

GMIT COVID-19 Response Plan

August 2020



#HOLDFIRM

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This is an evolving document which may change as determined by the national guidance and protocols.

1. INTRODUCTION

The GMIT Return-to-Campus Plan is intended to provide information and guidance to staff, students and members of the public on GMIT's plans and protocols for formally returning to campus during August and September, and beyond.

The GMIT Return-to-Campus Plan is aligned with national public health guidance, and takes into account the National Protocol for Returning to Work Safely, NSAI COVID-19 Workplace Protection and Improvement Guide, and the draft Guidance for Further and Higher Education for Returning to On-site Activity in 2020: Roadmap and COVID-19 Adaptation Framework¹ along with the additional published practical guidelines².

The high-level guidance provided will inform the development of more detailed planning under each specific area and for each Faculty, Department and functional area.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Guidance for Further and Higher Education for returning to on-site activity in 2020:

Roadmap and COVID-19 Adaptation Framework

July 2020

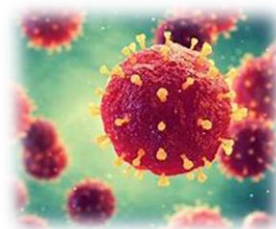
¹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/fc7a0-guidance-for-further-and-higher-education-for-returning-to-on-site-activity-in-2020-roadmap-and-COVID-19-adaptation-framework/#further-and-higher-education-roadmap>

² <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a7d05-practical-guidance-for-further-and-higher-education-for-returning-to-on-site-activity-in-2020/>

2. CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

WHAT IS CORONVIRUS?

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect lungs and airways. It's caused by a new (novel) Coronavirus called CoronavirusSARS-CoV-2. Current evidence suggests that the virus is significantly more infectious than the flu that circulates every winter. Viruses can be easily spread to other people (during speech, cough or sneeze) and patients are normally infectious until all the symptoms have gone. Some people have no symptoms yet are infectious.



SYMPTOMS

Common symptoms may include a fever, a cough and shortness of breath and loss/change of taste or smell. Regular updates can be found on the HSE website:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

HOW IS CORONAVIRUS SPREAD?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is spread in sneeze or cough droplets. You could get the virus if you;

- come into close contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing or sneezing
- touch surfaces that someone who has the virus has coughed or sneezed on and bring your unwashed hands to your face (eyes, nose, or mouth)

Please refer to the HSE for further guidance:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/how-coronavirus-is-spread.html>

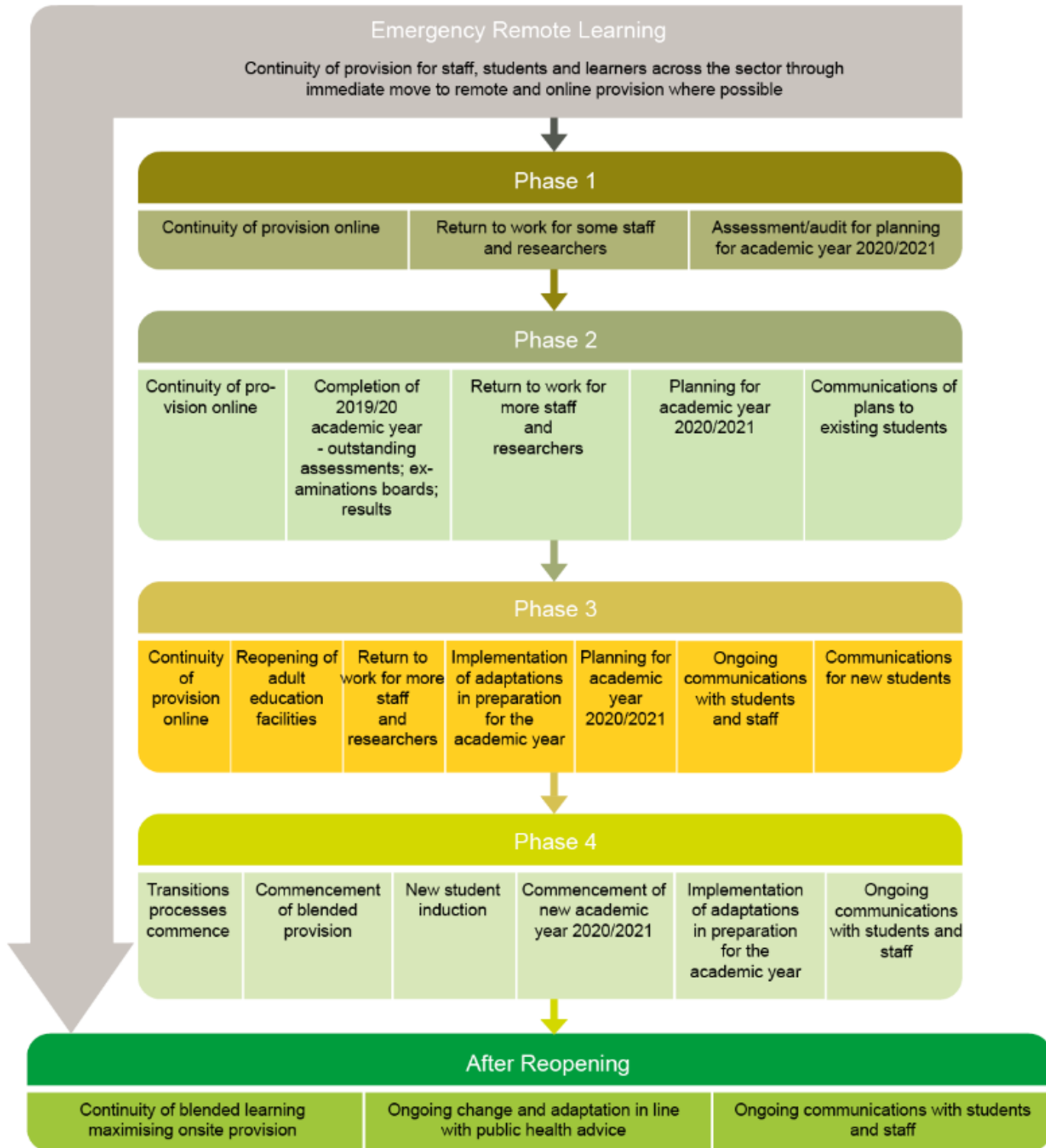
3. NATIONAL PROTOCOL ROADMAP

On June 5th the National Protocol Roadmap went from five to four phases for planning for society returning to normal activities with specified control measures. The fourth phase commences on the 10th August 2020.

