COVID-19 GENERAL WORKPLACE GUIDELINE (GWG)

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1 INTRODUCTION

As government regulations and public health advice continue to evolve, the University is looking ahead to resuming operations that were closed or operating with reduced occupancy due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In so doing, the health and safety of people in these spaces must be a priority and appropriate measures put in place. These measures will consider such factors as legal obligations, public health advice, and operational considerations. The University will need to put in place measures to protect the health and safety of its faculty, librarians, staff, students and other members of the U of T community, and to provide reassurance to community members who may have concerns about COVID-19 transmission.

This guideline outlines strategies and best practices for making workplaces ready for increased occupancy, and for addressing the needs of employees and others who will be returning to the workplace. This guideline is also a consolidation of various tools and resources from the University and other public health authorities that will be useful. This document is intended for CAOs, HR managers and academic leadership.

As we begin this gradual and staged approach to returning to on-campus operations, units should utilize these workplace guidelines to develop their own COVID-19 procedures for their specific workplace. Resumption of any on-campus operations must be approved institutionally before employees can return to campus. For more information, access the COVID-19 Leadership Toolkit and review information on what documents must be submitted to HR & Equity for approval. Information on how and where to submit these documents to HR & Equity is available in the Toolkit and is summarized in Figure 1 (below).

Figure 1 provides an overview of organizational structures involved in planning and implementing COVID-19 recovery plans at the University. Divisions/units may wish to consider developing organizational structures/working groups within their areas in order to ensure effective communication and implementation of the guidelines.

The strategies and best practices set out in this guideline are only to be applied by areas of the University’s operations that have been given institutional approval to return to on-campus operations. Such approval is necessary to ensure continued institutional compliance with legal obligations and public health advice. If you have questions regarding resumption of specific operations within your unit, please contact HR.

At U of T, the potential stages of restart will follow the stages set out in Ontario’s framework, implemented to our institutional circumstances. The stages are outlined below but for more information, please refer to: “UTogether2020: A Roadmap for the University of Toronto.”
In support of the recovery process, the University has created a number of teams and working groups to coordinate and implement various aspects of the re-opening. A list of team leads and key contacts is available here.

**STAGES OF RECOVERY (RESUMING OPERATIONS)**


From an institutional perspective neither Stage 1 nor Stage 2 would see anyone but essential staff and researchers who are able to maintain social distancing rules returning to campus; we understand that these two stages would likely take us to the end of June IF the gradual reopening of the province continues to be successful. While Stage 3 sees a responsible opening of all workplaces, the University still anticipates a very gradual return to work while those who can continue to work from home would continue to do so.

**Stage 1**

Some limited areas will be added to the province’s essential business list with physical distancing and limits on number of people. For example, Ontario announced that some critical construction projects, including at universities, can restart as of May 4, 2020.
In this stage, the vast majority of the population continues to be asked to stay home, and this includes most U of T employees. There is no change to mass gathering limits, so most divisions have announced that summer session classes remain online and delivered by alternative modes. Restaurants remain limited to takeout food services, so U of T’s food services remain closed with the exception of certain residents dining facilities.

Parks in the province remain closed, but in this stage, U of T may eventually be allowed to reopen its public outdoor spaces.

Resumption of any on-campus operations must be approved institutionally. For more information, access the COVID-19 Leadership Toolkit and review information on what documents must be submitted to HR & Equity for approval. Information on how to submit these documents to HR & Equity is available in the Toolkit.

Please note that submission of the General Assessment Tool is not required unless a unit is requesting to resume on-campus operations.

**Stage 2**

In Stage 2, more areas would be added to the province’s essential services list, with physical distancing measures remaining in place and limits on gatherings. We anticipate that some government and institutional services will resume, as well as some larger retail and entertainment.

Most people who are able to work from home would continue to do so, including most U of T employees. We might see partial reopening of restaurants, including eateries on our campuses. The number of individuals permitted to gather may increase, allowing smaller classes to meet in-person, as well as some research and office settings to resume in-person work.

Resumption of any on-campus operations must be approved institutionally. For more information, access the COVID-19 Leadership Toolkit and review information on what documents must be submitted to HR & Equity for approval. Information on how to submit these documents to HR & Equity is available in the Toolkit.

Please note that submission of the General Assessment Tool is not required unless a unit is requesting to resume on-campus operations.

**Stage 3**

In this stage, the government would allow all businesses to reopen, although physical distancing requirements could remain in place. Limits on social gatherings may impact classroom formats. Restaurants may be able to reopen with looser restrictions. In this stage, U of T athletic facilities would likely be allowed to reopen as would more research spaces and the U of T Libraries.

Resumption of any on-campus operations must be approved by the Dean or designated unit lead. For more information, access the COVID-19 Leadership Toolkit.

Please note that submission of the General Assessment Tool is not required unless a unit is requesting to resume in-person operations.
2 SCOPE
These guidelines apply to all buildings and areas occupied or operated by the University of Toronto at all campuses and other off-campus locations. This includes spaces that are used by students and other visitors. It applies to all faculty, librarians and staff. For student-related queries, please refer to specific guidelines as they become available.

All measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 should be in compliance with requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its Regulations, the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and its Regulations, and public health directives issued under the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA).

RESPONSIBILITIES PRIOR TO RESUMING OPERATIONS

Supervisors, Managers, Academic Administrators & Principal Investigators
Before resuming operations, any individuals who supervise other employees must (below are general considerations to be reviewed in the context of units developing their guidelines):

- Determine which activities need to be on-site to support University activities. Outside of these functions, the workforce should continue to work remotely where possible until advised otherwise. For assistance, please review the HR&E memo on Increased Public Health Restrictions & Provincial Emergency Order dated, January 15, 2021 and/or contact the applicable HR office. Please refer to the HR COVID-19 Temporary Telecommuting Work Arrangements Guidelines. Please also refer to the COVID-19 General Assessment Tool in this document.
- Field Trips should be limited to only those denoted as essential/required for course/degree completion until further notice. Field trips which are required must be approved by the Dean. The organizer is responsible for ensuring the business/location/site (as applicable) where the field trip is going is permitted to open and is in compliance with any specific requirements on it arising from COVID. The University is responsible to take all reasonable precautions to protect workers and students. Field trips to any location and associated modes of transportation must be compliant with all applicable COVID-related regulatory or public health requirements. For more information on research field safety and off-campus safety, please refer to: https://ehs.utoronto.ca/field-research-safety/ and UofT Field Research Safety Planning Record (Risk Assessment).
- There may be considerations, if applicable, for individual faculty, librarians, or staff members regarding:
  - At-risk status (i.e. do staff fall within the category considered at-risk by provincial public health officials).
  - Employees may be entitled to sick leave or accommodation under existing processes.
- Please contact your divisional HR office if you require further information on sick leaves and accommodation.
• Accommodate for caregiving obligations (note that at this time, most childcare facilities and all schools in the province remain closed) and employees who live with an at-risk individual. Employees may be entitled to unpaid leaves of absence or measures of accommodation under existing processes.
  o If a faculty/librarian/staff member requests workplace accommodation, the applicable HR & E office (e.g. divisional HR office, Health and Well-Being, Family Care Office) will provide guidance.

• Consider transportation concerns around use of public transit – see information from the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC). Please visit applicable transport authority website (Go Transit, MiWay) for more information and refer to the use of personal, non-medical masks in the PPE section. When carpooling with others, please refer to guidance from the US Centre for Disease Control (CDC).

