

COVID-19 GENERAL WORKPLACE GUIDELINE (GWG)

This guideline applies to all work and study areas including research spaces, in-person instructional activities and events*.

*This document replaces the Guideline for Reopening Research Spaces, the In-Class (In-Person) Instructional and Teaching Lab Guideline and the Events Guideline.

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1 INTRODUCTION

As government regulations and public health advice continue to evolve, the University is resuming operations that were closed or operating with reduced occupancy due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing so, the health and safety of people in these spaces continues to be a priority.

This guideline is a consolidation of various tools and resources from the University and other public health authorities. This document is intended for CAOs, HR managers, Chairs, Directors, Deans and academic and research leadership and is updated on a regular basis. For the most up-to-date information, please refer to the UTogether website: <https://www.utoronto.ca/utogether/>.

2 SCOPE

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Unit or Department Heads

- Provide support as required for units for in-person activities including those continuing or increasing operations.
- Incorporate guidance in this document where operationally feasible and appropriate. Ensure re-entry complies with public health/provincial guidelines and this guideline.

Note: Individuals working in research affiliated institutes and/or hospitals must follow the host location's guideline and/or directives in addition to applicable health and safety requirements in this Guideline.

Supervisors, Managers, Academic Administrators and Divisional Leads & Principal Investigators (PIs)

- Incorporate guidance in this document where applicable and appropriate. Allow sufficient time for planning and implementation and obtain approval from the designated unit lead where applicable.
- Stay current on local public health and provincial requirements and review and modify procedures/communications periodically.
- Provide equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE) and instructions on their use or other resources where applicable and appropriate.
- Ensure faculty, librarians, staff, students, visitors and other externals (e.g., contractors) are

provided with appropriate, accessible communications (including updates) and/or training on the re-entry requirements including COVID-19 measures. Examples of responses to frequently asked questions and concerns can be found in the [Manager's Guide to Returning to Operations on Campus](#).

- Vice or Associate Deans in academic division are the critical leads for academic instructions. They will work with Chairs, Directors, CAOs, EHS and their local Property Management unit, etc. for in-person instruction plans as applicable and advise academic administrators and course instructors on how to handle situations of non-compliance with public health measures (e.g., student showing symptoms).
- Be familiar with [Procedures in the Event of a Confirmed Case, COVID-19 Symptoms or Exposure to COVID-19](#) and assist the UofT Occupational Health Nurse as needed.
- For assistance regarding employee mental health issues, please contact your Divisional HR Office for consultation if needed. For students requiring accommodation, please contact the Office of the VP-Provost Students for assistance. Units may consider having a designated person receive and collate all queries to ensure consistent, clear messaging and follow-up.

All Employees

All employees must:

- Report hazards and concerns to their supervisor/unit head.
- Request accommodation where applicable by speaking to their supervisor/manager/unit head or HR. For more information regarding workplace accommodation, please also contact [Health and Well-Being](#).
- Review and follow institutional guidance/policies and divisional instructions where applicable. Instructors, teaching assistants (TAs) and Teaching Support staff are to review general health and safety practices and COVID-19 information (e.g. “stay home if you are sick”) and classroom procedures and expectations with students at the beginning of class using scripts, slides, and other resources supplied by the institution – please refer to Ch 10.
- Stay home if they are ill with COVID-19 related symptoms or have tested positive. Refer to: Ontario [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#) and [Procedures in the Event of a Confirmed/Symptomatic Case or Known Exposure to COVID-19](#). Inform their direct manager or supervisor through normal processes if they will be absent.

Students

All students must:

- Report hazards to their academic supervisor or contact.
- Review and follow instructions in the re-entry procedures specific to your work, academic or research unit and institutional policies where applicable. Students requiring academic accommodations should visit the [Office of the Vice-Provost, Students](#) page.
- Stay home if they are ill with COVID-19 related symptoms or have tested positive. Refer to: Ontario [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#) and UofT's [Procedures in the Event of a Confirmed/Symptomatic Case or Known Exposure to COVID-19](#). Inform their supervisor, undergraduate coordinator, or graduate coordinator of their status if they are sick or self-

isolating if they have been on campus and declare their absence through the Absence Declaration tool on [ACORN](#) if they are sick or self-isolating.

For more information, please see the [COVID-19 Information for University of Toronto Students](#).

Campus-Specific Property Management / Facilities Management Groups

- Review this guideline, and in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, implement measures in this guideline in common and shared areas in buildings (e.g. post required signage). Post clear instructions to ensure communication for all building users, including visitors.

CLASSROOM SPACE OWNERS AND OPERATORS

(Including central groups such as Learning Space Management and individual faculties/departments that own and operate classrooms):

- Coordinate with caretaking on the provision of hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies for room users.
- Provide clear messaging to departments/individuals booking the room on the existing cleaning strategy for the space (refer to the [Tri-Campus Caretaking Strategy for Return to the University](#)). This will provide clarity to departments and room users on what cleaning procedures they can implement in addition to existing caretaking services.
- Coordinate building access with appropriate facilities group.

For more information on Learning Space Management (LSM) classrooms, please visit the [LSM](#) website.

Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSCs)

During this highly complex time, the role of the JHSC, as part of the Internal Responsibility System, remains unchanged. Examples of JHSC responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Holding regular meetings and conducting monthly workplace inspections to ensure workplace hazards are addressed.
- Virtual inspections are an interim measure in place of in-person, monthly workplace inspections. If virtual inspections are required, the JHSC manager will contact the committee to schedule as required. It is expected that as individuals return to in-person activities, there will be a gradual shift back to in-person inspections.
- 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.
- Acting 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.
- Contact the U of T JHSC Manager if they have any concerns: ehs.jhsc@utoronto.ca.

Environmental Health and Safety

Environmental Health and Safety (including the Occupational Health Team) 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.
- Identifying and facilitating best practices for COVID-19 safety.
- Being available for consultation as needed.

External Groups

External groups such as contractors, tenants, external groups that have a service agreement, occupancy agreement, lease agreement, etc. are responsible for following, where applicable, UofT procedures in common areas such as elevators, lobbies and hallway (e.g. directional arrows) in effect at the time.

For spaces under their control, external groups are responsible for assessing their operations and developing/implementing COVID-19 related measures where appropriate. This includes contractors/constructors who have charge of construction sites (i.e., controls access, responsible for health and safety requirements) that are physically separated from UofT occupied areas. Per above, when present in UofT occupied areas, regardless of the length of time, they must follow UofT requirements if any.

External groups are also responsible for reporting any health and safety concerns that may impact the UofT community to their UofT contact person.

