



UNIVERSIDADE D
COIMBRA

Prevention Plan and Action Protocol

COVID-19

University of Coimbra

18th September 2020

(updated on the 1st of October 2021)

1. Introduction

The Prevention Plan and Action Protocol of the University of Coimbra (UC) regarding COVID-19 is a fundamental strategic tool to define the prevention, containment and mitigation measures of the risks associated with the spread of the new SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus.

This document follows the guidelines and standards of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), as well as the National Contingency Plan and the Guidelines issued by the Directorate-General of Health (DGS) .

On 9th March 2020, the UC released the Contingency Plan in order to implement preventive measures to contain the spread of the disease COVID-19.

Considering the time lapse, the start of the vaccination process against COVID-19 and the levels of population with complete vaccination schedule already reached, the progressive process of lifting the restrictive measures defined and, as a result, the resumption of face-to-face teaching in Higher Education, it is urgent to proceed with its adequacy and update, given the legal framework in force.

Thus, with this Prevention Plan and Action Protocol, the general measures and procedures established in the UC are hereby updated, and each Organic Unit (OU) or Department (DEP) is responsible for defining the contingency plans to be observed in the respective spaces for the functioning of teaching and non-teaching activities in the academic year 2021/2022.

2. Objectives of the Prevention Plan and Action Protocol

The main objectives of the Prevention Plan and Action Protocol are as follows:

- Minimize the impact of COVID-19 on UC visitors, students, teachers, researchers, fellows, and technical, administrative and management staff;
- Put into action adequate containment and mitigation measures in view of the level of risk found at each moment;
- Ensure the timely monitoring of the situation, as well as the collection and communication of information related to COVID-19.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

The main duties and responsibilities within the scope of this Prevention Plan and Action Protocol, are as follows:

Unit/Service	Duties
Rectory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the Prevention Plan and and Action Protocol regarding COVID-19 in the UC and provide the means for its implementation.
UC Administration and SASUC Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Services and provide human and financial resources, together with the Rectory.
Supervisory Committee for the implementation of the Prevention Plan and Action Protocol regarding COVID-19/ COVID-19 Follow-up Group at the UC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the members of the UC community with information about COVID-19; Provide information on the preventive measures that must be established and inform the UC community about the procedures to be followed in the case of suspected or confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2 infection; Keep the plan up-to-date based on the information and guidelines issued by the Health and Government Authorities; Support Organic Units (OU) / Research Units (RU) / Cultural Extension and Training Support Units (UECAF) / Departaments (DEP) / Services in the implementation of the Prevention Plan and Action Protocol regarding COVID-19; Develop information and awareness initiatives in the UC community; Promote the articulation of this plan with the Occupational Health and Safety Management Services. <p>The Commission has the following composition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professor Amílcar Falcão Professor Alfredo Dias Professor Cristina Albuquerque Professor José Pedro Figueiredo Professor Carlos Robalo Cordeiro Luís Bento Rodrigues Nuno Correia António Queirós <p>Contacts available in Annex I</p>
Boards of Organic Units / Departaments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform and support the Supervisory Committee of the implementation of the COVID-19 Prevention Plan and Action Protocol; Implement the COVID-19 Prevention Plan and Action Protocol; Designate the local focal points; Conduct the communication process in the respective unit / service;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare reports related to the sufficiency and suitability of essential services, mitigation measures and means made available, proposing corrective and / or improvement actions to the Supervisory Committee for the implementation of the COVID-19 Prevention Plan and Action Protocol.
Human Resources Management Service (SGRH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote with the OU / DEP the implementation of the COVID-19 Prevention Plan and Action Protocol, namely in terms of identification of critical functions and the human resources replacement plan, evaluating the functions that can be carried out through telework, reduction of hours or continuous work, in order to guarantee the continuity of its operation. • Check for any emerging needs for human resources in together with the units / services; • Establish the processes for validating sick leaves in suspected cases of COVID-19; • Respond to questions regarding justification of absences and remuneration, due to illness or family support.
Health and Work Safety Management Services (SSGST)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote with the UO / DEP the implementation of the COVID-19 Prevention Plan and Action Protocol, namely in terms of the identification of essential operational needs and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); • Support the OUs/DEPs in the implementation of the Prevention Plan and Protocol of Action against COVID-19; • Assess the conformity and specificities of PPE, as well as of goods and services needed to prevent and combat the COVID-19 disease, related to health and safety management at work, articulating with the competent service the requirements for their acquisition.
Communication Division (DCOM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage external communication with the media and the community; • Manage the internal communication defined by the Rectory and the Administration, supporting the Supervisory Committee / COVID-19 Monitoring Group and the Occupational Health and Safety Management Services in the dissemination of the procedures and practices related to the COVID-19 Prevention Plan and Action Protocol.