Some employees carpool to work. Here are some general precautions when carpooling:
  • Self-screening prior to carpooling and coming to work. Do not go to work and carpool if you receive a “red” Ucheck status based on responses to either the UCheck or offline paper-based assessment: https://www.utoronto.ca/utogether/ucheck
  • Wear a mask.
  • Avoid touching unnecessary surfaces and use hand sanitizer.
  • If possible, open windows
  • For more information, please refer to Toronto Public Health and Commute Ontario.

• Non-medical mask or face coverings are required in all common-use spaces in our buildings. For more information, please refer to: https://www.utoronto.ca/utogether2020/where-to-pick-up-face-mask. *For individuals who are required to conduct work <2m apart, the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment will be provided, please contact EHS for an assessment.

• If employees are required to come to campus to conduct work and they have questions regarding personal use of vehicles or would like to discuss commuting needs, they should speak to their supervisor/manager for arrangements on a case-by-case basis. The supervisor/manager should consult with their HR contact.

• Develop, document, implement and enforce appropriate operating procedures specific to the unit. Allow sufficient time for planning and implementation prior to resuming operations. Please see Appendices in this document for templates.

• Ensure unit-level enforcement plans are fair, unbiased and non-discriminatory. Issues regarding compliance are expected to be varied and unique and are to be assessed on a case-by-case basis by applicable unit leads. Confirm that measures put in place (e.g. physical distancing requirements, PPE requirements) are compliant with accessibility requirements.

• Ensure, following reopening, that controls identified in the COVID-19 operating procedures specific to their unit are followed.
• Provide equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), instructions or other resources as identified by the COVID-19 operating procedures.

• Ensure faculty, librarians and staff are provided with appropriate accessible communications and training on the re-entry procedures. Examples of responses to frequently asked questions and concerns can be found in the Manager’s Guide to Returning to Operations on Campus (please refer to the HR& Equity Management Resources section at the link).

• Ensure the re-entry procedure is readily available to applicable workers.

• Ensure that contractors or external vendors engaged directly by the unit to perform work in occupied buildings and shared work areas are also aware of this guideline and comply with their sector-specific COVID-19 procedures upon resumption of operations. For construction projects, refer to the Construction Guidelines when available.

• Be aware which employees are on-campus, when and where.

• Ensure staff phone numbers are current.

• Protect physical and psychological health and safety by dealing immediately and effectively with employee concerns and behavior. Please contact your Divisional HR Office for consultation if needed. Units may consider having a designated person receive and collate all queries to ensure consistent, clear messaging and follow-up.

• Provincial regulation and public health guidance now require that post-secondary institutions implement COVID-19 health screening for anyone coming to campus. In order to comply with these directives, a self-assessment is now required for all members of our community, including faculty members, librarians, staff, and students, each day they visit any one of the three U of T campuses or any other property owned or operated by U of T. This self-assessment MUST be completed BEFORE coming on-site.

There are two ways that individuals can complete the required self-assessment and generate a risk status each time they come to U of T: by using UCheck, or by completing a paper-based or offline self-assessment log.

Screening completion should be confirmed prior to onsite work commencing. This may be accomplished by confirming screening completion at the beginning of a shift, at the beginning of a meeting, via e-mail etc. Monthly reminders (or daily, weekly as appropriate/required) should be sent to employees regarding the requirement to screen BEFORE they enter university. For more information, please refer to the COVID-19 Self-Assessment: A Guide for Managers, Supervisors, and Academic Administrators in the HR Leadership toolkit.

**All Employees**

If returning to our campuses to work, all employees must:

• Report hazards and concerns to their supervisor/unit head.

• Request accommodation where applicable by speaking to their supervisor/manager/unit head.
This guideline is expected to change often based on COVID-19 related public health and government directives. Please do not download/circulate this document; visit the COVID-19 Leadership Toolkit for most up to date version. This guideline is intended to be used by CAOs, HR managers and academic leadership.

head or HR.

- Review and follow instructions in the re-entry procedures specific to your work unit.
- Use equipment and/or PPE as defined in the re-entry procedures.
- Follow applicable procedures in the event of suspected exposure to or illness caused by COVID-19. If the employee suspects they have been exposed to COVID-19 and/or is experiencing symptoms, the Ontario Ministry of Health self-assessment for COVID-19 must be completed: https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/. Upon completion of the self-assessment, the employee will receive information on what to do next. Immediately contact the U of T's Occupational Health Nurse by email at ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca if they test positive for COVID-19.
- Stay home if sick. If units are having difficulties with employees who are not compliant, please speak with your HR contact. For student related issues, direct queries to applicable U of T contact/academic lead.
- **Provincial regulation** and public health guidance now require that post-secondary institutions implement COVID-19 health screening for anyone coming to campus. In order to comply with these directives, a **self-assessment is now required for all members of our community, including faculty members, librarians, staff, and students, each day they visit any one of the three U of T campuses or any other property owned or operated by U of T.** This self-assessment **MUST be completed BEFORE coming on-site.**

There are two ways that individuals can complete the required self-assessment and generate a risk status each time they come to U of T: **by using UCheck, or by completing a paper-based or offline self-assessment log.**

Upon completion of the UCheck self-assessment, if the individual receive a “red” status, the UCheck web portal prompts them to stay home, and immediately connect with their Manager, Supervisor, Dean, Chair or Academic Director to discuss next steps if they need to come to campus.

In addition to using UCheck, employees must continue to inform their direct manager or supervisor through normal processes if they will be absent due to illness, including cold or flu-related absences. Employees who are ill with any cold or flu-like symptoms must stay home, and not attend campus. **NOTE:** Employees are no longer required to fill out the COVID-19 Employee Absence Self-Declaration Form on the HR Service Centre if self-isolating or ill due to COVID-19.

**Students**

If returning to campus, students must:

- Stay home if sick.
- **Provincial regulation** and public health guidance now require that post-secondary institutions implement COVID-19 health screening for anyone coming to campus. In
order to comply with these directives, a self-assessment is now required for all members of our community, including faculty members, librarians, staff, and students, each day they visit any one of the three U of T campuses or any other property owned or operated by U of T.

- There are two ways that individuals can complete the required self-assessment and generate a risk status each time they come to U of T: by using UCheck, or by completing a paper-based or offline self-assessment log.

- Upon completion of the UCheck self-assessment, if the individual receive a “red” status, the UCheck web portal prompts them to stay home, and immediately connect with their Dean, Chair, Academic Director or academic lead to discuss next steps if they need to come to campus AND to contact their local student health clinic to determine whether further follow up is required by the OHN.

- Declare their absence through the Absence Declaration tool on ACORN if they are sick or self-isolating.

- Consider advising their supervisor, undergraduate coordinator, or graduate coordinator of their status if they are sick or self-isolating.

- Abide by the relevant sections in this guideline if employed by or conducting work for the University.

For student-related queries, please refer to applicable guidelines when they become available.

Campus-Specific Property Management / Facilities Management Groups

Before resuming operations, property and facilities management groups must:

- Review this guideline, and in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, implement measures in this guideline in common and shared areas in buildings (e.g. stairwells, loading docks, corridors, elevators and lobbies, washrooms). Post clear instructions to ensure communication for all building users, including visitors.

- Ensure that contractors are aware of and comply with the COVID-19 procedures applicable to the areas in which they will perform work.

Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSCs)

During this highly complex emergency situation, the role of the JHSC, as part of the Internal Responsibility System, remains unchanged. As employees return to work on-campus, all Joint Health & Safety Committee members must:

- Ensure the workplace internal responsibility system is functioning by holding regular meetings and conducting monthly workplace inspections to ensure workplace hazards are addressed.