3 MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF TRANSMISSION

This section contains considerations for in-person activities. Not all information will apply to every unit. Units should review within the context of their operations and apply where applicable and appropriate. For more information, please refer to: [How U of T is promoting a safe environment | University of Toronto \(utoronto.ca\)](#).

For an overview of recent COVID-19 changes/continuing measures, please also refer to the [EHS COVID-19 webpage](#).

PERSONAL MEASURES TO REDUCE RISK OF EXPOSURE

General practices recommended by public health:

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. [Face mask are optional – the University supports your choice](#). To support the community, the University is providing medical masks as supplies allow: [Information about masks | University of Toronto \(utoronto.ca\)](#)
5. Physical distancing is not required but units have the discretion to implement physical distancing where feasible.
6. Individuals who are sick or who have COVID-19 related symptoms should stay home. Refer to: Ontario [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#) and [Procedures in the Event of a Confirmed Case and/or COVID-19 Symptoms](#).

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Physical distancing is not required. Units may exercise discretion to maintain physical distancing in their workspaces where reasonable/possible. Where appropriate and/or based on previous security and access control considerations, units may continue restricting building access (e.g. to fob/key only).

SCHEDULING & WORKFLOW

Where operationally feasible, all units can consider shifting all remaining in-person activities gradually. For example, some units may continue to maintain varying virtual services depending on local unit considerations such as staffing, alternative work arrangements, student services etc.

Where crowds and line ups are expected, units should have a plan for managing queues and minimizing congestion and congregating: e.g., designated locations for overflow and line ups, visual cues to encourage distancing to extent possible, staggering arrivals, scheduling appointments instead of drop-ins, providing some virtual options. Units may consider (not required) the following strategies:

- Clearly demarcate (e.g., signage, arrows, and floor decals) the flow of traffic into and out of the room and queuing outside of the room. This may be exterior of the room or outside of the building depending on the location of the classroom / event and number of students, staff / attendees.
- Where possible, entry and exit paths should be through separate marked doors, otherwise, keep to the right.
- Consider providing COVID-19 related training /communication on procedures, UofT policies, expectations, behaviour to all in advance of return, before an event, or for example in the case of returning students to campus during the orientation week, at the beginning of the first lecture or during the first in-person instructional session.

PROTECTIVE BARRIERS

Generally, barriers are not required at workstations. In some environments (e.g., fixed public facing reception areas, receiving areas, welcome desks, registration areas, ticket areas et al, where there are frequent short interactions), protective barriers may be installed at the discretion of the unit/division/department.

When designing/determining the need for physical barriers, the advantages and disadvantages of the barriers should be considered. For more information, please also refer to [Physical barriers for COVID-19 infection prevention and control in commercial settings](#).

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 walls and other surfaces (e.g., lab benchtops) 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.

When making changes to physical workspaces, please consider AODA requirements – contact your [Divisional HR Office](#) or the [AODA Office](#) for assistance.

VENTILATION

Public health authorities and medical evidence continue to state that the risk of transmission is greatest when in close contact with an individual who is positive for COVID-19 ([CDC](#) and [PHAC](#)). Transmission of COVID-19 by aerosols can occur over longer distances under favourable conditions (e.g. activities that increase generation of respiratory droplets and aerosols, overcrowding, poorly ventilated spaces, crowding). Transmission may also occur from touching a contaminated surface and then touching your eyes/nose/mouth. Aside from indoor air quality improvement through ventilation and filtration, key strategies to reduce transmission risk include vaccination, limiting contacts, health screening and staying home when ill, hand hygiene and masking (respiratory source control) and mask use. The University has implemented a [Tri-campus HVAC Strategy](#) as part of an overall ventilation strategy for both instructional and non-instructional spaces and buildings. The University continually monitors public health guidance and emerging best practices to update our procedures and guidance.

According to a report by the [European Centre for Disease and Control](#), a well-maintained ventilation system with the appropriate filters will remove and dilute virus laden particles. It also notes there is little chance of infectious aerosols transmitting COVID-19 through a building's ventilation system. The report recommends keeping ventilation systems in good operation and running for an extended period before and after building occupancy. Doing so helps decrease the transmission risk of COVID-19 in indoor spaces. As part of the [Tri-campus HVAC Strategy](#), where applicable, measures have been taken to increase ventilation (e.g., performing air flushing two hours before occupancy every morning and upgrade filtration) and upgrading ventilation. Per

public health, where possible, filters have been upgraded to MERV-13 rating (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Values, or filter's ability to capture particles between 0.3 and 10 microns (µm)). Same as before the pandemic, the University continues to maintain our ventilation systems on a regular basis.

In general building areas such as administrative offices, hallways, and meeting rooms, portable air filtration is generally not required. The University continues to encourage vaccinations, masking, staying home when sick, etc. in these spaces. If you have questions about your particular area, please contact EHS. Units should avoid purchasing portable air filtration units on their own unless they have consulted with EHS and their local facilities group.

In spaces that do not have mechanical ventilation, where possible, open windows and doors and continue encourage users to follow public health recommendations: vaccination, mask use, staying home when you are sick, finding alternatives for higher risk activities where appropriate (e.g., virtual participation in events), regular disinfection and increased hand hygiene. Note that many tasks at the University, such as general office activities or other administrative tasks confer a lower risk of transmission of COVID-19 compared to higher risk workplaces such as healthcare settings where aerosol-generating medical procedures take place for example.

In-person instructional spaces

This section describes the processes for in-person instructional spaces. For a definition of in-person instructional activities, please refer to Ch 10.

Table 3-1: Overview of Ventilation Assessment Process for In-person Instructional Spaces

Type of instructional space	Classrooms * - All Categories 1.1 Tiered Classrooms 1.2 Non-Tiered Classrooms and 1.3 Active Learning Classroom Spaces	Non-classroom instructional activities (i.e. other spaces not in Category 1.1-1.3) – “high” density instructional space
Assessment type (University Level of HVAC Assessment required)	Level 1 HVAC Assessments conducted in applicable buildings per the Tricampus HVAC Strategy : - Maintenance as per regular preventative maintenance cycle - Operation of HVAC system - MERV 13 filters or the highest compatible filter with existing HVAC infrastructure have been installed - System is programmed to start 2 hours pre-occupancy (default time to be used is 6am) - System operates for 2 hours post occupancy - Demand control ventilation has been disabled	Level 1 HVAC Assessments conducted in applicable buildings (see description on the left). To determine if a Level 2 Assessment should be conducted: 1. Where possible, instructional classes and academic instruction scheduled in non-inventoried classrooms or spaces without mechanical ventilation should be relocated to one of the 1000+ designated 6 ACH inventoried instructional spaces (i.e. Level 2-assessed) per the webpage . 2. If, due to specialized equipment needs, room logistics etc., the activity cannot occur in an inventoried instructional space, the unit will review to determine whether the activity can be modified to take place in an inventoried (HVAC assessed against 6 eq ACHs) classroom. EHS to assess and only in the RARE cases where the activity cannot be moved to an inventory classroom after exhausting all tenable options would we proceed to option 3-4 below. The expectation is that academic units will modify pedagogical approaches to allow course content