As the GMIT Dublin Road campus operated as a Contact Tracing Centre for COVID-19, it was open throughout the lockdown period, until the Contact Tracing Centre was stood down by the Government in June.

The Further and Higher Education Roadmap provides an overview of the phased return of further and higher education. The phases in the roadmap are derived from the Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business. While learning and assessment has continued through emergency remote learning for many, and research trainees began their onsite return on Phase 1, the academic year for most students and learners will commence in Phase 4. All of further and higher education is planning to maximise the provision of learning onsite and the resumption of normal schedules subject to the prevailing public health requirements (which will continue to evolve over the course of the academic year).

The phases in the Further and Higher Education Roadmap are set out below aligned to the Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business:

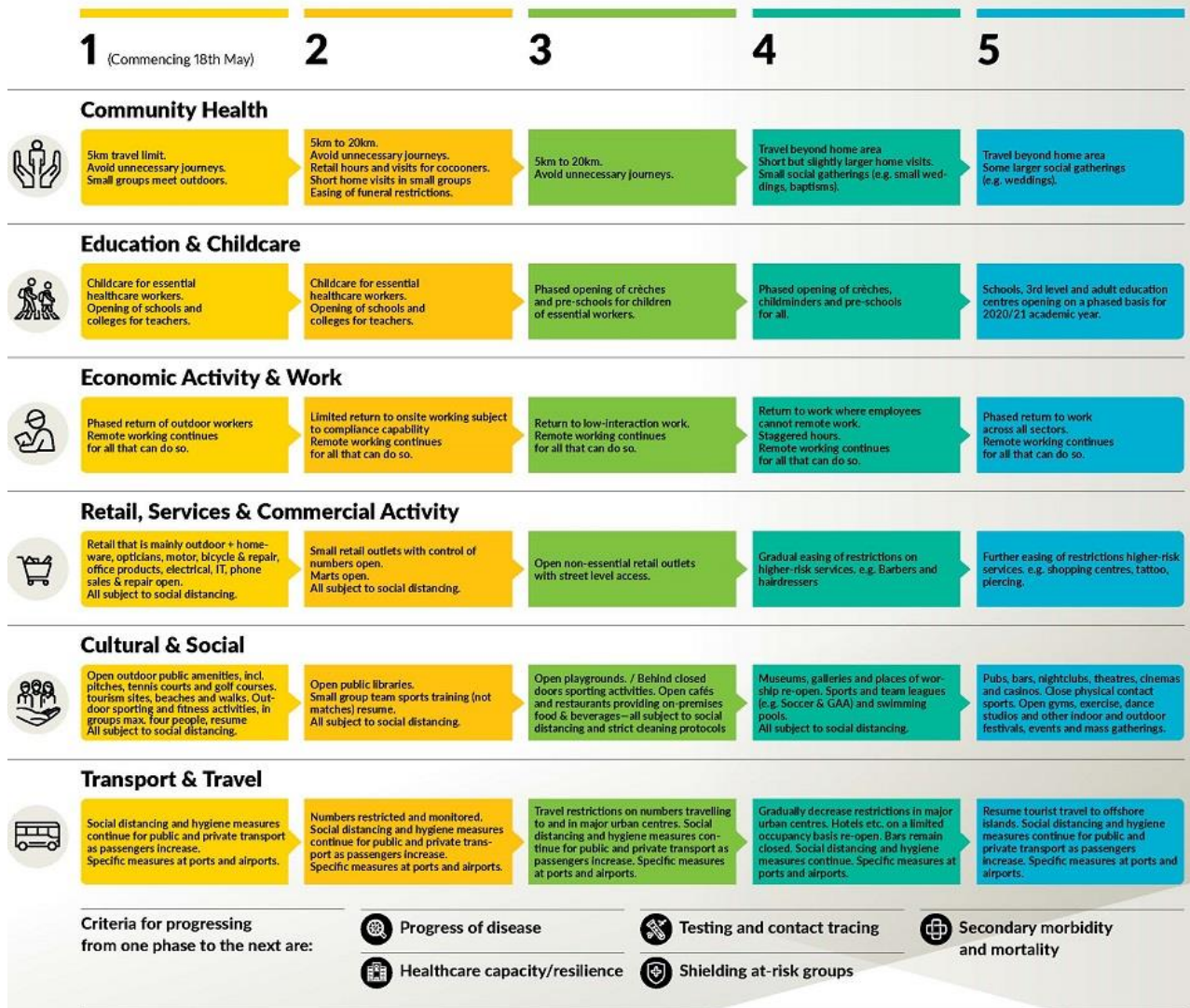


Overview of Reopening Phases

Commencing May 18th



Coronavirus
COVID-19
National
Programme



The details of this phased re-opening of our country are now available on [gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie). Please stay the course, and please continue to save lives by staying apart.

Supported by the Government of Ireland.



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As of the date of publication, Ireland remains within Stage 3 of a 4-stage re-opening of society. A medium-term plan is due to be published by Government in mid-September.

