Essential staff and activities under the ANU COVID-safe Campus Alert System Level

Guidelines for decision-makers

Background

1. The ANU has created a COVID-safe Campus Alert System to clarify ANU control practices to be activated at as the COVID-19 situation changes in Australia and the ACT.

2. Within the COVID-safe Campus Alert System Level, the term Essential Staff is utilised for stage **High**. These guidelines provide further instruction on determining which staff members or activities should be categorised as "essential", and clarify the delegation to make that determination.

Principles

1. The core business of the ANU is to undertake research and to educate our students. Any definition of Essential must include the continuation of these two core elements

2. All staff are essential to the operation of the University. For the purposes of the remainder of this guide Essential Staff and Services are those that cannot be performed remotely, rescheduled or deferred.

3. It is understood that for most staff members, some but not all elements of their work can be performed remotely. This should be taken into consideration when determining which activities are to be undertaken on campus.

4. The relevant Federal, State or Territory rules on occupancy density and time limits on potential exposure should guide decisions as to how many and for how long people are allowed in buildings and work spaces at any one time. Any relevant Federal, State or Territory guidance on definitions that describe Essential Services and Staff must be adhered to.

5. Other key activities that must be considered in determining Essential personnel and Services include:

    a. Continuation of critical and/or Essential Services that must be completed on-site;

    b. Maintaining integrity of infrastructure, property or systems on-site;

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c. Necessary on-campus work to maintain the safety and wellbeing of students, faculty and staff; and

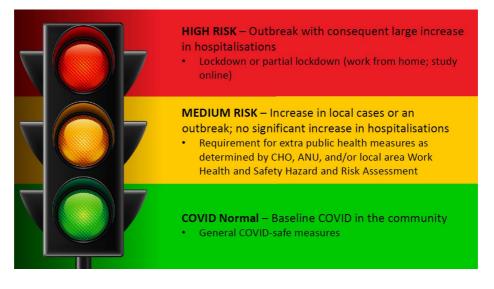d. The welfare of animals, plants, cadavers and specimens.

The COVID-safe Campus Alert System Level

The COVID-safe Campus Alert System applies on a whole of campus basis rather than at a precinct or building basis.

At lower levels within the ANU COVID-safe Campus Alert System, levels COVID Normal (Green), the campus remains accessible and there are few access controls placed on staff and students. At all times staff and students must follow the correct hygiene protocols and university guidelines.

At the Medium level (Yellow) the campus remains accessible however, at this stage vulnerable staff and students should work and study from home. Decision-making delegates (discussed below) should consider a level of access control and monitoring of vulnerable staff and students, given the risk involved.

At the High (Red) it is expected that decision-making delegates introduce additional approval processes for campus access including steps consistent with the increased level of risk (e.g. staff and students wearing full PPE to continue research experiments). Access control methods may be considered to restrict access to the campus. As the COVID threat levels escalate risk assessments must reflect this change and management controls should be implemented to monitor campus access.

Decision-making delegation and process

Each College Dean and Service Division Director is responsible for the determination as to which of its personnel and activities are essential on campus during the COVID-19 pandemic at risk level **High**.

This determination should be done in advance as part of business continuity planning.

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The process to provide access to the campus at High level includes:

1. Areas and staff that wish to be considered as Essential must provide a Risk Assessment (Chapter 3.1, [Appendix B](#)) outlining the work they intend to perform on campus and the method in which that work will be completed, using COVID-safe practices. Information should be reviewed and approved prior to submission.

2. Information within colleges and research schools to be submitted to the College Dean for approval.

3. Information for other areas to be submitted to COO, DVCA, DVCR or DVCSUE for approval.

4. If approved by 2 or 3 above, Risk Assessment for each activity on campus during the period must be conducted and have sufficient, specific and appropriate controls implemented in addition to the control measures specified in the Campus Alert System.

   The risk assessment must be managed in accordance to the WHS Management System Handbook Chapter 3.1. However, the approval authority during the time of risk levels, i.e. High, changes to the Director of the School/Division for all risk assessments. In addition:

   a. A COVID-19 Control Adherence Inspection must be conducted at least monthly for each area with workers on campus by that local area using the local Risk Assessments and the COVID-Safe Campus Alert System to ensure controls are adhered to at all times during on campus operation; and

   b. Non -compliance to the local Risk Assessment and the COVID-Safe Campus Alert System must to be addressed **immediately**.

5. A register of all approved essential staff and services will be maintained and available to the Work Environment Group, who will inform ACT Health of the required essential staff if the Campus Alert System is elevated to High risk.

In considering the approval of a request, all delegates are required to comply with State and Territory regulations in action at the time.

Additionally staff members or groups may be designated essential on a case by case basis, based on the nature of the emergency and/or the availability of staff and resources.

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Notes for specific elements of our core business

A. Research

Research student access to campus should be determined utilising the same principles as outlined above for staff and be subject to the same process for approval.

B. Education

Access to campus for face-to-face teaching / learning should be determined utilising the same principles as outlined above and be subject to the same process for approval.

C. Fieldwork

Approval for fieldwork at all stages should follow the "Interim Fieldwork Protocols" currently in place, taking into consideration any outbreaks of COVID-19 in the area in which the fieldwork is to take place and any changes to state or territory regulation on movement.

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