

## **William Smith Covid RA Implementation: Standard Operating Procedures**

**Edition: June 2020**

**This SOP for Phase1 where technical staff only will be allowed into the building to perform research duties, the SOP will be changed in phase2 to reflect changes to operation. Faculty will be consulted, suggested start dates July 20th.**

### **Regulation of numbers of people in the building**

Wherever possible staff and students should be working from home. Staff will be reminded that if they or anyone who lives in their household displays any symptoms of COVID-19 they should not come to work. Vulnerable or extremely vulnerable individuals should not come into work. Current official COVID-19 Secure notices should be displayed throughout the building.

Work in the building should only be that which cannot be done from home. When working in the building the shortest time should be used to complete the work and the minimum number of people in the team required to complete the work. The request to work in the building must be applied for through a formal route and an approval given prior to working in the building. The request will detail the work undertaken, the reason why the work needs to be undertaken, the duration, location/s of work and also provide details of a local SOP to comply with the school SOP.

The number of people in each space should not exceed the number designated for that space with social distancing, we have considered research areas first and teaching and staff areas in phase 2 ( after 13th of July). If the area has higher demands of use than capacity for the room as social distance, a clear rotate system must be put in place by the teams using those facilities. Anyone entering the building must sign in stating which room they are working in and log on to the SafeZone app when on site.

### **Compliance with SOP**

Once in the building all persons must adhere to the SOP of the building. The risk assessment and SOP will be provided to all staff before return, they **MUST** sign that they have read and will comply with the SOP and a log of induction training will be held with the designated technical staff. Any concerns must be raised to the designated lead technical officer as soon as possible. If there are procedures outlined here that may inadvertently cause any issues for any staff with disabilities or protected characteristics, please raise this to the technical lead ASAP to allow us to evolve the guidelines and provide reasonable adjustments to the SOP.

Inductions will be provided to staff returning through technical or PI support. Technical staff will be provided with a list of approved researchers and work locations. Regular spot checks will be undertaken by technical staff to ensure adherence with the SOP. Technical staff will raise any concerns with the staff or student directly. If this is not rectified, then this will be reported to the designated technical lead and if still not rectify report to the HoS. Noncompliance with the SOP will result in the permission to work withdrawn.

### **Information and posters**

Posters and leaflets will be displayed throughout the building at key points such as entry and exit, each floor, toilets and communal areas to illustrate current government guidelines on control in spread. Including advice of symptoms, controlling spread, handwashing and cleaning.

### **Hand washing**

Hand washing facilities with soap and water in place and disposable paper towels for drying hands. Hand washing areas clearly labelled in each area. Staff and students will be encouraged to wash hands more regularly and thoroughly through notices throughout the building and at hand washing points. Hand washing will be encouraged when coming in and out of the laboratory areas. Gel sanitisers will be available in key areas where washing facilities are not readily available and on entry and exit points. Regular checks of handwashing areas for soap and paper towels. Guidance on hand washing will be provided through notices. Bins will be regularly checked and emptied, and sinks cleaned at least daily.

### **Cleaning**

There will be frequent cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly particularly in areas of high use such as door handles and light switches using appropriate cleaning products and methods. Cleaning products such as disinfection sprays, wipes and paper towels or hand sanitisers will be accessible in all areas.

**Communal areas:** University cleaning staff will clean the building once a day in the morning in which surfaces such as door handles, handles and light switches along corridors and communal areas will be disinfected. Rest rooms will be cleaned twice a day with supplies of paper towels and soap checked. Kitchen and eating areas will be cleaned and disinfected daily.

**Offices:** A cleaning rota will be established for each office in use by the users of the office. Office surfaces and frequently touched areas should be cleaned prior to the start of work, again at least one point during the day and at the end of the day.

**Laboratories:** A cleaning rota will be established for each laboratory in use, by the users of the lab. Sinks, surfaces, light switches, door handles and frequently touched areas should be cleaned prior to the start of work, again at least one point during the day and at the end of the day.

**Meeting rooms:** Meeting room surfaces and frequently touched areas such as door handles and light switches should be disinfected before and after use.

