; to make a record of the time received and to be collected by which Department; and to inform the relevant department.
Safety measures at Labs in departments	1. Follow the Ministry of Health guideline or any other appropriate guidelines for laboratories providing services or conducting research 2. Provide a continuous supply of consumables for ensuring safety measures within labs such as gloves, masks, goggles, shoes, etc.

Visitors	1 At entry points to faculty, to have a dedicated person to inquire into their purpose of visit. Security can first communicate with department person's in-charge or a designated person in the Dean's office of the Faculty and clarify the actual need before sending them. 2 Meetings with outsiders over online platform whenever possible
Ensuring safe transport facilities to staff and students	Considering, that the university vehicles are used - Not to exceed 50% seating capacity (increasing physical space and minimising interactions) - Encourage students/ staff to use private transport instead of public transport or as an alternative to use the university shuttle service - Wherever possible, universities should try to provide transport to staff who regularly use public transport to maintain a secure bio-bubble.

4.3 Develop and implement Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

Develop Risk Communication Execution Committee (RCEC) at Universities, faculties, institutes and units	1. A COVID-19 Response Committee should form a Risk Communication Execution Committee (RCEC) as a sub-committee to identify the locally appropriate strategies and develop needed structure and materials with the community engagement. 2. The RCEC can be the Faculty COVID committee or a committee of at least 8 to 10 members representing the different categories of staff and students. It should ensure the inclusiveness of the all category of staff, students and well-wishers of the university. 3. RCEC should develop a coordination mechanism by using the existing communication structures or developing innovative tools by using modern communication technologies like WhatsApp groups with faculties, institutions, units, staff, and student communities. 4. The RCECs can develop their standard operating procedures to develop the information communication materials, ensure the accessibility of materials, assess the effect on knowledge and periodically check the level of risk perception and pandemic fatigue.
Ensure the access of the risk communication to relevant staff, students and members of the governing body and committees	1. All the Deans of the faculties, directors, sectional heads, union members and other leaders in the university to arrange the needed resources to disseminate the communications to reach all the required stakeholders 2. Ensure the access of the periodically updated communications at all levels 3. Develop and implement suitable mechanisms to get feedback on the communications that have shared. ex. Conduct a mini survey by using the google form on the knowledge of new normal life at the university. 4. Arrange periodical evaluation and provide feedback to university level RCEC on the effectiveness of the communications that have been disseminated at the faculty, sectional and unit level.
Arrange regular update on the risk level in the country	1. RCEC should ensure that the circular, guidelines and other relevant materials published by the relevant authorities must be notified on time to all the staff, students and members of the governing body and committees at the university. 2. Regular update through the websites, relevant management information systems and social media. 3. Ensure that all the stakeholders adopt and implement the shared materials

Improve the community engagement	1. RCEC, through its coordination mechanism, map the relevant staff, students, organizations and groups and mobilises them to work in partnership to ensure the RCEC related activities. 2. Adopt relevant strategies to keep them engaged.

4.4 Strengthening Public Health Management in Universities

Health Centre / University Medical Office (UMO)	1. All universities should have a Health Centre/UMO preferably in all campuses. If not possible to have in all campuses, a medical officer should visit each campus regularly based on the demand and the need. The numbers of each category of staff required shall be determined by the student population and the need. All vacancies in the health centre should be immediately filled. 2. Health centre /UMO of all universities should be adequately staffed including Medical Officer(s), nurse(s), Public Health Inspector(s), relevant allied health staff and ancillary workers. All staff in the Health Centre shall be under the direct supervision of the Chief Medical Officer. The Chief Medical Officer shall be directly under the Vice Chancellor and Registrar of the University. 3. Ideally each campus should have its own PHI or be regularly visited by the PHI of the university. 4. Assess available health services and upgrade services if necessary. 5. Necessary equipment and supplies including PPE should be provided. 6. Health centres should have facilities for isolating persons if necessary. 7. Health centres should be provided with ambulances or have access to an emergency ambulance service. 8. The Chief Medical Officer and staff of the Health Centre shall maintain close links with the Medical Officer of Health and the PHI of the area and the Provincial and Regional Health Authority including the Regional and Provincial Directors of Health and the Regional Epidemiologist.
Activities to be conducted by the Health Centre / UMO in relation to COVID-19	1. Develop COVID-19 related guidelines and SOPs and guidelines in consultation with the COVID Response Committee.

	2. Formalise routine work in line with COVID-19 prevention and initial management. 3. Update and train health care team towards latest updates of COVID-19 prevention and initial management. 4. Educate and train all staff and students on COVID-19 infection, risk factors, and protective behaviours (e.g., DReAM guidelines, care of PPE and to follow the instructions through webinars/email campaigns). 5. Develop posters and health education messages to be displayed to encourage workers to comply with given instructions. 6. Report any positive cases to relevant MOH and PHI through University Medical Center/ COVID-19 Responsive Task Force. 7. Maintain a database and update it appropriately. 8. Establish a 24-hour hotline in case of emergency. 9. Monitor and supervise all prevention activities carried out in the university. 10. Ensure proper disposal of hazardous waste. 11. Regularly report to the COVID-19 Response Committee. 12. The Committee should appoint a monitoring committee including the PHI and other health staff to oversee adherence to COVID guidelines.
General Administration	1. Assist the COVID-19 Response Committee in carrying out all preventive actions. 2. Procure all necessary equipment and supplies expeditiously. 3. Plan work schedules as per current guidelines. 4. Ensure all essential services are carried out. 5. Monitor and supervise all COVID-19 preventive activities.