- Participate in applicable hygiene sampling plans, work refusals and critical injury investigations.
• Act as a resource for employees and receive their health and safety concerns when an issue is not resolved with the employee’s supervisor and manager.

• Virtual inspections are an interim measure in place of in-person, monthly workplace inspections. As there is a gradual return-to-campus, virtual inspections may not be required. However, in the event that virtual inspections are required, the JHSC manager will contact the committee to schedule as required.

• Workplace inspection information is readily available to all committee members. If individuals have questions regarding workplace inspections, they are encouraged to contact their supervisor or engage their JHSC.

• Contact the U of T JHSC Manager, if they have any concerns: irn.tang@utoronto.ca.

Environmental Health and Safety

Environmental Health and Safety is responsible for:

• Developing and periodically updating this guideline, in consultation with the appropriate stakeholders, based on the changing COVID-19 situation and public health directives.

• Managing all COVID-19-related employee cases and risks at the University via the Occupational Health Nurse.

External Groups

External groups such as contractors, tenants, external groups that have a service agreement, occupancy agreement, lease agreement, etc. are responsible for following UofT procedures in common areas such as elevators, lobbies and hallway (e.g. directional arrows). For spaces under their control, external groups are responsible for assessing their operations and developing/implementing COVID-19 related measures. External groups must also sign and return COVID-19 Contractor/Externals Safety Acknowledgment Form and provide a copy to their UofT Contact.
3 MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF TRANSMISSION

Certain key elements need to be addressed in operating procedures and must be in place before on-campus operations resume. Units should utilize these workplace guidelines in order to develop their own COVID-19 procedures for their specific workplace.

SCHEDULING TASKS & WORKFLOW

Investigate ways to reduce potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus by minimizing the need and possibility of in-person interactions as much as possible. This may be on-going and may require adjustment over time, depending on applicable government and public health directives. For example:

- Reduce traffic into physical work spaces by continuing to operate remotely as much as possible, and have staff work from home in keeping with the document entitled *UTogether2020: A Roadmap for the University of Toronto.*
• Implement staggered shifts and flexible work arrangements to reduce the number of people in a space at the same time. Consider cohorts so the same individuals are scheduled to be in at the same time.

• Ensure any scheduling changes are consistent with collective agreement and policy requirements.

• Consider whether the work of the unit can be rearranged to reduce the need for in-person contact:
  o Provide services on-line or by phone.
  o Increase information on websites to reduce in-person inquiries.
  o Review services being offered to determine what is essential to offer onsite and what can be eliminated, deferred, or provided offsite.
  o Use text communication to minimize in-person interaction as much as possible.
  o Schedule virtual meetings, sharing screens, training/webinars etc.
  o Divert essential in-person appointments to virtual discussion to minimize in-person time required.
  o General visitors, volunteers and guests should be prohibited unless critical or essential to be on-site.

• Workers who are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should stay at home until cleared to return to work. Refer to COVID-19 HR guidelines. Due to absenteeism, illness or self-isolation, scheduling needs to be flexible.

• Minimize the need for individuals to wait in a waiting room (e.g., by spreading out appointments, having each individual stay outside the facility until the room is ready for them and then call in by phone preferably, or by scheduling visits to eliminate people gathering in reception areas).

• Remove non-essential items from any counters that the public/clients/staff may touch. This will reduce the need to disinfect those items.

• Continue to promote COVID-19 awareness, education, behaviours, and cough etiquette. Procedures include frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizers with 70-90% alcohol content.

• Anyone who enters University buildings will be screened through use of the University-approved poster (Restricted Access Poster 8.5x11 FA poster). Ensure screening procedure is unbiased, fair and not discriminatory. In addition, use restricted access measures including key/fob control. Individuals who inaccurately answer the self-screening question will be asked to leave the premises by the appropriate authority. Employees should report these concerns to their supervisor. Students should speak to their academic lead or contact. Follow up will be conducted by the supervisor or academic lead/contact

• Discourage sharing of equipment such as telephones, keyboards, desks or workstations. Please refer to the General Assessment Tool below.

• Paper, mail, packages and deliveries: This risk of the virus transmitting as result of handling paper, mail, packages and deliveries is low. General precautions for further
reducing risk include: where possible, implement contactless delivery and use electronic documents and frequent hand washing with soap and water (or use hand sanitizer if hand washing facilities are not available) after handling a package. Avoid practices such as passing handouts to the back of the room between students. Instead, lay out papers individually at the designated seating area or lay out individually at the entrance for pick up while following physical distancing. For roles which require frequent handling of deliveries, the use of disposable gloves may be considered. Employees should continue to practice good hand hygiene since gloves are not a replacement for washing hands regularly. Where practicable, consider wiping down the outside of packages with disinfectant.

If you department receives regular deliveries, develop safe work procedures which include:

- Delivery personnel must wear a non-medical mask
- Deliveries should be completed under 15 minutes
- Follow contactless delivery such as posting a phone number for the delivery personnel to call, designating a physically distanced drop-off point and staff members retrieving the items after the delivery personnel has left.
- Delivery personnel are expected to self-screen at the building entrance. Please ensure that the COVID-19 Restricted Access Self-Screening Poster is posted at every entrance including loading docks or other access points.

- All non-essential travel should be avoided. Should someone choose to travel, please review the Government of Canada Foreign Affairs website for travel advisories and ensure follow-up is conducted with their applicable travel insurance company regarding coverage restrictions. Public Health directives will need to be followed at the destination country as well as upon return to Canada (see Government of Canada website). For those returning to Canada after travelling abroad, please ensure that the travel guidance is followed and if COVID-19 related symptoms develop upon return. It is not necessary to contact please contact our occupational health nurse unless the employee has COVID-19 related symptoms.

- Until further notice, filming workout videos to facilitate remote workouts is not permitted in fitness facilities.

PERSONAL MEASURES TO REDUCE RISK OF EXPOSURE

Units should advocate the following Infection Prevention and Control strategies, which are based on government and public health directives:

1. Avoid touching your face, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
2. Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
3. Practice proper respiratory etiquette, such as sneezing and coughing into your elbow.
4. Do not shake hands.
5. Maintain physical distancing of two metres or more.
6. Sick employees should stay home.
In order to support the above strategies, units should refer to the Resources in this guideline.

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES TO REDUCE RISK OF EXPOSURE**

- Provide space for physical (social) distancing of at least two metres between colleagues, employees, students and visitors (e.g. by moving desks). Post maximum occupancy signage.

- **All food service** operations, including residences, operated by the University will be take-out until further notice.
  - Food service locations only: re-usable mugs/beverage containers will not be used for re-filling customer beverages until further notice.

*For future-planning purposes, when seated dining may take place again, units should plan for the following:*

*If for any reasons the operation must be opened for seating/dining:*
  - A limit of 10 is to be used for food planning purposes. Due to changing requirements, please ensure you also check applicable local public health guidance and municipal and provincial requirements.
  - The number of seated diners per table is 4 patrons maximum.
  - Keep background music and any other background sounds, such as from televisions or other electronic sound producing devices, no louder than the volume of normal conversation (with the exception of live performances carried out in accordance with the provincial Stage 3 regulation).
  - A customer log must be maintained for each patron, not just each person in the party.
  - A General Assessment Tool (GAT) or Event Assessment Tool (EAT) is to be approved by the Dean/CAO and reviewed by EHS. Please note, for any food services area which may be permitted to open for dining-in/seating, patron information must be collected at the point of purchase for contact purposes. Please include these details in the GAT/EAT.
  - **Residences.** The above requirements also apply for future-planning. Residences should limit seating for only those who have TCards (to facilitate contact tracing) which can be used to meet the customer log requirements above. If dining/seating options are provided to non-Tcard holders or individuals NOT purchasing food are allowed in the dining/seating areas, each person must complete the customer log above. It is recommended that residences provide a resource to monitor the dining/seating areas to ensure the log book is completed by such individuals.