### **Social distancing**

#### **Timing of work**

Core working hours will be between 10am-4pm, with technical support in the building between 9am-5pm allowing the technical team to ensure opening and closing of the building. Where possible arrival and departure times, lunch and break times should be staggered to reduce possible contact.

#### **Access to and egress from the building**

There will be one-way enter/exits points to the buildings to help maintain flow and facilitate social distance wherever possible. Each area will be clearly signed as entry or exit and will contain access to hand sanitiser. Posters will highlight use of hand sanitiser on entry and exit of the building. Signs to reinforce social distance will be present at entrances. Anyone entering the building must sign in and log on to the SafeZone app when on site.

For William Smith staff and students will enter the building through the main lobby, which will be divided diagonally by a barrier. Students will exit the building via the main lobby using the other side of the barrier.

Staff will exit the building via the main lobby (near reception). Access to the common room, tearoom, delivery office and gender-neutral toilet will be via the side entrance with a one-way

system operating from the side door leading to the William Smith reception lobby. There will be no access to the building via the fire exits or side door.

### **Movement within the building**

Movement within the building will be restricted to one way along most corridors with the direction clearly signed and arrows marked on the floor to highlight the direction of travel. Where possible routes will go in the direction of opening of doors to reduce handle use. In areas that require two-way access building users should ensure that they allow 2m between themselves and other users.

To have a one-way system on stairs, marker tape will be used, and in areas where stairs cannot be passed by at 2m distance, the flight of stairs must be seen to be clear before moving on to the stairwell. Maps showing the flow of users will be distributed around the building and provided to building users upon the opening of the building. Building users should not use corridors as an area to conduct a conversation and should move to an appropriate area where they can maintain social distancing. Where possible, and it doesn't constitute a fire risk, corridors doors can be wedged open to prevent contact with handles.

Lifts can only be used by persons who are restricted in mobility or disabled or having to transport items that are large, heavy or hazardous to transport via stairs. There will be demarcated holding areas within the lobby for lift users who are waiting to use the lift. Holding areas for PEEP should be kept clear during emergencies.

Work should be restricted to specific rooms where possible and work in fixed teams or partners is preferred. Movement between different areas and labs should be avoided where possible.

### **Offices**

All office social distance occupancy levels will be labelled on the doors (subject to Phase). Single occupancy offices can only be used by a single person. There can be no meetings in single person offices. People must move to areas where social distance can adhere to for meetings. In multi-occupancy offices the maximum number within an office with social distancing must be adhered to. To ensure this, people in the office will need to either set up a rota of office use or relocate to temporary alternative spaces provided in the building. New temporary social distance working spaces will be set up in a few locations in the building. Office furniture can be rearranged to facilitate social distancing and back to back or side to side working and where this is not possible barriers/screens can be requested.

A cleaning rota should be established for each office in use. Office surfaces and frequently touched areas such as handles should be cleaned prior to the start of work and again at least one point during the day. Frequently used areas should be cleaned more frequently.

In case of meetings staff will be encouraged to use alternate forms of communication than face to face wherever possible. If face to face meetings need to occur, they should be in areas which allow social distancing. Social distance meeting rooms will ideally be areas where ventilation can be increased and be marked out for social distancing. Door labels will indicate a social distance meeting room. Outside meetings will be preferred over inside meetings and outside seating at social distance will be provided in a few locations close to the building. A covered area for seating will also be provided.

### **Communal areas**

Communal areas will be cleaned more regularly, at minimum at first thing in the morning and at the end of the day. Signage will encourage all staff to clean surfaces after each use. Cleaning products and cloths will be available in these areas and supplies regularly checked.

Staff will be encouraged to bring their own lunch as canteens and food available on site will be limited. Communal areas for eating, such as the common room, will be rearranged and marked to ensure social distancing during use with back to back and side to side seating where possible. Cleaning products will be available on each table for cleaning after use.

Use of the sink, kettle, fridge and microwave areas will be marked and signed to ensure social distance during use. Staff will be encouraged to wash hands before use of any items. Floor markings and signs will show queuing systems for use. Queuing will be within rooms where possible rather than in the corridor. Users will be encouraged to use their own personal items of cutlery and crockery and take these home to wash. If this is not possible items should be washed with soap and warm water, dried with a paper towel (not hand towel) and put away immediately. All areas must be kept clear to aid cleaning and reduce risk of transfer of contamination.