4.5 Strengthening access to health services and advice

Strengthening access to health services and advice	1. Provide routine care taking recommended precautions. 2. Chief Medical Officer should be fully aware of the procedure to be followed when a suspected or positive case is detected. 3. Establish a team and an isolation area within the university premises to isolate COVID-19 suspected or positive students and staff. 4. If a suspected or confirmed case is detected, inform the MOH of the area and take necessary precautions until the person is transferred to an intermediate care centre/hospital. 5. Make a list of intermediate centres and phone numbers available to the university COVID-19 control team 6. Make list of institutions which will perform the PCR or antigen test available to the UMO 7. Make sufficient amount of PPEs available within the university. 8. Increase the number of health & safety warnings within the university with visible and clear lettering.

4.6. Minimising super spreading events

Minimising super-spreading in the academic learning environment	1. Lectures and small group discussions – as much as possible to be covered as virtual sessions 2. Practical classes a. Prioritise and minimise the number of practical classes that are conducted face-to- face (eg -by converting practicals/demonstrations to videos and uploading to moodle/student learning platform) b. Dividing the batch into small groups depending on the facilities and space available in labs. c. Take precautions when using shared equipment such as microscopes (example using goggles while using microscopes) 3. Arrange demonstrations (eg- specimens, dissections etc) in well ventilated open spaces as much as possible. Prevent students clumping together. 4. Examinations a. If students are not immunised, arrange two separate exam halls for days scholars and for the students residing within University premises. b. Any student/s with a contact history of covid-19 to be in a separate room during examinations. c. Do not encourage students with symptoms suggestive of COVID to attend. Alternative exam/assessment need to be worked out such that no injustice is done to such students. 5. Advice students to maintain the bio-secure bubble during group discussions with fellow students. 6. Avoid face-to-face meetings of the faculty staff. If such meetings are essential, minimise attendees and arrangements should be made to maintain distance and stick to all COVID prevention guidelines.

Minimising super-spreading in social gatherings	1. Advice students and staff to avoid organising social gatherings and activities such as musical shows, dramas, faculty meets, pirith ceremonies, 'paduru' parties, batch trips etc. 2. If any social gathering is essential, the organisers should take prior permission from the COVID prevention team/Dean of the respective faculty (even if the event is held outside University premises) 3. Student batch meetings should be held virtually. 4. If the students attend events outside (e.g.–funerals of close relations of their friends), advise them not to go as large groups and to minimise the time period that they spend at that place maintain all COVID prevention guidelines (usually university students spend nights in these places, a risk to the society too) 5. Students should not entertain outsiders and visitors to faculty premises and to halls of residence.
Providing facilities and the supportive environment to avoid a super-spreading event	1. Allocating separate wings in halls of residence to faculties to minimise students of one faculty mixing with others (e.g. – medical students undergoing clinical training to be in a separate wing). 2. Wardens/ Sub-wardens in halls of residence to monitor and report to a designated body/person if the students violate regulations. 3. Take disciplinary actions against students breaching the regulations and those who disregard instructions given by the authorities on COVID prevention.

5. Specific instructions for each setting

5.1 Classrooms

Specific Instructions	• Methods with minimal physical contact, such as Zoom, Moodle, Google classroom, are strongly encouraged instead of face-to-face lectures. • Following precautionary measures need to be ensured if face-to-face teaching-learning activities are conducted. • As much as possible to maintain "bio bubbles" within study programmes and batches. The suggested "bio bubbles" are - students from one or to particular hostel/s to be grouped into one teaching learning activity of the study programme - students travelling from residences to be grouped into one teaching learning activity of the study programme.
Students/Staff members	• Any students/staff members having, - fever and/or any other symptoms of acute respiratory disease at present - A contact history with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patient should not attend/conduct face-to-face teaching-learning activities. • All students/staff members should wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol hand rub at the entrance of the lecture theatre/tutorial room/class room. • All students/staff members should wear facemasks inside the lecture /tutorial room/class room. • All students/staff members should strictly adhere to social distancing practices with at least 2 meter distance from others at all times possible. • All students/staff members should maintain respiratory etiquette at all times. • Sharing any teaching material among students should be minimized as much as possible.
General instructions	• Keep the doors, windows and ventilation inlets open as much as possible in all lecture theatres/tutorial rooms/class rooms. • Attendance to be monitored in all teaching sessions (preferably by a single person). • All frequently touched surfaces (especially the equipment used for teaching) to be cleaned preferably after each teaching session. • At the entrance and exit, should follow a queue to maintain social distancing. • Used face masks/tissues should not be discarded inside classrooms and they should be discarded to bins with yellow biohazard bags in the faculty. • Posters, notices or any promotional material with relevant advice on COVID-19 control and prevention should be displayed at the entrance.