4. COVID-19 symptoms and transmissibility

COVID-19 is a disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The symptoms are mainly respiratory symptoms, namely fever, cough and difficulty breathing, and other symptoms may also occur, including total or partial loss of taste, total or partial loss of smell, odynophagia (sore throat), general muscle pain, headache, weakness, and less frequently, nausea / vomiting and diarrhoea.

Based on current scientific evidence, this virus is mainly transmitted through:

- Direct contact: dissemination of respiratory droplets, produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks, which can be inhaled or land in the mouth, nose or eyes of people who are close (<1.5m / 2m);
- Indirect contact: contact of the hands with a surface or object contaminated with SARS-CoV-2 and then with the mouth, nose or eyes.

The signs and symptoms of COVID-19 vary according to its severity, from the absence of symptoms (being asymptomatic) to fever (temperature equal to or higher than 38 degrees Celsius), cough, sore throat, tiredness and muscle pain and, in the most severe cases, severe pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, septicaemia or septic shock. Information collected shows that the worsening of the clinical situation can occur quickly, usually during the second week of the disease.

There is also evidence suggesting that transmission can occur from an infected person about two days before symptoms develop. It is estimated that the infectious period lasts, on average, from 7 to 12 days in moderate cases and up to two weeks in severe cases.

COVID-19 was considered a pandemic on March 11, 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO). For more information and recommendations refer to <http://www.covid19.min-saude.pt/> (*content in Portuguese*)

5. General aspects of implementation of the plan and protocol

The procedures implementation is carried out essentially at local level (Organic Units, Cultural Extension and Training Support Units and Departments), coordinated by a member appointed as the focal point who is also responsible to centralize and manage information. Under the proposal of each OU/DEP the UC appoints one representative to serve as the focal point and another one as an alternate focal point, in accordance with the table attached to this document (*Anex II*).

A suspect case of COVID-19 should be reported to the Focal Point, who will then be responsible for ensuring the compliance with the procedures established in the COVID-19 Prevention Plan and Action Protocol of the University of Coimbra.

The Focal Point is the person who accompanies or promotes the follow-up of the suspected case to the designated isolation area, provides necessary support and activates the defined procedures, being the internal link with the Organic Unit/Service of the UC, and the external link with the health authorities.

Only the confirmed cases reported on the UC facilities must be reported to the Rector's Office and DCOM on a weekly basis, for statistical purposes and to strengthen the articulation with the health authorities, whenever necessary (cf. flowcharts in **Annex III**).

6. Isolation areas

In order to prevent and limit the direct contact of a suspected case of COVID-19 with other members of the UC community, several areas of isolation were created, distributed across UC campuses and whose updated location can be consulted at www.uc.pt/en/covid19/facilities.

The identified isolation areas are equipped according to the instructions of the health authorities and the DGS recommendations, namely with telephone, chair or couch, water, alcohol-based antiseptic solution, surgical masks and disposable gloves, paper towels, waste container, thermometer and cleaning equipment.

7. Action Plan for Academic Year 2021/2022

The action plan for the academic year 2021/2022 defines the measures for teaching and non-teaching activities in the UC, which can be adjusted or complemented by others, according to the evolution of the pandemic.