Outside and covered seating area will also be provided in proximity to the building to allow people to have breaks and eat outside at social distance if they wish. These will be marked to maintain social distances.

Mental health awareness and support links will be advertised through posters in communal areas entrance and exit points and toilets.

### **Toilets**

Toilets will be cleaned more regularly, at minimum at first thing in the morning and at the end of the day. Signage in toilets will encourage good hand washing practices. Soap and paper towels will be available in these areas and supplies and bins regularly checked. For single occupancy toilets waiting areas will be marked out at 2m distance to allow previous occupant to exit with 2m distance. For multi-occupancy facilities this will need to change to a 'one in one out' system with only one person being in at a time. There will be signs to highlight this on the doors and either a 'knock and call before entering' system or vacant/engaged sign on doors with people told to use this on entry and exit.

### **Research laboratories**

All areas and surfaces must be kept clear wherever possible to aid cleaning and reduce risk of transfer of contamination. Prior to any return of lab use the labs must be clear of bench clutter and as many items as possible stored to allow a thorough clean of the lab and surfaces. Computers that are not associated with equipment should not be used within the lab and used in office spaces to reduce potential contamination areas. Equipment should be restarted and tested and where required serviced or calibrated before use. Equipment may need to be moved to allow easy access to users and reduce movement within the lab space. Cleaning must have been undertaken and cleaning and washing supplies must be available in labs. Air ventilation system checked and notes of pressure that may incur higher risks detailed within the laboratory specific SOP notes.

Research labs have been evaluated to allow the best use of the area whilst maintaining social distancing between users. All bays and benches should be labelled with the user/s and where appropriate supervisor or PI.

There should be **no face -to -face** working at any time. Areas which cannot comply with the 2m distance through spacing will have barriers set up. Bays and work areas will have signage to highlight how many users can use each bay or work area and floor markings show how users should flow within the area and to determine where users can work whilst maintaining social distancing from other lab users. If the area has higher demands of use than capacity for the room as social distance, a rota system must be put in place for the

teams using those facilities. Small fixed working teams should be established where possible.

Prior to use in the morning each laboratory will be inspected by a dedicated technician who will ensure that the lab is appropriately stocked with hand washing consumables, there are no obvious transmission hazards, all signage and taped areas are clear, and repairs are made before users enter. Whiteboards can be used to aid communication within the team and technical staff on rotas and cleaning.

Signage will be posted on each research lab door to highlight if the lab has been checked and is safe to work in. It will be the user responsibility to ensure a cleaning rota is adhered to in the lab. Disinfection and towels will be available in all labs.

Labs will have one way enter and exit routes where possible and handwashing facilities on exit and entry or alternatively hand sanitizers. Where possible windows should be used to increase ventilation. Waste needs to be disposed of regularly and appropriately, daily at minimum.

### **Equipment use and cleaning**

Where possible equipment use should be dedicated to one person use. Where this is not possible a booking system will need to be put in place and equipment cleaned appropriately between use. Disinfection and instructions will be provided to ensure equipment is appropriately cleaned between use. Where direct cleaning is not possible for a piece of equipment, protective cover of machines must be implemented to allow either protection or alternative cleaning. Signage will be on each equipment to explain appropriate cleaning after use. Cleaning products and bins will be available in each area and checked regularly.

Equipment which are frequency touched, such as fridges and freezers, hands or gloves should be cleaned before and after touching. Areas or equipment that are deemed high transmission risk, e.g. cold room will have specific instructions of cleaning before and after use.

### **One person rooms and spaces**

For single occupancy rooms this will be a one-in one-out system, however there will also need to be a 15 minute delay period between users in areas where ventilation is restricted.

Fume hoods and safety cabinets can be used if at social distance from other users. This might mean only 1 hood can be used at a time if next to each other and <2m working distance.

### **Deliveries**

Frequency of deliveries will be reduced by ordering larger quantities less often. Where possible and safe, single workers unload deliveries and where not possible a fixed team of technical staff will be used for deliveries. Social distancing and reduction of contact should be maintained when receiving deliveries. Drop off and collection points and processes should be clearly signed to delivery drivers to ensure social distancing during deliveries. Deliveries will then be delivered directly to the labs by technical staff. Non-technical staff should avoid visiting delivery areas to reduce contact risk.

