

Statement of Principles from the POSITS Forum

Partnership of Stakeholders in the Technological Sector: March 2021

Conscious that the virus remains a significant threat, but recognizing also that Ireland is advancing through the third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Partnership Forum comprising representatives from Fórsa, SIPTU, THEA, TU Dublin, TUI, Unite, the Higher Education Authority, and the Department of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation, and Science, has been established to work collaboratively on defined matters arising in relation to the ongoing work of our Technological Universities and Institutes of Technology. At its meeting on Thursday, 11 March 2021, the POSITS Forum agreed a series of principles whereby the partners:

1. Commit to adherence to public-health informed Government guidance in *COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021 - The Path Ahead* and any further/future iterations of this guidance.
2. Affirm the primacy afforded to public health and care for welfare and safety of our learning communities. This to be given expression through the continuing attention to current public health guidance. Proper and appropriate risk mitigating measures set out by Public Health will be strictly observed. These will be complemented by enhanced precautions where appropriate.
3. Accept that institutions will support the completion of programmes by increasing marginally their onsite provision for activities that are not capable of being delivered through alternative means and are time-critical for students and learners in light of the objective to support students in completing the programmes they are undertaking.
4. Recognize that institutions in the technological sector are required to continue to operate fully consistent with public health advice appropriate to Level 5 by remaining primarily online with onsite provision strictly limited at this time to essential and time critical practical and skills-based learning required for programme completion.
5. Acknowledge the shared commitment across the sector to do what is necessary to support students to the successful completion of the current academic year.
6. Reaffirm the discretion that is invested in institutions to support students whose study programmes require in-person attendance.
7. Ensure that overall onsite activity will be managed and monitored carefully and undertaken in a phased and gradual way over the course of the period ahead.
8. Agree that the aggregate volume of activity will be in line with current public health guidelines and will ensure minimization of mobility and avoidance of congregation. This will be undertaken with the involvement of the Lead Worker Representative.
9. Will put in place, and where requested, exemptions from in-person activity for particular front-facing cohorts of staff and in line with the period of heightened restriction, namely:
 - a. Those deemed medically vulnerable,
 - b. Those who are pregnant,
 - c. Those staff who are 60 years or over in age.
10. Commit to work collaboratively and in the interests of safety and fostering system-wide confidence. To this end, the partners undertake to communicate cohesively, transparently, and in a timely manner. The POSITS Forum will continue to meet in support of the implementation of these principles. while recognizing the key role of local consultation therein.