Calendar	Measures/Actions	Requirements
Academic Year 2020/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person work, according to the recommendations of the competent health authorities; • Teaching and non-teaching activities, mostly in person, complemented, when necessary, with synchronous streaming; <p>Considering the exceptional regime of protection of persons with immunosuppression conditions, provided for in Article 25a of Decree-Law no. No. 10-A/2020, of March 13, in its current wording, only persons with immunosuppression conditions that require the administration of an additional dose of the vaccine against COVID-19, in accordance with the rules of the Directorate-General of Health in force on October 1, 2021, may justify absence from work, through medical statement, provided that they cannot perform their activity in a telework regime or through other forms of provision of activity. The aforementioned medical statement must certify the health condition of the worker that justifies their special protection, and be issued, with date and legible signature, by a doctor of the specialty related to the clinical grounds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequacy of the number of students per class, whenever the UO/DEP considers it necessary and indispensable to guarantee the implemented safety measures and the DGS guidelines; • Mismatching the start and end times of face-to-face teaching activities, as well as extending the working hours of the support structures to teaching activities, whenever the OU/DEP considers it appropriate and indispensable to ensure the safety measures implemented and the guidelines of the DGS; • Reorganization of the spaces where teaching activities take place to ensure the safety conditions defined by the competent health authorities; • Holding of congresses, meetings, conferences and events respecting the DGS recommendations and the legislation in force, as well as the maximum capacity of the spaces, according to the guidelines defined for cultural events; • The use of common spaces for activities to support events and other initiatives depends on the authorization of the head of the UO/DEP/UECAF; • Travelling outside the country is subject to the health conditions of the destination country; • Management and administration services, food services, accommodation, sports facilities, libraries and study spaces available according to the safety conditions and complying with the prevention and mitigation measures defined in this document. 	<p>Mandatory use of mask</p> <p>Body temperature monitoring</p> <p>Hygiene and cleaning</p> <p>Adequate Physical Distancing</p> <p>Use of the defined circuits</p>

8. Prevention and Mitigation Measures

8.1. *General Aspects*

The prevention and mitigation measures adopted aim to minimize the risks of contagion and spread of COVID-19 disease and the safety and well-being of the entire UC community.

The criteria to be included in the definition of these measures take into account two variables: activities and spaces.

8.2. *Teaching Activities*

With regard to class spaces, criteria were considered such as location (indoor / outdoor), maximum capacity, ventilation conditions and their typology (laboratory, classrooms, common spaces, offices, etc.):

- Classes must take place in-person, according to the rules approved by A3ES;
- The times of contact in the classroom can be reduced, ensuring that the fundamental subjects are prioritized and that the tutorial support and autonomous work of the students is increased;
- Class schedule should also be weighed against the necessary adjustments to ensure all hygiene and safety requirements;
- In the classrooms, whenever possible, an adequate physical distance between people should be ensured, without compromising the normal functioning of the face-to-face teaching activities. It is up to the UO/DEP to define, according to the specific circumstances of their building and the number of students per class or curricular unit, the capacity of the spaces under their direct management;
- The number of students per class must be adjusted to be compatible with the existing safety and protection limitations, and the OU / DEP must find the procedures appropriate to their mode of operation and specificities so that all students may have the right to attend classes;

- Class attendance rules should be defined in order to maximize physical attendance in classes and proximity to the Academy, ensuring that all students can attend classes (theoretical, theoretical-practical and laboratory) in person, according to the rules approved by A3ES (for example , through rotationsystems), as long as there are no reasons, duly proven and substantiated, that justify the absence of the face-to-face activities that are defined by the OU / DEP;
- Classes schedules should be adequate in view of the teaching regime approved by A3ES, ensuring as continuous and staggered access to buildings as possible (e.g. start of classes staggered throughout the day to avoid peaks during the day, schedules without excessive breaks between classes);
- The definition of the activities that can take place inside the buildings must be evaluated by the OU / DEP, taking into account the specificities and local needs, considering the respective spaces and the number of users;
- Assessments planned for the 2021/2022 academic year will be carried out on a face-to-face basis;
- A plan for the maintenance and use of the isolation spaces must be ensured;
- The opening and closing times of the buildings must be defined taking into account the specific needs and compliance with the established rules;
- The definition of the use of all building spaces must respect the directives of DGS, taking into account the operating priorities that are defined locally;
- The bars of the OU / DEP or based in them must obey the general rules in terms of capacity and hygiene;
- Laboratories, libraries and study rooms must obey the general rules in terms of capacity and hygiene.

8.3. *Circumstances that demand synchronous streaming of classes*

The situations in which there is a need for synchronous streaming of classes using preferably the UC Teacher/UC Student platform are as follows:

- Unavailability of sufficient seats in the classrooms;

- Existence of a student or faculty in an immunosuppressive condition that requires administration of an additional dose of the vaccine against COVID-19, under the terms of the exceptional regime of protection for persons with immunosuppression conditions, provided for in article 25-A of Decree-Law no. No. 10-A/2020, of March 13, in its current wording, and under the terms of the rules of the Directorate General of Health in force on October 1, 2021, and in this case, should address to the Director of the UO/DEP, application in order to justify the absence from class, test or work, through medical statement, provided that it cannot perform its activity in a system of synchronous class or test, remote work or through other forms of provision of activity.
- Existence of a student or teacher who has been determined to comply with the quarantine period by the competent health authorities.
- Whenever the class has international students, when there is a proven difficulty in obtaining a visa or traveling to Portugal (for example, due to the closure of borders), students in these conditions must report the situation to the International Relations Division (DRI) of the UC and the OU / DEP.

