The health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students (and any potential event attendees) is the priority.

All events must take reasonable steps to mitigate the risk of transmission, in line with the government’s sector level guidance and including completion of a risk assessment.

There will be no limit on the numbers of individuals who can meet for organised events so long as a risk assessment is undertaken, appropriate precautions are put in place (such as seeking to hold larger gatherings outdoors where possible or increasing ventilation) and University health measures are applied.

Although no longer a legal requirement, it is recommended that you display official NHS QR code posters in any indoor areas where visitors are likely to congregate or sit down in close contact for 15 minutes or more. University venues can provide QR codes. Manual records should be kept for anyone who is unable to scan the QR code or who does not wish to use the NHS COVID-19 app. You can view guidance on maintaining records to support NHS Test and Trace.

For larger events involving a predominantly external audience you may need or choose to request proof that all attending the event (attendees, staff, guest speakers, suppliers) have one of the following:

- proof of COVID-19 status (full/double vaccination)
- registration of a negative Lateral Flow Device test (LFD test) taken in the last 48 hours
- proof of natural immunity via a positive PCR test taken within 180 days of the event, but following the 10-day isolation period

Note: COVID status proof must not be required for internal events, meetings or educational activities where only staff and students are present.

For in-person events, a comprehensive risk assessment should be carried out. For considerations and a template please review the other tabs on this page.

The latest University guidance on the use of face coverings should be checked and followed.

Communication plans should be developed for guests, hosts and presenters, staff and suppliers, to ensure compliance with measures put in place to mitigate risk.

For in-person events, Area or Divisional Safety Officers should be consulted to enable alignment with existing RTOSW planning and activity in the building/space selected for the event as appropriate.

Even though legal restrictions on gathering size and social distancing have been lifted, the University strongly encourages all event managers to have robust contingency plans in place in case restrictions are reinstated. Event planners should be prepared to move any in-person events online or be able to implement social distancing if government restrictions are re-imposed.

Useful links

- Government’s sector level guidance on events
- Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Test and Trace guidance on the Government website
• University risk assessment template for events (including COVID-19 risks) and general University health and safety guidance
• University general event management guidance
• University guidance on international travel is available on the Safety Office coronavirus webpages
• Return to on-site working guidance SharePoint site

APPENDIX 1: Risk Assessments

All events should be risk-assessed, and steps taken to reduce risk across all areas. A comprehensive risk assessment should be undertaken at the beginning of the planning phase and reviewed regularly. The list below provides examples of some of the areas that may need to be considered in light of COVID-19 and should be used to support the event risk assessment.

A template Risk Assessment (updated for the pandemic) can be found on the Event Management pages of the Communication Hub.

As the organiser of the event, you hold a shared responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of those onsite, together with the venue management, your suppliers and the individuals themselves. Your responsibility is to consider the risks, how they will be managed and how to mitigate or avoid them.

Understand and outline the current COVID-19 situation in relation to your event:
• Familiarise yourself with the latest University guidance about on-site activities (see RTOSW guidance)
• If you have any queries, seek advice from your Departmental Safety Officer as appropriate.
• Is the event outdoor (lower risk) or indoors (higher risk)? Is it a University-owned or external hired venue? If external, please see the guidelines below.
• What is the purpose of the event and what activities will it involve (for example, will people be seated or mobile, will they meet face to face or in a lecture situation)? Do these activities create additional COVID-19 related risks that could be avoided?
• Should consideration be given to restricting numbers (for example invitation only/ limited sign up)?
• Will the attendees be internal, external or both?
• If attendees are external and you are organising a large event you may need or choose to request proof that all attending the event (attendees, staff, guest speakers, suppliers) have one of the following:
  o proof of COVID-19 status (full/double vaccination) or
  o registration of a negative Lateral Flow Device test (LFD test) taken in the last 48 hours or
  o proof of natural immunity via a positive PCR test taken within 180 days of the event, but following the 10-day isolation period

