

PREPAREDNESS PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES UPON RETURNING OF STAFF MEMBERS TO WORK DURING THE EXIT STRATEGY FOR COVID-19 EPIDEMIC IN SRI LANKA:

In the wake of the global pandemic of Covid-19, the University of Sri Jayewardenepura has been closed for nearly 2 months for face to face teaching learning activities, same as for many other government and non-government institutions of the country. However, the steps are being taken to start functioning physically once again, in a phased out manner with caution. Currently, it is planned to commence returning to work only for the staff with the possibility of post graduate students. It is essential that we need to modify work practices and the work environments to prevent any possible transmission of COVID-19 infection within the staff and students of the University with the commencement of the activities.

The committee appointed by the Vice-chancellor recommends the following strategies and activities **in this regard in all faculties for the first week of preparedness for all staff.**

1. Establishing a COVID-19 response committee at faculty level

1.1. Composition of the faculty response committee

The faculty level response committee will be headed by the Dean of the Faculty, guided by a respective advisory board, with the Senior Assistant Registrar and the University PHI. Although the faculties would have the full autonomy in respect to their strategies for immediate actions or emergency response it should be governed by the decisions of the University committee and national guidelines.

1.2. The faculty response committee should

- 1.2.1.** Monitor all activities in the Faculty
- 1.2.2.** Prepare the environment of the faculty for the week/month ahead (Refer to Section 3).
- 1.2.3.** Conduct a readiness assessment
- 1.2.4.** It is recommended that a preparedness plan be obtained from all heads of all departments for the approximate number of human resources and the number of personal hygiene measures that would be needed per department, which would depend on the academic and nonacademic staff in the department and the post graduate activities that would be conducted per department.

1.3. University Medical Officer and his team

- 1.3.1.** should be maintain an online reporting system
- 1.3.2.** should update as soon as possible to the University response committee, if positive symptoms found by a staff member or a postgraduate student, and ensure self-isolation of the staff member or postgraduate student until necessary actions take place (Refer to section 6)

1.4. The University PHI and the marshals should

- 1.4.1.** Continuously monitor and conduct preventive measures
- 1.4.2.** Ensure that the staff are not be allowed in the university premises after working hours.
- 1.4.3.** Ensure social distancing in common places

2. General measures to be adopted by the University Administration

2.1. Curtail unnecessary movement of staff in the University

- 2.1.1.** Only the *minimum essential number of staff members* could return to work at any given time. Number of staff would be decided by each Faculty and Department depending on the requirement.
- 2.1.2.** The preparedness plan (Refer 1.2.4) by each department should take this into consideration when working out the plan.
- 2.1.3.** Special attention to be given to the high risk groups (e.g., ≥ 60 years of age, presence of long standing medical conditions, immunocompromised conditions, pregnancy, breast-feeding mothers) and whenever possible to limit the frequency of such individuals coming for work.
- 2.1.4.** Signing in and signing off times – to be decided by the university administration and to be flexible.

2.2. Following categories of staff members should NOT report for work.

- Those with fever, body aches, cough, sore throat, nasal congestion / runny nose, shortness of breath, new onset anosmia (loss of smell) and taste disturbance.
- Those who have had close contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, or was in quarantine or was a close contact of someone in quarantine within the last 14 days
- Those who have a household contact/ family member with above symptoms

The staff member in any of the above three categories should inform the Head of the Department and the UMO immediately

2.3. Following categories of staff members should NOT be allowed within the university premises

- Those who have been checked at the entrance and any person recording a temperature above 98.4⁰F or 37⁰C should be re-checked after 10-15minutes of rest and if positive for second time should not be allowed to report for work.
Such staff member should inform the head of the department and should report to the UMO immediately
- Workers not wearing a mask

2.4 Restrict large gatherings

Avoid in-person meetings as much as possible. Alternative methods of communications like video conferencing are recommended. If an in-person meeting (Refer section 7) is essential, minimize the number of attendees and the seating for the meeting should be arranged maintaining sufficient physical distancing. Pre-order sufficient supplies and materials, including tissues and hand sanitizer for all participants. Refreshments served at such meetings should be kept at minimum. Different modes of working (through e-mails, teleconferencing etc) to be employed to minimize physical contacts.

