Travel to and from work

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1. Introduction

In line with the UK government advice this QMUL guidance is aiming to help all QMUL staff and students understand how to limit their exposure to Coronavirus and, if essential, to travel to and from work safely during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. It provides guidance for walking, cycling, using private vehicles, and travelling by public transport (e.g. trains, buses and ferries) for travel to and from QMUL campuses.

How does coronavirus spread?

Coronavirus can be passed from people who have the virus (i.e. even those with no signs and symptoms) to others:

a. who are in close contact through respiratory droplets (coughs and sneezes)

b. by direct contact with infected persons (i.e. when standing less than 2 metres away)

c. by contact with contaminated objects and surfaces (e.g. touching the handle on a bus).

How can coronavirus spread be controlled?

We can all help control coronavirus spread by:

✔ staying at home as much as possible
✔ working from home if possible
✔ limiting contact with other people
✔ keeping your distance if you go out (i.e. 2 metres apart, where possible)
✔ washing your hands regularly
✔ self-isolating if you or anyone in your household has symptoms.

Is your journey necessary?

As QMUL essential research facilities will reopen some staff and students who are unable to work from home might need to travel to work on QMUL campuses. As more people return to work on site, it is essential that everyone travels by keeping themselves and others safe.

Do not travel if you:

- are experiencing any coronavirus symptoms
- are self-isolating as a result of coronavirus symptoms or sharing a household with somebody with symptoms.

If you have any concerns about having to travel to and from work, please raise them with your line manager and HR, if necessary.

If it is vital for you to travel to any of the QMUL campuses you should think carefully about the times, routes and ways in which you can travel in the safest possible manner.

Below you will find guidance and tips to keep yourself safe when travelling on the most commonly used types of transport. This guidance is by no means exhaustive and thus, if you require any additional information please refer to the relevant advice given by the UK government, Public Health England (PHE) and/or your transport operator (e.g. National Rail, TfL etc).
2. Cycling and walking

Walking and cycling will reduce pressure on the public transport system and the road network. Consider walking and cycling if you can. Local cycling schemes can be used.

Plan your journey

**TfL** has plenty of resources to help you plan a journey by walking or cycling across London. If you can, use existing or new walking and cycling routes. Your local council can also help you plan your journey by providing maps showing dedicated paths and routes.

Consider making a list of items to take with you.

On your journey

Where possible, try to maintain social distancing when you walk or cycle, for example when approaching or passing other pedestrians or waiting at crossings and traffic lights.

Where using bikes (i.e. private, docked or dockless) wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise your hands before and after cycling.

Completing your journey

When finishing your journey, it is recommended that you:

- follow local guidance
- wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise your hands as soon as possible.

3. Private cars and other vehicles

Plan your journey

Plan your route, including any breaks, before setting out. Routes may be different as local areas make changes to enable social distancing on pavements and cycle routes.

Consider making a list of items to take with you.

Check that your vehicle is safe and roadworthy if you have not used it for several weeks.

Ensure that your vehicle insurance covers your journeys to and from work.

Consider whether you need to make any parking arrangements by consulting EAF and Security.

If you normally share a vehicle with people from other households for essential journeys, we recommend you find a different way to travel. For example, consider walking, cycling or using your own vehicle if you can.

If you have to travel with people outside your household group, try to share the transport with the same people each time and keep to small groups of people at any one time.

There are some circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected and have not yet developed symptoms. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas.

If you can, wear a face covering in an enclosed space where social distancing is not possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
A face covering is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of personal protective equipment. These should continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers.

Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by the law. If you choose to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and after taking them off.

On your journey

If driving, you should anticipate more pedestrians and cyclists than usual, especially at peak times of day. Allow other road users to maintain social distance, where possible. For example, give cyclists space at traffic lights. Public Health England recommends keeping a 2 metre distance from others, where possible.

Limit the time you spend at garages, petrol stations and motorway services. Try to keep your distance from other people and, if possible, pay by contactless. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise your hands when arriving and leaving.

Be aware of the surfaces you or others touch. If people from different households use a vehicle (e.g. through a car share scheme), you should clean it between journeys using gloves and standard cleaning products. Make sure you clean door handles, steering wheel and other areas that people may touch by following QMUL cleaning and disinfection and hygiene guidance.

Where people from different households need to use a vehicle at the same time, good ventilation (keeping the car windows open) and facing away from each other may help to reduce the risk of transmission. Where possible, consider seating arrangements to optimise distance between people in the vehicle.

If you are in close proximity to people outside your household, you should:

- avoid physical contact
- try to face away from them
- keep the time you spend close to them as short as possible

Completing your journey

When finishing your journey, it is recommended that you:

- wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise your hands as soon as possible.
- follow QMUL guidance for hygiene including where to dispose of used gloves and disposable face coverings

4. Public transport

You should consider all other forms of transport before using public transport. Try to walk, cycle, or drive where possible.

Plan your journey

If it is unavoidable to use public transport, make sure you plan your journey and check with your transport operator for the latest travel advice on your route.
Travel may take longer than normal on some routes due to reduced capacity and social distancing measures. Allow sufficient time if your journey involves changes between different forms of transport.

Plan ahead by also identifying alternative routes and options in case of unexpected disruption.

If you can, travel at off-peak times. Your transport operator can advise on off-peak times. Your line manager may agree alternative or flexible working hours to support this.

Where possible, book your travel online through your transport provider’s ticketing app or website. If you are unable to book online, consider contactless payment to buy tickets (where this option is available).