- Where possible, such as in an office, lunch/food should be consumed at the individual’s workstation. Units should avoid re-purposing rooms as seating areas to reduce the potential for gatherings. Where it is necessary to provide lunch room/eating spaces, units will document in the GAT and include measures such as but not limited to: physical distancing with no more than 10 people, disinfection and cleaning, hand hygiene, contact tracing and signage.
- Modify furniture arrangement for visitors or staff to increase physical distancing (pre-arrange moving of furniture with local facilities group).

- Remove or tape off chairs in waiting rooms, service and receiving areas to promote physical distancing for the public.

- Consider measures such as restricting building access to fob/key only.

- Floorplans are available for all three campuses through Campus & Facilities Planning: https://updc.utoronto.ca/campus-facilities-planning/building-plans/. However, it is recommended that each unit and/or manager develop their own simple schematics as/if applicable. In many instances, because of reduced occupancy, adhering to general physical distancing and using our resources including but limited to: floor stickers and elevators signs will suffice. EHS will assist for specific division level considerations.

- Install other protective barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards (consider only if other measures are not feasible or it is not possible to maintain physical distance of two metres. NOTE: plexiglass barriers do not increase occupancy limits. Maximum occupancy is usually the lesser of either the gathering limit (where applicable, as set by the provincial government) or the ability to physical distance.

When designing/determining the need for physical barriers, please refer to the considerations in the section on Protective Barriers in the General Assessment Tool.

- Caretaking will implement applicable procedures for high touch areas in common spaces (such as doorknobs, elevator buttons, light switches, handrails, etc.); however, building occupants are also asked to clean high touch areas in their workspace (such as workspace countertops, shared equipment/tools) throughout the day. Units can contact Caretaking for supplies.

- If using reusable cloths to disinfect, change cloths regularly and use sufficient amounts disinfectant to wet the surface being disinfected. Follow manufacturer’s instructions on use and contact time. Depending on the product, you may be able to spray directly on the surface and allow it air dry without wiping. Reusable cleaning items can be washed using regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90°C).

- After disinfection is completed, the item or space can return to normal use/operations. Objects or spaces that cannot be disinfected or cleaned should be quarantined for 72 hours. In situations where objects are difficult to disinfect, disinfect accessible surfaces and quarantined/isolated for 72 hours.

- There is discussion about aerosol transmission of COVID-19 but public health authorities and medical evidence/infection control continue to support droplet contact as the main routes of transmission (close contact with a positive case and touching a contaminated surface and then touching your eyes/nose/mouth rather than airborne transmission). For this reasons, the basic principles of physical distancing, staying home when ill, surface cleaning and disinfection and hand washing are far more important than the HVAC system. At this point in time, there is no current evidence that supports COVID-19
transmitted through ventilation systems. Face coverings are also now required in common use areas (see FAQ #4 and Section 6 of this document), providing an additional layer of protection.

In addition, the Tri-campus HVAC Strategy is consistent with best available public health and engineering guidance. Aerosol transmission may occur in hospital settings during aerosol-generating procedures (e.g. intubation of a confirmed COVID-19 patient) but activities at the University do not pose the same level of material risk. There is no additional requirement for portable air filtration for instructional or administrative areas. Toronto public health has also stated that there is no evidence for the use of air purifiers to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Protective measures applicable to specific activities such as music or athletics will be reviewed through the GAT submissions process.

- **Reminder**: consideration must be given to accessibility requirements when making changes to physical workspaces.

**COMMUNICATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS**

Once a re-entry plan has been developed, it is important to communicate this plan in accessible and plain language to faculty, librarians, staff, students and other users of the space. The communication strategy will vary depending on the unit, but here are some recommendations:

- Consult with divisional, faculty, campus and University communications teams for resources and materials. Communications may take the form of memos, emails and meetings (following physical distancing). Ensure alternate formats of communication are made available. Please contact the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Office or appropriate divisional HR office for more information.

- Direct readers to University websites and resources for further information – see Appendix A for Resources.

- In addition to faculty, librarians, staff and students in the unit, consider how you will communicate with contractors, organizations and other departments that you work with routinely. Please refer to the COVID-19 Construction Guidelines when available.

- Update procedures for scheduling appointments.

- Post signage at an accessible height to remind workers and inform students and visitors. (Common signage will be developed for use across the University.)

- Post information on your website or send email to all clients advising them to call prior to coming to your office or facility, and update your email signature with instructions on new procedures.

- Utilize social media channels to provide updates and reminders.
• For high traffic flow areas, consider providing a resource to explain the procedure and direct visitors.

• Communications will need to occur more than once. Consider creating an official feedback mechanism (refer to Diagram 1) to get feedback from faculty, librarians, staff and students who may have additional suggestions to improve the procedure. The procedure may also change over time as restrictions continue to lift. The re-entry procedure may need to be adjusted over time and re-communicated to relevant parties.

Rumours and misinformation can circulate rapidly amongst the community and widely via social media. Stigma can undermine institutional cohesion and prompt possible social isolation of individuals and/or groups, which might contribute to a situation where the virus is more, not less, likely to spread. Stigma is when people are labelled, or stereotyped, and can lead to discrimination in the workplace based on their age, disability, ethnic origin, place of origin, and race, or other protected grounds in the workplace. Consider creating unit-level communication and awareness campaigns, tailored to specific workplace environments, developed with assistance from University of Toronto Communications, EHS, and HR & Equity Offices.

For more information, please review the document entitled Social Stigma associated with COVID-19 from UNICEF.

WORKSTATION ERGONOMICS

Employees may have questions about workstation ergonomics when working at home or making changes to their workstation (e.g. furniture or computer equipment being moved after cleaning/disinfection or after re-arrangement for meeting physical distancing). Please visit the EHS Office Ergonomics webpage and the EHS Office Ergonomics Infographics website. Employees can further learn about how to fully assess and set up their workstation by taking the free online course EHS536 Office Ergonomics (to locate the course please go to the My EHS Training and follow the instructions). If you have a specific request such as taking office equipment home, please contact your supervisor. Supervisors/managers can contact HR for assistance.
4 PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF A UCHECK RED SCREEN, CONFIRMED AND/OR SYMPTOMATIC COVID-19 CASE

In order to better respond to the global COVID-19 pandemic and protect the health of faculty, librarians, staff and students, the University’s tracking procedures for probable or confirmed COVID-19 cases among members of our University community are outlined in this section.

For the most current procedures, please also review procedures visit the EHS COVID-19 webpage. Instructions on what to do if you receive an alert from the Health Canada COVID-19 app is also on the webpage.

For more information on the case management, please refer to the UofT COVID-19 Case Management Process (Symptomatic & Confirmed cases).
5 COVID-19 GENERAL WORKPLACE ASSESSMENT TOOL (GAT)

Figure 2: Key steps of re-entry planning assessment, control and continuous improvement of processes

The process outlined below follows the continuous improvement process shown in Figure 2.
INSTRUCTIONS FOR NON-RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

*Research: Please refer to the Guideline for Reopening Research Space.