	<p>Level 2 HVAC Assessment against internal 6 equivalent ACHs (Air Changes per Hour). Where a classroom cannot meet the internal target of 6ACHs based on operation/modification of the existing central ventilation system, additional air filtration will be installed to meet the internal target.</p> <p>If it is not possible to install additional air filtration, in-person instruction may proceed in these spaces if additional measures are applied (see below)</p>	<p>delivery for classes to occur within an inventory classroom ONLY.</p> <p>3. If the EHS/unit assessment determines that it is essential to proceed with in-person instruction in a non-inventoried classroom, the unit may request a Level 2 ventilation assessment from F&S (Utilities)/Facilities Management using this template. Prior to submitting a request, please check the webpage to verify that the space has not been assessed yet. F&S (Utilities)/Facilities Management will review the request/information. If the space meets the criteria of a “high” density instructional space (65 persons/100 sq. metre**), a Level 2 ventilation assessment (6 eq. ACHs) will proceed. Per the assessment, air filtration units can be installed within the space or use of alternate appropriate air filtration units can be employed to accommodate the activity as intermittently required. Only appropriately selected air filtration units as per F&S (Utilities)/Facilities Management are to be used for this purpose and will be provided and maintained by F&S/Facilities Management ONLY.</p> <p>4. If the space is not a high-density instructional space, a Level 2 assessment is not required. In-person instruction may proceed in these spaces if additional measures are applied (see Additional measures below).</p>
<p>Additional measures (if applicable)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Physical distancing is not required but units have the discretion to implement physical distancing (e.g. open additional sessions or break up class into several rooms) where feasible. 2) Remind students and instructors that medical masks are available while supplies allow: Information about masks University of Toronto. 3) Open windows and doors where feasible (weather permitting). 	

*Definition of classroom: Per the [Council of Ontario Universities \(COU\)](#) a classroom includes: 1.1 Tiered classrooms: Tiered or sloped floored lecture theatres, lecture rooms, lecture demonstration rooms, and classrooms; 1.2 Non tiered classrooms: Flat floored lecture rooms, classrooms, seminar rooms, and tutorial rooms; 1.3 Active learning classrooms: Pedagogical space primarily moderated for group interaction. (The room may or may not utilize technology. The focus is on group learning. These may be tiered or non-tiered spaces).

**Based on ASHRAE standard 62.1 - Minimum ventilation rates listed in Table 6.1 are based on using this default occupancy (density). Data for room density is derived from room seat capacity and room volume data.

For units that have high density academic instructional spaces that have not been assessed yet, please contact your property manager and cc EHS (ehs.office@utoronto.ca).

There are regular filter checks for air purifiers that have been centrally installed in classrooms. For more information, please refer to: [COVID-19 Air Purifier Filters in Classrooms](#).

Ventilation shutdowns

Local facilities groups planning for shutdowns should liaise with building occupants to discuss the impact/affected areas of ventilation shutdowns and develop a schedule to accommodate occupant usage of the affected spaces. For prolonged shutdown periods (e.g. more than 1 day’s duration), additional assessments/measures may apply, please contact EHS for assistance. Where feasible, departments may implement physical distancing measures in the event of a prolonged shutdown.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Regular disinfection of high touch points in common spaces (such as doorknobs, elevator buttons, light switches, handrails, etc.) is in place. For more information, please refer to the [Tri-Campus COVID-19 Caretaking Strategy for Return to the University](#).

Units/departments can also disinfect high touch areas in their workspace (such as workspace countertops, shared equipment/tools) throughout the day and to minimize use of shared items (e.g. pens, markers, tools, equipment, etc.). Where possible, individualized or dedicated equipment should be provided. Units can contact Caretaking for supplies.

Considerations for disinfection:

- 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: The risk associated with transmission with shared objects is [low](#) and focus should be on regular hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce the risk of transmission. As an added measure, in situations where objects are difficult to disinfect, disinfect the accessible surfaces (if applicable) and quarantine/isolate/place in a designated holding area for 72 hours before reuse.

Where possible, provide individual equipment (e.g. telephones, keyboards, headsets et al. Individuals may also disinfect shared equipment and surfaces (e.g. workstations) before and after use.

Disinfectants must have a [Drug Identification Number \(DIN\) from Health Canada or be approved by Health Canada for use against COVID-19](#). Follow manufacturers' recommendations for contact time. In addition, laboratory or research environments may use the following chemicals for disinfection:

- 0.1% sodium hypochlorite (active ingredient in bleach) for 5 minutes of contact time then rinsed with water – note that sodium hypochlorite is corrosive;
- 70% ethanol;
- 0.5% accelerated hydrogen peroxide products such as PreEmpt.

Paper, mail, packages, and deliveries: The 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. Practice 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. 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.

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

- Follow contactless delivery procedures such as posting a telephone 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.
- Designate one location for any deliveries to the space and disinfect items centrally.
- Assign delivery management and disinfection as a task to specific employees (e.g. lab technicians in a lab setting) only.
- Where feasible, try to coordinate delivery of all needed supplies for one day of the week, reducing the frequency during the week.

SELF-SCREENING (UCHECK)

As of May 1, 2022, health screening and contact tracing will become unavailable in [UCheck](#). These features may be reinstated with little notice in the event that public health guidance or recommendations change.

The proof of vaccination module will continue to be available and can be used to:

- Upload proof of vaccination for new employees and existing employees in higher risk groups (see Vaccination section)
- Voluntarily upload proof of booster (additional) doses for all students, faculty, librarians, and staff

While health screening through [UCheck](#) is no longer available/required, individuals can monitor their health using the [Provincial health screening tool](#). We continue to ask members of our community to remain at home if they are ill.

Although UCheck health screening for the broader community is no longer required to attend campus, it is recommended that screening questions continue to be used in residential operations before entering the units (i.e., residents could be self-isolating in their units). E.g.:

1. Are you experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or have tested positive and are self isolated
2. Are you currently monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms as a result of a close contact
3. Have you travelled outside of Canada within last 14 days and are required to quarantine (e.g. not fully vaccinated)?