5.2 Office

Health status	● Daily health status of all staff members should be monitored to identify whether they, - have fever and/or any other symptoms of acute respiratory disease at present - have a contact history with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patient ● All staff members should be clearly advised not to report to work if they have fever and or any other symptoms of acute respiratory disease.
Hygienic practices	• All staff should practice proper hand hygiene by washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using alcohol hand rub before entering the office at each time. • All staff should maintain respiratory etiquette at all times and at all places. • All staff should strictly adhere to social distancing practices with at least 2 meter distance from others.
Arranging the workplace	• Workstations should be spaced out to avoid overcrowding and facilitate social distancing. • The number of staff in the office should be minimized to the essential at any given time. • All staff members are strongly advised not to share any frequently used office items (stationery/equipment) as much as possible except for common office items such as telephone, fax-machine, photo-copy machine, printer etc. • Before and after the use of common office equipment proper hand hygienic measures should be strictly adhered to. • Visitors to the office premises should not be permitted unless for any essential reasons. • An appointment system should be introduced to avoid overcrowding within the office premises. • Keep the doors, windows and ventilation inlets open as much as possible in office rooms. • Posters, notices or any promotional material with relevant advice on COVID-19 control and prevention should be displayed at the entrance.

Meals	• Having meals or beverages in the same room at the same time should be avoided as much as possible. • Keep a minimum of 2 meters when having meals/beverages. • Sharing of meals and beverages should be avoided. • Staff members are encouraged to have their own cups and plates and are advised not to share these items.
Cleaning	• All frequently touched surfaces including desk/tabletops, chairs, doorknobs should be disinfected daily at least before work begins. (General guidelines on cleaning and disinfecting are given under the relevant section below). • Staff members are encouraged to clean the personal working space on their own if possible. • Used face masks/tissues should only be discarded to bins with yellow biohazard bags in the faculty.

5.3 Accommodation

Entry to the hostel premises	• All students should complete the checklist on health screening for COVID-19. • All students should sign a declaration form confirming that they will follow the regulations and precautions given by the faculty. • Temperature check would be carried out at the entrance to the hostel using infrared thermometers (at every time). Any person recording a temperature above 98.4^0F or 37^0C (re-checked after 10-15 minutes) will not be allowed inside and will be referred to medical care. • All persons entering the hostel premises should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using alcohol hand rub at the entrance. • No visitors will be allowed in the hostel premises without prior permission. • Any deliveries should not be permitted to be delivered within the hostel and to be kept at the security point. • Posters, notices or any promotional material with relevant advice on COVID-19 control and prevention should be displayed at the entrance.
Permission to leave the hostel	• Going out of the hostel premises is strongly discouraged except for academic activities organized by the faculty and for main meals. • Students are not allowed to go out of the hostel premises without the permission of the sub-warden, for any other reason including for seeking health care for an illness. Permission will be granted by assessing the validity of the requirement by the sub-warden. • Departure declaration form should be submitted when students go out of the hostel in except in instances for health or other emergencies.
Occupying hostel rooms	• Number of students that can occupy in a room will be decided based on the recommendation made by the committee appointed for the purpose. 50% capacity is suggested. • The room allocation within different sections of the hostels (e.g. hostel floors) needs to be based on the different sub-groups involved in teaching-learning activities (e.g. clinical appointments) as much as possible. • Visiting other room is strongly discouraged.

Sanitary facilities	• Toilets/washrooms will be numbered according to the room number/s and each student should only use that designated toilet/washroom. • It is encouraged to clean the designated areas by the residents and to minimise the service of sanitary labourers. • It is encouraged to keep the windows and ventilation inlets open as much as possible.
Using common facilities in hostels	• All residents should wear facemasks outside the designated rooms. • All residents should strictly adhere to social distancing practices with at least 2 meter distance from others at all times. • All residents should maintain respiratory etiquette at all times and at all places. • All residents are advised to use the common areas as minimum as possible and doors of common areas should be kept open.
Student interactions	• Common gatherings or study discussions are strongly discouraged. Instead, students are encouraged to have online discussions via Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp etc. if needed. • In unavoidable circumstances students should be adhered to general recommendations such as hand washing, wearing facemask and social distancing practices.
Meals	• Preferably, meals should be provided from the faculty canteens for the students residing in hostels. • All residents are encouraged to have meals in separate places and are not advised to share food. • All residents should use their own plates, glasses, cups and other utensils during meals.
Having meals in the canteen	• All the students and staff should maintain at least 2 meter physical distancing while using common facilities at the canteen. • All students should use their own lunch-boxes, plates, glasses, cups and other utensils for dining. •
Illnesses	• All students are advised to inform regarding any diagnosed medical conditions to the faculty health centre or to the committee appointed on health concerns.

	• If students are having diagnosed medical conditions, they should ensure to bring medicine if on long-term treatment. It is also advisable to bring other commonly used medicine. • If students develop COVID-19 like symptoms, they should immediately get isolated (either go to the designated isolation area in the hostel or remain in the room if there is no roommate) and inform the sub-warden and the faculty medical centre or the relevant faculty-level committee.

5.4 Common areas

Specific Instructions	• All students/staff members are strongly advised to use the common areas only when it is necessary. • All students/staff members should always wear facemasks. • All students/staff members should strictly adhere to social distancing practices with at least 2-meter distance from others at all times. • All students/staff members should maintain respiratory etiquette at all times and at all places. • Keep the doors, windows and ventilation inlets open as much as possible in office rooms. • All common areas should be cleaned/disinfected daily at least before work begins. (General guidelines on cleaning and disinfecting are given under the relevant section below). • Used face masks/tissues should only be discarded to bins with yellow biohazard bags in the faculty. • Using the lifts, elevators should be minimized as much as possible. • Posters, notices or any promotional material with relevant advice on COVID-19 control and prevention should be displayed at the entrance.