**Policies and procedures may change due to public health directives. Please refer to the latest version of guidelines and assessment tools which can be found here: https://hrandequity.utoronto.ca/covid-19/returning-to-campus/**

There are a number of different tools for different groups at the University for different times of activities (e.g. units vs. student societies or regular operations vs. events). Before proceeding, please review the instructional guidance (Table 1). For guidance of maximum attendees or gathering limits, please refer to Table 2 in the same document.

Instructions for the COVID-19 General Assessment Tool

Units are to use the COVID-19 General Assessment Tool (GAT) to build Re-Entry Plans for units and offices. Divisions that have not yet submitted a plan are encouraged to work closely with their Divisional HR Office and Environmental Health and Safety as needed to complete their Re-Entry Plans. Instructions are outlined in the COVID-19 Leadership Toolkit.

With the aim of streamlining approvals, GAT submissions will no longer require approval from the Workforce Planning Committee. It is the responsibility of each unit to ensure that EHS has reviewed and provided feedback on their GAT, and that all EHS recommendations are incorporated and implemented in their final Re-Entry Plan. Once EHS’ feedback has been incorporate, unless there are further questions or concerns, it is not necessary to resend the GATs to EHS. Deans, Division Heads, or designates will be responsible for final review and approval of all GATs and Re-Entry Plans for their units.

Please note that submission of the General Assessment Tool is not required unless a unit is requesting to resume in-person operations. However, departments can use the Tool for planning future resumption of in-person operations.

In addition to the GAT, there are additional (optional) tools at the end of this guide for units to use: Appendix B – COVID-19 Control Template (excel), Appendix C - COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedure template and Append D – PPE Assessment Tool.Changes and amendments to GATs: Changes may be made to existing GATs and approved by the Dean or unit lead. EHS can be consulted if needed. If there is a change to the Employee Tracker Form, please update your local HR office and copy HR (Sean Sulman (sean.suleman@utoronto.ca) and Joan Griffin (joan.griffin@utoronto.ca)).

If you have any questions, concerns or special considerations (e.g. outdoor areas, food service, etc.), please continue to follow these steps and contact EHS (ehs.office@utoronto.ca) for assistance.

University of Toronto – Environmental Health and Safety
COVID-19 General Workplace Guideline
March 19, 2021
This guideline is expected to change often based on COVID-19 related public health and government directives. Please do not download/circulate this document; visit the COVID-19 Leadership Toolkit for most up to date version. This guideline is intended to be used by CAOs, HR managers and academic leadership.
Prior to making any physical changes to the workplace, any installation that involves the disturbance of building fabric (e.g. walls, flooring, ceiling) should be evaluated for asbestos. For example, some lab countertops may also contain asbestos. Please always work with your Property Manager or local facilities group to ensure proper procedures are followed. Please also work with your Property Manager or local facilities group for moving any furniture or heavy items to reduce the risk of injury.

Consideration must be requirements when making changes to physical workspaces – please contact your Divisional HR Office or the AODA Office for assistance.

Instructions for the Student Societies (in lieu of a GAT)

The submission of the Student Society Assessment Acknowledgement Tool (SAT) is required if a student society is requesting to resume in-person operations (in lieu of the GAT). This document applies to student societies as defined by the Compulsory Non-Academic Incidental Fees with employer responsibilities under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act (for example SCSU, UTMSU, UTSU, APUS, GSU, EngSoc, ASSU). A student society that does not have employer responsibilities should contact their local campus, college or divisional administration to complete a GAT.

Student societies must put in place measures to protect the health and safety of any and all individuals in the operations under their control (e.g., staff, volunteers, contractors, suppliers, agents, etc., collectively “personnel”) and visitors. Student society leads must be familiar with and run the organization in compliance with, and ensure staff members comply with:

- All applicable laws, bylaws, regulations, codes,
- Public health recommendations,
- Federal/provincial/municipal guidelines, and
- Publications of provincial health and safety associations.

Student society leads must advise the University of any health and safety hazards that may impact the University as a result of student society operations. This document is an assessment tool for assisting student society leads in applying COVID-19 exposure-reducing controls, strategies and precautions in their operations to develop their health and safety procedures and as a mechanism to inform the University of potential impacts. There is a large variety of different operations and physical work environments across the campuses and each student society should review their specific operations and physical environment to determine which of the controls below can be implemented. In addition, student societies must ensure that all vendors, contractors, service providers are aware of and abide by applicable health and safety procedures.

Student society event organizers with employer responsibilities are responsible for putting measures in place to protect the health and safety of any and all individuals operating the event under their control (e.g., event staff, volunteers, contractors, suppliers, agents, etc., collectively “event organizer’s personnel”) and participants of the event. Please refer to the COVID-19 Events Guidelines and complete Appendix D. Student Society Event Organizer Acknowledgement.
Instructions for the Events Guidelines

Required/essential in-person meetings for regular workplace operations may continue to occur as necessary where meeting virtually is not an option. In buildings that are not event spaces but have rooms available for booking, (e.g. UTSG -ACE), please ensure that bookings are not made for events. Similarly, in buildings that have meeting and event spaces, workplace meetings may be booked in these locations if it is essential and part of regular/required operations (and not an event).

All event organizers are responsible for putting measures in place to protect the health and safety of any and all individuals operating the event under their control (e.g., event staff, volunteers, contractors, suppliers, agents, etc., collectively “event organizer’s personnel”) and participants of the event. Please refer to the COVID-19 Events Guidelines and complete an Event Assessment Tool (EAT) instead of a GAT.

Student society/club/group should obtain information from the VP-Provost Students (meredith.strong@utoronto.ca) to obtain permission for an event. After obtaining permission, the student society/club/group should work with their UofT space contact to completed an EAT (please refer Table 1 (Instructional Guidance on which form to use) and Table 2 (limits)).

Student societies/club/group events are to abide the following until further notice:

- No food with the exception prepared, individualized boxed foods for orientation activities.
- No activities involving yelling, chanting or singing.

Until further notice, events are not allowed in lobbies, foyers or similar open spaces unless to fulfill course requirements

For more details on permitted events/activities, please refer to Section 3 of the COVID-19 Events Guidelines

COVID-19 GENERAL ASSESSMENT TOOL (GAT)

There are a number of different tools for different groups at the University for different times of activities (e.g. units vs. student societies or regular operations vs. events). Before proceeding, please review the instructional guidance (Table 1). For guidance of maximum attendees or gathering limits, please refer to Table 2 in the same document.

An electronic version of this WORD document is available: General Assessment Tool. Please submit the GAT at least 7 business days in advance of planned re-opening to ensure adequate time for feedback, clarifications and implementing recommendations. For future amendments, please ensure you use/download the most recent of the form.

Student Societies should fill out the Student Society Assessment Acknowledgement Tool (SAT) for any resumption of in-person activities that is not related to an event instead of a GAT.

This document is an assessment tool for assisting unit leads in applying COVID-19 exposure-reducing controls, strategies and precautions in their operations. There is a large variety of different operations and physical work environments across the campuses and each unit should
review their specific operations and physical environment to determine which of the controls below can be implemented. GATs document specific details regarding the unit staff who will be onsite, the work they will perform and the facilities to be used. Facilities used may include spaces controlled by the unit, or other spaces, including temporary work spaces and shared spaces such as meeting rooms. If using a space not controlled by your unit for an activity covered by a GAT prepared for your unit, ensure that you have communicated with the space owner to identify any controls, strategies and precautions identified in any GAT they have prepared which covers the space, and to advise them of the GAT your unit has prepared and will be following when in the space. Please also discuss your return-to-work plans with your local facilities group to ensure spaces (including common use spaces such as entrances, elevators, washrooms) are prepared accordingly and confirm these details in the GAT.