VACCINATION

The University continues to encourage vaccination of all UofT community members and visitors to be [fully vaccinated](#) and to obtain booster shots (3rd, 4th, etc.) if they are [eligible](#). If you require further information on how vaccinations can be obtained, please refer to [COVID-19: How to Get Vaccinated](#) from the City of Toronto or [COVID-19 Vaccine](#) from the Peel Region of Health.

COVID-19 vaccinations may be required for higher risk-groups such as clinical, certain research contexts and when conducting face to face research **if working with known COVID-19 positive populations** (upload documents in [UCheck](#)).

In addition, all students and staff living in residence will be required to have the primary series of COVID-19 vaccines and at least one booster dose at least 14 days prior to moving into residence. Local public health units have been advised of our vaccination requirement for residences and have indicated that having a high vaccination rate in communal-living settings benefits all those living there ([UTogether FAQs](#) 1.3 and 5.1).

Moving into residence means living in close quarters with other students. Requiring vaccination will help to provide the residence experience students are looking forward to, and to foster a welcoming home for them on our campuses where they can learn and thrive. Student must upload their vaccination documents to via [StarRez](#) by August 5, 2022 Documents will be reviewed and verified by University staff. For more information including exemptions, please refer to the [Office of Vice-Provost Students vaccination page](#).

People who have had COVID-19 in the past should still get vaccinated. Natural immunity from having COVID-19 may not last long and may not protect against COVID-19 variants. Consult with your physician. Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms, including fever, should not go to a vaccine clinic. Please wait until you are no longer in self-isolation or your symptoms have gone away. For more information, please refer to: [COVID-19: About the Vaccines – City of Toronto](#) and [About the COVID-19 vaccines - COVID-19 vaccine - Region of Peel \(peelregion.ca\)](#).

Vaccination status is private medical information and individuals should not be asked about their vaccination status unless there is a vaccine requirement related to their work or study (e.g. applicable clinical placements). In such cases, the individual will be referred to the appropriate medical/clinical resources at the University (e.g. Occupational Health) for this information.

Student or employee personal information will not be disclosed or shared for any reason, except for Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) purposes. A designated Occupational Health staff member will work with the applicable units to confirm that those with exemptions are enrolled in rapid screening program and uploading results regularly as required.

Student Placements

A number of programs (e.g., health sciences, education) place students in sites where vaccination is required. In many cases, the onus is on the placement site to verify vaccination status. In others, existing agreements require verification to be done by the U of T division. In those cases where divisions are already verifying vaccination status, divisions should be expanding the secure systems that they are already using to verify similar types of confidential student information that is required by law/regulation (e.g., police checks, other types of required vaccinations, TB screening, etc.).

As a reminder, guidance around vaccination verification for graduate students and post-docs in research settings in hospitals or third-party sites is available online. See: https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/lookingahead/frequently-asked-questions/#section_3. As indicated in that guidance, there will likely be scenarios where students will be required to demonstrate proof of vaccination more than once. Where possible, the University of Toronto and its partners aim to incorporate the tracking of COVID-19 vaccination status into existing processes that monitor

similar information. Where partnership agreements exist, processes must be compliant with those agreements.

For ALL student placement COVID-19 vaccination verification requests whereby the university is required to sign an attestation confirming that personnel attending an external site are COVID-19 vaccinated, ALL divisions must contact Occupational Health (ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca) for assistance. For the purposes of confidentiality, please designate one divisional contact person to act as a designate to work with Occupational Health.

** Please note: For divisions that already have vaccination validation processes in place for non-COVID-19 vaccines (e.g. varicella, TB, rubella etc.), please continue to ensure that adequate notice of data collection information is provided to placement students in advance of vaccine validation.*

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](#).

RAPID ANTIGEN SCREENING

The University's Rapid Screening program was paused on May 1, 2022. For antigen tests, please use the [Province of Ontario's rapid test locator webpage](#).

Rapid antigen screening or testing is not required for staff who were ill with COVID-19 (suspected or confirmed). If an individual has screened positive, they should isolate at home / or in residence and not attend in-person work / activities on campus. Due to limited supplies, departments should not purchase these kits unless they have been directed centrally (e.g. by EHS) based on risk assessment.

COMMUNICATIONS, SIGNAGE AND SCRIPTS

Once re-entry considerations have been identified, 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:

- As of July 1, 2022, the only required signage at building entrances is the [COVID-19 Precaution/Symptoms Poster](#). Other **optional**, centrally approved signs are available from [EHS website](#) for units to download/print for units to use while applicable. Instructions on how to order through the Brand Hub is also available on this website. Post signage at an accessible height to remind workers and inform students and visitors.
- Consult with divisional, faculty, campus and University communications teams for resources and materials. Communications may take the form of memos, emails and meetings. 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.
- 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 to get feedback from faculty, librarians, staff and students who may have additional suggestions to improve the procedure. The re-entry procedure may also change over time as restrictions continue to lift and will have to be 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, or 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 and HR & Equity Offices.

For more information, please review the document entitled [Social Stigma associated with COVID-19](#) from UNICEF.

FOOD SERVICES, EATING AREAS AND MULTI-USE SPACES

As faculty, staff and students return to campus, units are encouraged to work with their local facilities group/property management group to identify spaces where individuals can eat their lunch to avoid congestion and overcrowding in common areas (e.g. using unoccupied classrooms). In particular students may need spaces to study or work between classes.

Consider stagger lunch/break times and using meeting rooms or the individual's workstation to eat lunch/food to reduce overcrowding in lunch/break rooms.

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 regulation).

Provide disinfectant wipes nearby for individuals who may wish to disinfect eating areas prior to use.

For a listing of locations to eat, study, and access computers, please refer to: [Where to go between classes at U of T](#).

For **vending machines**: use signage to encourage users to use hand sanitizer and/or disinfectant wipes nearby before using the machines. Where possible, locate hand sanitizer and/or disinfectant wipes near the machine.

TRAVEL

[Global Affairs Canada](#) lifted the world-wide advisory to avoid non-essential travel anywhere outside of Canada as of February 28, 2022. As a result, all students are now able to travel internationally on University-sanctioned activities. Please note that travel will still not be allowed for undergraduate students for regions with [Global Affairs Canada travel advisories](#) of: “avoid non-essential travel” and “avoid all travel” as was the case pre-pandemic. If you are a graduate student that needs to travel to regions under those categories, for research or program completion purposes, please contact safety.aboard@utoronto.ca.

