

Four-stage model:

Process for moving between stages

Background

We recently published our 4-stage system to clarify how we will operate during the current pandemic. This paper is designed to clarify our process for moving between stages to ensure all stakeholders, including students and staff, understand clearly the rationale for changes that will impact their study, and the associated practicalities.

Clearly, we will be unable to provide the full, in-person timetabled provision we originally promised when government guidance makes it impossible for us to do that. However, we are committed to delivering a full student experience to ensure each student has the opportunity to achieve their learning and developmental goals, enjoy the benefits of being an ICMP student and receive excellent value for money. To this end we have taken reasonable steps to design a means of delivering our courses in full through a combination of distance and face to face teaching and learning, with managed access to facilities in all but Stage 1 of our published process (complete lockdown).

The timetable is designed so that students attend 1-day per week on site and 2 days per week remotely when we operate at Stage 3 of our published plan (our current stage of operation). The remote sessions will be run as synchronous events that students should attend in real time, so the principal change between Stage 3 and Stage 4 from a timetable perspective is simply that certain sessions will change from a virtual location to a real one. There may be some exceptions in particular cases, but for most students the timing of activities will not change.

If we are required to move to a lower stage as a result of local or national lockdowns, we may need to make those decisions and changes extremely quickly as it will be outside of our control. However, it benefits no-one to make sudden transitions to a higher stage. Students and staff will want enough time to make their arrangements and as such any changes of this nature will be carefully considered, planned and communicated.

Student consultation is important to us. As we move between stages and return to normality, we must ensure that it is in the best interests of the majority of our community. Therefore, any move to a higher stage of operation (i.e. towards more on-site attendance) will be subject to appropriate student consultation. To be clear, if we are required to move to a lower stage, i.e. increased lockdown, student consultation may not be possible.

Process

Increasing restrictions

We will increase restrictions (i.e. move down one or more stages) in response to Government guidance only. The decision to move down a stage will be taken by the Senior Management Team (SMT) under our business continuity procedure.

Any decision to move down a stage will probably have to be implemented immediately, as advance notice of a Government decision may not be available. There may be no opportunity for student consultation.

We have developed internal procedures for the following which will be implemented in these cases:

- Changing the timetable over from Stage 4 to Stage 3 or Stage 2 (assuming that some or all relevant, trained staff may be off sick or on holiday at the key moment);
- Making any adjustments to physical barriers and social distancing markers in the building; and
- Communication with staff and students.

Lifting restrictions

We will lift restrictions (i.e. move up one stage) in response to Government guidance, student consultation and any prevailing practical considerations. If changed guidance allows us to lift restrictions, we will initiate this process by consulting students. The final decision to lift restrictions will then be made by the SMT after reviewing student feedback.

Student feedback will be sought rapidly and informally via the Student President and student representatives. The aim will be to get feedback and make a decision in the same calendar week that government guidance changes, with any lifting of restrictions taking place at least two calendar weeks on from this decision. The minimum two weeks' notice will give students time to adjust any schedules and plan their return to campus, thus balancing the benefits of increased face to face provision with any difficulties in adjusting personal schedules and plans.

The eased restrictions will always take effect from a Monday, never partway through the week.

If Government guidance seems to permit re-opening but student feedback is not supportive of this, SMT may agree a review date. Following that review, a further round of student consultation may be tried if it seems possible that student sentiment will have shifted (e.g. because issues identified in the previous round of consultation have been addressed). If there is no consensus amongst students, then the presumption is that we will lift restrictions, as students who do not wish to study in person should not be able to prevent those who do wish from doing so.

Individual circumstances

Some students may have individual circumstances that mean they cannot return to on-campus attendance at the same time as others. This might be due to a long-term health condition that makes you more vulnerable than others, or it may be because you live with a vulnerable relative, or for some other reason.

Pre-existing long-term healthcare conditions are disabilities and protected by the Equality Act. We make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities. If you speak to our Disability and Wellbeing team, we can plan appropriate reasonable adjustments with you in advance of any change. You will need to provide suitable evidence, and we will document the agreed adjustments in a support agreement.

If your circumstances do not amount to a disability, we will still do what we can to help you manage your attendance and get the best out of your time at ICMP. You can use [this form](#) to tell us about your individual circumstances.