**Bangor UNIVERSITY**

**GUIDE TO EVALUATING REVISED COVID-19 CAPACITY WITHIN MULTI OCCUPANCY OFFICES**

v.2 - 2nd March 2022

This Guide has been developed to help Colleges and Professional Services assess office areas to enable a return to multi occupancy use.

The Guide supports the University’s implementation of the Dynamic Working Framework, enabling staff to return safely to the workplace, through improving physical distancing, providing good ventilation, and in some cases, reducing capacities until the remaining risk reduces.

**Approving Multiple-Occupancy Offices**

* Colleges and Professional Services should use the Self-assessment Sheet, whilst considering the pictorial examples (Appendix 1), to evaluate if a space may be occupied by more than one person for a prolonged period.
* Once confirmed, the College/Service should record the assessment conclusions and advise the appropriate staff of the findings.
* After this, a request should be made to [campusservices@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:campusservices@bangor.ac.uk) for a HEPA Filtration Unit.
* Where the College/Service is unsure on maximum capacity it is recommended the lower figure is used and a further assessment made following its use and in discussion with the occupants.
* For larger and complicated spaces, it may be necessary for a more detailed assessment. These can be facilitated through [healthandsafety@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@bangor.ac.uk), where necessary.
* **The return of staff to multi-occupancy offices is in line with Welsh Government Guidance and legislative obligations.**

**Assessment Sheet**

This Assessment Sheet and Guide outlines key points for Colleges and Professional Services to consider. It includes diagrams (Appendix 1) of a range of office scenarios to help assess and set an office capacity, whilst seeking to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of staff returning to a shared office. All GREEN questions and points must be confirmed (ticked) before allowing multi-occupation.

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|  | **Room Layout & Capacity** | **Tick** |
| 1 | Can physical distancing (at 2metres minimum) be achieved between workstations? |  |
| 2 | Can side-to-side or back-to-back seating arrangements be achieved avoiding face-to-face seating situations (even if these are 2m distanced)\*?  \*Where face-to-face cannot be avoided, can a physical partition be erected between the two workstations with more than 2 metres distancing between ‘faces’ achieved? |  |

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|  | **Workstations** | **Tick** |
| 3 | Using the Examples (Appendix 1), confirm how many workstations can be safely used, whilst considering ventilation, workstation layouts and physical distancing. |  |
| 4 | Are workstations individual-use only or hot-desking?  If hot desking, implement self-cleaning and day rotation. Do not rotate users during the same day. *For ‘own’ desk, clearly advise staff to clean their workstations regularly*. |  |
| 5 | Allocate a workstation to specific member(s) of staff. |  |
| **Note**: A new DSE [Self-assessment](https://my.bangor.ac.uk/hss/inflink/dse/dse-2008.php.en) must be undertaken for any changed or modified workstations. | | |

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|  | **Cleaning / Hygiene** | **Tick** |
| 6 | Ensure cleaning materials are available (arrange via Campus Services). |  |
| 7 | Ensure hand sanitiser is available (arrange via Campus Services). |  |
| **Note**: Campus Services does not regularly clean staff offices with cleaning resources concentrated on regular cleaning of high-footfall and student areas. If you are unsure what cleaning is being undertaken, please contact Campus Services to confirm. | | |

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|  | **Face Coverings (are staff aware)** | **Tick** |
| 8 | Confirm with staff face coverings are still recommended (unless exempt) in all University buildings.[[1]](#footnote-2) |  |
| 9 | Even if physically distanced in an office, it is recommended face coverings are worn. |  |
| **Note:** If staff do not wish to wear face coverings this should be part of a collective agreement by all office occupiers. | | |

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|  | **Ventilation[[2]](#footnote-3)** | **Tick** |
| **Note:** Rooms with no windows or ventilation system cannot be used as multi-occupation offices | | |
| 10 | Do windows open and can they be kept open throughout the day? |  |
| 11 | Are openable windows in good order (report issues to Campus Services). Do they require a window restrictor to prevent them from blowing open in the wind, or if ground floor, for security purposes in case left open overnight? |  |
| 12 | Request a HEPA Unit from Campus Services. Do not commence multi-occupancy in spaces that rely on window ventilation until a unit has been installed. |  |
| 13 | For mechanically ventilated offices, confirm with Campus Services that the ventilation system is working and sufficient for the numbers envisaged in the space.  Note: Where there is mechanical ventilation there is often no need for HEPA units. |  |
| **Note**: Be aware, windows must be kept open to encourage airflow. Coronavirus is primarily an **airborne virus** so fresh air is essential. Leaving windows open will impact the temperature of the room but all reasonable effort must be made to keep windows open, even during winter. The use of additional electrical heaters is not recommended as these could overburden electrical services. | | |