For all students travelling on University sanctioned activity, you must complete all safety abroad pre-departure requirements including checking travel advisories, completing safety abroad online workshops, securing travel health insurance and completing the safety abroad registry. More information on the safety pre-departure requirements for university activity abroad is available on the [Safety Abroad website](#).

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 requirements](#), e.g. testing, quarantine, vaccination, etc.) are followed and if COVID-19 related symptoms develop upon return. It is not necessary to contact Occupational Health (ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca) unless the employee has COVID-19 related symptoms.

For more information regarding travel, please refer to:

- FAQs from the Vice Provost, Students: <https://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/covid-19/#FAQSafetyAbroad>
- UofT Safety Abroad Office (students): <https://safetyabroad.utoronto.ca/>
- [Off campus safety](#)
- [Guidance on Research and Travel during the COVID pandemic](#).

Field Trips should be approved per standard divisional level review requirements as applicable. 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. Masks are optional but can be worn during transportation (e.g., bus).

VEHICLES

Where vehicles may be shared, where practicable/possible:

- Encourage employees to walk whenever possible. Where possible, only one staff member in the vehicle at one time.
- If it is not possible to avoid employees riding together in a vehicle, where possible, group the same employees together.
- Use seating arrangements that provide the greatest amount of separation (e.g. when there are two people, passenger sits diagonally across from driver.)
- Driver and passenger positions remain unchanged during the shift.
- Keep windows open when there is more than one person in the vehicle (e.g. both driver and passenger windows open).
- Where possible, avoiding facing each other while talking due to proximity in vehicles.
- Disinfecting high touch surfaces between operators (e.g. keys, steering wheel, turn signals, climate control buttons, radio buttons, light buttons windshield control buttons, gear shifter, seat belt bucket).
- Practice hand hygiene regularly (e.g. after filling up at the pump).
- Remove unnecessary belongings/clutter, eliminate items not required as part of the job. Place a garbage bag or wastebasket in a convenient spot to avoid trash (e.g. used gloves, wipes, etc.) piling up and regularly dispose the trash.

COMMUTING TO CAMPUS

Faculty, librarians, staff and students who express concerns regarding public transportation can be directed to information to the applicable transit authority (e.g. [Toronto Transit Commission \(TTC\)](#), [Go Transit](#), [MiWay](#), etc.) for more information.

Some individuals carpool to work. Here are some general precautions when carpooling:

- Self-screening using the [Ontario COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#) prior to carpooling and coming to work. Do not go to work and carpool if you are ill or instructed to isolate.
- Wearing a mask while commuting.
- Reduce the number of occupants in the vehicle (e.g. passenger riding in the back seat and distanced from the driver where possible).
- Avoid touching unnecessary surfaces and use hand sanitizer.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces within the vehicle often.

- If possible, open windows.
- Maintain the same people in the vehicle where possible to reduce exposure to others.

Faculty, librarians, staff and students who have questions regarding personal use of vehicles or would like to discuss commuting needs, should speak to their supervisor/manager for arrangements on a case-by-case basis. The supervisor/manager should consult with their HR contact.

WORKSTATION ERGONOMICS AND REMOTE WORKSPACE SAFETY

Employees may have questions about workstation ergonomics or other health and safety concerns when working at home or making changes to their workstation. Please visit the [EHS Office Ergonomics webpage](#) and the [EHS Office Ergonomics Infographics website](#). If you have a specific request such as taking office equipment home, please contact your supervisor. Supervisors/managers can contact HR for assistance.

Employees and faculty who have been approved to work from home (e.g. accommodation, approved alternate work arrangement) should review, the [Working Remotely](#) site, the [Working at Home Checklist](#) and Appendix B: Remote Workspace Safety Checklist in the [Alternative Work Arrangement Guideline](#).

4 PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF A CONFIRMED OR SYMPTOMATIC CASE OR KNOWN EXPOSURE

For procedures in the event an individual falls ill on campus, is symptomatic, has tested positive or have had contact with someone who is ill or for additional healthcare resources, please refer to: [Procedures in the Event of a Confirmed/Symptomatic Case or Known Exposure to COVID-19](#).

Clearance to return from Occupational Health is not required. Isolation is not required in most situations if you do not have symptoms - please refer to Figure 4-1 below. If isolation applies, follow the instructions at the link above or Table 4-1. In the event a student or instructor is positive for COVID-19, classes may continue. If you have any questions, please contact the OH team (ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca).

Public health paused contact tracing requirements in early 2022. Contact tracing is no longer conducted and [the lifting of most restrictions across Ontario, most COVID-19 infections will not be work-related](#), but if a department/unit has reasonable cause to believe that an employee contracted COVID-19 at the workplace **due to an increased risk greater than the risk to the general public**, please contact OHS, (ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca). Examples of workplace settings where there is an increased risk include healthcare workers or first responders providing interventions to those with COVID-19.

For workplace settings where there is NO increased risk but where employees/supervisors/academic leads, etc. have concerns about potential workplace transmission or multiple cases in their area can contact Occupational Health (ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca) for assistance. Occupational Health will assess on a case-by-case basis and provide next steps.

Table 4-1: Overview of Case and Contact Management & Isolation

Symptomatic or positive for COVID-19	Household Close Contact of a symptomatic or positive case	Non-household Close Contact of a symptomatic or positive case
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolate 5-days if fully vaccinated • Isolate 10-days if not fully vaccinated, immunocompromised or highest risks settings resident* <p>Under 12 years of age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolate 5-days if fully vaccinated • Isolate 10-days if not fully vaccinated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If severe illness (requiring ICU level of care), isolate for 20 days but at the discretion of their healthcare provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolate 5-days if fully vaccinated, non-immunocompromised • Isolate 10-days if not fully vaccinated and/or immunocompromised <p><u>No isolation is required if you do not have symptoms AND one (1) of the following exemptions apply:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Previously tested positive for COVID-19 (including a Rapid Antigen Test) in the last 90 days ○ 18 years or older and have received a booster dose (i.e. 3 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine; or 4 doses if you have a weak immune system) ○ 17 years or younger and are fully vaccinated <p><u>Follow precautions for the next 10 days (see right column). After your isolation period has ended, you must continue to wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings for another five (5) days (or ten (10) days if you are immunocompromised).</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No isolation required <p><u>Follow these precautions for the next 10 days:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-monitor for symptoms ○ Wear a mask in public settings. ○ Avoid activities with mask removal ○ No visits to highest risk settings* (seniors/immunocompromised)

* Highest risk setting such as hospitals (including complex continuing care facilities and paramedic services), home and community care workers and congregate living settings with medically and socially vulnerable individuals, including, but not limited to, Long-Term Care, retirement homes, First Nation elder care lodges, group homes, shelters, hospices, correctional institutions, Provincial Demonstration Schools and hospital schools. NOTE: Table 4-1 provides general parameters of consideration and is an overview only and public health guidance may change over time.

