NUMed Physical Distancing Guidelines – Standard Operating Procedure
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Description
The health and wellbeing of NUMed staff and students is a key priority for the University.

Our focus remains on sustaining capacity to provide the highest quality learning and teaching, research and support services, whilst being responsive to governmental advice and guidelines.

General advice to minimise risk associated with COVID-19 is as follows:

1. The following basic principles will enable staff, students and visitors/contractors to remain safe on the University campus and help to stop the potential spread of COVID-19.
2. If you are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, you must not return to the campus for work and you must self-isolate and inform your line manager as soon as possible.
3. Everyone should follow appropriate handwashing techniques at all times.
4. Coughs and sneezes should be covered with a tissue (into your elbow if no tissue available) which should be disposed of immediately in the nearest covered bin and followed by handwashing.
5. We suggest that masks be worn on campus at the following areas/situation:
   a. At all service counters – Main reception, Student Office, Teaching Technician office, LRC reception, lecture theatres, seminar rooms and lab spaces.
6. All high use surfaces will be regularly cleaned and disinfected.
7. All staff/students and visitors should maintain physical distancing of 1 metre whilst on campus and especially when greeting others, this includes avoiding shaking hands.

 Procedures for preventive measures in public areas on campus
6 areas of consideration
  1. Office Buildings
  2. Environmental Cleanliness
  3. Workspace & Facilities
  4. Teaching & Learning Activities
  5. Social Practice
  6. Administration Control

1. Office Buildings

   a. Screening at Points of Entry
   - All staff, students, contractors and visitors on campus would be required to register their entry on to the campus using the MySejahtera App.
   - Mandatory temperature checks will be carried out at the main entrance gate for all staff, students and visitors/contractors on arrival.
   - All contractors/visitors must fill in the health declaration form and submit a hard copy of the form to the Security Reception upon arrival. Entry can be denied in the event visitor/contractor is unable to produce this form.
   - Those with temperature above 37.5 will denied entry onto the campus.
   - Those suffering from cold/fever or flu-like symptoms are advised to see their doctor and MUST NOT enter the University campus.
   - Staff and students who are unwell are encouraged to stay at home.
   - If anyone develops symptoms at work, he/she must avoid contact with fellow workers and inform their line manager immediately.
   - Those who have travelled and/or returned from overseas within the past fourteen (14) days are STRICTLY NOT ALLOWED to enter the University campus.
• Those who have been in close contact with COVID19 patient(s) or have attended any activity where cases of COVID-19 have been detected are not allowed to enter the University campus UNLESS they have gone through the necessary screenings, self-quarantine and declared fit and free from COVID-19 by the health authorities.

b. Visitors/Contractors/Vendors
• The security section must be informed at least a day in advance, prior to the visitor/contractor/vendor visiting the campus, using the Facilities Management Service Request (FMSR). The security section will allocate the time of the visit.
• All visitors are required to practice physical distancing with a minimum distance of one (1) metre being maintained from each other.
• All visitors are encouraged to use online services/communications instead of face to face interactions where possible.
• All reading materials will be removed from waiting areas to decrease the availability of commonly touched items.
• The main reception and Student Office (SO) waiting areas should be organised and labelled properly in accordance with physical distancing norms. Staff should ensure that visitors adhere to the rules strictly.

c. Safety & Emergency
• In emergency the Emergency Commander (EMC) that operates from the Security Control Room will activate the Emergency Rescue Team (ERT) using walkie-talkie.
• Evacuation Controller (EC) and Security Controller (SC) will mobilize Fire Wardens and Search and Rescue Teams at each Assembly Point.
• Fire Wardens will lead staff/students/visitors to the assembly point, line up for the roll call and ensure the practice of physical distancing with a minimum distance of one (1) metre being kept between individuals.
• EC will verify any victims, missing persons or mobilized restriction occupants with the Fire Warden and Search Rescue Team.
• If a First Aider or First Responder are required to attend any victims, they must be fully equipped with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (e.g.: masks, medical gowns, gloves and spill kits).
• EMC will update CEO and COO on the incident and also liaise with the Fire and/or Police Departments or any other relevant authority.