5.5 Recreation facilities

	• Common gatherings of any form are strongly discouraged. Instead, it is encouraged to have alternative platforms via Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp etc. • For any recreational group activities, prior permission should be obtained from the relevant faculty level committee. • In all circumstances, students/staff members should adhere to general recommendations such as hand washing, wearing facemask and social distancing practices as much as possible. • All sports activities specially contact sports to be avoided

5.6 Canteen

Health status	• All staff should be screened on the first day to identify whether they, - had COVID-19 - have fever and/or any other symptoms of acute respiratory disease at present - have a contact history with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patient • All staff members should be clearly advised not to report to work if they have fever and or any other symptoms of acute respiratory disease.
Hygienic practices	• All staff should practice proper hand hygiene by washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before handing food. • All staff should maintain respiratory etiquette at all times and at all places. • All staff should strictly adhere to social distancing practices with at least 2 meter distance from others
Arranging the workplace	• Workstations should be spaced out to avoid overcrowding and facilitate social distancing. • The number of staff in the food preparation and serving areas should be limited at any one time. • Posters, notices or any promotional material with relevant advice on COVID-19 control and prevention should be displayed at the entrance.
Serving food	• Customers should not be allowed to serve themselves. • Buffet style should be served by dedicated person/s. • Staff serving food should wear disposable gloves. • Use of customers' (their own) plates/lunch boxes, glasses/cups are strongly recommended.
Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces	• The canteen premises should be cleaned, - every morning before opened for customers - after every tea-break and lunch break - at the end of each working day • The in-charge staff member should maintain a record on cleaning.

5.7 Shops (Communication/photocopy shops etc)

Health status	• Health screening of all staff members should be conducted prior to assigning duty during the period. All staff should be screened on the first day to identify whether they, - had COVID-19 - have fever and/or any other symptoms of acute respiratory disease at present - have a contact history with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patient • All staff members should be clearly advised not to report to work if they have fever and or any other symptoms of acute respiratory disease.
Hygienic practices	• All staff should practice proper hand hygiene by washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using alcohol hand rub before entering the premises at each time. • All staff should maintain respiratory etiquette at all times and at all places. • All staff should strictly adhere to social distancing practices with at least 2 meter distance from others.
Arranging the workplace	• Workstations should be spaced out to avoid overcrowding and facilitate social distancing. • The number of staff in the premises should be minimized to the essential at any given time. • Keep the doors, windows and ventilation inlets open as much as possible in the area. • A separate outlet should be operated for customers and it is advised to minimise the number of customers entering the premises at a given time. • Posters, notices or any promotional material with relevant advice on COVID-19 control and prevention should be displayed at the entrance.
Cleaning	• All frequently touched surfaces including desk/tabletops, chairs and doorknobs should be disinfected daily at least before work begins. (General guidelines on cleaning and disinfecting are given under the relevant section below). • Staff members are encouraged to clean the personal working space on their own if possible.

5.8 University Medical Clinic/Health Center/Medical Center

Health status	• Health screening of all staff members should be conducted prior to assigning duty during the period. All staff should be screened on the first day to identify whether they, - had COVID-19 - have fever and/or any other symptoms of acute respiratory disease at present - have a contact history with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patient • All staff members should be clearly advised not to report to work if they have fever and or any other symptoms of acute respiratory disease.
Precautions by staff members	• Always keep a distance of 2 meter from one another. • Always wear face masks within the clinic. • Use a hand sanitizer on entering, after seeing each patient and before leaving. • Use only the chairs that are not marked with cross signs in the reading area.
Precautions by students	• Every student should bring an adequate stock of face masks. • Every student should carry a small bottle of hand sanitizer with them. • Sharing of food/tea/beverages among students is strictly prohibited. • Use only the chairs that are not marked with cross signs in the reading area.
General instructions	• An appointment system should be available to prevent overcrowding. • Emergency room should be available. • PPEs should be available for use by the staff. • The clinic should have a foot traffic flow. • The clinic should be airy with appropriate placement of exhaust fans. • The clinic area should be cleaned, - every morning before opened for customers - after every tea-break and lunch break - at the end of each working day

	• The in-charge staff member should maintain a record on cleaning. • Sharing of food/tea/beverages among staff and students should be strictly prohibited. • Used face masks/tissues should only be discarded to bins with yellow biohazard bags in the faculty. • Posters, notices or any promotional material with relevant advice on COVID-19 control and prevention should be displayed at the entrance.

5.9 Library

Common instructions	• Encourage separate open areas for reading • Encourage use of digital learning materials
Health status	• Health screening of all staff members should be conducted prior to assigning duty during the period. All staff should be screened on the first day to identify whether they, - had COVID-19 - have fever and/or any other symptoms of acute respiratory disease at present - have a contact history with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patient • All staff members should be clearly advised not to report to work if they have fever and or any other symptoms of acute respiratory disease.
Precautions by staff members	• Always keep a distance of 2 meter from one another and library staff. • Always wear face masks within the library premises. • Use a hand sanitizer on entering the library and before using library material. • Use only the chairs that are not marked with cross signs in the reading area.