3. Below facilities need to be provided for prevention of spread of COVID-19 within the University

3.1. Hand washing facilities

- Anyone entering the premises should wash their hands with soap and water before entering (Annexure 1).
- Hand washing facilities; running water and liquid soap preferably in dispensers must be available at all entrances (main gates) to the University premises and essentially at entrances to main buildings. Continuous supply must be ensured. (Restricting the number of entrances to the university can be considered as students are not coming at the moment)
- Foot/elbow operated tap is the best for the wash basin. Steps need to be taken to install them.
- Tissues supplied for drying of washed hands and a bin at close proximity to discard the used tissue. Installation of hand dryers is an alternative.
- Adequate hand washing facilities should be ensured within the premises (in offices, departments, meal rooms, toilets etc.).
- Disinfection chambers are not recommended.
- Spraying of chemicals/disinfectants on personnel and vehicles of the staff members is not recommended.

3.2. Alcohol based hand sanitizer

- Every effort need to be taken to ensure a continuous supply of good quality hand sanitizer especially at all the **finger print scanners**.
- During the initial phase it could be considered not to use finger print scanners or signing books. Instead it is advisable to use a personal log by each staff member signed by the head of the department or unit.
- If possible hand sanitizer should be made available at the offices and work stations where several staff members are working at the same time.

3.3. Checking body temperature

Thermal scanners of Medical grade has to be made available at main entrances to the university premises and preferably at all entrances to the main buildings.

3.4. Face masks

Staff members need to wear face masks within the premises at all times. Special attention to be paid to the correct way of using and discarding masks (Annexure 2 and 3). At least two reusable (cloth) face masks for each staff member should be kept as a reserve during working hours. One mask can be used up to maximum 8 hours but must be changed whenever it gets damped (due to sweat, water or anything else) before that.

All workers shall wear masks properly while on duty. They should refrain from touching the mask or their faces, while wearing it.

After removing the mask, it has to be discarded into a pedal operated closed bin and hands should be washed subsequently. There should be minimal handling of the mask when removing. Avoid touching the face at all times.

3.5. Maintain physical distancing of minimum 1m

Arrange seating of all work stations and other places (meeting/conference rooms, meal rooms etc.) to have a minimum of 1m (preferably 2m) distance between 2 persons at all times.

3.6. Cleaning surfaces

- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine wiping/cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other items in the work environment.
- After cleaning by damp dusting/wet mopping or washing with soap and water or a general purpose detergent
 - All metal surfaces shall be disinfected with minimum of 70% v/v alcohol solution.
 - All non-metal surfaces be disinfected with 0.1% sodium hypochlorite solution
- The door knobs/handles and objects (e.g. shared telephones, keyboards) shall be cleaned and disinfected before starting work every day and every three hours thereafter.
- Keep the doors open as much as possible – This will minimize the necessity to touch the door handles.
- Floors, office equipment and furniture shall be cleaned with disinfectant a minimum of twice a day.
- All toilets have to be maintained in a hygienic manner. Where feasible the main entrance to the toilet unit can be kept open.
- Hand washing facilities with soap and water is to be provided outside the toilets, to wash hands after leaving the toilet.
- It must be noted that the door handles of toilets are to be cleaned and disinfected as above.

3.7. Cleaning staff

- Only the minimum number necessary should be engaged in work. All workers have to be traceable and the supervisor is responsible for documenting and maintaining necessary information in a register.
- All the necessary items and equipment for cleaning should be provided without shortage. All workers should be given clear instructions on infection prevention.
- While on cleaning duty all staff shall wear the appropriate protective gear (Face masks, impermeable aprons, gloves etc.). They must change the street clothes and wear uniforms only within the premises.
- They should wash or sanitize their hands thoroughly after each encounter (after cleaning each room, wash room, front desk, sales counter etc.). After each cleaning session all cleaning utensils and cloths shall be thoroughly washed and disinfected and dried in the dryer or under hot sun for about 30 minutes. They also should maintain one meter distance with each other at all times and the management need to look into this as the resting places of this category of staff is usually congested. Make arrangements to have lunch breaks and resting times given at different times to avoid congestion. Washing and bathing facilities shall be provided to the cleaning staff. They should be regularly educated and updated of the importance of their duty, and their safety as well.
- If a member of the cleaning staff develop symptoms, he /she should immediately inform the supervisor.

3.8. Environmental cleaning

Usual processes of environmental cleaning to be continued, especially to reduce mosquito breeding sites (to prevent mosquito borne diseases such as Dengue).