4. GMIT COVID-19 POLICY STATEMENT

COVID 19 Policy Statement

Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our workers and customers. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. All staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and students on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- provide an adequate number of trained Lead Worker Representatives who are easily identifiable and put in place a reporting system
- inform all staff, students and visitors of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt all campuses to facilitate physical distancing
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- have all staff and students undergo an induction/familiarisation briefing
- develop a procedure to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while on campus or engaged in GMIT activities
- provide instructions for staff and students to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 while on campus or engaged in GMIT activities
- intensify cleaning in line with government advice

All staff and students will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues, or suggestions.

This can be done through the Lead Worker Representatives or by emailing covidofficer@gmit.ie.

Signed:



Date: 28/08/2020

5. COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAMS IN GMIT

Dr Seamus Lennon is the designated GMIT COVID-19 Coordinator (covidofficer@gmit.ie).

GMIT has established several Teams to respond to the COVID-19 evolving situation, as outlined below:

5.1 Business Continuity Team (BCT)

The BCT comprised the Executive Board (EB) and additional personnel including the Computer Services Manager, the Building & Estates Manager, the HR Manager, the Marketing Officer, the Institute Health and Safety Officer, and the President of the Students Union.

This team, chaired by the President, met daily throughout March reducing to twice weekly meetings in April and May, and fortnightly meetings from June to September. This team was responsible for the overall institutional response to the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to maintain a strategic oversight remit.

5.2 Return-To-Campus (RTC) Implementation Team

This team, chaired by Dr Seamus Lennon, comprising nominees from all unions as well as HR, as well as a range of senior personnel, assumed overall responsibility for preparing for a healthy and safe return to campus for staff and students. The RTC team have met weekly since its establishment in June.

A pilot group put plans in place to allow researchers to return safely to campus; this group was chaired by the VP for Research & Innovation and its operation led to the establishment of the RTC Implementation Team. The initial Return-to-Campus protocols for researchers can be found in [APPENDIX 1 -](#)

5.3 Blended and Online Transformation (BOLT) Team

Sponsored by the Registrar, and chaired by Dr Seamus Lennon, the role of the BOLT team was to bring together the various institute-wide digital-learning resources and harness these resources to provide the necessary digital training and upskilling for all staff and students.

5.4 Campus Catering Committee

Reporting to the RTC Implementation Team, the Campus Catering Committee sought to provide support to the management of the catering company and to assist with the development of plans for providing catering facilities in a safe manner from September 2020. Risk assessments, staff training manuals, and serving layouts were all considered. Chaired initially by the President, this team has met weekly throughout the summer.

5.5 Lead Worker Representatives (LWRS)

In addition to the RTC Implementation Team, following the recommendations from the National COVID-19 Protocol³, volunteer Lead Worker Representatives (LWRs) were sought across each campus to assist in implementation and monitoring of adherence to COVID-19 requirements. The individuals undertaking the role, after receiving ongoing necessary training, will be part of the RTC organisational framework to ensure maximum effectiveness in preventing the spread of the virus in the workplace. RTC is seeking additional LWR volunteers. Training is ongoing, and the average time requirement is flexible depending on the relevant on-campus activities.

LWRs are required to help employers work towards compliance of protocols and safeguards put in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

³ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/>

The role of LWRs includes carrying out regular checks that COVID-19 control measures are in place, reporting any problem areas or non-compliance issues, listening to the concerns and suggestions of colleagues and raising such concerns/suggestions on their behalf with the COVID-19 Coordinator.

6. CONTROL MEASURES BY INDIVIDUALS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

GMIT is implementing the following control measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in line with the national guidance and public health protocols.

6.1 COVID-19 Risk and Control Measures Assessment

The hazards associated with the transmission of COVID-19 are recorded on the COVID-19 Risk Assessment Form. This assessment considers a range of important factors when assessing work areas and activities. Each work area has completed their individual risk assessments and are implementing the necessary controls identified. These will be monitored and kept under regular review.

6.2 Prevention of Spread

It is advised to follow the HSE guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Please refer to the following HSE link for up-to-date guidance:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/protect-yourself-and-others.html>

6.3 Minimising Contact – Remote Working and Learning

In line with the current public health advice, **all persons** are requested to continue to work remotely for the foreseeable future, where possible.

GMIT staff commenced remote working in March 2020 and their return to work on campus is on an essentially-required basis.

For the academic year 2020/2021, there will be a hybrid of onsite and online learning. Practical classes and workshops will take place onsite, for essential learning.

The online learning and remote working components are being supported through a range of measures, e.g. a comprehensive training programme was delivered in May and June, and further training will be delivered in September.

The institute has provided appropriate IT equipment to enable its staff to work remotely in an effective manner.

6.4 Physical Distancing

Ensure staff, students and contractors maintain physical distancing of 2 metres insofar as possible especially while working indoors, when using offices, workshops, laboratories, toilets, canteens, etc. Promote physical distancing when travelling to and from work (public transport, personal vehicles, etc.), and in your daily lives, in order to limit exposure.

- Follow designated walking routes and all signage especially floor signs
- In GMIT this means **KEEP RIGHT and KEEP MOVING!**
- Keep 2 metres apart from others
- Minimise direct contact with others
- Use a screen if necessary

6.5 Hand Hygiene

- Wash or sanitize hands before leaving home and on arrival on campus. Ensure you are familiar with and follow hand hygiene guidance.

- Use hand-sanitising stations at campus entrances.
- Use an alcohol-based hand rub/sanitiser or wash hands regularly with soap and water (after arriving, before and after eating and drinking, after coughing or sneezing, after using toilet facilities).
- A 20 second minimum contact time of suds or solution is necessary to render the virus inactive.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose with unclean hands.
- Do not share objects that touch your mouth e.g. bottles, cups, pens

Please read and follow the HSE guidelines for hand hygiene:

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

6.6 Face Coverings and Respiratory Hygiene

Face Coverings

The Institute requires all persons (staff, students, visitors and contractors) to wear face coverings indoors at all times other than when eating or alone in a room. The GMIT Policy on Face Coverings can be found in APPENDIX 2 – GMIT .