2. Environmental Cleanliness
a. Sanitiser stations
• Hand sanitiser (with at least 60% alcohol base) dispensers are to be made available in prominent and visible places and common areas around each building in the campus such as :
  ➢ Service counter/desk at lobby areas of Main Reception/SO/LRC/Welcome Centre/Lab Technician Office/IT Cluster/FM Office and Security Office
  ➢ Entrances of each building: Senior Office/classroom/Lecture Theatres/Lab/LRC/IT Cluster
  ➢ Outside the lift areas
• Everyone must sanitise their hands each time they enter a building / lift.
• Everyone should sanitise their hands after touching commonly touched surfaces, such as: door handles, handrails, windows etc.
• The hand sanitiser dispensers should be regularly monitored and filled by Facilities Maintenance section when required.

b. Signage and Posters
• Visual markers will be placed around the campus to remind building occupants of physical distancing practices.
• Posters regarding personal hygiene and social behaviour, such as handwashing, avoiding contact and cross-contamination etc. will be displayed prominently as reminders to staff and visitors (use graphics and images rather than text for easier understanding).

c. Cleaning & Disinfecting surfaces

Appendix 1 – Guideline on Cleaning & Disinfecting Surfaces (NUMed)

All areas in the premises, including common touch points to be disinfected regularly.
• All entrance doors
• Door key and door handles
• Card Readers
• All reception areas – Senior Office, Student Office, FM, Lab, LRC and Security Guards Room.
• Meeting Rooms, Lecture Theatres, Seminar Rooms, Classrooms
• Lifts
• Staircase handles
• Washroom/Pantry
• Office Equipment – Chairs, Desks, Cabinets, Photostat Machine, Computers, Keyboards, Telephones

d. Waste Management
• A closed bin with pedal control should be provided at strategic areas for hygienic disposal of tissues and face masks.

e. Air Ventilation

• To keep the workplace and staff rooms well ventilated windows should be opened to allow as much outside air to flow into buildings as possible whilst the centralized air conditioning is in operation/running.

f. Water Supply
• To carry out Legionella testing for all the domestic water tanks in all buildings before the campus is re-opened.
• The campus will be reopened to staff and students upon obtaining the negative legionella testing results.
3. Workspace and Facilities
Personal and shared spaces/facilities in the workspace

a. Ingress and Egress from buildings

- A single door will be identified for general ingress to each building where possible and a different door will be identified for general egress to help to control the flow of individuals in and out of buildings - taking into consideration building design and circumstances.
- Fire doors should remain operational as per pre-COVID19 circumstances and only used in emergencies.
- Signage should be placed at the entrance points to all buildings to remind people of physical distancing expectations.
- The following areas will be closed to all staff and students until further notice:
  - B.2.19 Staff Lounge
  - C.1.2 Student Recreation Room
  - C.1.16 Student Association Office
  - C.1.15 The Studio
  - G.1.1 Student Recreation Centre
  - Amphitheatre
  - Restrooms with showers

b. Office Space Distancing

- Keep physical workspaces at least one (1) metre apart
- Workspaces – Surfaces (e.g. desks and tables) and objects (telephone, keyboards) need to be wiped with disinfectant regularly.

c. Corridor/Walkways/Stairs/Lifts

- Regular cleaning and disinfection should be carried out along the sidewalk/5-foot ways and common areas—including hand & balcony railings.
- All staff/students and visitors are to practice the one (1) metre physical distancing rule when walking/passing each other in all areas on campus.
- All staff/students and visitors will be encouraged to avoid crowding narrow spaces (e.g. lifts, walkways) by taking turns and allowing others to pass first.
- Tape marker on the floor inside lifts to keep appropriate physical distancing between occupants.
- Increased safety monitoring by the security team to ensure compliance with physical distancing.