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|  | **Commencing Multi-use** | **Tick** |
| 14 | For non-mechanically ventilated spaces, once a room layout has been determined and HEPA Unit installed, staff may return to their allocated workstations. |  |
| 15 | Once all the GREEN points have been confirmed inform staff they are now able to use the offices. |  |
| 16 | After 1 month review arrangements, involving the users, and confirm controls are appropriate. Thereafter review arrangements periodically and in-line with any University relaxation or tightening of on-site working arrangements. |  |

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|  | **Risk Assessments** | **Tick** |
| 17 | Update your College / Professional Services **Covid-19 Risk Assessment**(s) or Protocols to reflect the changes implemented. |  |

**Other Considerations**

* Confirm returning staff have completed the [on-line](https://my.bangor.ac.uk/hss/covid19.php.en) Covid-19 Induction and / or viewed the Powtoon Covid-19 video.
* Can you reduce interactions by scheduling different work start / finish times, so staff arrive / leave separately?
* Avoid the use of shared items e.g., pens.
* To support Test, Trace and Protect ask staff to use Outlook to diarise when in the office.
* Avoid unnecessary increases in office capacities e.g., meetings via Teams or in a suitably sized space which allows people to distance if they wish.
* Remember physical distancing is still recommended in shared communal and welfare areas.

**Campus Services**

* Can be contacted on [campusservices@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:campusservices@bangor.ac.uk)

**HEPA Units**

HEPA units help ‘clean’ the air, they do not cool the air or reduce CO2 levels. The units should be used in conjunction with fresh air and are not considered a replacement for also opening windows. It is noted that if an office has existing mechanical ventilation, a HEPA unit may not be necessary.

The HEPA unit will come with instructions on operation and maintenance, and it is expected office occupants will familiarise themselves with these and undertake routine maintenance such as wiping the unit vents to keep them clean, keeping the units free of obstructions.

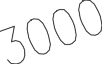
HEPA Units should always be operated whilst the office is occupied. If the units are switched off at night or at the weekend, please remind staff to turn them back on as soon as the office is occupied.

In most cases, the best position for the HEPA unit is in the centre of the room and where practicable raised off the floor. However, it is recognised this is not always possible and may introduce other hazards. Therefore, the unit should be positioned as close to the middle, drawing air away from people, as is safe and reasonable to do.