In addition, the health advice also acknowledges that face coverings may not be suitable for all individuals, for example those following medical advice with certain breathing problems or with special needs. Medical certification in these circumstances is required. We request that these individuals be respected and that all other public health control measures continue to be followed.

Advice from the Department of Health on the safe use of face coverings can be found <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>.

Respiratory Hygiene

- Adopt good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.
- Cover nose/mouth with a tissue when coughing/sneezing and dispose of used tissue (If no tissues are available, cough or sneeze into the inner elbow rather than into the hand).
- Keep contaminated hands away from the eyes and nose.
- Carry out hand hygiene after coughing or sneezing

6.7 Cleaning

Staff and students are requested to sanitise/wipe down their own workspaces and shared equipment before and after use. Disinfectant wipes are provided for this purpose.

7. CONTROL MEASURES OF GMIT FACILITIES TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

7.1 Access and Egress

Access to each campus will be restricted to designated points, with hand-sanitizing facilities provided.

7.2 Signage

Appropriate signage and procedures have been installed to highlight the public health compliance (minimising contact, physical distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene).

Signage will also remind staff, students and visitors to **KEEP RIGHT and KEEP MOVING**.

Signage is expected to change as the national guidance evolves.

7.3 Campus Cleaning and Maintenance

Cleaning

Following the National Protocol, cleaning is conducted at regular intervals which is in line with the national public health guidelines. Further information on cleaning in relation to COVID-19 is available from the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) at:

https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Environmental-persistence-of-SARS_CoV_2-virus-Options-for-cleaning2020-03-26_0.pdf

The HSA provided a checklist for COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfection. The cleaning schedule includes the following:

- Daily Office Cleaning: The recommended cleaning schedule will be carried out in offices.
- Contact/Touch Point Cleaning: common contact/ touch point cleaning in common areas is carried out at least twice daily. Records are held in Building & Estates of the completed cleaning schedules which can be referred to as part of our internal cleaning audit checks.
- Washrooms: washrooms such as toilets are cleaned at least twice daily. All toilets and wash areas will have enough hot water, paper towels, sanitisers, etc. to provide for safe hand hygiene. An increased number of handwashing stations have been put in place across the campus to encourage good hand hygiene practices.
- Cases/Suspect cases cleaning requirements: Where confirmation of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified, localised deep clean and/or sanitisation of rooms will be carried out in accordance with the guidance set out under ECDC.
- Stocks/Supplies: Stocks of essential consumables (e.g. sanitiser fluids, paper towels, etc.) will be held on campus to ensure a sufficient supply is maintained.

Sanitisers and cleaning materials will be distributed as required for use in offices and work areas.

Maintenance

All statutory and emergency maintenance continues as normal throughout the pandemic. General maintenance activity can be notified to buildingrepairs@gmit.ie (Dublin Road/CCAM) or mayobuildingrepairs@gmit.ie (Mayo Campus/Letterfrack) in the normal manner.

7.4 Shared Spaces

Maximum capacity numbers that can be safely accommodated have been set for each office, workshop, lab and meeting room. This estimation pays particular attention to, but will not be limited to, physical distances in offices, shared areas, circulation areas, Fire Safety, Emergency Evacuation and First Aid.

All shared spaces in GMIT have been assessed for occupancy rates in compliance with 2-metre separation requirements. In addition, localised risk assessments identify other potential hazards associated with circulation, ventilation, visitor access and cleaning; and control measures are put in place, such as rotas/timetables/bookings for shared-space use.

7.5 Reception/Face to Face Contact Points

Physical barriers/screens have been introduced at all reception areas and other face-to-face contact points across all campuses.

7.6 Offices, Classrooms and Meeting Rooms

All meetings/classes should be carried out virtually where possible, with COVID-compliant protocols applied for the use of meeting rooms and classrooms where necessary.

In some cases, layouts have been revised to accommodate physical distancing requirements.

7.7 Laboratories/Workshops

Technical staff have assessed the laboratory and workshop layouts, to introduce physical distancing where required. Operational protocols are required in laboratories where adjusted layouts are not practical or possible. This may vary from one discipline to another, depending on the requirements.

7.8 General Circulation Areas

General circulation areas include corridors, stairways, entrances, lobbies, etc. Controls have been introduced in all such areas to maintain physical separation and avoid gatherings. This is achieved through signage, removing seating and other obstructions from communal areas such as the canteen area or pinch points that may cause congestion.

Flow management such as “Keep Right” or “One-way” circulation has been introduced where possible, particularly on stairways. Alternative controls may be introduced where this cannot be achieved.

7.9 Catering Facilities

Physical distancing is to be observed, barriers erected and PPE to be worn by staff. Seating has been reduced and re-organised to provide for 2 metre separation and access, egress and circulation areas are being given consideration where appropriate, including the introduction of one-way systems.

Student break times will be staggered to reduce congestion and contact.

Timetabling of staggered lunch breaks is also being considered in consultation with academic departments.

The cleaning regime in the canteen area has been reviewed in line with recommendations with the cleaning protocols set out by the HSA. All canteen staff have received COVID-19 specific training on how to protect themselves and others.

When campus catering facilities re-open, payments should be taken by contactless card wherever possible.

The Campus Catering Committee will ensure there is regular communication on food offerings and adjustments of protocols as the situation evolves.

Hand sanitising facilities are available at the entries to the main catering areas.