3.9. Meal rooms and canteens

- Lunch breaks and tea breaks to be given in small group-wise manner to prevent crowding the meal rooms. The minimum distance of one meter is to be maintained while having meals and the furniture of the meal rooms should be arranged to encourage this. Eating from same plate and sharing meals and drinking from same cups and tumblers to be avoided.
- Canteens to be remained close. Staff members are encouraged to bring home-made meals. If it is essential to open a canteen, strict adherence to following is mandatory.
- Maintain physical distancing > 1m at all times, proper hand washing facilities, regular cleaning of all surfaces and furniture. Not to share plates, cups and other utensils between customers, Use of proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by the staff

3.10. Elevators

- Discontinue using elevators unless essential. It is advised avoid using the elevators until the 3rd floor.
- Staff is encouraged to use the staircase and avoid touching the hand-rails.

- If an elevator must be used,
- Mark places on the floor of the elevator with a distance of 1m apart, indicating where to stand and only that number of people should go in the elevator at a given time. It is vital to practice hand hygiene after using the elevator
- When two or more elevators are available only one elevator to be used at one time and for a maximum duration of 15 minutes.
- This alternative elevator would be cleaned during this time and kept open to facilitate the aeration

3.11. Ventilation

Maintain good ventilation of all interior spaces by keeping doors and windows open as far as possible. Use of air-conditioning is discouraged in common spaces (when used by more than one person).

3.12. Supplies

Assure adequate supplies in the work stations to avoid sharing of items such as pens and other stationaries.

3.13. Isolation room facility at the University Medical Centre

3.13.1. Establish an isolation room in the University Medical Centre.

3.13.2. In the event of detecting a suspected case within the University premises, the UMO needs to be informed immediately and the patient should be immediately sent to the University Medical Centre or request the UMO to visit the patient together with an assistant wearing appropriate PPE (Including the Ambulance driver).

3.13.3. UMO need to assess the patient and take necessary measures according to the guidelines.

3.13.4. Sufficient PPE should be made available at the University Medical Centre.

3.13.5. The suspected staff member should continue to wear a mask and kept in the isolation room and all relevant precautions should be taken to limit the spread of the disease, until transfer to hospital.

3.13.6. Seek assistance from hotline 1390 and follow the instructions given or alternatively transfer the worker to the nearest government hospital, by ambulance as per the national guidelines.

3.13.7. Suwasariya ambulance service can be contacted by dialing 1990.

3.13.8. Make arrangements to clean and disinfect the area following the standard measures described.

3.13.9. Same should be applied if a suspected patient has been seen/examined at the University Medical Centre.

3.13.10. If this person tests as positive the health authorities will visit the facility and will instruct on further preventive measures

3.14. Education and training of staff

Educate and train all staff members on COVID-19 infection, risk factors and protective behaviour (e.g., hand hygiene, cough etiquette, proper use of masks, etc).

Posters and health education messages to be displayed to encourage workers to comply with given instructions.

3.15. Restrict visitors inside the University premises

3.15.1. The university should be close for all visitors (unless identified as outside resource persons), including taxi drivers and three wheel drivers

3.15.2. Public (such as Patients attending laboratory services) attending universities for services - to use a dedicated separate entrance and path

4. Following preventive measures should be strictly adhered by all the staff members

All staff members should act in a responsible manner in maintaining your own protection and others

4.1. DO NOT report to work if you belong to any of following categories

- Those with fever, body aches, cough, sore throat, nasal congestion / runny nose, shortness of breath, new onset anosmia and taste disturbance.
- Those who have had close contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19
- in quarantine or was a close contact of someone in quarantine within the last 14 days

4.2. Social etiquettes

4.2.1. Hand hygiene

- Wash hands with soap and water on entering the university premises.
- Within the premises, practice hand washing or use alcohol based hand sanitizer frequently (Annexure 4), especially before and after touching high-touch surfaces, before and after meals etc.
- Follow the correct method of hand washing and sanitization. (Appendix 1)
- Keep a hand sanitizer with you

4.2.2. Avoid touching the face at all times

4.2.3. Physical distancing of minimum 1m

- Keep a distance of one meter with others at all times (while working, meetings, having meals, when lining up in a queue, etc.)
- Avoid gatherings and meetings where physical distancing is not possible.
- Refrain from shaking hands, hugging, etc. and adopt other non-touch techniques of greeting (eg; Aubowan).

