



Coronavirus Update

Monday, 23 November 2020

Dear colleagues,

The Victorian Premier made further significant announcements yesterday about the easing of restrictions, including gathering limits, working from home and changes to face mask rules when outside. The TCG will meet soon to consider any changes to Federation University and Federation TAFE operations in light of these changes to restrictions and update you through the week.

You can find all the details of the *Roadmap to reopening* at coronavirus.vic.gov.au. Victoria is now considered to be on the 'Last Step' towards reaching 'COVID Normal' by Christmas – a further welcome change for all.

In the meantime, the TCG has been receiving requests for more information about the acceptability and proximity of end-of-year staff celebrations.

Virtual end-of-year celebrations

The TCG and Vice-Chancellor's Senior Team have looked closely at what is allowable, but unfortunately under the current COVID restrictions, as an employer we cannot allow functions or face-to-face celebrations or planning days in 2020.

It is acceptable to hold end-of-year celebrations or planning days in a virtual environment between now and the end of the year.

We are hopeful that this will change in early 2021 and we will be able to announce the return of face-to-face staff celebrations then.

Closedown for this year will be one day earlier

In recognition of the difficult year we have all experienced, the VCST has resolved that all campuses will now be closed on 24 December and staff who have applied for leave on this date will have their leave recredited in due course (first working day back is Monday, 4 January 2021). Due to demands on Payroll at the end of the year, this will be credited through January.

Keep all meetings online

The TCG has been asked to consider whether staff can hold face-to-face meetings on campus, now that some staff are transitioning to campus.

We are asking that all staff meetings continue to be held online into January 2021 (and likely beyond). There are a number of reasons for keeping meetings online:

- It's an inclusive practice with some staff at home and others on campus
- Avoids accidental overcrowding of meeting rooms, which helps to ensure compliance with physical distancing requirements under our *COVIDSafe Plan*
- Limits the movement around campus when staff return
- It's a really productive way of collaborating across all campuses and not letting a location limit our opportunities for collaboration and engagement.

We have all learnt so much about how to hold really effective online meetings this year – and for many staff these have allowed much greater productivity. We understand that there are many staff members who prefer this approach.

For areas where there is a perceived need to meet face-to-face with students, a HIRAC must be approved prior to these meetings occurring and we ask that you look very closely at whether a face-to-face meeting is necessary, and if so, how you will limit risks to your students.

We understand that as the year progresses, different needs will emerge and COVID-normal will change restrictions again, and we will make further announcements as necessary.

COVID-19 staff check-in survey

This week, we have launched a second COVID-19 staff check-in survey to provide you with an opportunity to tell us what you think about the support provided to date, and how we can continue supporting you moving forward.

Your participation in this survey will ensure we are responding to collective feedback, and that any actions taken reflect your views. The survey is anonymous and confidential and can be completed by using the [staff check-in survey link](#).

You have until Sunday, 29 November 2020 to provide your feedback.

You also have a chance to win a gift voucher! The University has eight gift vouchers on offer as a way to thank you for completing the survey and to support local businesses during this time. [Enter the survey draw for the chance to win a gift voucher](#). Please note you will remain anonymous, your survey responses are not linked to this draw. Comprehensive FAQs can be viewed on the [COVID-19 staff check-in survey web page](#).

Health and Wellbeing

Supporting the health and wellbeing of our staff at Federation University and Federation TAFE has been an important priority throughout the pandemic and this continues.

You can find these resources on the Federation website via our [COVID-19 Support for staff](#), [Health and wellbeing](#) and [Coronavirus response](#) webpages.

Remember, if you are confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19, even if your

symptoms are mild, it is vital that you get tested, remain isolated, do not come on campus and let us know.

- During business hours: call the **COVID-19 Hotline on (03) 5122 6300** (8:30 am to 5:00 pm).
- Outside business hours: call the **Emergency phone number 1800 333 732** for confirmed cases (positive test result). Call the COVID-19 Hotline for suspected cases and negative COVID-19 test results (leave a message to be followed up the next morning).

If you are COVID-free and must attend campus for a one-off visit, please [contact Security](#) via the campus numbers listed online.

Stay safe.

On behalf of the COVID-19 Transition Control Group

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