5 COVID-19 Guidance and Resources

Guidance and information on COVID-19 are available from the websites below. Policies and procedures may change due to public health directives. Please refer to the latest information which can be found here:

[PSEC's Returning to Campus](#)

[EHS COVID-19 Information](#)

For researchers: [Update on COVID-19 and Research Operations](#)

6 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Effective July 1, 2022, the [Joint Provostial and Human Resources Guideline on Face Masks](#) is no longer in effect. This is subject to change at the discretion of the University administration as public health guidance, legal requirements, and understanding about COVID-19 evolve. The Instruction Mask Exemption for Pedagogical Reasons has also been paused.

[Face mask are optional – the University supports your choice.](#) Public health research shows that properly worn masks are highly effective in preventing the spread of COVID when worn consistently and to support the community, the University is providing medical masks as supplies allow: [Information about masks | University of Toronto \(utoronto.ca\)](#)

Individuals in specific circumstances may be required to wear masks in some situations, subject to changes in [provincial](#) or [federal](#) requirements, such as those who have just completed their isolation period or during flights – see Ch 4.

We ask everyone to always respect the decisions of others, their comfort levels, and health needs. It is vitally important that, even with the easing of provincial measures, we remain vigilant, conscientious, and show kindness to one another. Signage has been created to assist departments in communicating this message: [COVID-19 Face Mask: We Support Your Choice.](#)

Masks and other PPE may still be required in higher-risk settings (e.g. researchers working with COVID-19 positive patients or aerosol generating medical procedures). Please plan according to your unit's needs and timelines and review information on the [UTogether](#) page to assist employees

and staff in attaining medical masks in advance of coming to campus. Follow your usual procurement processes for the purchase of PPE. For information on where to purchase medical masks, please see Table 6-2 below.

Table 6-1: Type of Masks/Respirators and Their Usage

Type of mask or respirator	Standard	Usage
<p>Well-fitted medical or surgical/procedure mask.</p> <p>Face mask are optional – the University supports your choice.</p>	<p>ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) Level 2-3.</p> <p>ASTM level 2 masks are also three-ply. They are best suited for moderate levels of fluid exposure.</p> <p>ASTM level 3 masks are four-ply and offer maximum barrier protection and are best suited for environments with high levels of fluid exposure such as dental clinics.</p> <p>Check the packaging of your product for information on the rating of ASTM level. ASTM F2100 Standards should be included on the label, and should specify a level 1, 2, or 3.</p>	<p>Unless there is an increased risk above the community setting, masks can be encouraged but not required. To put this into perspective, in community settings where increased occupancy can occur (e.g. public transportation, entertainment venue, retailers at busy times, gym locker rooms, etc.) masks are not required.</p> <p>Units may consider purchasing medical masks which can be provided for those who want to wear one but forgot/soiled, etc, their mask. For purchase and distribution points for medical masks – please refer to: Information about masks University of Toronto.</p> <p>Individuals may also opt to wear personally owned medical masks. Individuals may also opt to wear KN95 (Chinese standard GB 2626-2006), KF94 (Korean standard KMOEL-2017-64) or FFF2 (European Union standard EN149-2001) in lieu of a medical mask.</p>
<p>Medical Mask (required)</p> <p>Fitted N95 disposable respirators (+ eye protection) are required for aerosol generating procedures as determined by local risk assessment.</p> <p>If you are having supply chain issues, please contact EHS to discuss strategies.</p>	<p>Fitted: N95: NIOSH approved, fit-tested, seal checked.</p> <p>Individuals must complete Respiratory Protection Training and Fit-Testing.</p> <p>Students requiring N95 respirators for external student placements should contact their department, which will arrange for fit-testing and training.</p>	<p>Activities that are higher risk in nature such as providing healthcare to suspect/probable/confirmed COVID-19 cases, providing patient care to vulnerable groups in clinical settings, working with biological agents, close contact such as face-to-face human participant research, aerosol generating medical procedures, providing first aid (e.g. CPR) in high-risk settings (residences), or in some highly urgent life-saving situations,) as determined by local risk assessment / biological safety containment, etc.</p> <p>Please speak to your supervisor regarding provision of mask and fit-testing registration. For additional information: https://ehs.utoronto.ca/training/respiratory-protection-training-fit-testing/</p>

The University continues to monitor public health recommendations and will update the guidance in this chapter when available. If you require assistance in determining which mask to use or if you have any other PPE related queries, please contact EHS (ehs.office@utoronto.ca) for assistance.

Note: Discard all disposable masks properly in a general waste container unless existing procedures state otherwise.

Table 6-2: Where to Purchase Masks, Respirators and other PPE

UTSG (St. George)	UTSc (Scarborough)	UTM (Mississauga)
U of T MedStore- info@uoftmedstore.com	Science Wing Central Stores – stores@utsc.utoronto.ca Environmental Sciences and Chemistry Building Chemical Stores – chemstores@utsc.utoronto.ca	UTM Stores – matthew.malcolm@utoronto.ca

Eye protection

Eye protection may be required in some higher risk settings (see Table 6-1). Eye protection must provide a barrier to splash or spray from both the front and the sides and if applicable, from the top (e.g., health care workers). For this reason, goggles and face shields are the primary forms of protection when there is a risk of splashing (e.g. health care workers providing care to sick patients).

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. Where safety glasses are used, it is recommended to use models where gaps between the face and glasses are minimized.

Consider sourcing products that have an anti-fog coating. When selecting eye protection, also take into consideration if there are other hazards where eye protection is needed (e.g. corrosive chemicals, flying debris). Please contact EHS if you have any questions (ehs.office@utoronto.ca).

General Guidance on the Use of Masks

Masks should be [well-fitted](#). Per [Toronto Public Health](#), the mask should:

- Fit your face, **covering your nose, mouth and chin without gaping**.
- Be **comfortable**, easy to breathe through and not limit your vision.
- Mask and ties/ear loops should **fit securely** to avoid frequent adjusting during use.

For more information, please refer to [How to make your mask fit properly](#) on the Government of Canada website. For information on the knot and tuck technique to improve your mask for a better fit, refer to CDC (Centre for Disease Control) video: [How to Knot and Tuck Your Mask to Improve Fit - YouTube](#).