Precautions by students	• Every student should bring an adequate stock of face masks. • Every student should carry a small bottle of hand sanitizer with them. • Sharing of food/tea/beverages among students is strictly prohibited. • Use only the chairs that are not marked with cross signs in the reading area.
General instructions	• The library should have a foot traffic flow. • The library premises should be cleaned, - every morning before opened for customers - after every tea-break and lunch break - at the end of each working day • The in-charge staff member should maintain a record on cleaning. • Used face masks/tissues should only be discarded to bins with yellow biohazard bags in the faculty. • Windows should be kept open and use fans to move air outwards. • Sharing of food/tea/beverages among students is strictly prohibited. • Posters, notices or any promotional material with relevant advice on COVID-19 control and prevention should be displayed at the entrance.

5.10 Laboratory

General instructions	• Students should wash hands/ use alcohol hand rub at the entrance of the laboratory/dissection room. • Social distancing of a minimum two meters should be maintained in all circumstances. • Students should wear face masks throughout the class. • Sharing stationary material and textbooks is strongly discouraged. • Students should bring only the essential books and equipment to the laboratory/dissection room. • Once the class/practical is over students should return back to their respective homes, resident halls without undue delay. • Fresh clothes should be worn on every day. • Used face masks/tissues should only be discarded to bins with yellow biohazard bags in the faculty. • Posters, notices or any promotional material with relevant advice on COVID-19 control and prevention should be displayed at the entrance.

5.11 Cleaning services

General instructions	• All frequently touched surfaces including desk/table tops, chairs, door knobs should be disinfected before work begins and at least every 3 hours after cleaning by damp dusting/wet mopping or washing with soap and water or a general purpose detergent using following - Non metal surfaces with 0.1% sodium hypochlorite solution • Metal surfaces with 70% (v/v) alcohol solution. • All floors should be mopped twice a day. Used mops and buckets should be washed with soap or detergent after every cleaning session. • All used paper towels should be discarded to a separate bin with foot-operated lid. • All used clothes should be discarded to a separate bin with foot-operated lid and reused after washing with soap or detergent and dried in sunlight or in an oven. • All shared toilets should be disinfected at least in every 3 hours according to following instructions. - Toilet bowls with phenol - Non metal surfaces with 0.1% sodium hypochlorite solution - Metal surfaces with 70% (v/v) alcohol solution • The external environment should be kept cleaned and good housekeeping should be maintained. • Number of cleaning sessions may be limited to one to limit the contact in identified areas based on the situation

5.12 Transport

Related to drivers and support staff	• Health screening of all drivers/support staff should be conducted prior to assigning duty during the period. All staff should be screened to identify whether they, - had COVID-19 - have fever and/or any other symptoms of acute respiratory disease at present - have a contact history with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19patient • All drivers/support staff should be clearly advised not to report to work if they have fever and or any other symptoms of acute respiratory disease. • All drivers/support staff should wear facemasks throughout the journey. • Number of passengers should not exceed the number of seats and all the passengers remain seated throughout the journey.
Related to vehicles	• Before commencement of each trip, the vehicle interior including entry points should be disinfected. • One identified door should be used for loading passengers.
Related to passengers	• All passengers should clean their hands before getting on to the vehicle (Support staff could facilitate this by providing hand sanitizers to all passengers at the entry). • All passengers should wear facemasks and remain seated throughout the journey. • All passengers should have minimal contact with seat bars/windows and other surfaces while travelling. • All passengers are advised to keep their personal belongings closer to their seats (preferably on the lap). • Disposal of any form of litter is strictly prohibited inside or out of the vehicles.

6. Surveillance, Isolation, Quarantine for first contacts and Advice to others

This chapter will abide with all National health guidelines, and therefore could change with time.

