



To the University's Structures

Operative guidelines for 'Phase Two' - COVID-19 action plan and safety guidelines

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to increase the effectiveness of the precautionary measures of containment adopted by the University of Verona in the fight against COVID-19, and will be subject to constant updating on the basis of the epidemiological evolution, the national and/or regional regulatory framework and the scientific and technical developments.

1. Introduction

COVID-19 represents a specific risk only in some workplaces (e.g. health care facilities, hospitals, laboratories, etc.), while for other workplaces it is a risk of a generic nature (*external to the workplace*). Nevertheless, in order to implement the post-lockdown 'Phase 2', identified by the Ministry of the University, Education and Research (MIUR) as the period between May and the end of August 2020, **we believe it is necessary** for the University to carry out a **risk assessment** on all work environments and, on the basis of this, prepare an **action plan and specific safety guidelines**.

The risk assessment shall be carried out on the basis of the following sources:

- INAIL document – April 2020 'Documento tecnico sulla possibile rimodulazione delle misure di contenimento del contagio da SARS-CoV-2 dei luoghi di lavoro e strategie di prevenzione';
- criteria adopted in the Risk Assessment Document issued by the University Hospital of Verona - AOUI, where both contracted and non contracted staff (TA, doctors, students) work;
- international scientific literature (e.g. WHO, CDC);
- documents issued by the Veneto Region: 'Indicazioni operative per la tutela della salute negli ambienti di lavoro non sanitari (Rev. 10 del 11.04.2020)' and 'Procedura regionale Nuovo Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) Rev. 03 del 13.03.2020';
- ISS COVID-19 report no. 2/2020 of 28 March 2020.

Being a risk assessment, its execution, as well as the resulting action plan, requires cooperation between the **Prevention and Protection Service Manager** (*Responsabile del Servizio di Prevenzione e Protezione - RSPP*) and the **Responsible Doctor** (*Medico Competente*), pursuant to Legislative Decree no. 81/08, and the consultation of **Workers' Representatives for Workplace Safety**. The **Rector's safety adviser for Safety** is also included in this process.

2. 'Phase 2' action plan

Given the current scientific and technical context on risks from SARS-CoV-2, fully subject to possible changes and development, the measures set out in the COVID-19 action plan are based on the **precautionary principle**, as well as the principle of prevention and individual responsibility. The action plan is made necessary by the decision to reopen - **on 4 May 2020** - the University's facilities and premises that had remained closed during Phase 1 by implementing the technical measures described below. **This was established with the aim of ensuring the resumption of all research activities and related services, with teaching activities continuing to take place online via distance learning, unless in the exceptional circumstances outlined in this document.**

In order to implement the plan, the work of the Covid-19 task force, set up at the beginning of the outbreak, is even more crucial. Indeed, the task force is now called upon to liaise and maintain a constant flow of information with the University's preventive surveillance system, comprised of directors and supervisors, with a specific coordination role entrusted to the Workplace Safety advisers.

In this regard, we highlight the role of the directors and supervisors, identified in accordance with the University Regulations, in **ensuring the correct implementation of the ordered measures**. There remains also the **obligation of all those to whom these measures apply, to:** contribute, together with the employer, the directors and the supervisors, to fulfill the measures set out in this action plan, complying with the provisions and instructions of supervisors; use personal protection equipment as appropriate and following the instructions received, reporting any problems that may have arisen.

2.1 Technical, organisational and procedural measures

The COVID-19 action plan includes the following measures:

- a. technical measures
- b. organisational measures
- c. procedural measures

a) Technical measures

- As soon as the pandemic was declared, hand sanitiser dispensers (hydroalcoholic disinfectants) were installed at all the entrances of the university buildings. Additional dispensers will be installed in the corridors, based on assessments carried out by the Prevention and Protection Service, also in view of the limited access to toilettes. Supply and maintenance will be carried out by the Technical Area.
- With the start of phase 2, the installation of Plexiglas barriers will be completed in the following places open to the public: reception desks, 'book borrowing points' in libraries, front office of the Teaching Directorate. The opportunity of installing barriers within offices, where it is not possible to adopt alternative organisational measures, will also be considered.
- The sanitisation of filters of fan convectors and air handling units will be carried out and completed by the end of May by a specialised company appointed by the Technical Area.
- Since the declaration of the pandemic, the guidelines on cleaning of premises, elevators, and workplaces (including keyboards, touch screens, mouse), common and leisure areas (including beverage and snack vending machines), and waiting areas have been updated, replacing common detergents with sodium hypochlorite disinfectants, in accordance with the provisions of the Ministry of Health Circular no. 5443 of 22 February 2020. Therefore, all University facilities will be sanitised before reopening and then periodically. In particular, the spaces where the presence of confirmed cases of COVID-19 has been confirmed will be sanitised as indicated in the Circular of the Ministry of Health no. 5443 of 22 February 2020.
- All receptions will be equipped with thermometers that allow remote temperature measurement on request (see 'Temperature measurement' below).