### **Contractors**

Contractors will be briefed on the SOP in the building prior to arrival, or on arrival if this is not possible. Visitors and contractors will use the same entry and exit routes as staff. For William Smith this will be the front doors and lobby area. Contract workers will coordinate with the technical staff and/or relevant laboratory teams to ensure compliance of the SOP during the

contracted work or visit. Contractors need to supply valid covid risk assessments, Estates should have copies available if requested.

## **PPE**

In labs all personnel should be wearing a lab coat and a pair of gloves appropriate to the work to be carried out. Gloves and lab coats must be removed prior to leaving the laboratory. Lab coats should be designated to one person to use only and kept within the laboratory. Gloves should be disposed of before exiting the laboratory. Goggles should be washed on site. Storage areas in the lab for people's PPE will be provided. If additional PPE is required for the planned work a work specific risk assessment must be carried out and implemented as appropriate. Additional PPE to reduce COVID -19 risk assessment, such as face mask should be used during closer contact training (see below)

Movement of samples/gels between laboratories should be done in specific carry cases that can be wiped down and safely held in ungloved hands. These carry cases must not be left anywhere in the building other than the designated space.

## **Training and demonstrating (when social distancing can't be maintained)**

The protocol to be undertaken must be discussed prior to the training for example by a remote meeting. All personnel involved in training should wear appropriate PPE and in addition wear face masks to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission. Small rooms should be avoided for close proximity training/supervision. If proximity is requiring this should be reduced to 5 minutes in single occupancy rooms and 15 minutes max in multiple occupancy rooms. Talking should be kept to a minimum during the procedure, essential corrections only. Observations should be no more than 15 minutes in a single period. The procedure should be split into 15 minute sections if more time is required. Longer post training face to face supervisory meetings can be conducted in areas where social distancing can be adhered to.

## **Emergency situation**

In an emergency, for example, an accident or fire people do not have to stay 2 m apart if it would be unsafe. Health and Safety of the work specific risk assessment and fire safety protocols should be followed at all times.

## **Teaching considerations for labs**

Labs will be assessed for capacity with 2m social distancing. There will be one way in and another way out systems where possible for lab classes. There will need to be marked queuing systems set up for entry into the labs. Locker use should be reduced to the bare minimum/exception and locker access set up at social distancing. Once in the labs practical classes will need to be set up so that all equipment requirements are at the immediate work bench and equipment is not shared unless cleaned between sharing. This will require academics to review and modify practical's to ensure individual uses of a single set of equipment at a bench where possible. Larger shared equipment should be moved to reduce lab movement and allow use whilst social distancing. Movement around the lab should be reduced to minimum. Demonstration of techniques should be done remotely where possible via digital support and social distancing with staff and students should be maintained during the lab class. The number of demonstrators in a lab should be reduced to a minimum and training is needed to ensure social distancing during demonstrating. If close proximity training is required, then further protocols will be needed. Personal equipment needs to be brought in by each individual student and reduction in sharing or equipment such as pens etc.

**Research Laboratory capacities at social distance****William Smith:**

<b>Ground floor</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Room specific considerations</b>
WS0.07	4	<b>Technical Staff only</b>
WS0.08	2	<b>Technical Staff only</b>
WS0.10a	1	<b>Technical Staff only</b>
WS0.10b	1	<b>Technical Staff only</b>
WS0.11	4	<b>Technical Staff only</b>
WS0.19	2	<b>Technical Staff only</b>
WS0.21a	1	<b>Technical Staff only</b>
WS0.22	2	<b>Booking System</b>
WS0.23	1	<b>Technical Staff Office</b>
WS0.24	2	<b>Booking System</b>
WS0.25	2	<b>Booking System</b>
WS0.26	1	<b>Booking System</b>
WS0.27	2	<b>Booking System</b>
WS0.31	1	<b>Technical Staff only</b>
WS0.32	1	<b>Technical Staff only</b>
<b>First floor</b>		
WS1.08	2	<b>Technical Staff only</b>
WS1.09	2	<b>Technical Staff only</b>