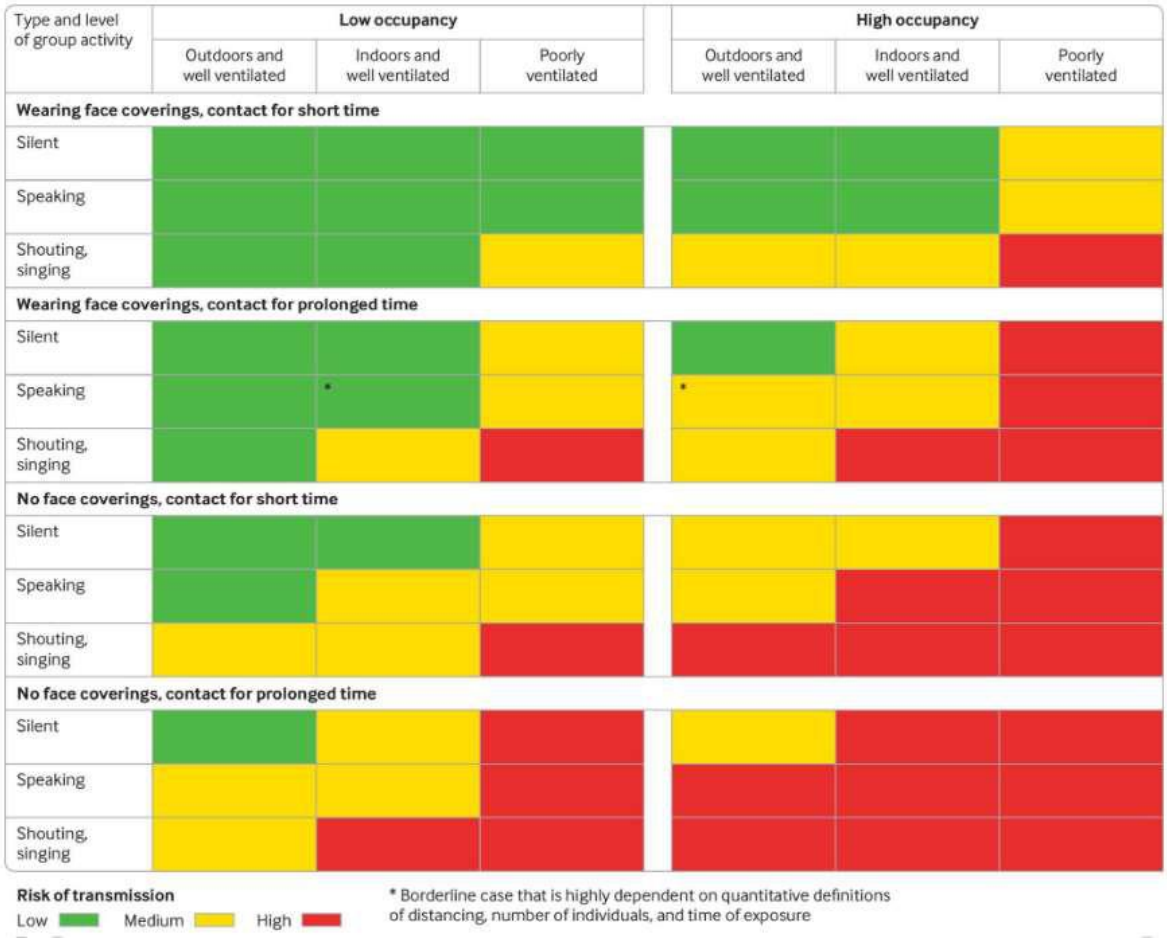
6.1. Surveillance

Surveillance Committee	● The surveillance system should be established as mentioned in section 4.2
Establishing database	● Establishing a database and a surveillance system ● All faculty databases to be maintained by the Registrar of the University ● Separate databases should be updated and maintained by the Senior Assistant Registrar/Assistant Registrar of the Faculty. ● The database should be established in collaboration with the department/unit heads and the batch representatives for, ▪ Undergraduate/postgraduate students ▪ Academic/non-academic staff ▪ Other staff (Security personnel, Canteen staff, Sanitary labourers, etc.) ● The database should contain ▪ Name (as per the salary slip) ▪ ID card number ▪ Age ▪ Permanent residence ▪ Temporary residence (If any) ▪ Contact details ▪ Transport mode to the University ▪ Vaccination Status ▪ 'High-risk' groups e.g. long-term illness, on immunosuppressive patients ▪ Pregnancy status of female staff and students
Surveillance system	● The surveillance system can be through WhatsApp or any other app preferred by the committee ● **Prior to commencement of the University an online surveillance system /assessment needs to be conducted to identify** ▪ COVID-19 positive person ▪ Presence of symptoms ▪ Contact history with COVID-19 confirmed and suspected patients or those coming from a high-risk area or a "lockdown" area ▪ Contact history with someone with recent travel history

	• After commencement, an online reporting system should be maintained by the UMO and the Chairperson of the University COVID committee. • The Faculty COVID committee Chairperson should inform the University COVID Committee for, ▪ Those who have been found to be a case of COVID-19 and update as soon as possible and ensure self-isolation ▪ Attendance - Even though attendance will not be compulsory initially, monitoring absenteeism, is recommended. - Maintain attendance details / occupant status daily in office premises/academic venues/hostels and residential quarters. - Maintain a record of official visits by all staff to other sections.
Random RT-PCR testing	The University surveillance committee should have • a consent form for random RT-PCR testing • a roster on random RT- PCR testing of staff and support staff • a roster on random generated students for PCR testing In addition, if the University is from a low risk area, to conduct RT-PCR testing of students and staff from high risk areas

6.2 Risk Assessment for meetings and teaching learning activities

For surveillance purposes all meetings, teaching learning activities and gatherings should have a documentation of the venue, number of attendees and its duration.



Source: Two meters or one: what is the evidence for physical distancing in covid-19? B*MJ* 2020; 370 - doi: https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m3223 (Published 25 August 2020)

