

Safe Meetings & Events Policy

This document sets out the measures that Strathclyde's Conferencing & Events (C&E) team, with the support of the University's other operational teams, has put in place to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of delegates, staff, visitors and other building users in the context of COVID19.

The aim at all times is to provide an environment for meetings and events which is safe, welcoming and comfortable, which is compliant with guidance issued by the Scottish and/or UK Governments.

The measures implemented, and this policy, are intended to be flexible, and will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis as required to provide an effective response to COVID19. Substantial changes in policy will be pro-actively communicated to clients, without delay.

This policy was last reviewed on 13/05/2022.

1. Staff Training

- **The health and wellbeing of staff is our highest priority.** Our team must be comfortable in their working environment and confident in implementing our new processes if we are to provide a meeting environment which is safe, welcoming and comfortable.
- All members of the Conferencing & Events team have undertaken a **detailed training programme** specific to the measures implemented in response to COVID19, which has included:
 - **Health self-assessments**, which allow individuals to declare any conditions which would deem them to be within 'moderate' or 'high' risk categories. Only those staff who have declared themselves Fit to Work are permitted to return to campus.
 - A **University induction** on measures in place across campus to keep staff, students and visitors safe.
 - A further **building induction**, specific to the measures in place throughout the Technology and Innovation Centre.
 - **Training on the additional measures** that Conferencing & Events has implemented to keep delegates safe, comfortable and informed, including the safe use and storage of materials which support sanitisation of conference spaces, equipment and high-touch points.
 - [World Host](#)'s certificated **Keeping Customers Safe** programme.
- As part of the training programme, all members of the Conferencing & Events team have been involved in **reviewing and revising risk assessments and standard operating procedures** in response to COVID19. The team will continue to monitor and update processes in response to their experience, customer feedback and Government guidance.
- The University no longer asks our staff, students and visitors to wear **face coverings** on campus. However, in line with Scottish Government guidance, we strongly encourage the use of face coverings as a precaution to help protect each other, particularly where significant numbers of people are present. It is down to individuals to choose when and where to wear a face covering while on campus, and you may find that some Conferencing & Events and Catering staff wear face coverings in busier spaces, or where there are no Perspex barriers.

2. Event Planning

- The University's standard **Terms & Conditions of Hire** include a clause, recommended by the UK Meetings Industry Authority, which specifically references the need to postpone/reschedule or cancel events in the context of COVID19 and related measures. The Conferencing & Events team will be as flexible as possible when working with clients to postpone/reschedule or cancel events, within the parameters of what is practical and permitted by the guidelines in place at the time.
- **Room capacities** will be adjusted in line with any physical distancing measures recommended by the institution, and by the Scottish and/or UK Governments. Charts of amended capacities at 2m and 1m distance are available.
- Although conferencing spaces in the Technology and Innovation Centre operate without the requirement for **physical distancing**, signage in place at entry/exit points and in common areas will remind attendees of the importance of **maintaining a safe distance where possible**.
- **Risk assessments** which consider each step of the organiser/delegate journey and detail the measures in place to mitigate risk, will be made available on request.
- Where appropriate, event managers will work with organisers on an **event-specific risk assessment**, which will seek to identify risks unique to a particular event and may require that additional mitigations are jointly agreed in advance and implemented on the day. Such measures might include, but are not limited to:
 - Advance registration and use of the Protect Scotland app, to support Test & Protect (see point 3, below)
 - Staggered/specific delegate arrival times
 - Delegate entry via a clearly designated route other than the main entrance
 - Staggered/specific break times to avoid congestion in foyer spaces
- The University expects that **the organiser will undertake due diligence with any third-party suppliers** they engage and whose equipment or personnel are likely to be on-site during the event, with respect to the specific processes that supplier has in place in response to COVID19.
- Organisers should **avoid producing physical collateral** – badges, delegate lists, promotional/branded items, delegate bags etc. – wherever possible. There is fast, free and reliable WiFi available in all conferencing spaces, and organisers are encouraged to provide delegate/exhibitor information online and via conference apps, where this is practical.
- An abbreviated version of this policy, which highlights **what attendees can expect** when they arrive at and while they're in the venue is available on our [Meet with Confidence webpage](#).