The Toronto Public Health document Strategies to Increase Physical Distancing and Spread Reduction for Community Partners is also an excellent resource for workplaces. If you have questions or require assistance in completing this tool, please contact your local Environmental Health and Safety designate, or you can reach out to EHS at ehs.office@utoronto.ca. If you would like to see a sample of a completed General Assessment Tool, please contact EHS.

Please note, this GAT template will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis based upon changes to legal requirements, public health advice, operational needs, and other circumstances. For the same reasons, GATs completed and submitted by units, including the control measures set out in completed GATs, are expected to evolve and change over time. Policies and procedures may change due to public health directives. Please refer to the latest version of guidelines and assessment tools which can be found here: https://hrandequity.utoronto.ca/covid-19/returning-to-campus/. It is the responsibility of the unit or division to update their GATs as required to reflect changes to public health, provincial directives and/or University polices/procedures. For units or divisions wishing to plan ahead, or where, as a result of changes to public health and provincial directives or University polices/procedures, activities in an approved GAT are (temporarily) not allowed, it is the unit/division’s responsibility to ensure measures outlined in the GAT align with public health/provincial directives that are in effect at the time when activities are taking place.

Please note that submission of the General Assessment Tool is not required unless a unit is requesting to resume on-campus operations. For more information on how to request approval to resume on-campus activities, access the COVID-19 Leadership Toolkit and review information on what documents must be submitted to HR & Equity for approval. Information on how to submit these documents to HR & Equity is available in the Toolkit.

Employees who have a medical condition and are concerned about COVID-19 (e.g. are medically at-risk) should contact U of T Health and Well-Being for guidance: hwb@utoronto.ca or 416-978-2149.
6 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Please note this is the institutional position on the use of face masks. Departments/units are to follow the Policy and Guideline when developing their own unit-level plans. This information will change accordingly with government and public health directives. Please regularly refer to the University’s FAQs for updated information.

Wearing of medical masks may be required for protective purposes in certain occupational settings for tasks where there is risk of exposure such as health clinics or research labs. EHS will determine whether the use of masks is required and if so, whether N95s, surgical masks or other types of masks are appropriate.

In October 2020, the provincial government enacted a mandatory requirement for non-medical masks and face covering to be worn within enclosed public spaces in O.Reg. 364/20 Provincial regulation Public health authorities recommend wearing a non-medical mask in addition to physical distancing to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Non-medical masks should always be worn when physical distancing may be challenging or not possible. When we all wear a mask to cover our respiratory droplets it provides source control to reduce the spread of germs into the air and on surfaces. While those with symptoms should stay home, there are cases of transmission of disease from asymptomatic individuals.

Per Toronto Public Health, qualities of a good non-medical mask include masks that are made of at least 2 layers. A three-layer mask may provide added protection. However, the Chief Public Health Officer has said this does not mean that existing masks need to be disposed of and they can continue to be used. A three-layer mask may be considered for people at greater risk of COVID-19 due to work or living situations. Information on how to add a filter to existing 2 layer masks is available at the Toronto Public Health webpage provided above. The City of Toronto defines non-medical mask or face covering as a mask, balaclava, bandana, scarf, cloth or other similar item that covers the nose, mouth and chin without gapping.

Non-medical masks may be used in non-healthcare settings for source control (i.e. protects others, not the wearer). However, non-medical masks are not personal protective equipment (PPE) and their use does not alter the contact risk assessment process; therefore, physical distancing should still be consistently practiced even when non-medical masks or face covering are being worn.

The following types of face covering is not recommended for general use:

- **Face shields** are not a replacement for a face covering or non-medical mask. They can be an option for those who require an accommodation. Accommodations are made on case-by-case basis. Face shields is another option for eye protection when employees are working <2m apart. Employees requiring accommodation should advise their supervisor and contact their divisional HR Office. Students requiring accommodation...
Masks with an exhalation valve are not recommended because they may filter dust particles in the air as the person inhales, but they may not filter virus particles or respiratory droplets. This means droplets from a person can be spread in a room, reducing the benefit of the mask. Respirators with exhaust valves are also not recommended. These are intended to make the respirator more comfortable for the person who is wearing it, but they can also allow respiratory droplets to spread in room. *If you must use a respirator with an exhaust valve, use them when you are working alone or wear a mask over the respirator (note: a medical mask must be worn if physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained).*

- **Clear plastic face masks** with openings or gaping areas that extend below the chin and wrap around the sides of the face may be considered when communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, to allow them to lip read. However, clear plastic face masks are not recommended for general use as they do not cover the nose, mouth and chin without gapping and cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected between uses. Non-medical masks with a clear panel may be an option and are available from UofT Medstore.

**University of Toronto Policy on Non-Medical Masks or Face Coverings**

Masks or face coverings are to be worn indoors, including classrooms and common areas in residences on University property. **Please ensure you have a non-medical mask or face-covering ready when working on-campus to meet this policy.**

**Enforcement:** Enforcement will depend on the individual’s relationship with the University, the nature of an incident, the place in which it occurred, and the impact on others in that place. Individuals who do not comply with this policy and who do not have an approved accommodation may be asked to leave premises by the appropriate authority. Employees should engage with their supervisor and students should engage with their academic lead/contact if they have concerns. Follow up will be conducted by the supervisor or academic lead/contact.

Masks with clear screens may be worn to facilitate working/teaching with those who are Deaf, Deafened, Hard of Hearing or who have hearing loss and in circumstances where visualization of facial expression is of pedagogical importance such as studio/performance activities. Units may purchase masks with screens from external vendors with the following guidance in mind: [https://ehs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Cloth_Mask.pdf](https://ehs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Cloth_Mask.pdf) and FAQ: [https://www.utoronto.ca/utogether2020/faqs](https://www.utoronto.ca/utogether2020/faqs)

Medical masks and eye protection* (e.g. goggles, face shield) are to be worn for tasks and activities where physical distancing (2 metres) cannot be consistently maintained (for example, instructional/classroom environments, trades operations, clinics). Please contact EHS for an assessment if required. Please attain medical grade masks as applicable from your existing supply chains and/or medical stores.
In instances where a worker is providing service or working with someone who cannot wear a mask or face covering, is within two metres of the person, and is not separated by an impermeable barrier, the worker must wear a medical mask or face covering and eye protection or face shield.

For exceptions for when a masks are not required refer to the Joint Provostial and Human Resources Guideline on Non-Medical Masks at the University of Toronto. The guideline will be updated periodically as our response to COVID-19 evolves. Until further notice, the information contained in the Policy, Guideline and the exemptions below apply during all stages of the provincial COVID-19 response framework.

Wearing a mask or face covering is also strongly recommended outside when people cannot physically distance more than two metres. Masks are required to be worn when lining up outside for services even if physical distancing is maintained.

Additional Guidance regarding mask exemptions:

- Children under the age of 2.
- Children who are attending school within the meaning of the Education Act or attending a child care program.
- Private offices, open concept/shared offices and other work areas when all of the following conditions apply: 1) there is no public access; 2) physical distancing (2 metres) can be consistently maintained; 3) all individuals are performing work for the University (e.g. employees, contractors). For offices, once seated and with physical distancing, employees may remove their mask but must put mask back on when leaving their desk. Physical distancing may require units to follow a rotational schedule or stagger shifts. Once seated, no “visiting” other occupied workstations.
- Workspace behind protective barriers. However masks are required if employees behind the barriers cannot maintain physical distancing from other employees.
- Lunchrooms, dining halls, etc. once seated and while eating/drinking
- Indoor areas such as designated meeting rooms, lunchrooms, spaces, rooms providing WiFi access and lounges when all of the following conditions apply: 1) there is no public access; 2) physical distancing (2 metres) can be consistently maintained; 3) all individuals in the space are performing work for the University 4) where contact tracing information can be collected.
- Collaboration spaces when all of the following conditions apply: 1) there is no public access; 2) physical distancing (2 metres) can be consistently maintained; 3) all individuals in the space are performing work for the University (employees, contractors).