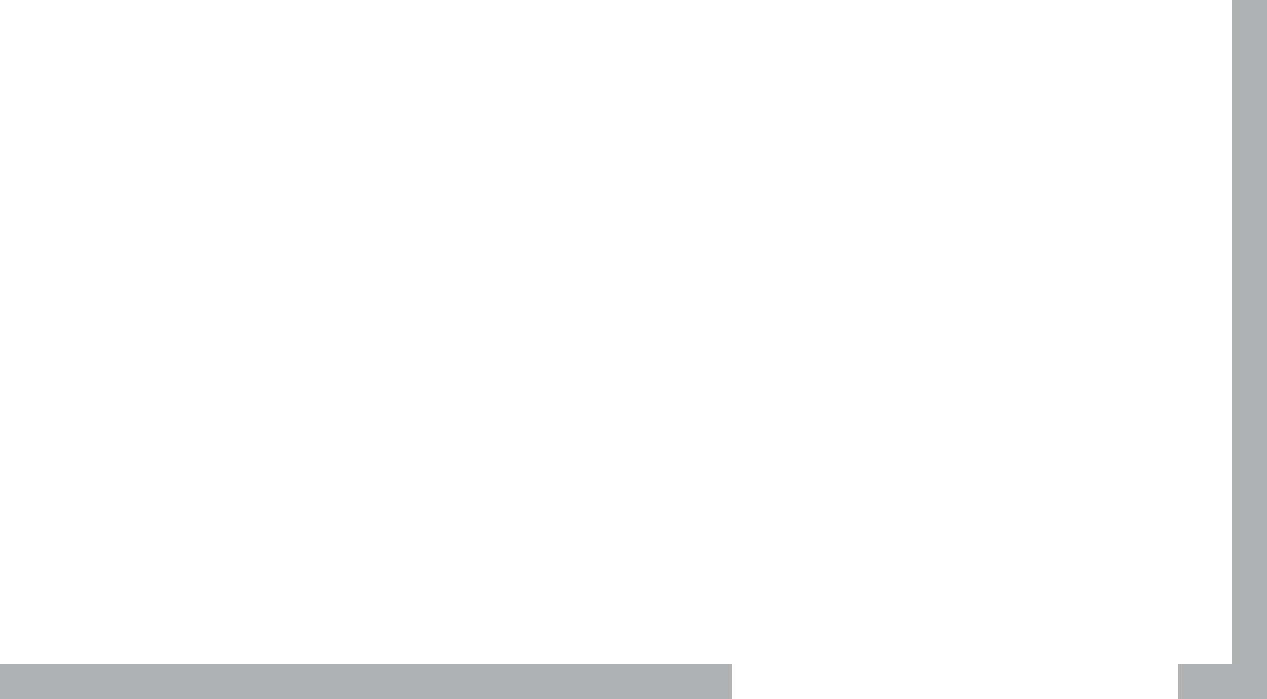
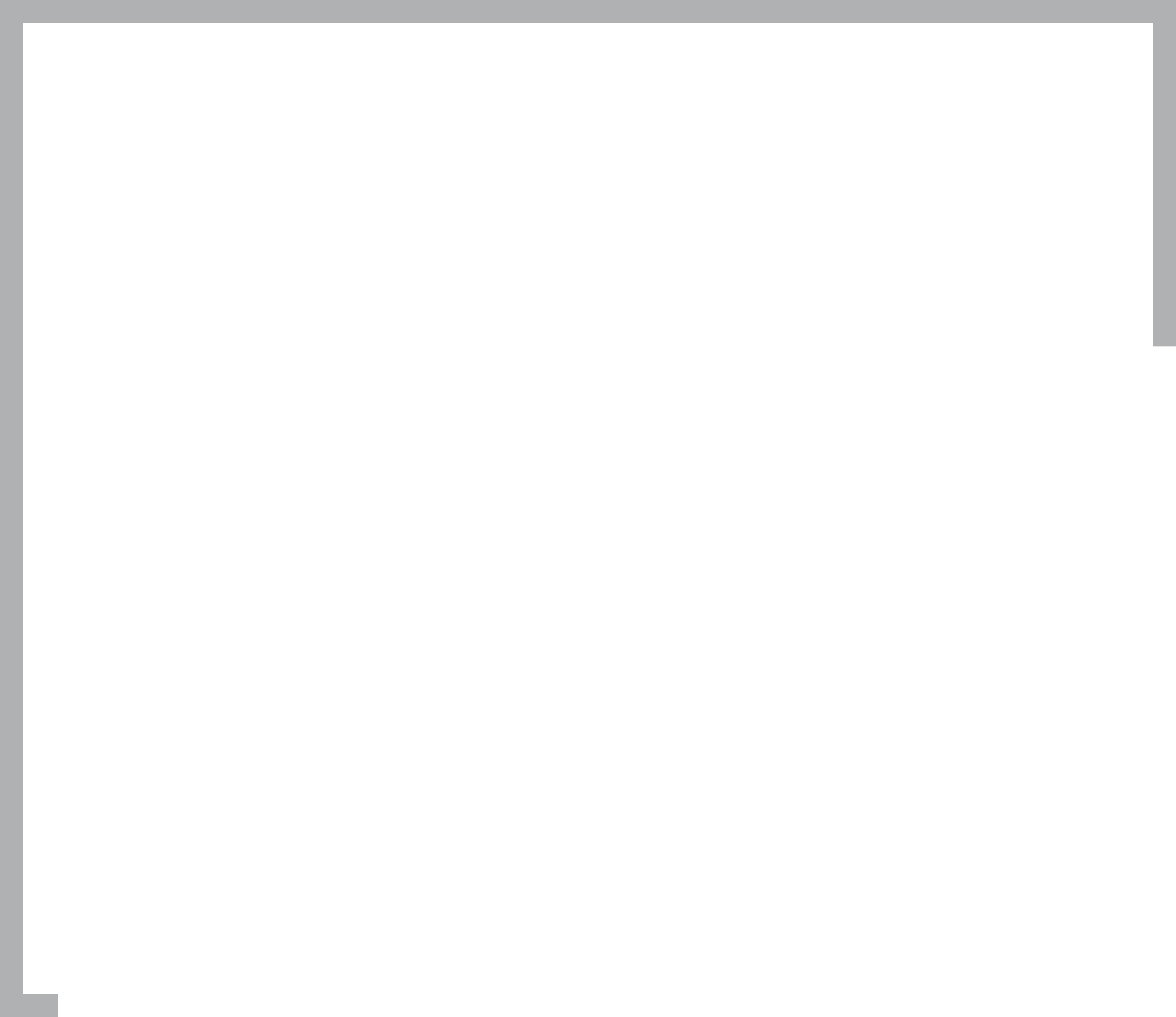
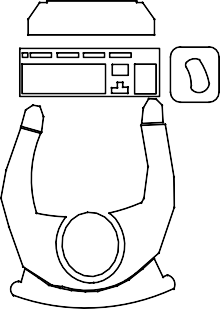
**APPENDIX 1**