3. Test & Protect

- The University and event organisers undertake jointly to support the Scottish Government's [Test & Protect](#) programme of contact tracing.
- The Event Organiser must ensure that they hold **a complete record of attendee names, along with individual contact details** in the form of a telephone number or email address, in advance of the event. This information should be retained securely by the Event Organiser for a minimum of 21 days following the event.
- The University asks that Event Organisers recommend that their attendees download the [Protect Scotland](#) app to their smart phone/tablet prior to the event
- Information on these measures will be included in all **Booking Contracts**. Bookings are only considered 'Confirmed' once a Contract has been signed; a signature will indicate that the organiser agrees to comply with the measures in place to support Test & Protect.

4. Arrival at the venue

- Although conferencing spaces in the Technology and Innovation Centre operate without the requirement for **physical distancing**, signage in place at entry/exit points and in common areas will remind attendees of the importance of **maintaining a safe distance where possible**.
- **Clear signage** in place at the main entrance to the building provides an overview of the measures in place within, i.e. physical distancing and good hand hygiene.
- [Scottish Government guidance](#) recommends the wearing of **face coverings in indoor public places** and on public transport.
- The University no longer asks our staff, students and visitors to wear **face coverings** on campus. However, in line with Scottish Government guidance, we strongly encourage the use of face coverings as a precaution to help protect each other, particularly where significant numbers of people are present. It is down to individuals to choose when and where to wear a face covering while on campus, and you may find that some Conferencing & Events and Catering staff wear face coverings in busier spaces, or where there are no Perspex barriers.
- Signage at the point of entry clearly indicates that **individuals should not enter the building if they have any of the following symptoms:**
 - continuous cough
 - high temperature
 - shortness of breath
 - loss of taste or sense of smell
- Free COVID19 testing has now ended for most people in Scotland. If you have symptoms of COVID19 you should stay at home and avoid contact with others until you feel better.
- **The main entry point to the building is clearly marked.** A queueing system may be in place at peak times; where this is the case, flexible signage and members of staff will be deployed in support of physical distancing, and to keep delegates and visitors informed.

- For **groups of >40 delegates**, the event manager and organiser may, as part of the event-specific risk assessment process, agree in advance that **delegates will enter via an alternative point**, to avoid undue congestion at the building's main entrance.
- As part of the event-specific risk assessment process, the event manager and organiser may agree in advance **a specific time for delegate arrivals**, to avoid undue congestion. The organiser understands that, should they arrive outside the agreed window, **delegates may be asked to wait outside** before gaining entry to the venue.
- **One-way systems** may be in operation to avoid congestion and ensure delegates get to their meeting room as quickly and easily as possible. These will be implemented with clear signage, with staff on-hand to assist as required.
- Although delegates and visitors who can use stairs will be actively encouraged to do so, **passenger lifts are available**. Signage encourages passengers to 'maintain physical distance'.
- **Conferencing & Events staff will be on-hand** inside (and, where required, outside) the venue to welcome and direct delegates, and will be present and visible on the floor at all times.
- **Portable Perspex screens** can be made available to organisers using a registration desk. As indicated in point 2 above, organisers should **avoid producing physical collateral** wherever possible, to reduce congestion and the risk of transmission.

5. Physical Distancing

- Although conferencing spaces in the Technology and Innovation Centre operate without the requirement for **physical distancing**, signage in place at entry/exit points and in common areas will remind attendees of the importance of **maintaining a safe distance where possible**.
- The Scottish Government's [Distance Aware](#) scheme highlights that there are people who may still be worried and who would appreciate more space and care around them as we all work to get back to a more normal way of life. Posters around the venue will remind you of the importance of being Distance Aware.
- Organisers and delegates can expect to see a number of **measures in place to support physical distancing**, including but not limited to:
 - **Clear signage**;
 - **One-way routes** in some areas of high footfall;
 - **Keep Left/Give Way signage** in shared spaces with lower footfall, including staircases;
 - **Staff who are present and visible at all times**, and pro-actively managing physical distancing in shared spaces at key times, e.g. arrival, breaks, departure;
 - **Staggered arrival and break times**, which will be mutually agreed in advance between the event manager and the organiser (further information under point 4);
 - **Use of a separate, designated entrance for conference/meeting delegates**, when the group is >40 people – this to be agreed in advance with the organiser, and communicated in advance to delegates (further information under point 4).

- **Flexible one-way routes** may be deployed in foyer spaces to ensure that they can safely and comfortably accommodate multiple groups on any given day. This will help avoid undue congestion at potential pinch-points including, but not limited to:
 - arrival;
 - refreshment/lunch breaks;
 - moving between plenary and breakout sessions;
 - departure.

Such routes will be supported with flexible signage and members of staff. Where possible, routes will be agreed in advance as part of the event-specific risk assessment process, though it is recognised by both the event manager and the organiser that additional provision may require to be agreed on the day.