The identification / proof of these situations must be done as follows, for each of the cases:

- Unavailability of sufficient seats in the rooms:

It is verified when the student is not authorized to attend a specific class in person, based on the capacity of the rooms and the number of enrolled students in each class, according to the schedule defined by the OU / DEP;

- Impossibility of international student or faculty, as a result of legal restrictions of health authorities imposed due to the pandemic:

The international student or faculty must indicate the impossibility of moving from the place where he / she is, official address or address he / she lives during the school term. The OU / DEP must validate this impossibility by checking the travel restrictions defined by the health authorities and as long as they remain;

- Existence of a student or faculty with immunosuppression requiring the administration of an additional dose of the vaccine against COVID-19, under the terms of the exceptional regime of protection for people with immunosuppression conditions, provided for in article 25-A of Decree-Law no. 10-A/2020, of 13 March, as amended, and

under the terms of the regulations of the Directorate General of Health in force on 1 October 2021:

The student or faculty must indicate the specific situation, addressing, in this case, to the Director of the UO/DEP, a duly substantiated request, in order to justify the absence from class or test, through medical statement, provided that he/she cannot perform his/her activity in a temporary distance regime or through other forms of provision of activity, namely attending class or performing test in a room specifically allocated for that purpose. The aforementioned medical declaration must certify the health condition of the student or faculty that justifies his/her special protection, and be issued, dated and legibly signed, by a physician with a specialty related to the clinical grounds;

- Existence of a student or faculty who has been ordered by the health authorities to comply with a period of quarantine:

The student or faculty must indicate the need to remain in quarantine, as well as the expected period, presenting to the UO/DEP the corresponding proof issued by the health authorities.

The student will have the right to request a new date for the exam under the conditions established in the Academic Regulations of the University of Coimbra (RAUC)

8.4. *Access to buildings*

In addition to the compulsory wearing of mask at all times inside the UC buildings, hand washing and cleaning, adequate physical distance and observance of the defined circuits for access to the UC buildings, the OU/DEP may temporarily define other measures deemed necessary to comply with the general rules and guidelines in force.

Alcohol-based solutions for hand disinfection will be available at the entrance of the buildings and/or at the temperature reading point.

The maximum capacity of the rooms, according to the directives issued by the DGS and by the supervising authority, must be adapted by each OU/DEP. It is up to them to assess the specific context of each room and define its exact capacity, without prejudice to the articulation with the central services of the UC.

The general circulations in the buildings are defined by the OU/DEP, in articulation with

the central services of the UC, for later local implementation.

All people who access the UC buildings must voluntarily declare that they have checked the necessary conditions for that purpose, self-monitoring their body temperature, considering, whenever necessary, possible reasons that justify a temperature equal to or above 38 degrees Celsius and that may recommend evaluation by their attending physician.

People without masks and who have not sanitised their hands may not enter the buildings.

When holding corporate or cultural events, the general rules and guidelines in force should be verified, and participants must present a COVID-19 digital certificate or rapid antigen test carried out in the last 48 hours.

8.5. Sanitization and cleaning

As a preventive measure, the cleaning of objects / places of greater contact is reinforced, such as:

- Door knobs, handrails and switches;
- Lift cabins and buttons;
- Phones and peripherals (keyboards, mice, remote controls);
- Printing equipment (multifunction);
- Vending machines and water dispensers;
- RecyclePoints;
- Basin taps, consumable dispensers and sanitary equipment;
- Work surfaces with special attention to counters and customer service desks;
- Chairs, tables and benches.

The cleaning of buildings and outdoor spaces is performed by the companies that provide cleaning and gardening services at the UC, under the coordination of the competent services and together with the Health and Safety Management Services at Work.

Users of shared spaces and materials must ensure the correct use and maintenance of their cleaning. Disinfection means (e.g. hand sanitiser and paper towels) are available for complementary cleaning, whenever necessary.