**Examples of office layouts that (with appropriate fresh air ventilation and physical distancing) may be appropriate**

**window**



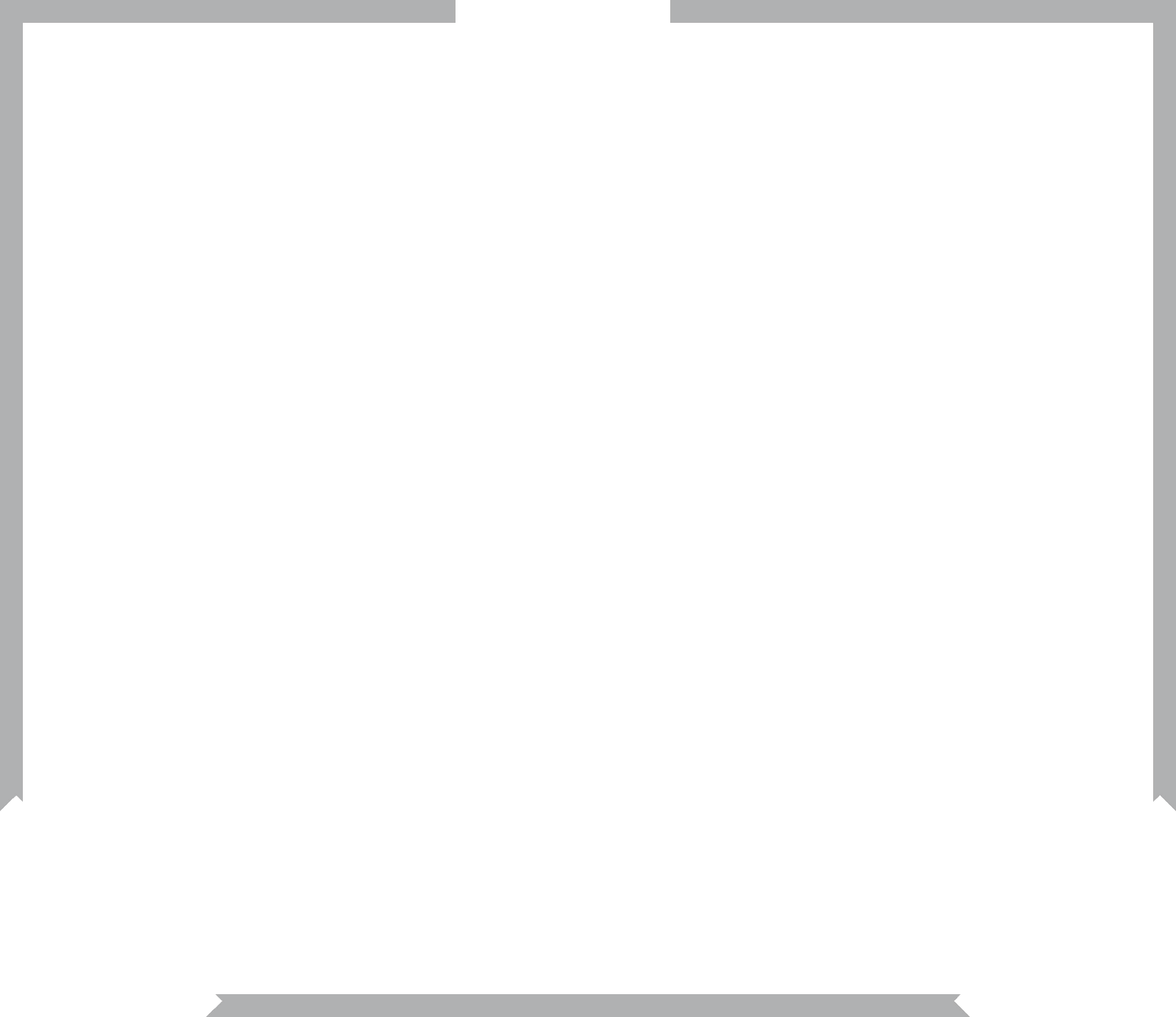
HEPA



HEPA

**window**

**window**



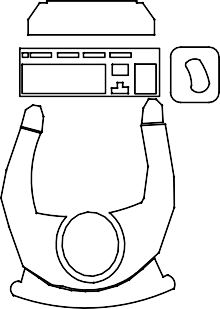
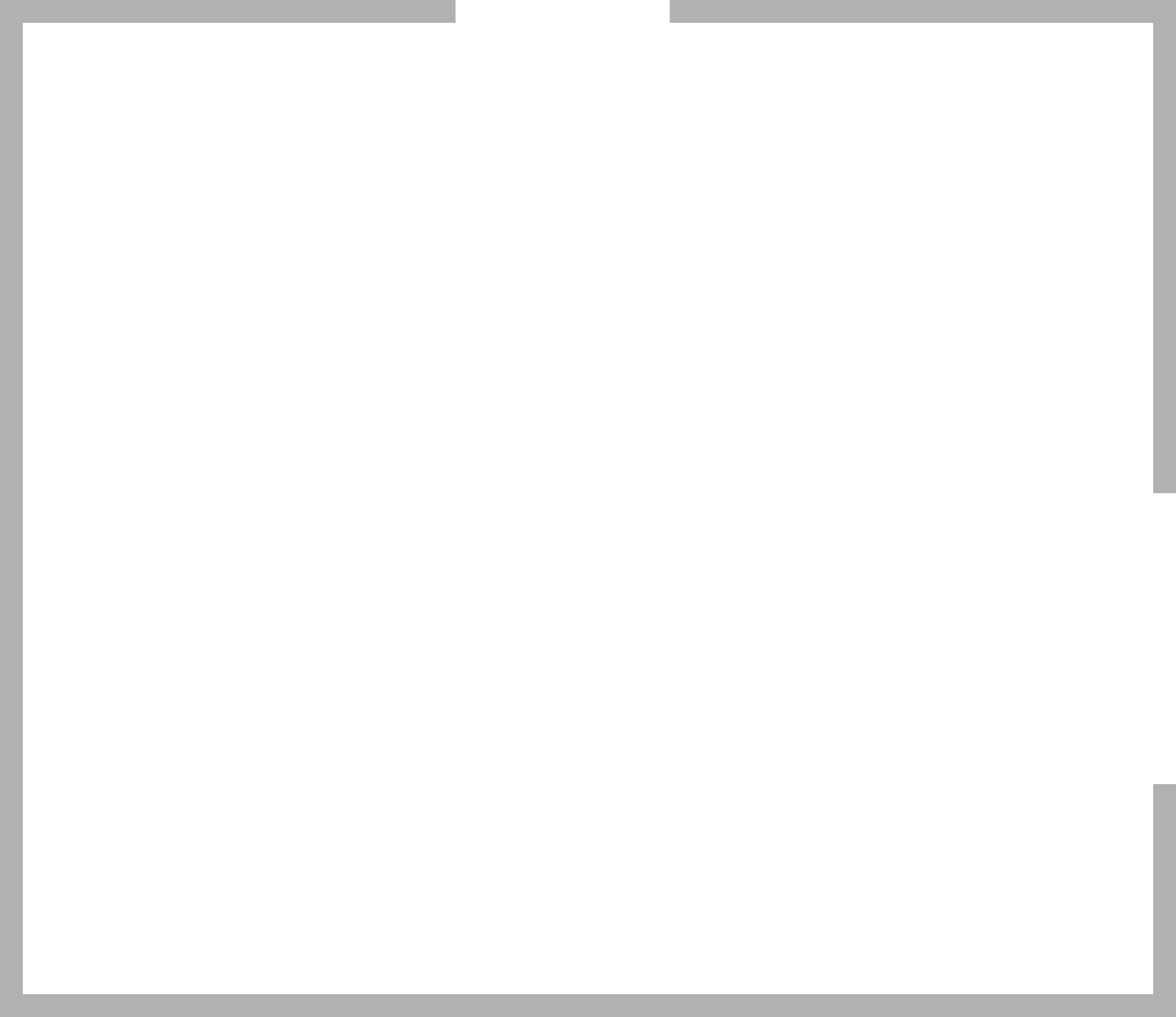
HEPA

**window**

**window**

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It may be possible to utilise this workstation (Desk B) through moving Desk A and B slightly. However, due to the single window, it is recommended this is only considered following a period of occupancy to ascertain suitability of increased use.