Definitions for interpretation

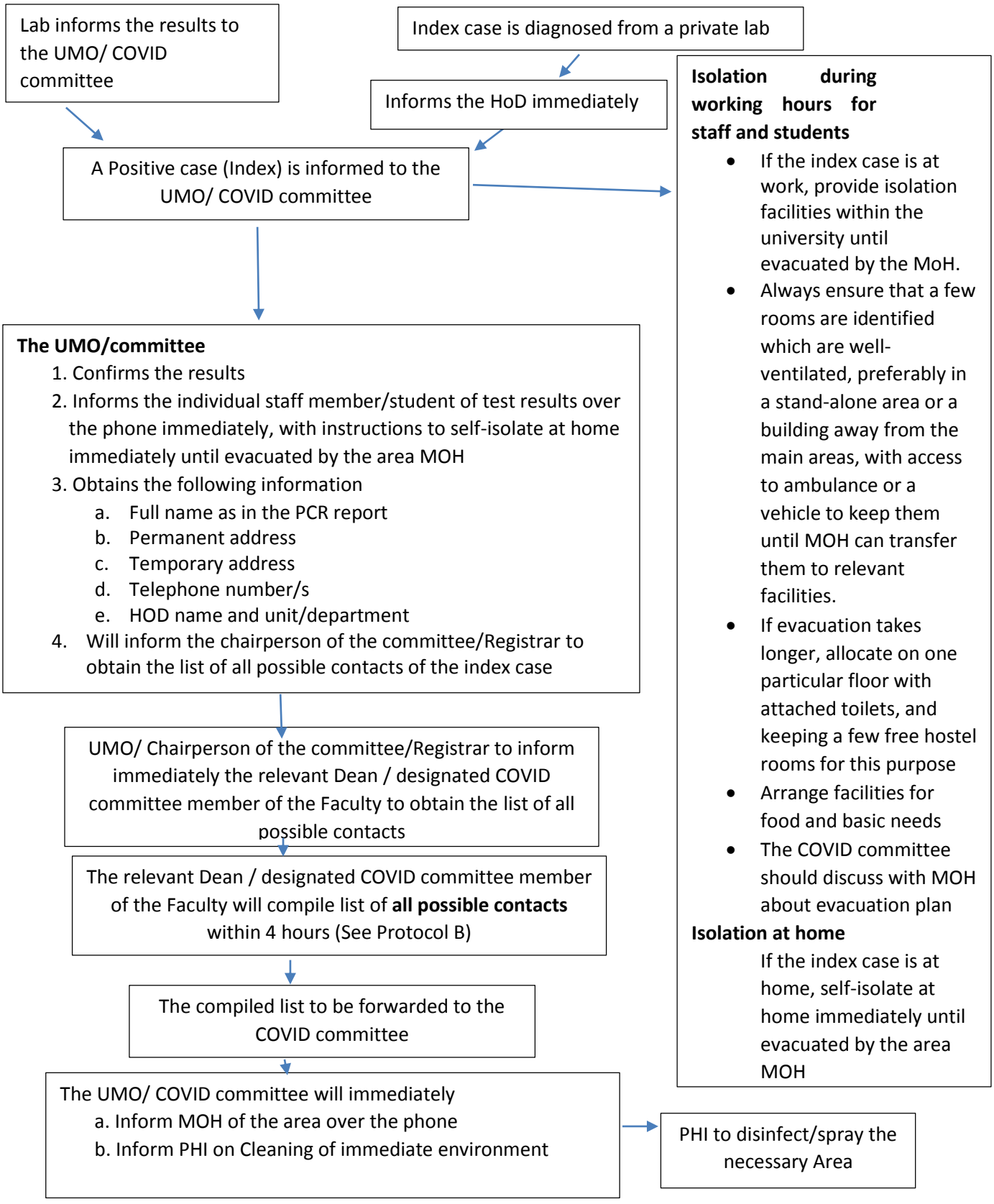
High Risk	**As per the guidelines of the Ministry of Health, the contact will be self-quarantined for 14 days, PCR done on day 7 (to identify the 2^{ry} contacts early before it spreads) and then again on day 14, for exit clearance**
Moderate risk	**Will be kept on close watch and observe for symptoms.**
Low risk	**Will be allowed to continue to work, but will be monitored for symptoms**
A. Venue of the meeting	**Definition**
Outdoors and well ventilated	Any outdoor group activity
Indoors and well ventilated	All doors and windows of the room to be opened
Poorly ventilated	Indoors with all windows closed and Air conditioned

B. Level of Group occupancy	
Conference Rooms Greater than 5 Seats	*A good rule of thumb is to remove 50-60% of the chairs from conference rooms.*
For smaller rooms	*There should be no more than 8 occupants allowed in any space to maintain the social distancing guidelines. As smaller airborne droplets laden with SARS-CoV-2 may spread up to 8 metres concentrated in exhaled air from infected individuals, even without background ventilation or airflow a small room is defined as a room less than 8 x 8 meters.*
High occupancy	If the room has had an occupancy of > 50% of the original number (pre COVID) of occupants
Low Occupancy	If the room has had an occupancy of < 50% of the original number (pre COVID) of occupants
C. Time	
Short time	Less than 15 minutes
Prolonged time	More than 15 minutes
D. Wearing / Not face coverings	
Wearing	The index case **should have been wearing** at least a surgical face mask during the whole duration of the meeting and no items should have been shared during the meeting
Not wearing	If the index case and/or the primary contact was not wearing the mask, irrespective of the venue or the occupancy all contacts in the room will be regarded as “Not wearing

Notes to consider

- The grades are indicative of qualitative relative risk and do not represent a quantitative measure.
- Other factors not presented in these tables may also need to be taken into account when considering transmission risk, including viral load of an infected person, the number vaccinated etc
- A participant’s susceptibility to infection should be considered (immunocompromised).
- Coughing or sneezing, even if these are due to irritation or allergies while asymptomatic, would exacerbate risk of exposure across an indoor space, regardless of ventilation
- Even volume of speech may impact on droplet spread and subsequent risk of transmission, making the process of predicting mode of transmission problematic

