

# Cambridge Stem Cell Institute

## Covid guidelines for Research in Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre

26/10/20

### Broad principles

- 1) Staff health and safety is paramount. Key to this is working at reduced occupancy / density (social distancing) whenever possible.
- 2) The use of face coverings is strongly encouraged at all times except when alone in a room or when eating/drinking.
- 3) Where social distancing is impossible, protective equipment will be mandated.
- 4) Work that can be done from home can continue to be done from home. Staff may need to come into work for work-dictated, or practical or wellbeing reasons.
- 5) Staff should only be in the JCBC if they have a demonstrable need to be there and have a sensible and agreed plan of working in the building. Otherwise, they should work from home.
- 6) Enhanced hand hygiene and cleaning processes will be in place.
- 7) Flexibility is essential to accommodate the diverse types of work across the Institute.
- 8) There will be sanctions for individuals / groups not adhering to the new guidelines (e.g. removal of building access).
- 9) Staff in at risk groups need to follow government guidelines around shielding. Similarly, it is recognised that staff may need a new pattern of flexible working due to lack of or changes in childcare provision, and/or the feasibility of public transport options. Staff with family members in high-risk groups are encouraged to discuss their individual circumstances with their line manager so that any concerns may be addressed.

### Social distancing

- 1) Compulsory use of face coverings is necessary if less than 2 m apart. The use of face coverings or masks is strongly encouraged at all other times even when the 2 m rule can be observed. Face coverings are not required when working alone in an office with the door closed.
- 2) It is up to the individual group leaders how they will achieve working at reduced density. Each PI should provide a written plan to the Institute Principal Technician (Steph Hall), outlining how they will organise their group to work at reduced occupancy. When prioritising work, PIs should consider career prospects of individual students/postdocs as well as overall research goals. Work plans should be updated regularly, as working arrangements evolve, and Steph notified of any revisions.
- 3) Those opting for a shift pattern should accommodate a significant gap between shifts to avoid overlap.
- 4) Shifts and/or teams should operate as 'social bubbles' minimising exchange between bubbles to reduce cross infection.
- 5) A maximum of 2 persons working per laboratory bay on CI side of building, and 3 people (staggered on either side) in the longer bays on car park side is permitted. People should rearrange furniture so that they sit maximally apart, and avoid sitting opposite each other on either side of a bench with the use of face coverings or masks strongly encouraged.
- 6) Social distancing requirements and control measures will be posted on the door of each room and should be strictly observed.

- 7) Tissue culture labs will work at reduced occupancy without use of adjacent MSCs unless using protective equipment (see below).
- 8) Time spent in open plan office areas should be minimal and social distancing maintained. The use of face coverings is strongly encouraged. Hot-desking should be avoided and desk work should be done from home, where possible. Where staff need to use desks in the write up area, ensure that alternate desks are used, with a maximum of 2 people per full write up bay (six desks on Levels 2 & 3, 4 desks on level 1) or 1 person in a smaller bay (three desk run), and that these are staggered so that users do not sit face to face. Desk spaces immediately adjacent to the open-plan corridor must not be used. Level 1 end desks are set back from the corridor and are ok to use.
- 9) Most meetings / seminars to remain digital until further notice. Meeting rooms can be used for internal meetings (if attendees are already on site), and social distancing/face coverings must be maintained. Social distancing rules also apply to digital meetings. Researchers should not come onto site solely to attend meetings.
- 10) Undergraduate, postgraduate and Erasmus visiting student placements are permitted. PIs should accommodate any visiting students within their existing work plans. Priority should be given to postgraduate students registered at Cambridge. Contact [phd@stemcells.cam.ac.uk](mailto:phd@stemcells.cam.ac.uk) or [hr@stemcells.cam.ac.uk](mailto:hr@stemcells.cam.ac.uk) to arrange for a visiting student letter. Agreement is also required from the student's home institution.
- 11) Lab placements for visiting staff, including clinicians (e.g. Academic Clinical Fellows) are permitted. PIs should accommodate any visiting staff within their existing work plans. Contact [hr@stemcells.cam.ac.uk](mailto:hr@stemcells.cam.ac.uk) to arrange a visiting worker's agreement.
- 12) In-person meetings with outside researchers (collaborators) are permitted, where social distancing rules are adhered to. Where a PI has a joint grant with someone outside of JCBC, members of those collaborating groups may visit the building to carry out collaborative experiments, where they can be accommodated, within PIs work plans for safe working.
- 13) Staff may visit other University buildings in an appropriately risk-assessed manner. Visitors may access JCBC research facilities in accordance with the building-wide visitor policy and with the research facility's working protocols (see Research Support/Shared Areas).
- 14) University staff should not enter any hospital buildings, including shops, unless they are working in the hospital or have other legitimate work-related business there.

## **Cleaning**

- 1) Lab bench and desk areas must be cleaned thoroughly before and after use by each individual researcher (with 70% ethanol). Spray bottles of ethanol will be provided for each bay (wet and dry) by building services.
- 2) All contact points including door handles and plates, lift buttons, taps and stair rails across the entire building will be cleaned 4 times per day by cleaning staff. Ethanol sprays are provided each side of corridor doors to allow users to spray handles before use.

## **Building control**

- 1) Reception to be open 08:00 – 18:00. Visitors to remain 2 metres distance from reception (behind the table). The normal out of hours work policy will be in operation.
- 2) Staff presence in the building will be recorded and monitored weekly. Contractor presence will be managed by the JCBC Buildings Team.