d. Meeting Rooms & Boardroom

- Ensure that employees only hold face-to-face meetings with internal and external parties if no other method can be achieved.
- Keep all face to face meetings short and limited to 5-8 attendees (not more than 10 attendees and depending on room size).
- Increase physical spacing between attendees in meeting rooms if standing (at least one (1) metre apart).
- Ensure meeting rooms are cleaned and disinfected after each meeting.
e. Events
- Consider whether a face to face event is needed. Consideration to replace by teleconference or virtual event.
- No face to face meetings and staff training in the first instance. Face to face meetings can only be approved by CEO or COO in exceptional circumstances.
- Conduct virtual meetings where possible.
- Choose online training whenever possible.
- For essential training that cannot be conducted online:
  - Space out seating for training participants at least one (1) metre apart.
  - Avoid activities that require physical contact.
  - Provide individually packed food instead of buffet-style meals.
- Carry out cleaning and disinfection of the space and furniture after each event.
- Open windows and doors whenever possible to ensure the venue is well-ventilated.

f. Pantry/Cafeteria/Food Trucks
- Avoid sharing utensils. All staff and students to use their own utensils i.e. plate, bowl, fork, knife, spoon, glasses.
- Food and drink will only be available as a takeaway service.
- All staff, students and visitors are to maintain a physical space of at least one (1) metre between each other in the cafeteria.
- Tape/marker to be placed on tables/chairs and floor for queuing, ordering food and drink at cafeteria/common dining areas to ensure physical distancing is maintained during lunch hours or breaks.
- Meals/beverages served in buffet style must only be served by dedicated individuals. Customers will not be allowed to serve themselves to avoid any chance of cross contamination.
- All food items should be closed to avoid contamination.
- All workers in cafeteria/food trucks should wear a mask, perform regular hand hygiene and should not attend work if unwell.
- Lunch breaks should be carried out by batches to prevent overcrowding in the cafeteria.
- “One out, one in” procedure with no more than one person being in the area at any time to be employed in pantries.

g. Washroom
- All washrooms to change to a “one out, one in” system with no more than one person being in the room at any time. Users are asked to use a “knock and call” system. A sign should highlight this on the outside of the door.
- Hand soap and disposable paper towels or hand drying blower must be available in all washrooms at all times.
- Washing facilities need to be wiped with disinfectant regularly.
- A sign should be placed on the inside of the door reminding persons of good hand washing practice.

h. Printing & Stationery Room
- Avoid crowding in the printing room – take turns to use if necessary.
- Put up reminders for employees to always clean and disinfect machines/tools/stationery used or borrowed before returning them to the room.
- Provide hand sanitizers in the room (with 60% alcohol content);
• Regularly clean and disinfect the room and frequently touched surfaces such as working tables and equipment.
• Keep the room well-ventilated and orderly for ease of cleaning.

i. Learning Resource Centre
Appendix 2 - Guideline on Managing Library Operations – Post Movement Control Order

j. Computer Clusters
Appendix 3 – Guidelines on Managing Shared IT Equipment and User Personal Device

Lecture Theatre/Seminar Rooms/Lab

• Avoid large group teaching in lecture theatres. The maximum occupancy of rooms will be set at no more than 25% of the normal maximum occupancy.
• Facilities Management team to set up or create space (table and chairs) in theatre/classroom/Lab to be at least one (1) metre apart.
• Staff or students are not allowed to change the setup of individual rooms for any reason.
• Classrooms and all items inside rooms to be cleaned and sanitized after every session before the next group of staff/students are allowed to use the room.
• Floors to be marked at 1 metre intervals to ensure people maintain appropriate physical distancing from one another.
• A one-way system to be implemented for ingress and egress into rooms with certain doors being designated for entry and others for exit only. Clear signage to indicate entry and exit.

k. Prayer Rooms

• Stagger prayer breaks among staff and limit no. of occupants (limit to 2-3 occupants) in the prayer room at any time to avoid overcrowding.
• Avoid sharing prayer mats, prayers beads and other relevant items; advise to bring and use their personal prayer items and to keep these in the individual room/locker.
• Practice physical distancing during prayers and breaks.
• Avoid assembling in large groups-Jama’ah prayers (Muslim congregational prayers) are not encouraged at the current time.
• Ensure availability of hand soap at washing facilities as well as sanitizers and disinfectants for staff to use.
• Always clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as table-tops, cabinet handles, drawers, etc. as well as shared amenities such as refrigerators, sinks etc.
• Keep the room well-ventilated and orderly for ease of cleaning.