HEPA

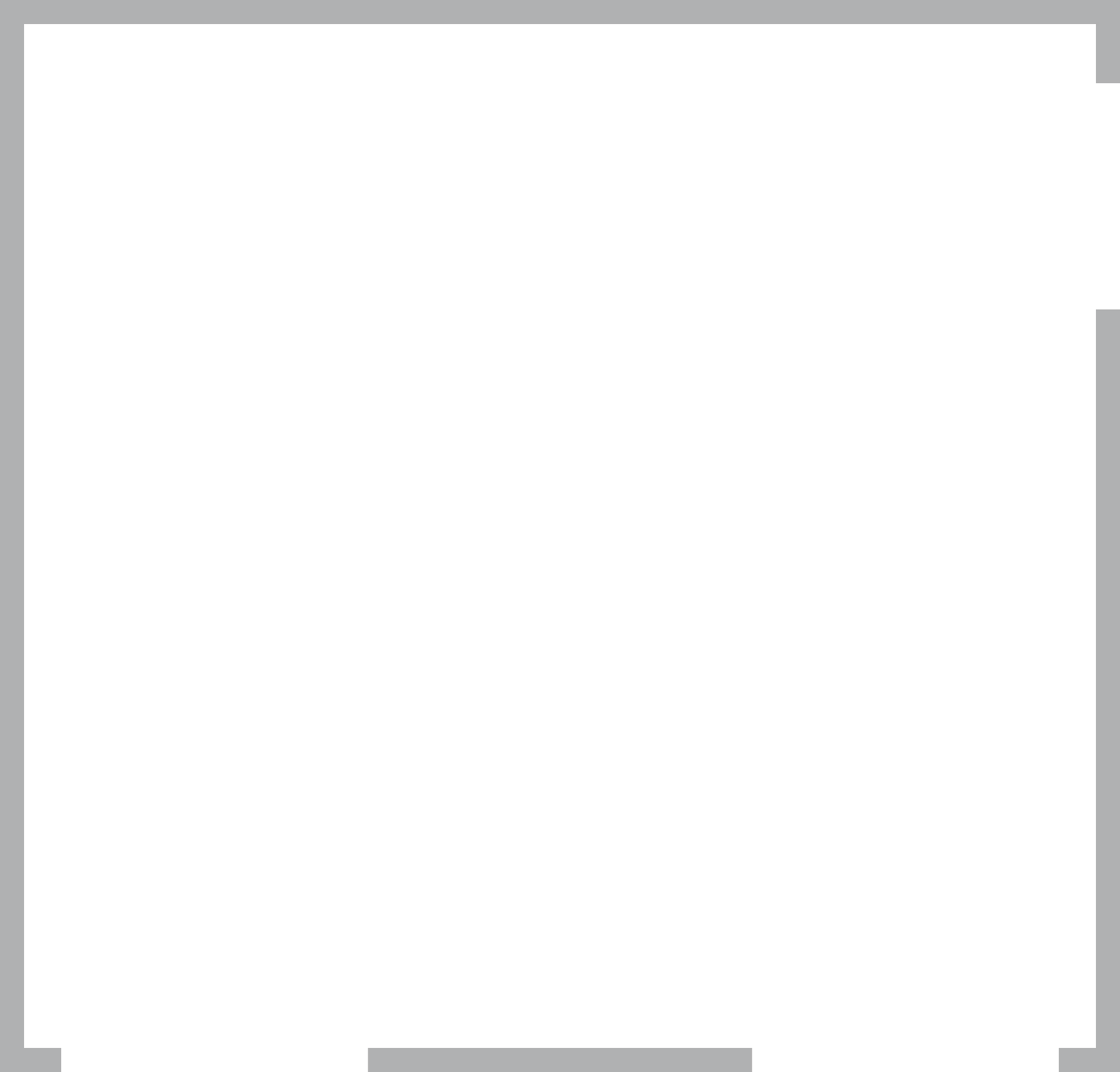
**window**

Desk B

Desk A

A third workstation may be possible in this position. However, it is recommended this is only considered following a period of occupation, to ascertain suitability of increased use.