7.10 Toilets

Controls, including signage, are being introduced in all shared toilets to ensure physical distancing and good hygiene practices are observed. Cleaning in toilets is being carried out in accordance with National Protocols, and as per above.

7.11 Drinking Water Dispensers

Persons using water dispensers should run the water before placing their container under the tap – taking care not to touch the tap. Water dispensers are included in the touchpoint cleaning schedule.

7.12 Showers

Legionella management plans have been implemented and sufficient cleaning will ensure that low use does not introduce additional risks. Cleaning in showers is being carried out in accordance with National Protocols, and as per above.

8. RETURN TO CAMPUS PROTOCOLS

Return to campus has occurred on a phased basis for essential activities over the summer period in accordance with Government Phasing guidelines.

8.1 General Responsibilities

Controlling the spread of COVID-19 requires action on the part of every individual to assess their risk and take the necessary personal precautions to aid in prevention of contracting the virus in addition to prevention of spread of the virus to vulnerable persons.

All staff and students must keep themselves updated on the latest advice from Government and the HSE. They must also co-operate in maintaining the control measures put in place to prevent the spread of the virus and report issues or concerns that they may have.

8.2 Staff and Student Responsibilities

All staff and students must self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The Campus Access Health Declaration form is used to assess staff and student health before any return to Institute campuses.

Staff COVID-19 Return to Campus Form and Induction

Staff can access the campus once the following steps are completed:

1. Complete the COVID-19 induction training and quiz.
2. Complete the Campus Access Health Declaration form.
3. Communicate with your manager about visiting GMIT/returning to campus.

Access will not be granted to any campus of GMIT unless the above steps have been completed. The link to the COVID-19 induction training and quiz and the Campus Access Health Declaration form is here:

<https://galwaymayoinstitute.sharepoint.com/sites/hr/SitePages/Return%20to%20Campus.aspx>

Student COVID-19 Return to Campus Form and Induction

This programme is being managed by Student Services from 01 September 2020.

On Return

On review of the form, Human Resources (for staff) or Student Services/ Student Health Unit (for students) may contact you and ask you not to return to campus immediately and will discuss further requirements to enable your return.

If you are unsure whether or not you are in an at-risk category, please check the information at the link here [At Risk Groups](#). It is your personal responsibility to protect your health by complying with the public health medical advice.

Where a staff member falls into the “at risk groups” then a specific assessment will be carried out for them in relation to their concerns in accordance with national protocols. Such an assessment will consider factors such as the type of office accommodation involved, the ability to adequately ventilate the office, the number of staff working in close proximity, the approximate number of interactions with other staff or students. The risk assessment may identify further mitigating actions required for the safe return to work of staff in the ‘at risk groups’.

Where a student falls into the “at risk groups” then a specific assessment will be carried out for them in relation to their concerns in accordance with Student Services protocols. Such an assessment will consider a range of factors including - the timetabled activities, the physical layout of any rooms to be used, the types of activities that will be involved. The risk assessment may identify further mitigating actions required for the safe attendance on campus of students in the ‘at risk groups’.

Daily Actions

Each day before attending campus activities all persons must ensure that they are free of any ill health symptoms. Should a person have concerns of ill health they should:

- not attend campus
- seek medical advice (GP/Student Health Unit)
- inform their Institute contact (line manager, lecturer or supervisor as relevant, and the Covid Officer (covidofficer@gmit.ie)).
- follow the medical and institute advice

In addition, all persons attending GMIT (students, staff and visitors) must notify GMIT immediately by emailing covidofficer@gmit.ie or phoning 091 742708 immediately if:

- A positive test outcome for COVID-19 has been issued by any healthcare provider and they are required to self-isolate
- Or if they have been identified as a contact and must restrict your movements for 14 days.

After the Covid Officer has been notified that a student / staff member / visitor has tested positive for COVID-19, contact tracing will be conducted to determine if there was exposure to other members of our community so that GMIT can assist Public Health to take appropriate next steps to mitigate further spread of the virus. Consistent with GDPR governing patient confidentiality, the Institute will not share any patient’s contact details or private medical information

➤ Prior to arriving in GMIT, staff and students are required to complete a **daily health check and attendance form**. Note this form will also serve to record your presence on campus which may be used for any subsequent contact tracing work. Thus, it is important that this form is completed for every day of attendance at GMIT. This form is available here: [Daily Health Check and Attendance Form](#)

➤ When leaving each day, staff and students are required to complete a **personal contact log** which is available here: [Daily Personal Contact Log](#)

8.3 At-Risk Categories

Staff

Human Resources (HR) request that staff who are at or high risk or very high risk of infection with COVID-19 to alert them of their condition so that arrangements can put in place to minimise or eliminate workplace transmission risk. HR will liaise with the appropriate line manager to discuss options for alternative arrangements.

Students

Heads of Departments will request students who are at very high or high risk of infection with COVID-19 to alert them of their condition so that arrangements can put in place to minimise or eliminate transmission risk. The Head of Department will liaise with the student and Student Services to discuss options for alternative arrangements.

Personnel living with “at risk groups” as defined by the HSE, must consider if there is a heightened risk from attending work. The HSE have also issued a list of illnesses/ conditions that place certain individuals in a very high-risk group and who should remain at home.

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html>.

8.4 Travel To/From/For Institute Activities

In line with the current public health advice, **all persons** are requested to continue to work remotely for the foreseeable future, where possible.

Where staff or students exhibit any signs of COVID-19 or have been exposed to a confirmed case, they should not travel to campus.

Where possible, car sharing should be avoided. Face coverings should be worn when car sharing. Parking capacities at each location will be assessed in respect of increased vehicle numbers.

Where public transport is the only option for staff or students, then guidance (<https://www.transportforireland.ie/news/COVID-19-information/>) outlining how to reduce the possibility of infection should be considered.