- 3) Catering – JCBC Café will remain closed for the time being. The cafeteria area and other break out areas in JCBC are available for use whilst ensuring 2m between each chair (all directions). The tables and chairs have been spaced in accordance with the University’s Safe Space Teams Guidance and should not be moved. Face coverings are not required when eating and drinking but are strongly encouraged for all social interactions in these areas
- 4) Staff kitchenettes – minimize use - 1 person per kitchen. Food items need labelling with the owner’s name in the shared fridges/freezers.
- 5) Toilets – air driers disabled– substituted by paper towels in dispensers plus pedal bin, to reduce aerosols.
- 6) Personal fans are not permitted.
- 7) Lifts/stairs. Maximum of 2 persons per lift, to stand in diagonally opposite corners. When using the stairs, people walking downstairs to be courteous and wait on the landings to let people walking upstairs pass.
- 8) Make way for people when walking down corridors, by for example stepping into empty lab spaces or empty write-up areas. Otherwise, pass people back-to-back.
- 9) Similarly make way at exits, entrances and frequently used doors.
- 10) A shoe sole cleaning station has been installed at the main entrance. This must be used by anyone entering the building after having been to the hospital site.
- 11) The wearing of scrubs in not allowed in the building.
- 12) Staff must wash their hands regularly and thoroughly with soap for a minimum of 20 seconds on each occasion, followed by complete drying, throughout the day and especially on arrival at work, before and after using kitchens and toilet areas, and before leaving for home.
- 13) Staff to avoid touching their faces.
- 14) Hand sanitizer stations are provided near the entrance and throughout building, and need to be used regularly by all staff.
- 15) Individuals to follow government guidelines for travel and observe required quarantine periods.

### **Research support / Shared areas**

- 1) All core equipment must be booked on PPMS in advance. All shared bench and equipment surfaces need to be cleansed before and after use.
- 2) Other Core facilities and Tissue Culture. Each core will have a specific operating procedure that must be adhered to. Prior booking will be mandatory. Training manuals will be provided for remote training where possible. However, in person training will be needed for some core equipment, as well as new PhD students / postdocs. This will require protective equipment (see below).
- 3) Cold rooms will operate on a ‘one in, one out’ basis unless two people are required for a specific activity (which will require protective equipment).
- 4) Maximum 2 people are allowed in a chemical prep room if maintaining >2 m distance. Otherwise protective equipment required.

### **Situations where social distancing is impossible**

For work situations where social distancing is impossible in the Institute, protective equipment will be required in the following situations where the 2m rule cannot be followed:

- Tissue culture
- Training to use equipment

- Core facilities (will have their own set of rules based on specific activities)
- Any rooms/activity requiring close contacts including the provision of First Aid

In these situations protective equipment will consist of

- Surgical masks (Type II or IIR – centrally provided)
- Gloves (for molecular biology and cell culture)
- Lab coats

## **Managing staff with Covid-19 symptoms**

- 1) Staff with Covid-19 symptoms must not come to work. They should notify their line manager, PI and the Institute administrator (Anthea Stanley ajs333@cam.ac.uk) and follow government guidance to self-isolate.
- 2) If a member of staff develops symptoms whilst in the building they should go home immediately or if too unwell or it is unsafe to do so, they may isolate in the ground floor meeting room (LO-R57), whilst waiting for someone to collect them. They should notify their line manager (by email or phone) who must inform the Institute administrator.
- 3) Affected persons should seek a test for Covid-19, either by following the university testing process or by following government website advice, and always feedback the result to their line manager, PI & Institute administrator.
- 4) The Institute HR administrator maintains the 'Staff absence due to Covid-19 spreadsheet' and provides daily updates to the School HR team who notify Occupational Health.
- 5) PIs should inform the other members of their group that work the same shift as the affected person, so that they are aware and should follow government guidelines as they evolve. Those that consider themselves at risk should self-isolate for 14 days.
- 6) Individuals should follow government and University guidelines on 'Test & Trace'. The social distancing and protective measures put in place will mean that few (if any) should be at risk if a colleague self-isolates following symptoms or tests positive.

## **Non-Compliance**

Compliance with this guidance is taken very seriously. The institute strongly encourages an open culture where individuals feel able to politely highlight non-compliance when they see it and courteously request adherence to the guidelines. Individual working practices will also be monitored by regular walk-rounds.

Where an informal approach does not result in changed behaviour, please let Anthea or Steph know (see raising concerns section below). They will treat any information as confidential, but will take appropriate action including discussion with the individual and their group leader. If inappropriate behaviour continues, the matter will be escalated to the Institute Director and senior team and may result in disciplinary action including withdrawal of access to the JCBC.

Should any issues arise involving individuals from other institutes within the building, Anthea will raise the matter with the relevant institute administrator or Building Manager (as appropriate). Where appropriate, non-compliance issues will be discussed at the Joint Management Committee.

As with all Institute property, protective equipment such as gloves, masks and sanitizer are for official use, as described in this guidance only. Any misuse or appropriation may result in disciplinary action.

## **Raising Concerns**

Staff are encouraged to bring forward their concerns and those wishing to raise specific concerns about:

(a) the effectiveness of measures for infection control, please contact Steph Hall ([slh60@cam.ac.uk](mailto:slh60@cam.ac.uk))

(b) any other issues such as feeling pressured to come into or feeling unsafe at work, please contact Anthea Stanley ([ajs333@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ajs333@cam.ac.uk))

Anthea and Steph will take all concerns seriously and work to resolve them in an appropriate manner.