l. Accommodation
Appendix 4 – Guideline on Managing Student Accommodation Post Movement Control Order

4. Teaching & Learning Activities

Teaching and Delivery programmes
• Some forms of teaching may be delivered whilst maintaining physical distancing.
• Further adjustments may be required to the teaching timetable to allow for more time walking between buildings and for safe entering and leaving rooms.
• Teaching room capacity to be reduced by 75% (with a 30 seat space now only holding 7 or 8 ) depending on the furniture style to maintaining physical distancing.
• All teaching spaces will need to be reassessed for ‘safe’ operating capacities for face to face teaching.
• These constraints will require a more flexible approach to timetabling with classes scheduled at different times throughout the day and early evening to ensure less intensive use of the campus facilities.

5. Social Practice

1. Personal responsibilities of individuals at work

• To limit physical contact in workplace i.e. No handshakes, food sharing, stationary sharing etc.
• Avoid all mass gatherings e.g. training sessions, social events etc.
• All meetings to be conducted virtually if possible. If unavoidable, attendees must follow strict physical distancing norms (at least one metre apart from each other) and meetings be as short as possible.
• Carpooling to be avoided. If unavoidable, it is advised to ensure that not more than two (2) people in a car unless they live in the same household.
• Maintain physical distancing while waiting for the lift by standing at least one (1) metre apart from each other.
• Only two (2) persons are allowed to be in the lift at any time.
• Employees are encouraged to take their meals at their desk.
• Avoid all non-essential travel.

2. Encourage wearing of face masks

• Anyone entering NUMed is encouraged to wear face mask.
• It is mandatory for those colleagues at reception desks, those who deal with staff, students or visitors i.e. student office, lab technician, FM, Library staff to wear a face mask at all times.

3. Maintain workplace hygiene

• Ensure regular and thorough hand washing using soap and water, especially after using the toilet, before and after eating food, after blowing your nose, sneezing and coughing, after coming from a public area, after touching commonly touched items/surfaces etc.
• Hand sanitiser (alcohol based) dispensers to be made available at all reception areas and outside the lift area.
• Ensure tissue paper and closed bins are available.

4. Safe transport of students

• Vehicles should be cleaned and disinfected (the seats, all handles, interior door panel, windows, locks, exterior door handles, etc) before transport of passengers.
• Arrange a vehicle with appropriate seating capacity according to number of staff/students to enable them to maintain at least 1 metre distancing inside the vehicle, once seated.
• The driver must be present to open and close doors of the vehicle for passengers. Passengers must refrain from handling the doors.
• All passengers to wear masks while in the transport.

6. Administration Control
• NUMed management to continually promote the message that people need to stay at home even if they only have mild symptoms associated with COVID19
  o Display posters with this message at the workplace
  o Define who would not be encouraged on campus
  o Develop, implement and communicate workplace flexibility and protection
    ▪ Actively encourage employees to work from home
    ▪ Have flexibility in sick leave policy
    ▪ Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. All managers need to be aware that some employees may need to stay at home to care for sick family members
    ▪ To provide adequate and appropriate training and informational material about business essential functions and employee health and safety
    ▪ To conduct adequate training on appropriate hygiene factor issues and the use of workplace controls
    ▪ Work with the NUMed insurance company to provide information to staff about medical care if they affected by COVID19

7. Management of COVID-19 cases
• All suspected or positive cases confirmed by Ministry of Higher Education will be communicated to CEO and COO in the first instance through the Student Office.
• CEO to communicate to the Emergency Management Team (EMT), Incident Manager at Newcastle University Upon Tyne, UK.
• COO to inform MoHE immediately and ensure the following requirements are met:
  o The identity of suspected or positive COVID-19 staff and students to be kept confidential;
  o All teaching and learning activities related to suspected or positive COVID-19 staff and students suspended immediately;
  o The identified location to be closed and disinfection process is done with the directives of the MoH.
• To reopen the campus upon receiving the approval from MoH and MoHE

We ask for full compliance of these SOP from all staff, students and visitors to the campus.

Disciplinary action will be taken against those who fail to comply with the SOP. All violations of these SOP will be considered as a case of major misconduct under the NUMed disciplinary procedures.

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References


