

Safety Protocol COVID-19 UM (version 15)

Introduction

It is clear that the Omicron variant is spreading very fast in the Netherlands. The Dutch government has therefore decided that the Netherlands will go into lockdown again from Sunday 19 December. For the education sector, this means that from Monday 20 December 2021 to Sunday 9 January 2022 no in-class teaching will take place. In principle, this means that all students and staff will stay at home. An exception is made for assessments and examinations, practical training and support for vulnerable students. Research activities can only continue to take place on-site at the university if they are strictly site-specific, such as laboratories.

Where there is an exception during the lockdown, the following existing pandemic measures will continue to apply:

- Adhere to the basic rules of hygiene and health;
- Wear face masks covering the mouth and nose when moving between teaching activities;
- There is a maximum group size of 75 students (excluding staff) per self-contained room (excluding final examinations and interim examinations);

With the following additional advice:

- Perform preventive self-testing twice a week;
- Adhere to walking routes where available;
- Maintain a distance of 1.5 metres from one another whenever possible.

For the record: during the lockdown, the university sports centre is closed. All food and beverage outlets and indoor catering establishments in the UM buildings are also closed. Take-away is allowed. Various University Library locations remain open. Students can also make use of the study places there. For the current opening hours of the various locations, please check the [website of the University Library](#).

UM continues to offer students and staff a safe learning and work environment during the lockdown. This protocol describes how we can limit the likelihood of spreading COVID-19 within UM as much as possible and is based on guidelines of the RIVM/ National Coordination of Infectious Disease Control (LCI) and the Dutch government.

The current complete set of measures is in full force and effect within the university as of 20 December 2021, and will be modified when warranted by changed legislation and government directives.

Measure 1: Education and research during the lockdown.

The Netherlands is in a lockdown due to the high number of infections in combination with the epidemiological situation involving the Omicron variant. Students and staff are therefore expected to stay at home as much as possible. This means that no in-class teaching will take place from Monday 20 December 2021 to Sunday 9 January 2022. An exception applies to students who are:

- Taking final examinations;
- Taking interim examinations;
- Taking tests;
- Taking practical training;
- Vulnerable and in need of support.

The above measures also apply to other locations where the university organises educational activities, such as the MECC.

Implementation:

With regard to the organisation of interim examinations, the following measures apply in addition to or in derogation of measures 2 to 9 of this Protocol, both with regard to interim examinations at the MECC and interim examinations at another external location or at the faculty:

- In accordance with government guidelines, the maximum group size restrictions that apply to education in general do not apply to interim examinations (see also [measure 6](#));
- In testing rooms, the chairs of students taking interim examinations are placed 1.5 metres apart;
- Wearing a face mask is mandatory when students move through the buildings, and – in addition to [measure 4](#) – when seated until 15 minutes after the start of the test (in connection with checking IDs). The face mask can then be removed, but must be put back on if students are in contact with the invigilator or move from their chair;
- At MECC, crowd management measures are in place to ensure that students have as little contact as possible with others and that no congestion occurs in or around the location; a one-way traffic rule applies wherever possible.

With regard to the opportunities to take a test, the following applies:

- If a student misses a test due to pandemic measures or COVID-19 symptoms, the student will be given a new test opportunity. This is then the first opportunity for the student to take the test, which means that the student continues to participate in an honours programme or to graduate cum laude. To be clear: after missing the original test, a student has the opportunity to take one test plus one resit, which is the same as under normal circumstances.
- Students who are in their final year or doing a one-year Master's degree will obviously get their new test opportunity in the current academic year. For other students, this test opportunity may be postponed until the next academic year.
- Students who are currently allowed to attend teaching online because of accommodation problems are expected to take tests at the Campus and are therefore not eligible for a new test opportunity.

The following applies to vulnerable students and/or staff:

- A limited number of UM locations are open during the lockdown. This means that vulnerable students and/or staff may physically attend the university. Please check the [UM & COVID-19 page](#) on the internet for the current opening hours during the lockdown.