7 ADDRESSING EMPLOYEE CONCERNS

Here are some considerations as more employees return to in-person activities:

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 institutional messaging about COVID-19: [UTogether](#) and [How U of T is promoting a safe environment](#). Ask for feedback and suggestions. Keep the safety talks positive.
2. **Model the desired behaviour and encourage control measures**, such as 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 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 among employees.
4. **For any health and safety concerns brought to your attention, respond immediately.** 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 expediently de-escalate concerns.

5. As per the above, **effective, proactive 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 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](#) 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) 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. For individuals requesting medical accommodation (e.g. immunocompromised), please contact [divisional HR office](#) if you require further information on supporting employees involved with sick leave and workplace accommodation. For students requiring accommodation, please contact the [Office of the VP-Provost Students](#) for assistance.
- (b) For employee mental health issues, please contact your Divisional HR Office for consultation if needed. For students requiring accommodation, please contact the Office of the VP-Provost Students for assistance. Units may consider having a designated person receive and collate all queries to ensure consistent, clear messaging and follow-up.
- (c) Some individuals may have caregiving obligations or live with an at-risk individual. Employees may be entitled to unpaid leaves of absence or measures of accommodation under existing processes. 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. For students requiring accommodation, please contact the [Office of the VP-Provost Students](#) for assistance.

- (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.

9 Research Space and Activities Considerations

For the latest information about the Division of the Vice-President, Research & Innovation's COVID-19 response, please see the [Research & Innovation Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Research website](#). Other topics and resources related to research spaces and activities are listed below:

- **Face-to-Face (F2F) research:**
 - Researchers may use any Health Canada-approved rapid antigen screening kits.
- **Off-campus (OC) research:** For more information, please refer to:
 - [Guidance on Research and Travel During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
 - [Off-Campus Safety Planning Record \(Risk Assessment\)](#) (optional planning resource)

- [EHS Off-Campus Safety](#)

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Masks may be required for certain research activities where there is an elevated risk of COVID-19 exposure (e.g. researchers working with the COVID-19 virus or COVID-19 positive patients) – please refer to Table 6-1. Please also speak to your supervisor/Principle Investigator regarding health and safety precautions, including PPE.

Note: When required to wear a mask/ respirator 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 masks.

SAFETY TRAINING

Ensure safety training is up-to-date. Please see the [EHS training matrix](#).

All personnel working with SARS-CoV-2, including its RNA and DNA, must review the SARS –CoV-2 Biosafety Guideline available [here](#) and take the online EHS 620 – SARS-CoV-2 Biosafety Training course. You can find this new course on “[My EHS Training](#).”

PERMITS

Ensure your permits are up-to-date and accurate, including amendments for the use of new biological agents, and the list of authorized users. When transferring biological agents to external parties, ensure you have appropriate documentation (i.e. [Biological Transfer Notification](#) and [Material Transfer Agreement](#)).

EMERGENCY PLAN

Given the current uncertainty in the trajectory of the COVID-19 situation, it is prudent for researchers to develop and update an emergency plan to prepare for the possibility of an orderly winding down of research activities. Prepare your laboratory including ensuring continuity and minimizing hazards, and ensuring lab users are aware of these activities by implementing a communication system:

1. Develop and maintain an up-to-date emergency contact list for personnel in laboratories and those responsible for specific equipment/facilities

2. Identify equipment/facilities that would require special attention (e.g. maintenance or shutdown, certification or calibration requirements) during a closure or reduced personnel situation, prepare Standard Maintenance Procedures, and have these available.
3. Identify and train personnel in the operation of essential and critical equipment or for general research project backup/maintenance to ensure these are performed safely
4. Plan for adjustments to research methodology where collaboration or research participation may be compromised due to illness or closure
5. Have written documentation in place detailing ongoing experiments and associated SOPs, critical steps, and how to interrupt/stop as appropriate
6. Ensure that necessary supplies are accessible and on hand e.g. liquid nitrogen, compressed gas. Have a plan in place of when supplies will be delivered, including contact numbers for suppliers
7. Plan for scaled down operations
8. Plan for start-up if necessary, after a shutdown.

10 In-Person Instruction (including Teaching Labs)

GENERAL MEASURES FOR ALL IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION

All members of the UofT community are recommended to follow the general strategies detailed in Ch 3. In addition, this chapter outlines strategies and best practices for in-person teaching. Units are not required to implement these considerations but have the discretion to do so applicable and appropriate.

Note: teaching labs are considered distinctive spaces and should not be used to perform research.

SCOPE

This chapter applies to all instructors (TAs, etc.) and all in-person instruction, academic teaching lab activities (wet and dry labs, including computer labs), simulation labs, and assessments in buildings/areas occupied or operated by the University of Toronto and the Federated Universities at all campuses and other off-campus locations (e.g. Koffler Scientific Reserve).

IN-PERSON TEACHING ROOM CAPACITY AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Please refer to the most recent all-community [COVID-19 planning memo](#) update for more information.

For courses returning to in-person activities, students should be notified as soon as possible as they can modify travel plans to return. In addition, as more in-person activities resume, units are expected to plan activities with local facilities management or property management groups to mitigate potential issues with congestion in common spaces.

Definition of In-person instruction: Academic related activity taking place in classrooms, teaching laboratories, instructor offices, areas where TAs/grads/undergrads have been assigned desk, academic related study spaces, computer labs, libraries and in-person for-credit experiential learning. In-person instruction also includes assessment activities such as exams, midterms etc.

The definition of in-person instruction also applies to activities taking place in academic research laboratories that involve a learner or group of learners (graduate students, undergraduate students, postdocs and other research staff etc.) conducting research under the guidance and instruction of a faculty supervisor, where the learners are being trained on scientific/research methods, receiving technical training, and/or performing experiments and the like in any space that the faculty member uses for their research group, has trainee workspaces that the supervisor oversees and in which they interact with trainees. Divisions would be permitted but not required to apply this definition within their specific laboratory contexts.

For the Faculty of Arts and Sciences specifically, please refer to: [COVID-19 – Undergraduate Student FAQs | Faculty of Arts & Science \(utoronto.ca\)](#). Other instructors are advised to contact their registrar's office for guidance

VENTILATION: IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION

The University of Toronto has also developed and implemented a [Tri-campus HVAC Strategy](#) as part of an overall ventilation strategy for both instructional and non-instructional spaces and buildings. Please refer to Ch 3 for more information on ventilation assessments for instructional spaces.

Academic related study spaces may reside in highly variable, multi-use areas across the campuses. Ventilation assessments are not required in these areas. In addition to the above measures, open windows and doors where possible. Please see the Ventilation section to determine when assessments are required.