Note: COVID status proof must not be required for internal events, meetings or educational activities where only staff and students are present.
• Are attendees, suppliers or staff coming from overseas, national locations or from the local area only? Where they are coming from could impact on the level of risk.
• What information will be collected for NHS Test and Trace purposes, and how will you collect this?
• If you’re holding a multi-day event and someone connected tests positive, or there is an outbreak, what measures would you take?
• Will there be likely bottlenecks i.e. at arrival and departure times? Consider mitigations that could help such as staggered arrival times.
• What needs to be set up beforehand? How will this be done in a COVID-19 secure manner?
• Are any contractors being used for the event (such as caterers)? They will need to provide their own risk assessment. Remember to check for potential inconsistencies or knock-on effects of their arrangements.
• Consider using physical distance floor markings for common areas such as entry points, registration, food and drink points, toilets, showers, lockers and changing rooms and in any other areas where queues may typically form. Remember to think about associated access points such as car parks, and don’t forget disabled access.
• Are you able to stagger break times and make use of outdoor space for breaks where possible?
• Have you ensured, for indoor events, an increase in ventilation where it is safe to do so?
• Have you consulted your departmental safety officer about the need to acquire any supplies to manage risk of transmission (for example, face masks, hand sanitiser)?
• Note that ventilation (and similar matters) should be considered by those leading on RTOSW planning for the building if relevant and anything like that should therefore go through that mechanism.
• The needs of those who are vulnerable should be taken into consideration

Holding events in University buildings
• All University-managed buildings should be following University guidance (see RTOSW guidance)
• When you are using college buildings you should reference their RTOSW guidance and risk assessments.
• Contact the event or bookings manager at the building with a clear outline of your requirements well in advance of your event.
• There should be an existing building risk assessment that will act as context for the specific event risk assessment (which should align/dovetail with the building one).
• Does the building and venue display suitable signage to inform, direct and guide guests, staff and contractors?
• When completing your risk assessment, be sure to liaise with the University venue on the considerations listed below under ‘Holding events in non-University spaces and buildings’ and ensure you understand how your event space is being managed.
• Will food/refreshments will be supplied? If so, discuss with the internal or external supplier how the COVID-19 risks will be managed.
• Protocols for dealing with emergencies, evacuations and accidents may be impacted by the need to maintain physical distance. Everyone on-site should be familiar with any new processes. Include COVID-19 based protocols for first aiders (see RTOSW guidance) and where needed, evac chair operators.
• Ventilation (and similar matters) should be considered by those leading on RTOSW planning for the building if relevant and anything like that should therefore go through that mechanism (with Estates support).
• To support NHS Test and Trace activities, the University strongly encourages venues to maintain visitor logs and display official NHS QR code posters. Use of QR codes is also encouraged in any indoor areas where visitors are likely to congregate or sit down in close contact for 15 minutes or more. Manual records should be kept for any non-app users. Don’t forget to include suppliers and crew in your records. You can view guidance on maintaining records to support NHS Test and Trace.
• The venue alerts system remains in place. This will advise attendees to book a test if they have visited a venue linked to a potential COVID-19 outbreak. These alerts do not require the recipient to self-isolate, and the venue is not named in the message. Discuss this system with your chosen venue in advance of the event to have it in place.

**Holding events in non-University spaces and buildings**

• Events in non-University spaces and buildings (this includes colleges) require more rigorous consideration, to be assured that they meet University guidance and current public health recommendations.

• When you are using college buildings you should reference their RTOSW guidance and risk assessments.

• However, it is recommended to **consider all the points below when using a University venue** as well:

  • Does the venue allow attendees to maintain a reasonable distance between each other? If not, and the space might be end up being crowded and/or poorly ventilated, have you considered further mitigations in line with the University’s RTOSW guidance?

  • Ensure any changes to entries, exit and queue management take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including people with disabilities, and do not introduce additional risks such as blocking fire escapes or inadequate pedestrian/vehicle segregation on roads.

  • Where an event is seated, have you considered how to manage entry and exit such as based on row number, front to back? How will this be managed?

  • Have you considered disabled access and exit?

  • Prior to accessing the venue(s) has a deep clean been completed?

  • Has a cleaning schedule been developed to ensure the venue is clean and hygienic before, during, and after the event?

  • Are handwashing and/or hand sanitiser stations available at all points of entry and exit, and other well-marked and illuminated locations throughout the venue? Are these stations no-touch activated?

  • Request space with good ventilation (flowing fresh air preferable to air conditioning).

  • Will food/refreshments will be supplied? If so, how will the COVID-19 risk be managed?

  • Lifts should be available for people with disabilities or other accessibility issues, for essential purposes, but other guests should be encouraged to use stairs and avoid closed spaces. Does the venue limit the number of people per lift according to current government guidelines? Bear this in mind when booking your meeting space.

  • Protocols for dealing with emergencies, evacuations and accidents may be impacted by the need to maintain physical distance. Everyone on-site should be familiar with any new processes. Include COVID-19 based protocols for first aiders (see **RTOSW guidance**) and where needed, evac chair operators.