Measure 2: Health check: 'Can I come to Campus'

If it is necessary for staff and students to come to UM during the lockdown, they should do a health check beforehand using the flow chart '[Can I come to Campus](#)'. The [flow chart](#) clearly shows whether they can or cannot come to the Campus.

The general rule continues to be that students should not come to campus if they have COVID symptoms or are in self-quarantine, even in the case of an exception as referred to in [measure 1](#).

For everyone's safety, anyone with a cold will be sent home. They will also be asked to undergo preventive testing as a matter of urgency. A negative self-test cannot be used to override the self-quarantine measures.

Implementation:

1. Students and staff with COVID symptoms should stay away from Campus. If they show symptoms while at UM, they are expected to leave Campus. This also applies if their presence is an exception during the lockdown.
2. UM expects students and staff to act responsibly and take a self-test before visiting the Campus for activities. If they visit more than once a week, this means that they should take at least two self-tests per week. However, the use of a self-test is and will remain voluntary. Proof of a negative self-test is not required for access to UM buildings.
3. Free [self-tests](#) are still available and can be ordered by students and staff via www.zelftestonderwijs.nl. Self-tests are an addition to the existing coronavirus measures at UM and are not intended to replace the more reliable PCR test taken by the GGD. This means that a negative self-test cannot be used to override the quarantine measures. If a self-test is positive, the student or staff member must stay at home and make an appointment for a test at the GGD immediately.
4. Students who experience a study delay and/or other personal problems due to a positive COVID-19 test result for themselves or someone they live with should discuss this as quickly as possible with their [student adviser](#).
5. Students who suffer from chronic colds should discuss this with their [student adviser](#). Staff members who suffer from chronic colds should discuss this with their line manager.

Measure 3: A positive test result

If the GGD test is positive for COVID-19, you must then stay at home according to the flow chart. You should inform your contacts so that they can also take a test. You may also be called by a GGD employee with regard to [contact tracing](#). The GGD will give you instructions on what to do, such as going into isolation at home. This means that you should do everything possible not to infect your fellow students, colleagues and housemates. After a positive result, you should also read the [information sheet](#) of the RIVM. This contains the rules that apply in your situation. And take a look at the [quarantine rules](#) to find out exactly what you should do in your situation.

It is not mandatory to report a positive COVID-19 test result to the UM. However, in the interests of monitoring a safe study or working environment at UM, notifying the [student adviser](#) of the faculty (for students) or the line manager (for staff members) is very much appreciated.

Implementation:

1. UM's internal procedure is designed to ensure that as soon as the person informs UM that they have tested positive for COVID-19, or as soon as the GGD provides this information to UM, a check will immediately be carried out to determine the UM students or staff members with whom the 'patient' has had contact in the period during which he/she is or was contagious. These persons will be informed by UM of the day on and location in which they may have been exposed to an increased risk in relation to contact with an anonymous colleague/fellow student who tested positive.
2. Staff or students who have been informed by the GGD that they should or are advised to self-isolate should report their absence to the line manager or [student adviser](#) if they were expected to be present at UM during their period of self-quarantine. They will not have access to UM buildings during their period of self-quarantine.
3. Staff who are unable to work at home due to COVID-19 symptoms should report that they are sick to their line manager in accordance with UM's standard sickness absence reporting procedure.
4. Students with questions about COVID-19 can contact the health counsellor (Tel.: 043-3883992, or e-mail: healthcounsellor@maastrichtuniversity.nl).
5. Students who experience a study delay and/or other personal problems due to a positive COVID-19 test result of themselves or someone they live with, should discuss this as quickly as possible with their [student adviser](#).

Measure 4: Face mask rule

If it is necessary for you to be present at UM during the lockdown, wearing a (non-medical) face mask is compulsory for both students and staff inside UM buildings. When you sit down you may remove the face mask, except where the branch protocol prescribes the wearing of a face mask or a tutor or line manager explicitly requests it (e.g. because of a medical reason). During examinations, face masks must be worn for the first 15 minutes until the invigilator has checked your ID. When working with test subjects, a similar face mask rule may apply to a specific part of the education or research.