**Research/laboratory spaces (including cold rooms)** - All lab members must wear masks. Certain considerations for mask exemption may be applicable for university employees in research environments if all of the following apply 1) the approved departmental/divisional research re-entry plans allow individuals to maintain a consistent two-meter physical distance, where there is no requirement for Personal Protective equipment; 2) there is no public access, and; 3) all individuals in the space are performing work for the University (employees, contractors). For questions regarding the application
of this exception and/or regarding accommodations regarding mask use in in
research/laboratory spaces contact ehs.office@utoronto.ca.

Given the diversity of lab personnel and researchers, and the importance of applying a
consistent approach across our research areas, the university requires everyone
conducting research in labs to wear masks even when physical distancing measures can
be applied. Note: Masks do not replace the need for two-metre physical distancing, hand
washing, and staying home when sick.

• When performing or rehearsing in a film or television product or in a concert, artistic
event, theatrical performance or other performance that has been authorized by the
University.

• Shared facilities in residences shared by a defined group of roommates (e.g. kitchen in
shared townhouse residential unit).

• Working alone in publicly accessible spaces that are locked after-hours (i.e. no longer
publically assessable) and physical distancing can be consistently maintained.

• In situations where there is temporary need to remove the mask or face covering while in
an indoor area,
  ○ To receive services that require the removal of mask or face covering
  ○ As may be necessary for purposes of health and safety

• Accommodations are made on case-by-case basis. Employees requiring accommodation
should advise their supervisor and contact their divisional HR Office. Students requiring
accommodation should contact their academic lead and the Office of the Provost –
Students. If there are concerns regarding an external (non-employee/non-student) having
or requiring a face-covering exemption, please refer to your supervisor and/or academic
lead to review on a case-by-case basis. EHS can be contacted for assistance
(ehs.office@utoronto.ca; 416-978-4467).

Note: When required to wear a mask or face covering while working with hazardous material
(e.g. biological agents, flammable chemicals, radioactive agents), please speak to your
supervisor/Principle Investigator on the safe use of face coverings and masks.

For learning and teaching environments: Non-medical mask or face covering will be required
in learning and teaching environments. If there are health and safety reasons or pedagogical
reasons why a mask or face covering should not be worn, the instructor will delineate these
reasons and attain approval from the Dean. EHS will be advised of any decision pertaining to
mask exemptions in learning and teaching environments to ensure a systematic approach with
the understanding of that each course will have unique considerations.

*Eye protection: Eye protection must provide a barrier to splash/spray from both the front and
from the sides and if applicable, from the top (e.g. Health care worker). For this reason, goggles
and face shield are the primary forms of protection when there is a risk of splashing (e.g.
healthcare workers providing care to sick patient). Some but not all forms of safety glasses may
provide adequate eye protection. Safety glasses may be considered in specific situations where
there is a low risk of splashing and where the use of goggles or face shields may impede the
worker’s vision causing safety concerns (e.g. drivers). Where safety glasses are used, select models where gaps between the face and glasses are minimized. Where applicable, consider sourcing products that have an anti-fog coating. If you have any further questions on appropriate eye protection, please contact EHS. When selecting eye protection in the work or study environment, also take into consideration if there are other hazards where eye protection is needed (e.g. corrosive chemicals, flying debris).

**PPE ASSESSMENT AND REQUEST PROCESS**

At the University of Toronto, the Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) Office will determine whether employees and students should be provided with the appropriate medical masks (N95 masks, surgical masks etc.) when working in specific environments such as some research labs and health care settings. For all other work conducted at the University, the general use of face covering is required, as outlined in the the Policy on Non-Medical Masks or Face Coverings and the accompanying Guideline.

The University is distributing two non-medical masks for all members of the community for their personal use. If you require additional non-medical masks and cannot source your own supply, please contact Medstore.

Non-medical masks do not require EHS review/approval. For other types of PPE, please contact EHS (ehs.office@utoronto.ca) for assistance. Please use the PPE assessment template (Appendix D) as needed.
7 ADDRESSING EMPLOYEE CONCERNS

One of the consequences of working in a large and dynamic workplace, such as the University, during a time of pandemic is a heightened awareness of risk.

Work with your divisional HR office to assess and mitigate any concerns raised by employees during the process of re-opening, including:

(a) Health needs
(b) Caregiving
(c) Transportation

Employers have an obligation under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to take reasonable care to maintain a safe and healthy workplace, including during a pandemic.

There are multiple sources of perceived risk in the workplace during a pandemic, including:

- a confirmed or presumptive case of COVID-19 in the workplace
- a confirmed case of COVID-19 in an employee's immediate family or other close contact
- the risk of potential exposure to COVID-19 from clients, external parties, community members and other employees depending on the nature of the workplace
- concerns from at-risk employees (e.g. age related, compromised immune system, underlying medical condition, etc. subject to change as identified by provincial public health authorities) not wishing to report to work
- employee concerns about stigma, bias and discrimination in the workplace based on age, ethnicity, place of origin, race and/or disability
- employee concerns over workplace practices and control methods, including personal protective equipment, or
• employees with a generalized fear of contracting COVID-19 by travelling to or attending work

Workplaces with robust health and safety systems as well as effective communication and outreach are often able to resolve health and safety concerns related to the above factors so that they do not escalate unnecessarily. For guidance on responding to employee concerns and for wellness supports for your employees, please reference the Manager’s Guide to Returning to Operations on Campus (please refer to the HR& Equity Management Resources section at the link)..

The below are some suggestions:

1. **Start each day (or week) and/or shift with a safety talk or have regular all employee check-in meetings to see how everyone is doing.** Review COVID-19 measures and/or institutional messaging. Ask for feedback and suggestions. Keep the safety talks positive. The University is engaged in numerous, exciting initiatives regarding COVID-19 – you could discuss the latest featured U of T research story, U of T News coverage, etc.

2. **Model the desired behaviour and encourage control measures**, such as physical distancing, proper personal hygiene, etc. so that employees understand and meet your expectations. Lead by example.

3. **Reach out. Be present and available to employees.** We have many employees working remotely at this time, so use institutionally approved tools such Teams to conduct staff meetings or to check in with each of your staff individually to see how they are adapting.

4. **Keep communication channels open and encourage your reports to bring concerns forward.** Talk it through and see if you can find a solution together.

5. **Be mindful of any stress that employees may be dealing with at work and at home.** If they express specific worries, pay attention. If there is a health and safety concern, address it immediately. Contact HR/EHS for assistance as required.

What to do if your staff have concerns:

1. **Respond calmly and with assurance.** Listen carefully before speaking. If you do not know the answer regarding a COVID-19 related question/matter, attain the appropriate information first before responding to a concern.

2. **Ask questions** such as “What more could we do? What would help ease your concerns? What would help you feel more comfortable doing this task?”. If you make changes, communicate them to anyone who may be affected, ideally in writing (e.g. confirm via e-mail to all your reports when you have implemented a safety measure). Please note: before implementing any measures, ensure you obtain approval first to ensure your proposed measure is consistent with other institutional risk mitigation measures. Contact your Divisional HR Office and EHS for assistance.

