

Dear all,

From today, additional new public health guidelines begin that are aimed at reopening Irish society. Inter-county travel is now permissible; click and collect, and appointment only retail and personal services are available; and outdoor training and gatherings are permissible for a maximum of 15 people. Follow this [link](#) for more detail.

In the light of these changes, many of us are wondering about returning to work on campus in September, particularly with Minister Simon Harris' announcement that he wants third level students to have a university experience that is as normal as possible next academic year. However, detail on this has not been provided yet and the recommendation continues to be to work from home unless your work requires you to be on campus. UL is in regular communication with the Irish Universities Association (IUA), the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the Department, and will align its return to work process and recommendations with the sector as a whole.

In the meantime, a cross-campus staff working group have been developing a Remote Working Policy for UL to provide context and guidelines for colleagues over the next twelve months or until such time as the National Remote Working Policy is published. UL's policy is due to go to The Executive shortly for approval.

### **New Legislation for the Third Level Sector**

Last week Minister Harris published new legislation aimed at reforming and modernising governance of the Higher Education sector. Among other things, the legislation will allow for strengthened powers for the HEA, increased conditions around funding and compliance and a series of measures to reinforce internal governance of universities. There are no changes to the current legislative provisions related to academic freedom. Follow this [link to read the General Scheme of the Higher Education Authority Bill](#).

### **HR News**

Congratulations to Charlotte Long in HR Research who arranged an extremely well attended webinar aimed at opening a dialogue between the IUA and the Departments of Justice and Enterprise in relation to work-permit challenges faced by researchers involved in international collaborations. Since 2008, Irish universities have an agreement that enables researchers to enter Ireland without long delays while waiting for work permits. The next step is to develop this process under the Euraxess umbrella to ensure ease of movement for researchers involved in collaborations across Europe that necessitate extended stays in other countries.

### **UL@50 Consultation**

The Consultation Review Group (CRG) are meeting this week to work on finalising the details of Phase 2 of the consultations. I circulated links to access the various feedback documents from Phase 1 last week. Since then, a few minor amendments were made to the layout, which I believe resulted in some of the links no longer working. Apologies for any inconvenience. You can access the aggregated feedback report, individual feedback summaries, and the Phase 1 Consultation Feedback Synthesis and Topics for Phase 2 by going to the **Phase 1 Feedback folder**, on the [UL@50 SharePoint site](#).

**UL FIFTY**

Thanks to everyone who sent in a proposal for UL's fiftieth anniversary in 2022. We plan to mark this occasion with twelve months of programmed events from May next year that look to the future and remember our past. There will be plenty of opportunities to get involved and send in your ideas. The email at the start of April from the Chancellor was an initial call-out to get the ball rolling. A website is being developed for the year and, in the meantime, the UL FIFTY team is meeting next week to look at all the proposals so far and progress the planning.

Have a great week,

Eoin