Implementation:

1. This has been communicated in various forms of announcements, as indicated in the introduction to this protocol.
2. If someone forgets their face mask, they can obtain one from the UM building reception.
3. When carrying out their work, emergency assistance officers (BHV) and first-aiders (EHBO) wear face masks that are available at all receptions and in the BHV coronavirus kits. They received a short online training on COVID-19 measures when administering first aid.
4. The rules regarding the wearing of face masks [will be enforced](#).

Measure 5: Hygiene measures while at UM

Even during the lockdown, the [basic rules](#) remain in full force: wash your hands, keep your distance, get tested, ventilate.

We wash our hands so that virus particles cannot spread. You do this when entering one of the UM locations by using the disinfection stations at the various entrances. You should also wash your hands before using shared equipment, such as hot beverage dispensers, copiers and/or vending machines, etc. Use the do-it-yourself cleaning kits in the classrooms, conference rooms and offices to disinfect your table/desk and chair before use. You should do this again after use. Furthermore, try to touch contact points as little as possible, cough and sneeze into the inside of your elbow, and use paper tissues to blow your nose. Then throw the tissues away and wash your hands again.

Maintain a distance of 1.5 metres from one another whenever possible. Do not shake hands and give each other plenty of space. Stay at home if you have symptoms - in accordance with [measure 2](#) – and get tested.

Implementation:

This desired behaviour during the pandemic has been announced through communications, as indicated in the introduction.

Wash your hands:

1. There are sufficient sanitary facilities available to wash your hands with soap and water. Paper towels are available in these areas to dry your hands. In addition, sanitiser containing at least 70% alcohol is available at each entrance.
2. Staff and students are responsible for cleaning equipment and/or materials after use. This is possible using a do-it-yourself cleaning kit available on each floor of a building. The COVID-19 'UM rapid response team' will ensure supply.
3. Where possible, interior access doors, such as in corridors, meeting or teaching rooms or toilets, will be open permanently during the day as long as this does not affect fire safety. We do this in order to avoid frequently used 'contact points'. Where this is not possible, these points are intensively cleaned focusing on contact surfaces.

Keep your distance:

4. All desks/receptions are equipped with protective Plexiglas with an access hatch. Mobile screens made of plexiglass are also available at the counters/reception desks. Each unit has mobile screens available for those needing them.
5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as splash goggles, doctors' coats and aprons, are not necessary for non-COVID-19 patients. Staff and students can request such items from their line manager/tutor after consultation with the company doctor (staff members) or the health advisor (students).

Testing:

6. A limited supply of self-tests are available at the reception desk of the building. Students and staff should first order self-tests using their UM account via www.zelftestonderwijs.nl.

Ventilation:

See [measure 7](#).

Measure 6: Maximum group size

There are no in-class teaching activities in the period 20 December 2021 to 3 January 2022. The maximum group size of 75 persons per self-contained room (excluding staff) previously prescribed by the Cabinet for upper secondary vocational education (MBO), higher professional education (HBO) and universities does not apply to rooms used for sitting interim examinations or final examinations. This is one of the exceptions during the lockdown. In addition, the maximum group size does not apply in hallways and other transit areas.

In all other situations, however, the maximum group size must be respected. This means that the maximum group size also applies to the use of the learning spaces at the University Library during normal opening hours during the lockdown.

Implementation:

- A limited number of UM locations will be open during normal opening hours during the lockdown. This means that students can use the learning spaces and library locations that are open during the lockdown. Students can reserve a study place using the University Library reservation app. The current opening hours during the lockdown can be found on the [UM & COVID-19 page](#) on the internet.

Measure 7: Ventilation

Fresh air is essential. Fresh air helps to reduce the transmission of the virus. We therefore ensure that UM buildings are properly ventilated by using our mechanical ventilation systems or by manually ventilating (opening windows).

If students and/or staff are unsure about the quality of the ventilation in a room, they can report this to the FS ServicePoint. The ventilation will be checked and, if necessary, appropriate action will be taken.