8.6. UC community screening

Considering the beginning of the academic year 2020/2021, the challenges it posed, namely the resumption of face-to-face classes during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the UC action to create special conditions so that the safety of the academic community was maximised, we reinforced, at the beginning of this academic year 2021/2022, the weekly random screening programme for COVID-19 disease.

Students and workers will be called (via email) to go to the previously defined locations. Students and staff are given the opportunity to choose the desired day and time for random testing, using a first come, first served system. After the test, only participants with positive or inconclusive results will be contacted.

The random screening programme for COVID-19 disease for the current academic year 2021/2022 remains non-mandatory and informed consent will be applied at the time of sample collection. However, with the vaccination recommendation advocated by the Government and health authorities, the UC strongly recommends the voluntary participation of the entire academic community.

9. Procedure in the event of a suspected case

Under the terms issued by DGS, it is considered:

- Suspect case - Patient with acute respiratory infection (sudden onset of fever or cough or difficulty breathing), with no other etiology that explains the condition + History of travel or residence in areas with active community transmission, in the 14 days prior to the onset of symptoms;

OR - Patient with acute respiratory infection + Contact with confirmed case or probable infection with SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), in the 14 days prior to the onset of symptoms;

OR - Patient with severe acute respiratory infection, requiring hospitalization, without other aetiology.

In view of the identification of a suspected case, the action protocol is as follows:

1. The Focal Point should be contacted, who should send the suspected case to the isolation

space, ensuring the necessary monitoring and support during the period in which he/she is at the UC facilities.

2. The individual considered a suspected case should contact the SNS 24 line and follow all recommendations.

3. If a suspected case is confirmed, the Focal Point must inform the OU / DEP and take steps to adopt the cleaning and disinfection measures in the isolation space, with the situation being monitored and comply with the procedure defined for the implemented action regarding confirmed cases (defined by DGS as a case with laboratory confirmation of SARS-CoV-2, regardless of signs and symptoms).

10. Procedure in case of a confirmed case

In view of the identification of a confirmed case who is attending or has attended the UC facilities during the period of risk of transmission, the action protocol is as follows:

1. Report of the situation to the Focal Point, which promotes the follow-up of the confirmed case and directs it to the isolation space prepared for the purpose, in cases where it is inside one of the UC buildings. Whenever the confirmed case is able to do so, it should contact the SNS 24 line and follow the instructions provided, or, in manifestly emergent situations, directly contact INEM (112), always in coordination with the Focal Point and the OU/DEP;
2. The Focal Point, together with the Occupational Health and Safety Management Services, informs the health authorities, in order to streamline subsequent actions;
3. The Focal Point must collect all relevant information, supporting health authorities in applying appropriate health procedures, including:
 - The attended spaces and the time spent in circulation, based on the entry records in the buildings and the records of the attendance of classes in the period indicated by the health authorities;
 - Close contacts and listings of other members of the academy who attended the same places;
4. For the spaces identified in the previous point, an action plan should be implemented in close articulation with the health authorities, including disinfection and / or temporary closure, whenever justified;

5. Specific situations of confirmed cases during the stay at the UC facilities:

- Students in a classroom or laboratory or similar: they must immediately contact the teacher, who, in turn, must contact the Focal Point, in compliance with the defined procedures of contact with the competent health authorities;
- Students outside the classroom, workers or visitors should contact the Focal Point;
- Participants in an event or conference taking place at UC facilities must contact the event organizer.

11. Legal framework

- Resolution of the Council of Ministers No 157/2021 of 27 November, published in the Diário da República, 1st Series, No 230-A, of 27 November, declaring a state of emergency and the adoption of exceptional measures necessary to combat the disease COVID-19;
- Decree-Law no. 104/2021, of 27 November, which alters the exceptional and temporary measures relative to the pandemic of the disease COVID-19;
- Decree-Law No. 10-A/2020, of 13 March, in its current version, establishing exceptional and temporary measures regarding the epidemiological situation of the new coronavirus - COVID-19;
- DGS Guidelines published on <https://covid19.min-saude.pt/orientacoes/>, specifically DGS Guideline no. 6 of 26-02-2020, updated on 29-11-2021: Infection by SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) - Procedures for prevention, control and surveillance in companies;
- Guidelines from the DGES and DGS to Scientific and Higher Education Institutions to ensure the implementation of on-site teaching and non-teaching activities for the academic year 2021-2022, September 2021.

