

COVID-19 Testing when accessing University buildings policy

Introduction

Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) has prioritised the safety and well-being of staff and students throughout its management of the COVID-19 situation.

Institutional and local risk assessments have been undertaken across the University to identify the risks posed by COVID-19 and identify the measures that are required to reduce the risk to everyone within the University and to ensure that the workplace is as safe as possible.

The availability of symptom free testing for frontline workers within the Liverpool City region allows for an additional safety measure to be put in place by requesting that all members of staff, students and contractors provide evidence that they have undertaken a COVID-19 test within the last seven calendar days and have tested negative for COVID-19.

It is acknowledged that the lateral flow test, which is used in symptom free testing, does not detect all cases and it is recognised that individuals may contract COVID-19 after they have received a negative test result. Therefore, providing evidence of a negative test is an adjunct to the controls measures that have been identified in risk assessments and everyone must continue to follow the measures identified in risk assessments.

Process

1. Staff members who need to access any University buildings should undertake a COVID-19 test and receive a negative test prior to accessing any University building or any part of the University campus
2. Even when staff members are accessing a University building for a short period of time e.g. to collect equipment they must still provide evidence of a negative test prior to accessing the building
3. The date of the test must be within seven calendar days of the date that they will be entering a University building
4. Staff members who are required to access University buildings on a regular basis will be expected to undertake a test regularly in line with the above requirement
5. Staff members can access the symptom free testing available for frontline workers (<https://liverpool.gov.uk/smarttesting>), these tests do not need to be booked. Staff members will be given time to attend a test within their working day
6. Once a staff member has undertaken a test, they will receive confirmation of the test result via text message and email, test results from the lateral flow test are typically received within one hour
7. If the staff member receives a negative outcome then they should upload or input the test result onto Staff Infobase through self service
8. If the staff member receives a positive test outcome then they must follow government advice and book a further PCR test and self-isolate. It is vital that a further PCR test is taken due to the exemption outlined below
9. On receipt of a negative test outcome, the individual can access University buildings for a seven days period from the date of the test. If the individual requires further access after the seven day period, then they will need to undertake a further lateral flow test at the appropriate point

10. If staff members have experienced symptoms and have received a negative test outcome from a PCR COVID test then this test result will be accepted as evidence of a negative test result. This test result is valid for up to seven calendar days from the date of the test
11. In addition to ensuring that a negative test result has been received, line managers must confirm that it is essential for the staff member to access University buildings at this time and ensure that the individual has approval from IMT to travel and access University building through the essential worker process
12. Whilst on site, staff members must follow all control measures that been identified through risk assessments e.g. appropriate social distancing, use of face coverings
13. Staff members may be asked to confirm that they have complied with requirements whilst in University buildings or campus, however, they will not be expected to share the tests results with anyone other than their line manager and their HR business partner (if required)

Exemptions

Staff members who have received a positive PCR ('with symptoms') test result, which has been recorded on the NHS system or through the University's testing facilities, in the 90 days prior to accessing a University building are not required to have a further test unless they have symptoms. Line managers will ask to see evidence of the positive PCR test result.

If a positive PCR ('with symptoms') test result has been received more than 90 days ago, staff will be asked to undertake a further test prior to accessing a University building.

It is recognised that there may be medical reasons why an individual is unable to take a COVID-19 test, in this eventuality further advice will be taken from an appropriate medical advisor to determine the appropriate action. Individuals will continue to receive their full salary, even if they are not able to undertake their role, whilst this medical advice is being sought. The individual will not be allowed to access University buildings and may be asked to undertake alternative duties from home whilst medical advice is being obtained.

Compliance

The University recognises that individuals may have anxieties either due to concerns about traveling to a test centre, the test itself or the consequence of receiving a positive test result for themselves or family members.

Line managers will take a supportive approach to understand individual's concerns and will support the individual in trying to resolving these. However, with the exception of the exemptions outlined above, staff members who need to access University buildings will be required to take a COVID-19 test.

The University will ensure that any individual who receives a positive test outcome and is required to self-isolate, will continue to receive their full salary and support from the University.

The University believes that this is an appropriate and reasonable requirement to ensure the safety and well-being of staff members and students based on the current high level of COVID-19 infections within the local area. Students and contractors are also being required to evidence a negative COVID-19 test result prior to accessing University buildings and the risk of transmission is reduced by ensuring everyone accessing the campus has recently tested negative for COVID-19.

If following supportive conversation with their line manager, a staff member, who cannot undertake their role from home and is required to attend the workplace, refuses to undertake a test they will be advised that they will not be able to undertake their usual role and may be asked to undertake alternative duties as required.

Based on the circumstances, the request to undertake a test may be deemed a reasonable management request and it may be necessary to commence an investigation under the University's Disciplinary Procedure if an individual is unable to undertake their role due to their decision not to have a COVID-19 test. The University hopes that it will not be necessary to take action against any individual as it is hoped that it is recognised that this requirements is in place to protect everyone at the University.