Implementation:

1. The mechanical ventilation systems of the various UM buildings meet all the requirements and operate using fresh air from outside. They have all been checked and their operating performance has been increased. This means that:
 - The ventilation rate has been increased and the system is only used to supply fresh air. In other words, there is no recirculation of air.
 - The ventilation systems switch on earlier and turn off later (day/night) and will also run at night to a limited extent.
 - The ventilation systems in toilet areas will run continuously, namely 24/7.
2. In areas where there is no mechanical ventilation system, we indicate this so that students and/or staff can manually ventilate these areas. These areas include offices, pantries and other working areas, as well as various teaching and meeting rooms. Following RIVM advice, these spaces must also be well-aired using natural ventilation. This manual ventilation will be realised as follows:
 - When using these areas, leave the windows ajar or the door open whenever possible.
 - A clear indication is given at the entrance to teaching and meeting rooms that cannot be mechanically ventilated and need to be ventilated manually, stating that the room concerned needs to be ventilated naturally and including instructions about using this form of ventilation. The instructions state that *during* use, windows should be kept continuously ajar by at least 10 cm and that, *after* use, the air must be 'flushed' for 15 minutes by opening the windows and doors simultaneously.
3. The following applies to both mechanically and non-mechanically ventilated rooms:
 - After each meeting, additional airing of both mechanically and non-mechanically ventilated rooms is ensured by opening windows and doors at the same time after using the room (15 min.).
 - Users of education, meeting and work rooms are responsible for this manual ventilation. In teaching rooms, the tutor is responsible for natural ventilation after the meeting. For offices, the staff members working in the rooms concerned must make agreements on how to ensure this natural ventilation.
 - There is no maximum time limit for staying in a room if there is sufficient ventilation. A poster is clearly on display in the teaching and meeting rooms, indicating the ventilation instructions for that room.
 - Students and staff should hold each other accountable for their actions.
 - A mechanically ventilated room is preferred when planning classes, meetings or gatherings and 15-minute ventilation breaks should be planned between each meeting. For this reason, meetings should also be completed within the scheduled time to be able to guarantee the ventilation time.
4. If students and/or staff have any questions or doubts about air quality, they can report this via the FS ServicePoint. These reports are initially forwarded by FS to the building manager who will contact the person making the report for an initial assessment of the situation. The building manager, in

conjunction with the occupational healthcare advisor and the FS location team, can then launch an investigation that comprises the following steps:

- Checking the number of people using the room;
- Measuring the amount of fresh air blown in, for rooms with mechanical ventilation;
- Checking whether the method of 'airing' takes place in accordance with the instructions, for rooms without mechanical ventilation;
- If these steps fail to discover the cause of the poor air quality, it may be necessary in some cases to measure the CO₂ in the room. Intervention will take place on the basis of this investigation.

Measure 8: Travel from and to code orange/red countries or regions

Before travelling to the Netherlands, please review the [checklist for entering the Netherlands during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). You may need COVID-related documents, such as a vaccination certificate, test certificate or quarantine certificate.

Before travelling abroad, you should read travel advice about the measures that apply in the country you are travelling to or are travelling through. For example, which COVID-19 certificates you need. Additional rules apply if you are travelling by plane. Before every trip, [check the travel advice and colour codes](#) and the [checklist for travel outside the Netherlands](#). Only travel to countries that have colour code green or yellow travel advice.

Implementation:

- In principle, travel to [orange/red](#) code countries or regions for work or studies is not allowed.
- For urgent business or study trips to colour code orange areas within the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic, permission must be requested from the director of the administrative unit if the reason for the colour code is related to the pandemic.
- Permission from the Executive Board must be requested for urgent business or study trips to a colour code red area within the EU or colour code orange/red outside the EU. See the [UM procedure](#) for this.
- Please be aware that granting permission will be handled very cautiously for the student's/staff member's own safety, but also due to the fact that travel insurance currently does not reimburse travel changes and/or cancellations for code orange/red regions or countries. Repatriation from these areas is also problematic.

Exchange programmes in the spring 2022 semester:

UM students may participate in an exchange or internship within the EU, Erasmus+ programme countries and Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Vatican City, if the destination country is colour code green, yellow or orange, in accordance with the Dutch government's travel advice.