- **Toilets** are available on Levels 1, 2, 3 & 9 of the building. Where possible, delegates will be encouraged to use the single occupancy, gender-neutral/accessible facilities in each area. In toilet facilities which support multiple occupancy, signage encourages users to 'maintain physical distance'.
- Although delegates and visitors who can use stairs will be actively encouraged to do so, **passenger lifts are available**. Signage encourages passengers to 'maintain physical distance'.

6. Cleaning & Hygiene

- Conference Rooms, Auditoria and Foyers are **sanitised regularly using electrostatic mist**.
- The University has a rigorous regular schedule in place - **all conference spaces and toilets are cleaned overnight, and colleagues from the Cleaning team are on duty each day until 18:00** to clean and replenish toilets and hand sanitiser, and to sanitise high-touch points, e.g. door handles, light switches, banisters, lift call points.
- **Staff will sanitise all hard surfaces, audio-visual equipment and high-touch points** – e.g. door handles/finger plates, phones, lecterns, armrests - once room set-up is complete.
- **Staff will sanitise audio-visual equipment and high-touch points following “switch on”** and prior to organiser/delegate arrival.
- Disposable antibacterial wipes/spray (min. 60% alcohol) will be used to sanitise **audio-visual and electronic items**.
- The importance of **good hand hygiene** is promoted throughout the venue. **Hand sanitiser** is available in foyer spaces, in the room throughout the meeting and at catering service points.
- Conferencing & Events staff will be constantly 'on the floor' while spaces are in use. Their duties will include **regular, visible sanitisation of high-touch points**, e.g. door handles, banisters, lift call points. This will take place at least hourly, and more frequently during peak periods, e.g. arrival, breaks, departure.

7. During the Meeting

- All **non-essential items** – water station, flipcharts/paper/pens, conference stationery – will be removed from the room, and only provided on request. All paper and pencils/flipchart pens will be safely disposed of immediately following the meeting, if not taken away by the facilitator/delegates.
- The building's **air handling** system runs fresh air supply and extract at over 95% of capacity throughout the building. There is low velocity airflow recirculation in local areas through fan coil units. Government guidance is that these units are not considered to be a risk in normal operation. The University's [position statement on ventilation](#) is accessible online.
- A **member of C&E staff will be available at all times at Reception on Level 2, and can be contacted by phone on ext. 7010**, to offer advice and assistance as required. At break times, staff will direct delegates to the closest available toilet facility and advise on any one-way routes in operation (see point 4, above).
- Where possible, **staff will access the meeting room during breaks** to ensure that it's tidy, and to sanitise audio-visual equipment and high-touch points.

8. Service of Food & Beverage

- **Service will normally be from a designated point in the foyer**, though self-service tea/coffee stations can be set inside conference rooms on request, depending on delegate numbers and room layout.
- Service points will normally be staffed and have clearly-marked in/out routes. **Freshly-washed crockery, glassware, wrapped cutlery and hand sanitiser will be available at all times.**
- For **larger groups**, multiple service points, additional signage and one-way systems may be agreed in advance or on the day.
- When you have chosen a working lunch or finger/fork buffet menu, **delegates will normally be invited to serve themselves using tongs. Hand sanitiser will always be available, and staff will be present at the service point to assist.** Please speak to your Event Manager if you would prefer our Catering staff to serve your delegates.
- Any items prepared to accommodate **specific dietary requirements** will be clearly labelled, with the diet and, if you have provided it, the delegate's name.
- Used crockery/glassware will be cleared at the end of service, and the station sanitised and reset for your next break.
- Where possible, staff will clear dirty crockery/glassware from meeting rooms during breaks.
- There will normally be a member of **C&E or Catering staff present** during service to answer questions and offer directions.

9. Symptomatic individuals on-site during an event

- Any individual who believes that they have developed symptoms while they are on-site should notify the event organiser as soon as possible; the organiser should, in turn, notify a member of the Conferencing & Events team as soon as possible.
- The individual will be isolated in the nearest available room – whether the First Aid Room on Level 2, or a Conference Room not currently in use. If required, the Conferencing & Events team will arrange private transport for the individual to return to their home address or accommodation in the city and provide a disposable face covering should the individual not have one of their own.
- Free COVID19 testing has now ended for most people in Scotland. Those unwell with symptoms of COVID19 or who have a fever are advised to stay at home and avoid contact with others until their fever has gone or they feel well enough to go about their day-to-day routine again.