All non-essential Institute travel is prohibited. Travel for Institute business within Ireland is permitted on an as-needed basis and subject to the normal prior approval.

Persons returning or arriving to the island of Ireland should refer to national advice issued by the HSE / the Department of Foreign Affairs.

International students should comply with the Government Protocol of Arrival of International Students⁴.

Persons travelling as part of a GMIT activity or on the GMIT mini-bus must adhere to the physical distancing and face-covering requirements.

⁴ Currently only available in draft format.

9. CONTACT LOGS TO FACILITATE TRACING

Contact tracing is carried out by the Health Service Executive to control and limit the spread of infection following a confirmed case.

Following recommendations from the Department of Education and Skills, institutions are required to keep records to facilitate contact tracing.

To do this:

- GMIT strongly recommends that all staff and students download the **COVID-19 Tracker App**
- Prior to arriving in GMIT, staff and students are required to complete a daily health check and attendance form which will also record attendance. This form is available here: [Daily Health Check and Attendance Form](#)
- Library and computer room bookings will be required
- Timetables must be accurate
- Attendance at class must be monitored
- Staff and students attending face-to-face meetings (including lunches/coffees) must keep their own record of such meetings as well as the attendee lists. **All interactions greater than 15 minutes are considered to be contact incidences.** When leaving each day, staff and students are required to complete a personal contact log which is available here: [Daily Personal Contact Log](#)



10. COMMUNICATION

A Return To Campus (RTC) Communications Strategy (with communications protocol) outlines how the contents of this document and other associated controls are being communicated to all stakeholders through an onsite information campaign (signage, posters, campus TV screens & audio points), a designated Institute webpage (<https://www.gmit.ie/general/coronavirus-advice>), local and regional press, social media, and emails to internal and external stakeholders.

Providing induction to staff and students in advance of their return to campus will be essential to ensuring that controls are effective.

The GMIT COVID-19 Response Plan 2020 is being made available to all staff and students and is available on the GMIT website (<https://www.gmit.ie/coronavirus>).

11. VISITORS, CONTRACTORS AND DELIVERIES

11.1 Visitors

No visitors should be permitted on campus unless present to conduct essential business.

Where possible, visitors must be approved prior to coming on campus by an institute host. Each such invited visitor must complete a Visitor Health Declaration Form that is available on the GMIT website and here: [Visitor Health Declaration Form](#).

In the case where a visitor arrives unannounced, a facility to log their Visitor Access to Campus Form may be provided at reception.

Additional signage will be installed stating that access is only for:

- Staff
- Students who have a timetabled activity or an appointment or booking
- Visitors who have completed the visitor access protocol

11.2 Contractors

The host of the contractor is responsible for them and their activities while on campus and control measures must be followed upon entry to campus. These control measures include but are not limited to maintaining their own contact log, hand hygiene and sanitisation processes.

Controls are being put in place to ensure that all maintenance and service engineers and contractors coming to site comply with the COVID-19 control measures. Buildings & Estates will ensure that the following minimum controls are in place:

- All contractors are required to provide a Risk Assessment / Method Statement in respect to COVID-19.
- Site visits will be scheduled for pre-agreed dates and times.
- A staff member will be assigned responsibility and will be on site to oversee the work from start to finish.
- Any contractor arriving on site without pre-notification will not be permitted to carry out work on campus.

11.3 Deliveries

Post is typically delivered by An Post in the morning and left at reception or the porter's office at the relevant campus.

Delivery protocols are as follows:

- No personal deliveries should be arranged for any GMIT campus.
- All deliveries must be non-contact to enforce physical distancing.
- Delivery personnel will not normally be permitted to enter the premises beyond the designated set-down point.
- Departments procuring class materials are responsible for liaising with suppliers and agree a delivery protocol with suppliers at time of ordering.
- Departments are responsible for receipt of deliveries such as chemicals, equipment, machinery and other class materials.
- Deliveries will be planned with allocated times where possible.
- Caretakers and/or reception will receive deliveries and keep handling to a minimum. Departments can then collect deliveries from reception or arrange for caretaker transfer.
- Arrangements will be made where possible with suppliers for paperless delivery acceptance and acknowledgements to ensure materials management and material reconciliations are accurate.

- Hand sanitising facilities are available convenient to set-down and goods inwards locations.

12. CAMPUS COMPANIES AND SHARED FACILITIES

12.1 Campus Companies

The Campus Companies generally work from the iHub buildings on the Galway and Mayo campuses. As part of those companies returning to work on campus, a risk assessment has taken place with recommended control measures.

Each campus company must provide evidence to GMIT of compliance with the national COVID-19 protocols prior to returning to iHub buildings.

12.2 Shared Facilities with 3rd Party/External Organisations

In some cases, GMIT facilities – including access, library, welfare, and canteen facilities - are shared with 3rd party/external organisations. In these circumstances, risk assessments have taken place and control measures put in place as outlined in this document.

Co-operation with these external parties is also required to comply with their COVID-19 protocols.

13. UPDATES TO EXISTING SAFETY PROCEDURES

FIRST AIDERS

Due to the nature of First Aid activities, the First Aider may come into close contact with suspected cases of COVID-19 or may on occasion need to assist a person with other conditions. While guidance has been developed in respect to responding to suspected cases of COVID-19, this guidance will be reviewed and updated to ensure controls are in place for all eventualities that may require close contact. First Aiders will be alerted to the guidance with the Institute providing updated awareness training to first aiders.

FIRE SAFETY/FIRE DRILLS

Fire safety measures will continue to be applied and at least one drill will be held. However, plans will be put in place to ensure physical distancing is maintained, e.g. increased assembly points.

14. SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19

14.1 Suspect COVID-19 Case at Work

If a member of staff or a student experiences any COVID-19 symptoms while attending campus they are required to self-isolate immediately and inform their line manager or head of department by phone or email. If possible, the staff member or student should go directly home, but not without first notifying their line manager or head of department.

Travel home should be by private transport where possible. The affected staff member or student should ring their GP for further medical advice.

Where the affected member of staff or student is not able to go home then they will be assisted to present at the nearest designated isolation room, or to remain in their current location, depending on the situation. A window in the room should be opened. Their GP should be contacted for medical advice. A decision will be made by the affected person's GP on whether to call an ambulance or to allow the person await collection for transport home. In the case of an international student this advice will be provided by the Student Health Unit medical personnel.

There will be a kit of protective equipment provided for both first aider and the affected staff member/student which will include tissues, face mask, gloves, disposable apron, face shield/eye protection, hand sanitiser and bin.

Where a suspected case has spent sufficient time in any office or designated isolation area that requires sanitation, this will be carried out according to the guidance from the HSE and for environmental cleaning in non-healthcare facilities.

<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/coronavirus-SARS-CoV-2-guidance-environmental-cleaning-non-healthcare-facilities.pdf>

The identified isolation rooms are listed in APPENDIX 3 - DESIGNATED ISOLATION ROOMS.

Persons who have shared space or come into contact with a suspected case need not take any action unless the case has been confirmed as positive or they experience symptoms, as per the HSE guidelines.

14.2 Contact with a Confirmed Case

If a confirmed case is identified, those who have had close contact will be identified by the HSE, required to restrict their movements for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and to follow the restricted movements guidance and any other instructions set out by the HSE.

All affected staff cases will be followed up by HR. All affected student cases will be followed up by the COVIC Officer and the relevant Department.

People who have been in close contact with a confirmed case include but are not limited to:

- Any individual who has had greater than 15 minutes face-to-face (<2 metres distance) contact with a confirmed case;
- Any individual who has had greater than 2 hours contact in the same room as a confirmed case;

Each School should ensure that student attendance records are accessible by a number of staff, so that such information can be provided rapidly should the need arise.

14.3 Human Resource Procedures For COVID-19 Cases

Human Resources have developed procedures for staff availing of COVID-19 sick leave or self-isolation in accordance with the national protocols. The Department of Education and Skills has published Circular Letter 0051/2020 which outlines arrangements for public service employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is available here: [Circular Letter 0051/2020](#)

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform have provided guidance regarding working arrangements during COVID-19. This document is provided can be found here: [Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19](#)

In addition, further guidance and policies will be kept under review by the HR Office and the Return to Campus Implementation Team.

14.4 Student Health and Wellbeing

Students who contract COVID-19 can receive medical care from the Student Health Service and should be aware of their academic entitlements via the FAQ section on the GMIT website. Any student who has a concern or suggestion regarding the procedures put in place by GMIT to manage the COVID-19 situation should contact their class representative and/or the Students Union.

The social aspect of the normal GMIT college experience has been impacted by the pandemic, and our Student Services, Clubs and Societies are all working to develop appropriate compliant activities and events for students.

14.5 Confirmed Contact in GMIT

Following the confirmation of a positive COVID-19 case on campus, GMIT will liaise with the HSE with regard to contact tracing and public health advice will be sought in order to inform possible subsequent actions such as further testing of staff and/or students or the temporary closing of a section or a Department.

APPENDIX 1 - RESEARCH



MAINTAINING A COMFORTABLE, SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT FOR RESEARCH AT GMIT

**General protocols for ensuring the safe resumption and conduct of research
consistent with COVID-19 restrictions**

Resumption and conduct of research at GMIT

GMIT's COVID-19 Business Continuity Team are assessing various scenarios of COVID-19 restrictions stipulated in the national public health advice. For each scenario the consequences for GMIT's activities and potential mitigation measures are being considered. The Institute will necessarily take immediate and longer-term actions to ensure that our facilities are safe.

Scientific research and development activities are specifically listed as an essential service within the Department of the Taoiseach's COVID-19 public health guidelines (published on March 28th 2020). The easing of COVID-19 restrictions over the coming weeks will enable people to return to GMIT's research facilities. In this context the Institute is planning for some resumption of campus-based and remote research activities consistent with the partial relaxation of travel restrictions now proposed from May 18th 2020.

This document outlines changes to the conduct of GMIT's research activities implemented to protect GMIT's research staff and students and to ensure that they can continue to work in a safe and healthy environment.

The control measures are proposed in the light of Government advice for reopening published on May 1st 2020. Changes to the national public health and workplace safety advice may necessitate revision of these control measures.

1. Campus research environments

COVID-19 control measures within GMIT's research facilities include:

- Elimination practices (physical distancing);
- Engineering controls;
- Administrative controls; and,
- Personal Protective Equipment.

1.1 Elimination practices (physical distancing)

- Researchers accessing research facilities and their communal spaces will maintain physical distancing in accordance with the public health advice.
- All activities not requiring essential attendance in GMIT facilities should continue remotely (i.e.: desk-based research activities such as analyses and writing must remain remote working activities).
- Persons with particular vulnerability to infection will be protecting through isolation measures.
- Persons with symptoms of COVID-19 (even a mild cough or low-grade fever) are to remain isolated from the workplace until tested negatively for the virus.

1.2 Engineering controls

- Facilities with controlled access systems (fobs/swipe cards) will remain accessible through these systems but with increased administrative control.
- More frequent cleaning of 'high-touch' areas will be commissioned, in addition to the cleaning services provided before the COVID-19 restrictions.
- Research facilities and their communal spaces will be arranged and organised (e.g.: through reduced/staggered seating) to maintain healthy physical distances from colleagues.
- Hand sanitation stations will be installed at facility entrances for use on entry and exit.