b) Organisational measures

General provisions

- Spaces must be re-organised in such a way as to **ensure social distancing of 2 meters is maintained** indoors. For this purpose, it is recommended, if possible, to re-organise spaces in a flexible way, in order to **reduce the number of people per room**, ensuring an approximate area of 6 square meters per person (the regional regulations for office premises provide for 4 square

meters per person). Where spaces do not allow it, organisational solutions will be adopted, e.g. work shifts.

- **Any meetings/group activities must be held primarily online/via video-conferencing.** If it is essential to hold meetings in person, hygiene measures - above all, social distancing of at least 2 meters - must always be complied with.
- Organisational measures, on the part of those responsible for the organisational aspects, must be adopted **to avoid crowding in and out of the workplace** (e.g. staggered working hours) by identifying, where possible, different routes for entry and exit.

Technical-administrative staff (including outsourced staff)

- The **'Smart work' (Working from home) scheme** shall continue to be the standard work mode for all tasks that can be carried out remotely, pursuant to Law no. 27/2020, Directive 2/2020, and Circular 2/2020 of the Civil Service and the Prime Ministerial Decree of 26 April 2020. Crowding in the workplace could, in fact, directly or indirectly cause new infections;
- where it is necessary - within an office/unit - for some employees to be physically present, work shifts should be implemented: given the need to reduce long-distance commuting and, therefore, until the end of the emergency, all employees - including those working from home - may be called upon to be physically present in their office, laboratory, library, **unless one of the following conditions applies:**
 - 1) employees with serious illnesses (as per Law 27/2020) or with children or dependent relatives with disabilities certified under Law 104/92 (Art. 3, paragraphs 1 and 3);
 - 2) employees who, within their own household, have family members living with situations of innate or acquired (certified) immunodeficiency;
 - 3) employees who have children under 14 years of age if they are a single parent or if the other parent is unable to work from home, or otherwise cannot ensure their presence at home to look after the child;
- for the **administrative activities** that are carried out in the offices of the various University facilities, it will be the responsibility of the relevant Supervisor to periodically determine, until the end of the emergency, whether it is necessary to have employees on-site; only employees whose physical presence is required can work on shifts, taking into account the above exceptions (points 1, 2, and 3 above);
- for **laboratory activities** taking into account criteria based on the scientific disciplines, logistical aspects and research activities involved, it will be the responsibility of the Scientific Supervisor to determine whether the activities should continue on-site. If so, the Scientific Supervisor will also have to consider whether the physical presence of employees in the laboratory is necessary and how to implement it;
- for **library services**, all the online services listed on the FAQ page #lamiabibliotecadacasa will continue to be active; access to premises will be granted to academic users, including students of the University of Verona, from 18 May 2020, subject to the preparation of a specific action plan. Study rooms will remain closed;
- **for all those employees whose work cannot be performed remotely from home**, and not requiring the employee in question to be physically present in the workplace, the Director/Head of Office should determine that they take their accrued annual leave days, or take days off using any extra hour worked. If the employee in question does not have any remaining days of annual leave, the Director/Head of Office shall exempt the employee from working, pursuant to Law 27/2020; the period of exemption from work will be regarded as normal work for all legal purposes, but the employee will not be entitled to any meal vouchers. In addition, no later than 30 September 2020, as an exception to the provisions of the national collective agreements in force, it is possible for employees to transfer, in whole or in part, the rest and holidays accrued up to 31 December 2019, to another employee of the University without distinction of position or profile; the transfer takes place in writing and must be communicated to the Supervisors of the employees concerned, is free of charge, may not be subject to conditions and is not revocable;
- for each unit or office, **the Supervisors**, in agreement with the Head of Digital Transition (Art. 17 of Legislative Decree no. 82/2005), which has among its main functions that of operationally guaranteeing the digital transformation of the administration, coordinating it in the development

of digital public services and the adoption of new measures to enhance transparency (<https://www.agid.gov.it/it/agenzia/responsabile-transizione-digitale>), **will need to carry out an assessment of all management processes requiring physical presence on-site**, redesigning them to make them compatible with the 'Smart work' scheme. The following should be encouraged: use of electronic and digital signatures, replacement and/or integration of editable forms, elimination of paper forms and use of digital signatures for everything that can be done online, also by email sent from a personal institutional address (name.surname@univr.it);

Teaching staff (including RUA, RUB and contracted staff)

Lecturers and teaching staff will be authorised, at the time of reopening, to access university facilities and premises, always complying with the provisions on physical distancing and the adoption of prevention measures set out in this document. The Directors of Department and Research Centres, in collaboration with the relevant Safety Advisers, will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions.