Annex I – Contacts of the Supervision Committee / Monitoring Group

Members	Phone	Email
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Focal Points: Rectory and Communication Division

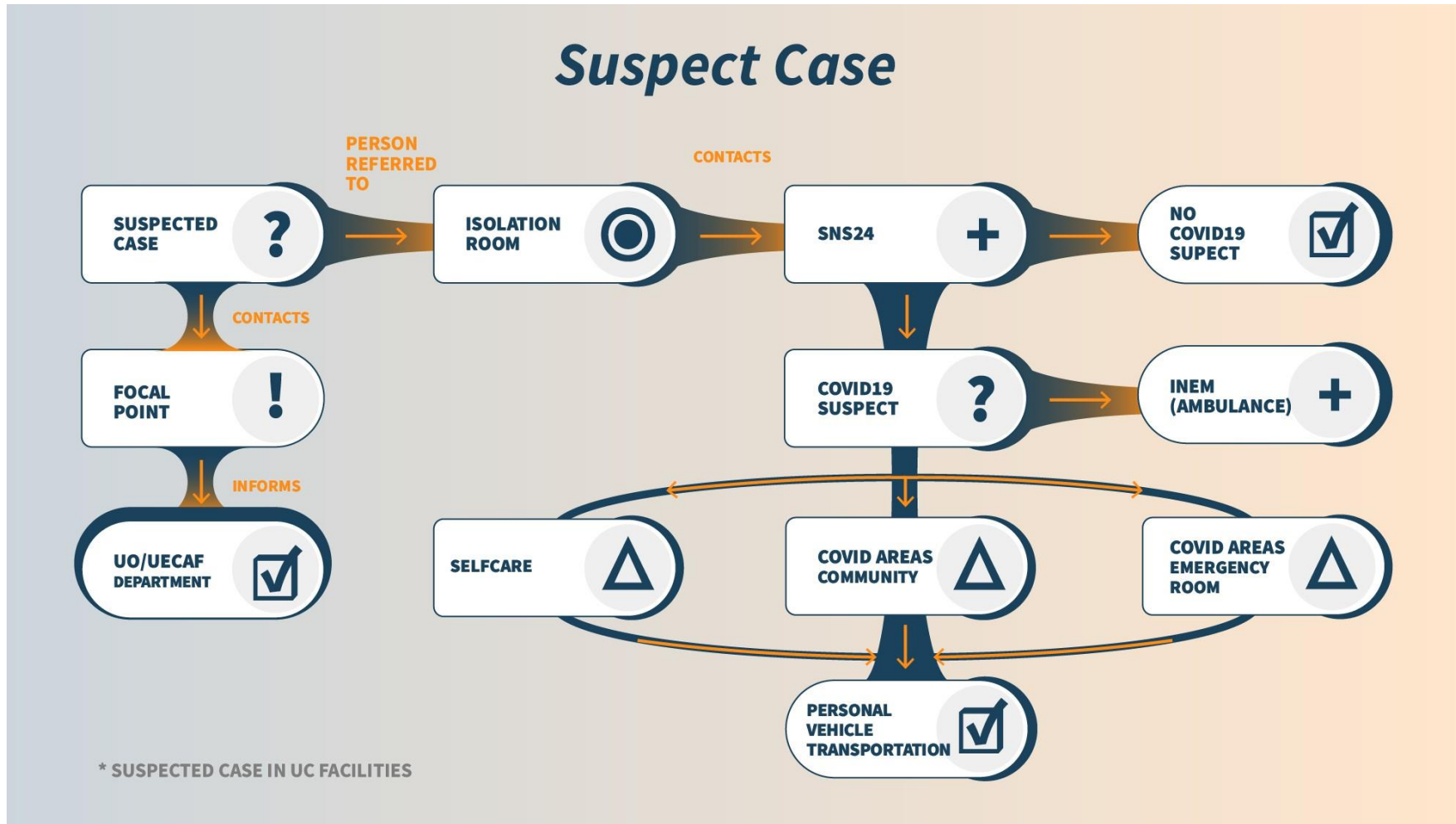
Permanent Contacts (24h)	Phone	Email
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• Communication Division –Joana Maria dos Santos Silva Tereso (Head of Division)	932010521	joana.tereso@uc.pt