1.3 Administrative controls

- Projects may resume activities when they have each conducted project-specific [risk assessments](#) (template appended) that explicitly consider and mitigate the risks arising from COVID-19.

- Access to GMIT’s research facilities will be afforded to staff and students directly involved in research activities but restricted to other GMIT staff and students and to the general public.
- All persons entering research facilities must sign in with the date and time of their visit and identify the individuals that they are visiting. This will facilitate contact tracing should the need arise.
- Deliveries will be accepted outside of facilities at designated drop-off locations.
- The number of people accessing the facility and spaces within it will not exceed the overall occupancy levels consistent with public health advice.
- Throughout each research facility appropriate Behavioural Signage will be erected in strategic locations to remind researchers of their obligations to maintain social distancing.
- Booking arrangements will be implemented to ensure reduced occupation in high traffic areas (i.e.: meeting rooms, common spaces, shared laboratories).
- Whilst some access to research facilities is intended for all projects the priority of access will be based on need. Greater priority will be given to:
 - Projects that cannot progress at all without continued access to physical facilities (i.e.: where there is no data analysis, writing, or other remote work to do); and,
 - Key personnel coming to the end of their contracts/stipends.
- Access to facilities may be scheduled outside of normal working hours to accommodate the flexibilities required by individuals.
- Individuals conducting research activities within research facilities may be organised into shifts and consistent groups to limit potential transmission.
- If someone becomes symptomatic (even a mild cough or low-grade fever) or ill with suspected COVID-19 that person will be isolated from others in the workplace. Contact will be limited with others and the local health authorities will be contacted.
- Research centre / group leaders will update their colleagues of any changes to operations of the facilities or changed expectations of facilities users arising from revised public health restrictions and guidelines.
- Dependent on the current level of public health travel restrictions the Gardaí are empowered to decline the passage of individuals who are not authorised to travel. Researchers requiring evidence of permission to travel to conduct research at GMIT facilities may request letters of authorisation from the Research Office. These will be provided for individuals working in alignment with the general protocols of their centre/group on projects/activities that have specifically assessed and mitigated COVID-19 risks.

1.4 Personal Protective Equipment

- Face masks are to be worn in areas occupied by more than one person at a time.
- Hand sanitation stations will be installed near high-touch equipment used by several individuals.
- In areas where social distancing cannot be maintained appropriate screens may be erected.

2. Remote research environments

Research may resume at locations remote from GMIT facilities when project-specific [risk assessments](#) (template appended) have been conducted that explicitly consider and mitigate the risks arising from COVID-19. Mitigation measures for these activities may include:

- Elimination practices (physical distancing);
- Engineering controls;

- Administrative controls; and,
- Personal Protective Equipment.

Field work conducted during COVID-19 restrictions requires additional dynamic risk assessment. All journeys and survey situations should be risk-assessed on a journey by journey and site by site basis. If the journey and survey cannot be conducted with minimal and manageable risk, it should not be undertaken. The advice of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management on [undertaking field work during COVID-19 restrictions](#) is particularly useful.

Professional, Scientific and Technical activities (including scientific research and development activities) have been classified by the Department of the Taoiseach as essential services. Travel to and from work, or for the purposes of work, is permitted for essential services that cannot be done from home. However, national COVID-19 restrictions on non-essential work may limit the feasibility of remote research activities (e.g.: through limiting: social interaction; public transport; accommodation; ancillary support services). Project-specific risk assessments should explicitly consider such impacts and their mitigation.

The Gardaí are empowered to decline the passage of individuals who are not authorised to travel. Researchers requiring evidence of permission to travel to conduct off-campus research may request letters of authorisation from the Research Office. These will be provided for individuals working in alignment with the general protocols of their centre/group on projects/activities that have specifically assessed and mitigated COVID-19 risks.

1. Risk Assessment Template

Project / Activity:			Location:		Date:	Review date:
Assessor(s):						
Documents / information consulted in preparing this risk assessment:						
Consents required to conduct this project / activity:						
List of the hazards based on the sequence of work / structural environment & equipment:						
Description of: Hazard; Associated risks; and, Persons/entities at risk	Potential severity (High, Medium, or Low)	Probability of occurrence (High, Medium, or Low)	Control measure(s)	Person(s) responsible	Safe work practice sheet or New procedure required? Yes/No	
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APPENDIX 2 – GMIT FACE COVERING POLICY

GMIT Face Covering Policy

At GMIT the safety and health of students and staff is a priority, and in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic we are deploying a range of mitigating actions that will act to reduce the spread of Coronavirus.

Face coverings act to minimise the scattering of droplets from the mouth and nose. As such, face coverings are recommended by NPHEt in indoor settings where adequate physical distance cannot be maintained.

The various communal areas in GMIT will be busy during the academic year, and thus maintaining an adequate physical distancing of 2 metres at all times, as recommended by NPHEt, will be difficult.

Therefore, the wearing of face coverings by everyone (staff, students, and visitors) is mandatory at all times in GMIT, except when eating and when working alone.

Lecturers may wear either a face covering or a visor when delivering laboratory practical sessions or tutorials.

Face coverings should be made as per World Health Organization guidelines and consist of three layers. GMIT has purchased suitable reusable face coverings and visors for use by staff.

GMIT expects the GMIT community to comply with this policy, and in doing so, we will be working together to reduce to spread of COVID-19.

APPENDIX 3 - DESIGNATED ISOLATION ROOMS

GMIT Dublin Road Campus	Room 153 (ground floor, old building) and Room 1034 (first floor, new building)
GMIT CCAM Campus	Room 128 (ground floor).
GMIT Mayo Campus	Room B004 (ground floor).
GMIT Letterfrack	Meeting Room 1 (ground floor) and the Student services room (first floor).