Scholarship and Research grant holders, PhD students

Scholarship and Research grant holders, PhD students and staff in any capacity included in the research activities may attend university facilities subject to the written authorisation (see attachment 1) of the lecturer responsible for the research, who must ensure compliance with the provisions on social distancing and the adoption of preventive measures, set out in this document, also in relation to the presence of TA staff and lecturers. Any authorisation will have to be agreed with the Department Directors, and with the Heads of the Research Centres, who will be responsible for keeping the relevant documents.

Students

In accordance with national guidelines, all teaching activities (including examinations, graduation sessions) will be carried out remotely until further notice. For internships, the blended mode (distance and presence on-site) is allowed, compatibly with the availability of the receiving organisation and provided that the organisation concerned has adopted appropriate safety guidelines for COVID-19. If these modalities are not feasible, the internship can be replaced by a written work, which must be agreed between the student and the relevant tutor.

Health-related internships can also be carried out online: however, physical presence may be allowed subject to decision taken by the President of the relevant Degree programme. In the latter case, students will have to express their consent.

Dissertation work may also be carried out on site, if access to the University's facilities is essential, subject to written authorisation (see attachment 2) of the Supervisor. Any authorisation will have to be agreed with the Department Directors, and with the Heads of the Research Centres, who will be responsible for keeping the relevant documents.

Students will be allowed to access University's administrative and student services offices only in exceptional circumstances — by appointment, and always wearing a surgical mask that they will need to bring from home.

Doctors in specialist training

Until further notice, doctors in specialist training from the School of Medicine will continue their activities in the Veneto Region only, with the sole exception of those who have a contract with the Autonomous Province of Trento, and with the Autonomous Province of Bolzano.

External staff

Employees or staff of other public or private organisations who need to carry out research activities within the university facilities, on the basis of existing agreements, may do so subject to authorisation, at the request of the professor responsible for the project, the Directors of Departments and Research Centres.

Individuals recruited in the context of authorised research studies may also have access to university facilities, subject to the authorisation of the research supervisor. The above-mentioned individuals must in any case comply with the measures set out in this document that are relevant to their work.

c) Procedural measures

In order to implement the action plan, the following procedural measures must be adopted:

- use of professional protective equipment (DPI);
- establish that access to lifts and toilets should be provided one person at a time, and that the presence within the common areas should be minimised;
- ensure the ventilation of the rooms, opening the windows for 10 minutes every three hours and at the end of any meetings;
- with regard to external suppliers and maintenance workers, determine methods, routes and timing for their access in order to ensure compliance with social distancing measures for all their activities.

In addition, the following principles must always be adhered to:

- it is mandatory to stay at home if body temperature is above 37.5° or if the following symptoms are present: cough, difficulty breathing, severe sore throat, colds and conjunctivitis, loss of taste and smell, diarrhea; call your family doctor. In any of these cases, the person concerned should call their family doctor;
- it is forbidden to enter or remain in the University's facilities and premises, and any symptoms or presence of risk factors (fever over 37.5° and/or symptoms as described above, coming from risk areas or contact with people found positive for the virus in the previous 14 days) must in any case be communicated immediately;
- health and safety guidelines set out by the health authorities and the employer must always be complied with when entering a university facility: in particular, to maintain a safe distance, to comply with the rules of hand hygiene - preferably washing with soap and water - and to behave responsibly in general in terms of hygiene;
- the commitment to promptly and responsibly inform the Human Resources Office (presenze@ateneo.univr.it; tel. +39 045 802- 8666, 8433, 8556) if the symptoms described above arise whilst at the University. The person concerned should also maintain social distancing from anyone present and leave the workplace as soon as possible. It will be the responsibility of the Human Resources Office to notify the local health authorities SISP ULSS-9 Scaligera (tel. +39 045- 8075511; prevenzione.aulss9@pecveneto.it). Students must promptly and responsibly inform the relevant professor/manager/staff, who will be responsible for notifying SISP ULSS-9 Scaligera (tel. +39 045-8075511; prevenzione.aulss9@pecveneto.it);
- the correct use of personal protective equipment (DPI).