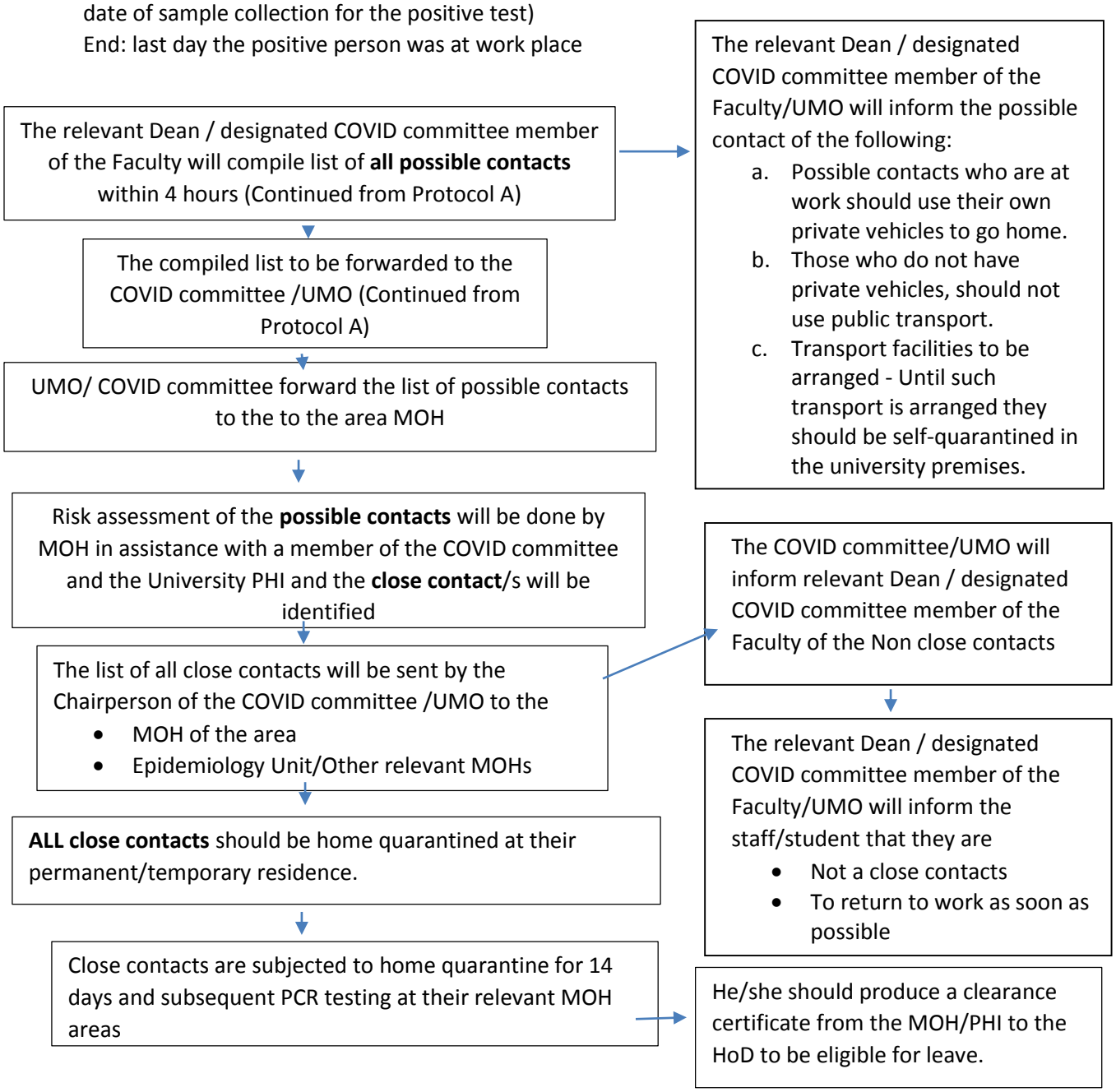
6.3 Plan of action for a positive individual who needs isolation



6.4 Plan of action for Primary contacts/close contacts

This is as per the circular on workplace (DDG/E&OH/EH12012020) dated 06.11.2020

- **A close contact** (1st line contact) is defined as
  Someone who was within one-meter proximity for at least 15 minutes or had direct physical contact with the person who tested positive during the exposure risk period#.
- #**Exposure period** is defined as,
  Start: 7 days before the person had symptoms (or asymptomatic patients, 2 weeks before the date of sample collection for the positive test)
  End: last day the positive person was at work place



6.5 Secondary contacts

- The Faculty COVID committee to be vigilant on the primary contact's COVID status.

6.6 Advice to others

- Organize a telephone contact portal with medical staff to seek advice
- This team is expected to address concerns of primary and secondary contacts, other staff and students and family members of further course of action
- It is to play the role of interphase between the area MOH of the University/PHI and the institution
- The individuals quarantined at home of premises are advised to contact if they become symptomatic to communicate for next best action through MOH/PHI
- The home quarantined individuals will have to be advised on strict home quarantine measures.
- It advisable to cut down number of staff attending if there is an outbreak within the faculty.
- It is advised to revert to online teaching until the situation assessed and remedial action are taken.
- The mental and the physical well-being of students
- **Mental and Physical Wellbeing**

  The mental and physical well-being of students is useful in preventing and managing COVID-19. Restricted social movements definitely cause a substantial level of stress, especially among students. University shall introduce stress-releasing activities with the help of Physical Education Units depending on the facilities available. Students shall be encouraged to engage in small physical activities on a routine basis as individuals or as a very small group while strictly adhering to basic COVID-19 health guidelines and without compromising the health of individuals and the community. There are several sports and games which can be promoted in this situation. Appropriate Yoga exercises and mindfulness exercises can be introduced on a daily basis online. Each and every activity should be assessed by University Medical Officer and relevant health experts to ensure safety. There should be a monitoring mechanism for each activity.

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