Taking a less busy route and reducing the number of changes (e.g. between bus and train) will help you keep your distance from others. Public Health England recommends keeping a 2 metre distance from others, where possible. Where this is not possible you should keep the time you spend near others as short as possible and avoid physical contact.

Try to start or end your journey using a station or mode of transport you know to be quieter or more direct. For instance, walk the first or last mile of your journey, or alight at an earlier station, where this is possible.

Consider making a list of items to take with you and minimise the luggage you take.

If you can, wear a face covering if you need to use public transport.

There are some circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected and have not yet developed symptoms. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas.

A face covering is not the same as the surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of personal protective equipment. These should continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace, such as health and care workers.

Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by the law. If you choose to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and after taking them off.

**On your journey**

Some routes may be busier than usual due to social distancing measures or changes to previous timetables or schedules. Keep your distance from people outside your household. Public Health England recommends keeping a 2 metre distance from others, where possible. The key thing is to not be too close to other people for more than a short amount of time, as much as you can.

The risk of infection increases the closer you are to another person with the virus and the amount of time you spend in close contact: you are very unlikely to be infected from just walking past another person.

There may be situations where you can’t keep a suitable distance from people, for example when boarding or alighting, on busier services, at busier times of day and when walking through interchanges. In these cases you should:

- avoid physical contact
• try to face away from other people
• keep the time you spend near others as short as possible.

If you can, wear a face covering on public transport.

Be aware of the surfaces you touch. Be careful not to touch your face. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when coughing or sneezing.

Treat transport staff with respect and follow instructions from your transport operator. This may include:

• notices about which seats to use or how to queue
• additional screens, barriers or floor markings
• requests to board through different doors or to move to less busy areas.

Help keep yourself, other passengers and transport staff safe by:

• waiting for passengers to get off first before you board
• ensuring you maintain social distancing, where possible, including at busy entrances, exits, under canopies, bus stops, platforms or outside of stations
• being prepared to queue or take a different entrance or exit at stations
• waiting for the next service if you cannot safely keep your distance on board a train or bus
• respecting other people's space while travelling
• avoiding consuming food and drink on public transport, where possible
• being aware of pregnant, older and disabled people who may require a seat or extra space
• being aware that some individuals may have hidden disabilities
• seeking assistance if you need it

If you require assistance when travelling and would normally contact your transport operator ahead of time, continue to do so.

If any problems arise or you feel ill during your journey, speak to a member of transport staff. In the case of an emergency, contact the emergency services as you normally would.

If you need help, maintain a short distance from members of staff, where possible. If this is not possible, you should try to avoid physical contact and keep the time you spend near staff as short as possible.

**Completing your journey**

When finishing your journey, it is recommended that you:

• consider walking or cycling from the station or stop you arrived at
• follow local guidance
• wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise your hands as soon as possible
5. Checklists for safer travel

Plan your journey

✓ Can I walk or cycle to my destination?
✓ Have I checked the latest travel advice from my transport operator?
✓ Have I booked my travel ticket online, bought a pass or checked if contactless payment is possible?
✓ Have I planned my journey to minimise crowded areas and allow for delays?
✓ Am I taking the most direct route to my destination?
✓ Have I checked the safer travel information sheet?

What to take with you – a list of items

✓ A plan for the journey
✓ Contactless payment card or Oyster card
✓ Phone (needed for travel updates, tickets, contactless payments)
✓ Tickets (if purchased online in advance)
✓ Hand sanitiser
✓ Essential medicines
✓ Tissues
✓ A face covering, if required
✓ Packed lunch and water (Please note catering facilities on QMUL campuses are not currently open)
✓ Small bag or backpack (preferably avoid using a shoulder bag as you might need to touch it more often)
✓ Hat/cap, if required

During your journey

✓ Keep 2 metres apart from others, where possible
✓ Wash your hands, if required
✓ Carry hand sanitiser and use it, if required
✓ Wear a face covering, if required
✓ Use contactless or Oyster to pay for your travel
✓ Avoid eating and drinking whilst you travel
✓ Avoid touching your face, eyes and mouth whilst you travel
✓ Follow the UK government advice for safer travel

Other useful tips and tricks

✓ Tie your hair up before you travel to avoid and/or minimize the need for touching your face
✓ Avoid buying takeaway coffee
✓ Avoid touching your phone, if not required
✓ Avoid using headphones and listening to loud music, so that you are more aware of what is happening around you
✓ Press stop buttons and door open buttons with knuckles instead of fingertips
✓ Touch door handles with the side of your hand, if possible
✓ Try maintaining one clean hand and one dirty hand (i.e. the dominant one) for the duration of your travel, if possible
1. Is your journey necessary?
Before you travel you should consider whether your journey is necessary. You can reduce pressure on the public transport system and road network by:
- Working from home
- Shopping locally and less frequently
- Walking and cycling

2. Plan your journey
- Plan ahead and use a direct route
- Can you travel off-peak?
- Take hand sanitiser and a face covering, if you can
- If you require assistance you should continue to request this as you normally would
- Wash or sanitise your hands before beginning your journey

3. On your journey
- Maintain 2 metre distance where possible
- Use a face covering, if you can, when you will be close to others
- Use contactless payment where possible
- Be patient and follow instructions from transport staff
- Wash or sanitise your hands as frequently as possible

4. Completing your journey
When finishing your journey, you should:
- Follow guidance at your destination
- Walk and cycle from public transport to your destination, where possible
- Wash or sanitise your hands as soon as possible

For further information visit
www.gov.uk/coronavirus