Annex II – Focal Points OU/DEP responsible for the procedures of suspect or confirmed case

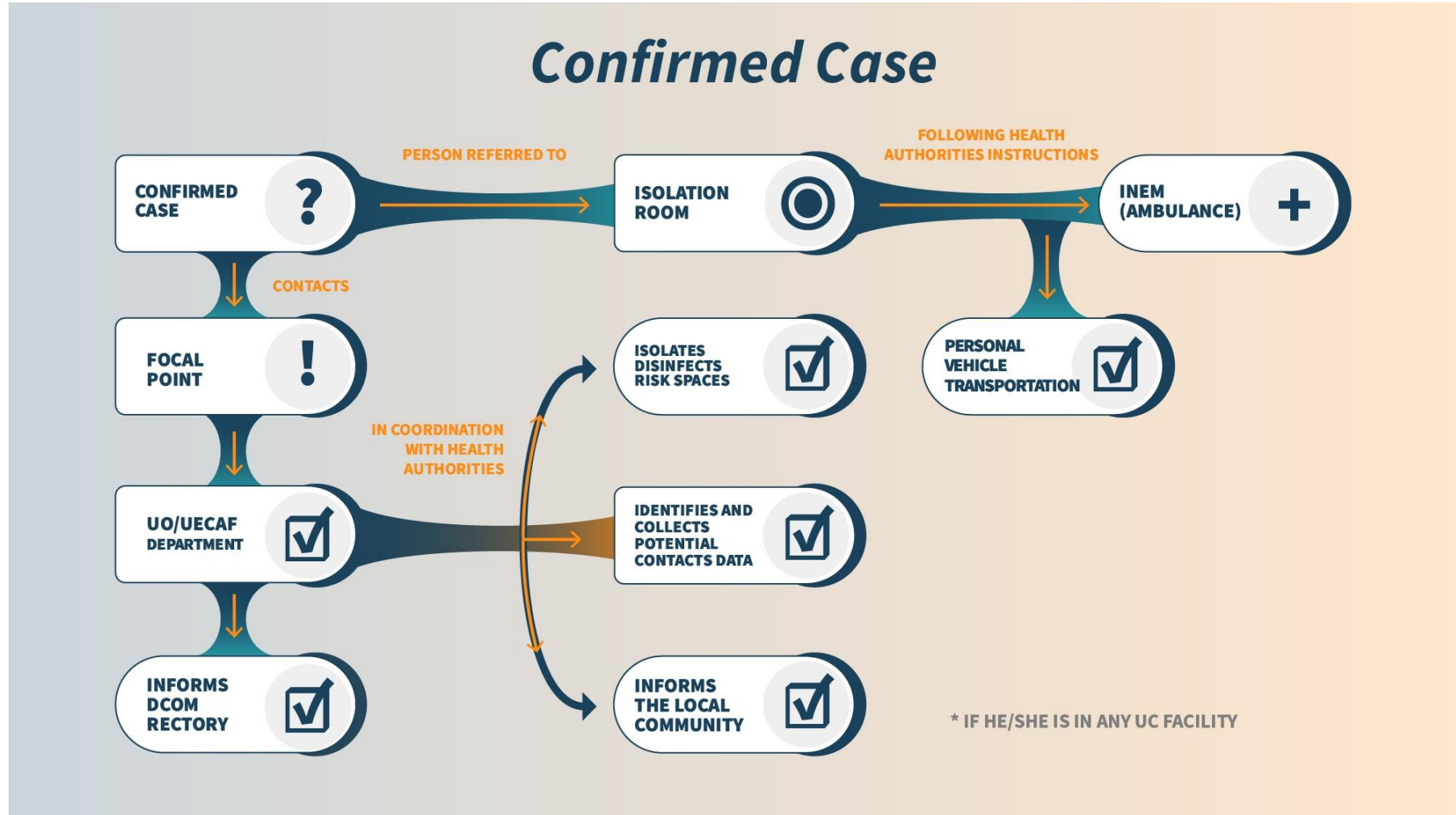
Organic Unit / Departament	Focal Point	Alternate focal point	Contact	
			Phonetransmi	Email
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Departament of Geography and Tourism	Pedro Carvalho	Silvio Santos	239 410 090 / 239 410 012	gabdiretor@fl.uc.pt
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Annex III – Flowcharts

Flowchart 1 – Suspect case procedure



Flowchart 2 – Confirmed case procedur





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