4.2.4. Masks

All staff members shall wear masks properly inside the premises. Refrain from touching the mask or face, while wearing the mask. Follow the correct guidelines on using masks. (Appendix 2)

4.2.5. Respiratory etiquette

- Coughs and sneezes have to be covered by the inner side of elbow or sleeve. In a situation where this is not possible a tissue can be used to cover the nose/mouth, provided the tissue is discarded into a closed bin and hands washed thereafter.
- Keep surgical masks and/or paper tissues at your workplace for use by those who develop a runny nose or cough at work, along with closed bins for their hygienic disposal.

4.2.6. Cleaning

Practice cleaning of your own table and office area as much as possible keeping separate dusters and cleaning solutions to avoid cross-contamination.

4.2.7. Ventilation

- Keep the doors and windows open so that air circulation takes place.
- Keep the doors open between sections as much as possible – This will minimize the necessity to touch the door handles.

4.2.8. Opening of doors and windows

- When opening a door – open the doors with your body by pushing (this will minimize the contact of door handles).
- Where you have to pull to open - it is advisable to use a disposable tissue for the door handle and immediately discard it)

4.2.9. Usage of Elevators

Avoid using elevators. Always try to use staircase. When using a staircase, do not touch the railings.

4.2.10. Other Etiquettes

- Do not lean on surfaces (eg; walls, doors, etc.) or sit on tables, staircase steps, etc.
- During working hours, remain inside the premises and avoid movements to the places outside the University.

4.2.11. Usage of mobile phones and other equipments

Do not use others' mobile phones, pens etc. Avoid using common telephones, fax machines, desks, or other work tools and equipment, whenever possible. If any object has been shared it must be cleaned with soap and water or with minimum 70% v/v alcohol based sanitizer.

4.2.12. Work attire

- Avoid clothing that has a higher chance of coming in contact with other surfaces or objects and which need frequent handling such as Sarees and ties.
- Avoid all jewelries on hands such as rings and bangles as they interfere with effective hand cleaning, and ones that could come in contact with other surfaces and objects such as long necklaces and earrings.
- Avoid applying beauty care products which come in contact with the face such as lipsticks, make-up brushes, etc. at the workplace.
- It is advisable to wear long hair in a manner which avoid contact with furniture and surroundings
- Keep what you bring to work a minimum

4.2.13. Travel

- Try to avoid public transport as far as possible. Walk to the University if within walking distance. Use personal vehicles whenever possible. If using public transport adhere to the recommendations.
- When the Police/Tri-Forces are checking your identity cards/curfew passes etc. cooperate with them to do it without touching your documents. Same applies to the checking process by the University security officials.

4.2.14. While having meals

- Always try to consume home-made food. Avoid sharing glasses, plates, other utensils and the same food parcel with anyone else. Have your own plate, cup and water bottle.
- Stagger the lunch hour per department (Such as 1 hour per each floor, such as 11-12, 12-1 pm). Breakfast and tea also be staggered to avoid over-crowding in lunch rooms
- Make your own tea.
- Have your meals by yourself

4.2.15. Maintain good personal health and hygiene by practicing the following

- A balanced diet
- Drinking adequate amounts of clean water
- Regular physical exercise
- 7-8 hours of sleep
- Abstain from unhealthy habits such as smoking and consuming alcohol

5. What needs to be done on returning home from work

Upon returning home before entering the house

- Call a member of the house and advice him/her to
- Keep open all doors, from the front door of the house to the all doors of the bathroom/washroom. If there are any washrooms outside those could be used before entering the house
- Remove shoes/slippers and leave them outside
- Leave all your belongings outside. If any item is taken inside the house, either wash it with soap and water or disinfect with alcohol sanitizer. (This applies to your mobile phone, spectacles, wrist-watch etc.)
- Once inside the washroom,
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water
- Remove the clothing and wash them before wearing them again

6. Developing a faculty level plan for diagnosis, referral and subsequent contact tracing

- A faculty level plan should be developed and approved by the COVID-19 University response team for diagnosis, referral and subsequent contact tracing
- Investigations should coordinated through the UMO and be expedited by the university laboratories, if possible.
- The university Medical Office should have a separate fever unit for diagnosis and referral if needed. The health care workers at the University Medical Office should be provided with PPE.
- This triage point at the University Medical Office, should collaborate with the university laboratories for suspected cases.
- As soon as a case is suspected/ diagnosed the University Medical Officer should transfer the staff to the nearest COVID-19 treatment hospital and begin contact tracing as soon as possible with the University PHI.
- In the event of detecting a suspected case in the workplace, seek assistance from hotline 1390 and follow the instructions given or alternatively transfer the staff/student to the nearest government hospital, by Suwasariya ambulance to be contacted by dialing 1990.
- A database of the cases and suspected staff should be developed and followed-up by the UMO/ PHI.