2.2 Personal protective equipment

The following guidelines are based on technical-scientific, international and national documents and regulations (national and regional laws). That said, it is mandatory to **wear the surgical mask always when it is not possible to keep a distance of two meters from other people.**

A surgical mask approximately **every 2/3 days of work** and actual use will be delivered to employees. The mask will be provided together with an **information notice** on how to use the mask correctly. Please find in attachment 3 a list of the locations where the masks are to be delivered, depending on each University unit or structure.

In this regard, we recommend using masks only when necessary, i.e. it is not necessary to wear a mask when working alone in the office, and when complying with the technical, organisational and procedural provisions mentioned above (e.g. maintaining social distancing of at least 2 metres, and adequate space per person).

Any specific needs for masks of a different type, or delivered with a different timing, must be supported by documentation; requests must be submitted by email to the RSPP and the Responsible Doctor, at the following email addresses:

servizio.prevenzioneprotezione@ateneo.univr.it
medico.competente@ateneo.univr.it

2.3 Health surveillance

Health surveillance was never interrupted during the epidemic, and is still continuing. The Responsible Doctors follow the guidelines set out by the health authorities and based on the technical and scientific observation of the disease evolution.

In collaboration with the Prevention and Protection Service, the Responsible Doctors follow the risk assessment for all UNIVR employees.

With regard to workers with risk conditions ('lavoratori portatori di condizioni di rischio' as per Law 27/2020), specific situations have been managed appropriately for some time now.

The return to work of employees can take place safely, in the light of the provisions issued by the health authorities and UNIVR, especially in the light of the current risk assessment.

Please note that special health surveillance interventions are not expected at this stage.

Those who believe they are in a proven situation of risk as described by Art. 26 of Law 27/2020, are advised that they should contact their family doctor. Only afterwards, it will be possible to proceed with a visit of the Responsible Doctor by appointment, pursuant to Legislative Decree no. 81/08. **We invite those who have undergone isolation, quarantine or testing measures (swab)**, to report it to the Responsible Doctor and send them the document which certifies that they tested negative for Covid-19.

Those who, whilst at the University, show symptoms (such as fever $>37.5^{\circ}$, cough, breathing difficulties, severe sore throat, colds and conjunctivitis, loss of taste and smell, diarrhoea), must promptly and responsibly inform the Human Resources Office (presenze@ateneo.univr.it; tel. +39 045 802- 8666, 8433, 8556) or (in the case of students) the responsible professor/tutor/staff, who will be responsible for notifying SISP ULSS-9 Scaligera (tel. +39 045-8075511; prevenzione.aulss9@pecveneto.it). The person concerned must quickly put on the surgical mask, isolate themselves from others and leave the workplace. The Human Resources Office or the relevant professor/tutor/staff will immediately contact the relevant health authorities and, if necessary, ask the people who worked closely with the person concerned to leave their workplace, and direct them to their general practitioner.

UNIVR and all the subjects mentioned in the document will cooperate actively with the health authorities to determine the close contacts of the person showing symptoms.

2.4 Clinical and diagnostic tests

- a. Due to technical-scientific and epidemiological reasons, at present, **nasopharyngeal swab testing on a large scale is only performed on healthcare staff**. It is currently not necessary, nor advised by the Health Authorities, to perform swab tests on non-healthcare university staff. For such staff, at present, swab testing can be carried out only on the basis of a specific epidemiological investigation, on a case-by-case basis, and ordered by the competent health authorities. Healthcare university staff, as well as doctors in specialist training, have already been swab tested one or more times and will be swab tested again, according to a programme arranged by the Veneto Region and the University Hospital of Verona - AOUI, coordinated by Prof. Stefano Porru. In the next few days, we will determine how to perform swab tests on students who may be required to do their practical medical internship in person, as well as those (e.g., research grant holders, PhD students, scholarship holders) who are due to return to work in a healthcare context.
- b. At the present date, **serological testing** to assess a person's immune response to SARS-CoV-2 is not expected for the monitoring of non-healthcare UNIVR staff. Serological testing is still being studied in the scientific community at national and international level. On 22 April 2020 a study was approved by the Ethics Committee for the Clinical Trials (*Comitato Etico per la Sperimentazione Clinica*) of the Provinces of Verona and Rovigo, which, on a voluntary basis, will assess the immune response through a series of parameters for those working at AOUI and healthcare university staff, including doctors in specialist training and those who carry out healthcare activities.
- c. The University is equipping itself with some thermometers for remote **temperature measurement**. The thermometers will be located at the reception desks. Measurements will be occasional only, at the request of the person concerned or if proposed by a Supervisor, if deemed necessary due to specific circumstances (e.g. symptoms described above), in compliance with privacy measures, as per the Protocol of 24 April 2020.

Verona, 30 April 2020

THE RECTOR

Prof. Pier Francesco Nocini

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Federico Gallo