Implementation:

- If the exchange or internship takes place in a colour code orange region, the host university or internship provider should confirm in advance that the exchange or internship will be offered entirely or partly on campus. Students are not allowed to travel to a colour code orange destination if their exchange or internship is taking place entirely online.
- If in-person teaching was provided within a period of 14 days (in connection with self-quarantine requirements), before the official start of the outgoing exchange or internship (as recorded in the individual Erasmus+ Grant Agreement) the student may travel and will retain their Erasmus+ grant if the host university later switches to completely online teaching. To be eligible for this leniency regulation, students must submit proof of the time of their departure (airline ticket, fuel receipts and/or train ticket).
- Exchanges and internships in colour code red travel advisory areas are not allowed.

Exchange programmes outside Europe in the spring 2022 semester:

UM students may participate in an exchange or internship outside the EU, Erasmus+ programme countries and Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Vatican City, if this is taking place entirely or partly on campus and the destination has a colour code green or yellow travel advice from the Dutch government. If the destination outside Europe has a colour code orange travel advice, the exchange may only take place if the exchange or internship destination is included in the (regularly updated) [EU List of Epidemiologically Safe Countries Amid COVID-19](#) and no (significant) security risks are identified by the faculty International Relations Office (IRO) and AA Internationalisation.

Implementation:

- If the destination is removed from the abovementioned EU List of Epidemiologically Safe Countries Amid COVID-19 within a period of one month before the official start of the outgoing exchange or internship the destination, a leniency regulation applies. This leniency regulation means that the exchange or internship may go ahead if no (significant) security risks are identified by the faculty International Relations Office (IRO) and AA Internationalisation.
- The faculty board may grant an exception to the rule if the exchange or internship forms an essential part of the study programme for which there are no alternatives available. An overview of essential exchange and internship programmes was determined by the faculty boards in agreement with the Executive Board prior to the start of the spring 2022 semester.
- All outgoing exchange and internship programmes are subject to the general condition that the partner institution can receive the student in-person and/or online and that the student consciously chooses to go abroad and does not make use of the alternatives at UM.

More information about the UM COVID-19 exchange and internship programmes can be found on the [UM website](#).

Measure 9: Enforcement

Our corona stewards are in charge of enforcing the face mask requirement. They make students and staff aware of the requirement to wear a face mask. If students or staff (repeatedly) ignore a reminder to wear a face mask, access to the UM buildings may be temporarily denied.

Implementation:

1. Each unit will provide a sufficient number of corona stewards for enforcement in and around UM buildings that are open and in use for educational activities. The corona stewards will be hired via InterUM, a (temporary) recruitment and employment agency. InterUM also takes care of the recruitment, selection, scheduling and registration at HR's Staff Career Centre for skills training before the stewards begin their work.
2. All UM corona stewards can be recognised from their 'corona vests', which they must wear at all times.
3. The corona stewards can hold staff members and students accountable for their conduct if they do not comply with the pandemic measures.
4. Anyone who violates the pandemic measures at UM and who has ignored a warning can be temporarily denied access to the UM buildings by the building managers.
5. Staff and students are encouraged to report unsafe situations regarding COVID-19 in and around UM locations to corona@maastrichtuniversity.nl. Enforcement will be evaluated on a regular basis and the protocol will be amended where necessary.

Appendix 1: Correct face mask use

The WHO provides the following guidelines for the correct use of face masks:

- Wash your hands thoroughly before touching and putting on your face mask;
- Make sure the face mask fits your face well: you should be able to breathe through both your mouth and nose. If necessary, you can adjust the nose bridge to minimise any gaps between your face and the face mask;
- Do not touch the face mask while wearing it;
- Remove the face mask using the correct technique: do not touch the front of the face mask, but unfasten it from the back;
- After removing the face mask or whenever a used face mask is inadvertently touched, clean your hands with alcohol-based disinfectant or with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty;
- Replace the face mask with a new, clean, dry mask as soon as it becomes damp;
- Do not reuse single-use face masks;
- Dispose of single-use face masks after each use.