7. Meetings

- If a meeting is essential to be held, such as a scrutiny board or a results board
- Minimize the number of attendees
- Do not shake hands with other participants, instead say ‘Ayubowan’
- Pre-order sufficient supplies and materials, including tissues and hand sanitizer for all participants.
- Have surgical masks available to offer to anyone

- Maintain a distance of 1m between participants
- Follow all the hygienic measures outlined above

8. Contact information on focal points

- The focal point to provide guidance on infection prevention strategies whenever necessary;

Dr. Thushari Dissanayake

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- The focal point to monitor preventive activities within the University;

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Dr. Darshani Abeygunasekera

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- If a staff member develops any symptoms, contact the UMO.

Dr. Sagarie De Silva


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University Medical Centre
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Bibliography;

1. Guidelines on COVID-19 preparedness for workplaces - Operational guidelines on preparedness and response for COVID-19 outbreak for work settings. Interim Guidance 17th April 2020. Directorate of Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND INDIGENOUS MEDICAL SERVICES

How to Handwash?

WASH HANDS WHEN VISIBLY SOILED! OTHERWISE, USE HANDRUB

 **Duration of the entire procedure: 40-60 seconds**



Wet hands with water;



Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces;



Rub hands palm to palm;



Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;



Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;



Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;



Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa;



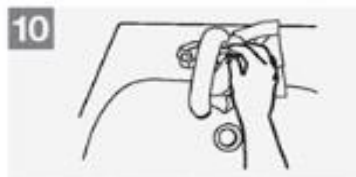
Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa;



Rinse hands with water;



Dry hands thoroughly with a single use towel;



Use towel to turn off faucet;



Your hands are now safe.



World Health Organization

Patient Safety

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Clean Your Hands

All illustrative procedures have been taken from the World Health Organization's 2009 'Five Moments for Hand Hygiene' manual. However, the published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. The responsibility for the use of the material lies with the reader. It is not intended that the World Health Organization be liable for damages arising from its use. WHO acknowledges the Hospital Universitario de Girona (HUG), in particular the members of the Infection Control Programme, for their active participation in developing this material.

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Annexure 2



Step 1:

Hold the mask via the ear loops, and ensure that it covers your mouth and nose. Then place the loops over your ears.



Step 2:

Pinch the metal strip or stiff edge of the mask so it takes the shape of your nose bridge.



Step 3:

Once the mask is soiled, remove it by holding the ear loops.



Step 4:

Dispose soiled mask into the bins.



Step 5:

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after disposing the mask.

Annexure 3

How to use and discard masks safely and effectively

For any type of mask, appropriate use and disposal are essential to ensure that they are effective and to avoid increase in transmission of infections.

- Wash your hands immediately before wearing and after removing the mask
- Place the mask carefully, ensuring it covers the mouth and nose, and tie it securely to minimize any gaps between the face and the mask
- Do not touch the mask while wearing it.
- Remove the mask using the appropriate technique: do not touch the front of the mask but untie it from behind
- After removal or whenever a used mask is inadvertently touched, clean hands using an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water if hands are visibly dirty
- Do not use the same mask for more than 8 hours at a time
- If the mask becomes damp with (with sweat, water, etc.), replace immediately with a new clean, dry mask
- Surgical masks are single-use and cannot be sterilized after use. Do not reuse surgical masks. To dispose a used surgical mask, immediately after removing wrap it in a polythene cover and dispose with non-biodegradable waste.
- Cloth masks are reusable. They can be decontaminated by boiling for 10 minutes. Always have a water resistant, sealable bag with you to put the used cloth masks till they are decontaminated for re-use
- Masks are effective and safe only when used in combination with proper hand hygiene practices

How to Handrub?

RUB HANDS FOR HAND HYGIENE! WASH HANDS WHEN VISIBLY SOILED

 **Duration of the entire procedure: 20-30 seconds**

1a



Apply a palmful of the product in a cupped hand, covering all surfaces;

1b

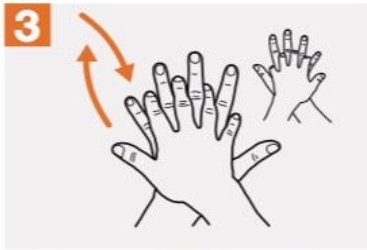


2



Rub hands palm to palm;

3



Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;

4



Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;

5



Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;

6



Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa;

7



Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa;

8



Once dry, your hands are safe.



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