These two workstations may be ‘flipped’ if desired

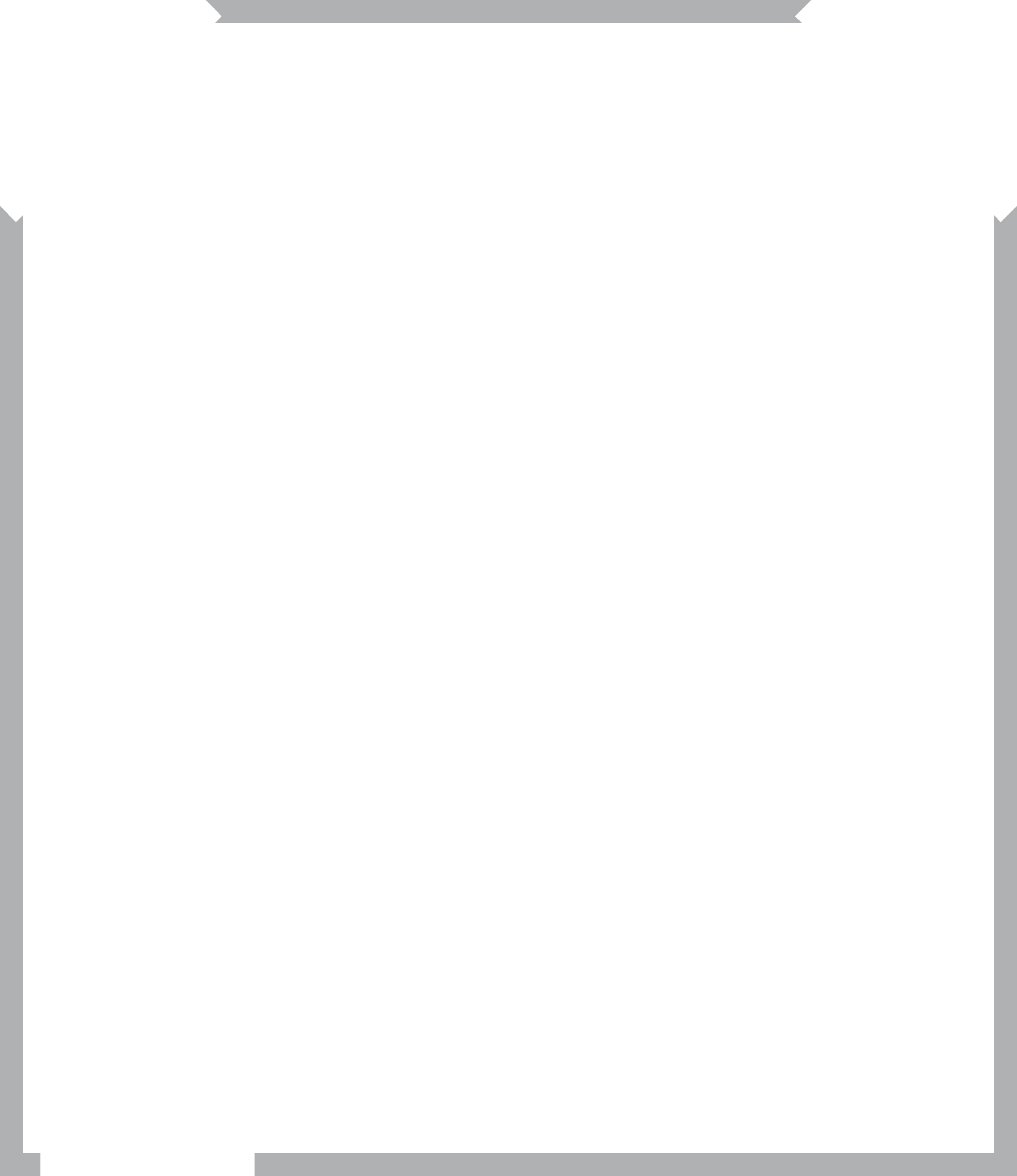


HEPA

**window**

**window**

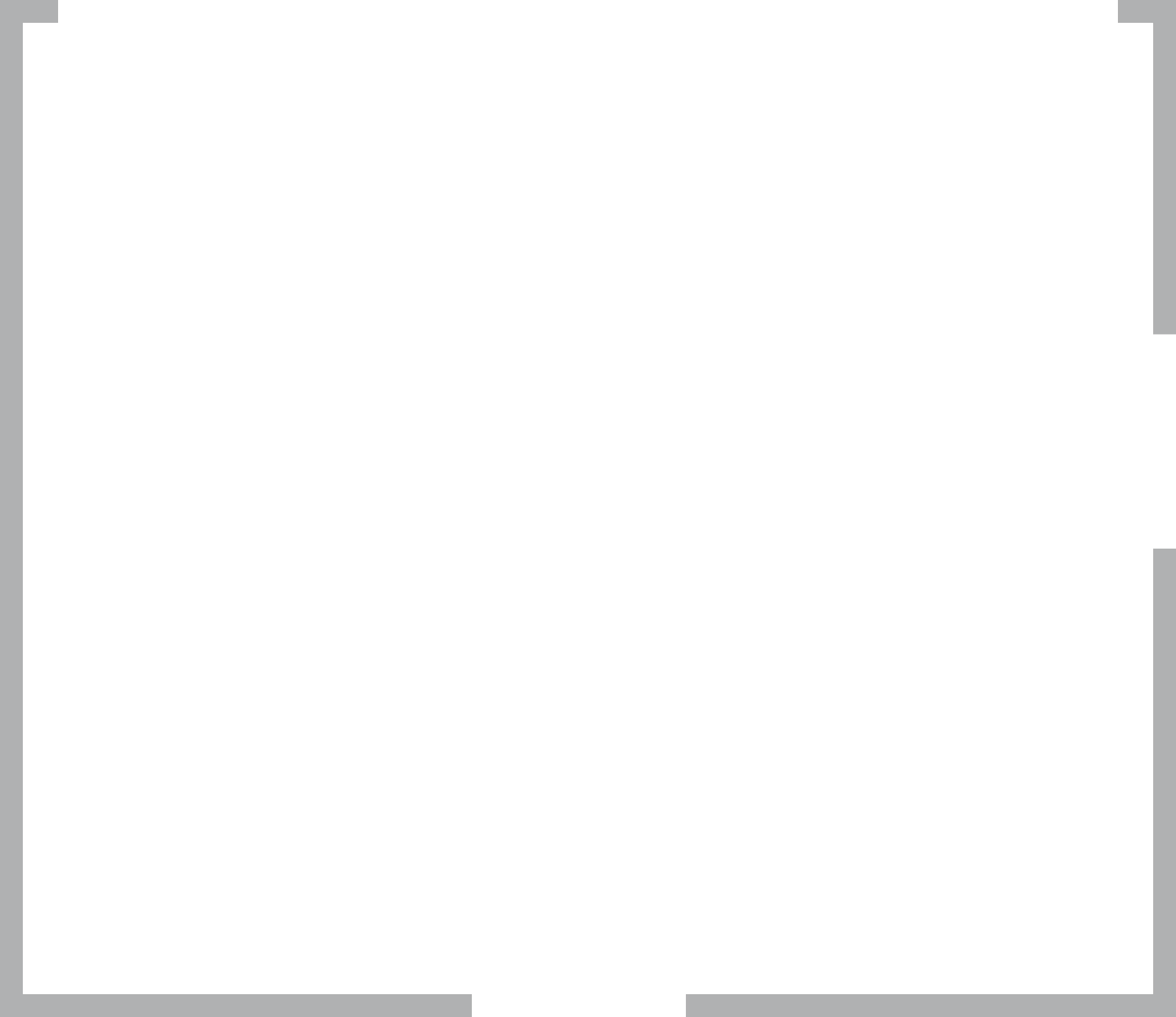
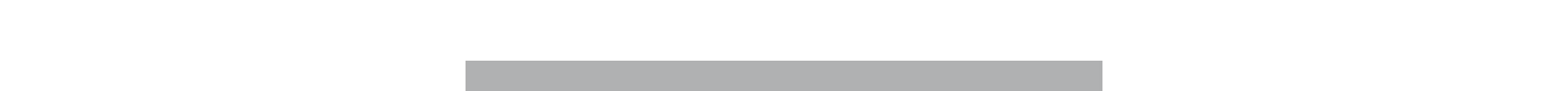
Through reconfiguring the workstations, it may be possible to increase capacity to 3 or 4 workstations, whilst keeping suitable physical distancing.



HEPA

**window**

**window**



HEPA

**window**

**window**

1. Face coverings are still required in University shops, work vehicles and if directed by a Risk Assessment. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. As offices are used for extended periods there is a greater risk of airborne transmission of coronavirus and therefore the criticality of good ventilation is highlighted. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)