

Dear all,

Further to the outline findings presented by Dr Marie Connolly, Director of Human Rights, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in UL, at the Town Hall on the 9 June, a [copy of the Summary Report](#) from the staff survey on remote working carried out in April-May of this year is available in the Remote Working Folder on the COVID-19 Sharepoint site. The comments box provided a wealth of additional information and you can find a summary of the key themes from these comments included in each section.

Overall, most staff now report that there are advantages to working remotely. The feedback is that key supports identified in 2020 to enable remote working have now been delivered. However, some additional areas for support include training, clarity around remote-working and promotion / progression, equipment, workload, and collaboration and communication with colleagues.

Respondents have said that switching off from work can be a challenge. Female staff report more non-childcare caring responsibilities than male staff, while female academic staff are particularly concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on their career progression.

Action is being taken to address key areas of concern, while the University is also planning for the lifting of the recommendation that all staff work remotely unless they have essential work on campus. This is in the expectation that there will be a full cohort of students on campus by the end of September. Staff are invited to highlight in promotion applications how COVID-19 has affected them, and a remote-working procedure has been agreed and will soon go to Executive Committee.

### **Return to Campus-Working – Research**

Following the announcement that the third level sector in Ireland will be returning to on-campus teaching for all students in September, planning is underway in UL to enable this to happen. There is a specific “Summer Provision” within this to allow increases in research activities over the summer period, see [A Safe Return to on-site further and higher education and research](#). At the same time, contingency plans will be made should there be a change to the national approach to the reopening of Irish society.

At the Space Management Committee meeting last Thursday, the request to re-open open-plan spaces and multi-occupancy offices was approved, with the following provisos:

- Until we receive alternative direction from Government and/or Public Health in relation to minimum distance requirements, capacity in research spaces cannot be increased beyond what would be required to maintain a minimum of 2m spacing. It will be a matter for individual units to manage this to ensure maximum capacity is not exceeded, for example through local scheduling.
- Any spaces to be occupied must meet the minimum ventilation rates as set out by [WHO \(2021\)](#). This will need to be assessed by Buildings & Estates for any spaces where researchers are requesting access.
- Occupancy of any research spaces (open plan, multi-occupancy offices, experimental facilities) must be reflected in the relevant unit’s Business Response Plan.

Please note that Return to Work Safely protocols are still in place. If your area's [COVID-19 Business Response Plan](#) involves an increase in the numbers returning to campus, it will need to be updated. If you are planning on returning to research over the summer and you do not know if you were included in your area's Business Response Plan, you need to notify the Plan owner so you can be included.

### **Music in UL**

Speaking of returning to campus, there will be musicians and an audience at University Concert Hall tomorrow at 2pm where the Irish Chamber Orchestra perform a live afternoon concert as part of the Government's pilot programme of live events taking place countrywide. Click [here](#) for more details.

Meanwhile, the Irish World Academy presents the [North Atlantic Fiddle Convention \(NAFCo\)](#) entirely online this year also from tomorrow, in association with Limerick City and County Council Arts Office, Creative Ireland and the Blas International Summer school. The three main aspects of the convention are an academic conference, a performance programme and a series of workshops and educational resources for schools, educators and youngsters in first and second level. Blas lunchtime concerts are running all week and are free to attend, just following this [link](#) for more information.

### **UL Sport**

The pool, gym and most other facilities are now open but you must pre-book. The best way to do this is via the [UL Sport app](#) and if you have any difficulties using the app for the first time, email [info@ulsport.ie](mailto:info@ulsport.ie) for assistance.

Have a good week,

Eoin