3. **Be flexible** and be prepared to accommodate individual needs. One single approach will not work for all as there are differing needs of among employees.

4. **Implement changes promptly.** When a concern is brought to your attention, respond immediately. Assessing a concern may take time; however, an immediate response to a concerned employee advising them that you are reviewing their concern and will be in touch soon as possible goes a long way to de-escalating worry and anxiety. If you need assistance
in managing a concern, connect with your unit lead sooner rather than later to ensure you are provided with the support you require to effectively and expeditiously de-escalate concerns.

5. As per the above, **effective, pro-active and responsive communication** in keeping with institutional messaging guidelines is instrumental in de-escalating concerns both at the individual and unit level. Employees who have concerns should engage with their supervisor immediately.

To supplement the General Workplace Guideline, HR & Equity has been developed a guide to assist managers with respect to returning employees to work on-site at the University. The **Manager’s Guide to Returning to Operations on Campus** (please refer to the HR& Equity Management Resources section at the link) includes best practices for supporting staff, communication templates, responses to frequently asked questions and checklists for preparing employees for re-entry.

# 8 EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

The re-opening procedures developed in accordance with this guideline may result in changing the way work is done and the physical environment in which it is done.

This could be a variety of equity impacts, including impacts related to:

(a) Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) and the Ontario Human Rights Code

(b) Individual accommodation plans, such as accommodations for employees with disabilities or family caregiving obligations, which may include specific measures relating to scheduling, the physical workspace, or other elements that could be impacted by COVID-19-related changes.

(c) Employee needs relating to disability or caregiving obligations that did not previously require accommodation may now require accommodation due to changes implemented as a result of this guideline.

(d) Stigma associated with COVID-19 due to an employee’s age, ethnicity, place of origin, race, and disability could lead to discrimination in the workplace. For more information regarding human rights, please refer to the Ontario Human Rights Commission website and the Communications section above.

(e) Stigma affects us all. Address stigma at every opportunity through communications, general education and as issues arise. Please work with our Equity offices for support and assistance to address issues, create messaging and receive communication tips.

(f) Operating procedures including screening and enforcement must include an equity lens, as specific community members within the U of T community may experience differential treatment or adverse impacts. Adequate processes/procedures with equity in mind is critical.
(g) Embed equity, diversity and inclusion when developing training modules for employees on the department/division’s procedures. Please refer to the Equity Offices for further resources.

(h) As measures are being put in place, please consider existing Ontario Human Rights Code and AODA legislation and the accommodation obligations based on family status and / or disability. For additional information, contact Human Resources and Equity.

APPENDIX A: RESOURCES FOR COVID-19

For the latest information about U of T’s COVID-19 response, please see the University’s UTogether2020 page and University’s Coronavirus page. Please take the time to review our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and the Human Resources & Equity page on COVID-19 (e.g. Return to Work Processes during COVID-19 Response document). If you or members of your unit have a question that is not covered, please consider using the Contact Us button located at the top of the FAQ section to submit your question.

HR-RELATED COVID-19 RESOURCES

For a list of COVID-19 resources available to all employees, please visit: http://www.hrandequity.utoronto.ca/covid-19/#resources.

For COVID-19 manager resources, please visit the COVID-19 Leadership Toolkit at https://uoft.me/leadership-toolkit. (please refer to the HR& Equity Management Resources section at the link).

RESEARCH AND TEACHING

- Principles for Research Recovery and Adaptation
- Guideline for Reopening Research Laboratories and Spaces
- University of Toronto Research COVID-19 webpage
- In-class instruction and teaching guidelines (available from the COVID-19 Leadership Toolkit at https://uoft.me/leadership-toolkit.)
- EHS Field (Off-Campus) Research Safety (detailed information on planning)
- Face-to-Face and Off-Campus (F2FOC) COVID-19 Review Form)
SPECIFIC WORKPLACES RESOURCES

- Toronto PH Strategies to Increase Physical Distancing and Spread Reduction for Community Partners
- Construction Guidelines
- Tri-Campus Caretaking Strategy for Return to the University
- COVID-19 Procedure for Non-Clinic Employees Working in Clinics

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO POSTERS AND INFORMATION ON COVID-19

Please refer to the EHS COVID-19 webpage: https://ehs.utoronto.ca/covid-19-information/

POSTERS AND INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS

- Toronto Public Health poster on proper handwashing and TPH COVID-19 poster
- Toronto Public Health poster on using sanitizers
- Toronto Public Health Cough Etiquette and TPH COVID-19 poster
- TPH COVID-19 How to wash your hands and How to sanitize your hands
- TPH Physical Distancing Poster
- TPH How to protect yourself COVID-19 poster
- Ministry of Health’s How to protect yourself
- Public Health Ontario’s Cleaning and Disinfection of Public Settings
- US Water Quality and Health Council posters on cleaning and sanitizing
- Centre for Disease Control’s List of disinfectants for use against COVID-19
- TPH Strategies to Increase Physical Distancing and Spread Reduction for Community Partners
- Ontario Ministry of Health Screening for symptoms of COVID-19 poster
- Health and Safety Association Guidance Documents for Workplaces During the COVID-19 Outbreak
- Ontario Resources to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANIZATION

- Toronto Public Health
- Peel Region Public Health
- Ontario Ministry of Health
- Public Health Ontario
- A Framework for Opening our Province
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- World Health Organization
SCHEMATIC OF COVID-19 GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS:

If your workplace has special considerations, please contact gina.trubiani@utoronto.ca.
* If your workplace has special considerations, please contact gina.trubiani@utoronto.ca.

** For the student placement and practicum site readiness guides, please contact Bridgid McNulty (non-health science) or Heather Skelton (Health Science). For Divisions or programs partnering with TAHSN having a separate process not outlined on the VPS placement webpage page, contact Sarah Gottlieb.
APPENDIX B: COVID-19 RE-ENTRY CONTROL PLANNING

This is an optional template. If you complete the General Assessment Tool, you do not need to complete this. An EXCEL template is available at on the EHS Website: http://ehs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-Control-Template-excel.xls. Units can adapt the template to their operations.
APPENDIX C: COVID-19 STANDARD OPERATION PROCEDURES (SOP)

This an optional template for units to use if they wish to develop a task-specific procedure. You do not have to complete this if you have completed the General Assessment Tool.

This WORD template is available from the EHS website: http://ehs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-SOPTemplate.docx.

This template is available to units who wish to develop a standard operating procedure based on the assessment tools in the prior appendices.

Pages 1 and 2:

Pages 3 and 4:
APPENDIX D: PPE ASSESSMENT TOOL

This EXCEL tool can be downloaded at: http://ehs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PPE-Assessment-Template.xls.

We would request that your assessment be based on Stage 1 and 2 staffing, with a view to a future updating of the assessment using your gradual re-entry plans, as confirmed with HRE. With this information, we will be able to plan for the phased procurement and distribution of PPE across the tri-campus. Please consider the above definitions carefully when assessing need.

*Research PPE Assessments: Please refer to the Guideline for Reopening Research Space.*
Appendix E: University of Toronto Safety Plans

University of Toronto Safety Plans are located on the EHS webpage:

- COVID-19 Safety Plan for General University Operations
- COVID-19 Safety Plan for In-Class/Person Instruction and Teaching
- COVID-19 Safety Plan for Athletic Centres
- COVID-19 Safety Plan for Meeting Event Spaces Conference Centres and Performance
- COVID-19 Safety Plan for Restaurants and Bars