CLEANING, DISINFECTION AND HAND HYGIENE

- Establish a clear cleaning and disinfection plan which, in most cases, will be a combination of central caretaking (refer to the [Tri-Campus Caretaking Strategy for Return to the University](#)) and

- provision of cleaning supplies to room users. Communicate plan to applicable room users.
- Where possible, provide hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes. Replenishment may need to be planned in areas of higher traffic. Monitor and in coordination with caretaking groups, a feasible schedule for replenishment.
- Provide appropriate instructions, supervision and supplies for cleaning and consider having cleaning supplies available for students to assist in disinfecting lab areas (e.g. work bench).
- Additional waste receptacles may be required if increased consumables such as wipes are present; placement of which will need to be considered in conjunction with traffic flow.
- Consider breaks during in-person teaching to provide bathroom/water breaks to different cohorts of students throughout the teaching session instead of waiting until the end of the session.

SIGNAGE/COMMUNICATION

- Review the need for optional signage, for example to manage traffic outside and within classrooms. Institutionally approved signage is available from [EHS](#). A signage template is also available through EHS (ehs.office@utoronto.ca).
- Behavioural expectations/rules of engagement: Instructors, teaching assistants, support staff should reiterate COVID-19 measures using institutionally provided teaching resources (slides, scripts, etc.):
 - [COVID-19 In-Class Instruction Guidelines for Course Instructors](#)
 - [COVID-19 In-Class Instruction – First Class or Tutorial Slide Deck](#)
- To facilitate compliance, instructors should update their course webpages with the most updated information from the above resources.

HIGH TOUCH SURFACES / SHARED EQUIPMENT

- Review any shared equipment or collaboration tools (e.g. scales, fume hoods, biological safety cabinets (BSCs), markers, chalk, etc). If individualized equipment is not possible, disinfected between users and wash hands frequently.
- Where applicable, determine ways to de-densify shared equipment areas to reduce crowding (e.g. queuing instructions or markings on the floor). Consider informing students about procedures ahead of time, virtually before class or dividing in small groups (stations) within a lab, (e.g. online, or in a separate space from the lab) and provide all needed equipment at the station to minimize traffic inside the lab.
- Reduce/eliminate the use of shared wireless microphones and podium/lectern/fixed microphones, if possible. Use dedicated equipment, such as personal microphones where applicable. Departments or divisions could create internal safety operating procedures such as Shared Equipment Loan programs.
- High touch surfaces such as cameras, laptops, microphones and touch panels will require cleaning and disinfection protocols when using approved disinfectants. Where applicable, designate an instructor to use/demonstrate shared equipment. Ensure disinfectants are available and accessible.
- Consider relocating or grouping some equipment in one area of a large space creating a “learning zone” to minimize traffic within the room.
- **Light/power switches:** Affix signage to remind occupants to keep switches ‘on’ all day.

- **Doors and drawers:** Affix doors in open position in common areas (note: not permitted in a lab nor where the doors are deemed Fire Doors).
- **Printing/information sharing:** Where possible, reduce the quantity of printing/photocopying; use of online platforms associated with secure data changes such as Quercus.
- **Supplies storage:** Secure supplies in storage areas and designate specific personnel (lab technicians, TAs) to manage stock and distribute items.
- If filming in a lab, please refer to the [Guidelines for Images in Research and Teaching Laboratories](#).

CIRCULATION AND CRUSH SPACE

- Where applicable, designate and post the direction of foot-traffic in main circulation paths: entries to teaching lab (e.g. if there are two doors assign an entrance only and exit only).
- Consider one-way circulation routes (e.g. clockwise) through the teaching lab, e.g. only move in a clockwise direction when approaching bench / leaving bench or marking increments on floors where queues could form, e.g. where equipment for each lab experiment is picked up.
- Consider situations where students may want to approach a TA for assistance (e.g. raise hand) or how a TA may circulate through the room to assist students.
- Use signage in crush spaces to support appropriate use, e.g. adjoining lobby/alcove/hallway areas, spaces where people may gather before/between/after classes. These areas may also have supportive elements (e.g. access to WiFi seating, etc.) and public health requirements apply (e.g. circulation pathways).
- Provide instruction to students to contact instructor by virtual means for assistance instead of congregating at the podium / lectern / presenter area.

TEACHING LABS (WET, DRY, AND COMPUTER)

CAOs/Academic leads are responsible for assigning resources for implementing COVID-19 measures. Due to the nature of teaching labs, and the activities that take place in these spaces, some additional considerations may need to be taken into account:

CONTAMINANT CONTROL

To manage contaminants that may enter the workplace / teaching lab, consider the following precautions:

1. Storage

- Add places for individuals to store and secure their own items separately from others (i.e., individual coat hooks rather than coat closets used by the group, individual lockers).
- Consider providing cleaning supplies to allow students to clean lockers before use if they wish or advise students to bring plastic bags to bag/store their personal items before placing in shared lockers.

2. Waste receptacles

- Provide separate waste bins for PPE. Provide garage bins for disposable masks.
- Allocate an area to place and disinfect any reusable PPE (goggles, face shields, glasses, etc.); allocate appropriate time for the task.
- If PPE is reusable, there should be a bin for contaminated items (used items, for example glasses, goggles, shields) and a separate bin for clean items; consider placing a bin with

clean and used items in different parts of the laboratory.

3. Human subjects in teaching lab

- Review the type of practical teaching and where appropriate, the need for in-person human subjects or close person-to-person contact.
- If required, please modify the protocol by incorporating COVID-19 measure and contact EHS for assessment.

TEACHING LAB AND INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES: PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

If you have any questions regarding which type of mask/respirator to use for your designated tasks, please refer to Ch 6, Table 6-1 or contact ehs.office@utoronto.ca.

If wearing a mask, the presence of hazardous materials (e.g. biological agents, flammables and ignition sources) should be considered accordingly.

Lab coats should be worn to protect street clothes from possible contamination. Lab coats must be removed prior to leaving the lab. There should be separate coat racks/hooks for lab coats and street clothes, and they should be as far apart from each other as possible.

General information about donning and doffing PPE is below. Teaching labs should assess the level of PPE required for the experiments. Contact EHS if you have any concerns about the order of donning/doffing for additional PPE.

1. Donning PPE Sequence

- a. Perform hand hygiene
- b. Put on face mask (where applicable, based on type of work or facility engineering control)
- c. Put on eye/face protection (where applicable)
- d. Put on lab coat (where applicable)
- e. Put on gloves (where applicable)

2. Doffing PPE Sequence

- a. Remove gloves (to avoid contamination, follow Public Health Ontario's [Steps to take off gloves](#))
- b. Perform hand hygiene
- c. Remove eye/face protection and wipe with disinfecting cloth
- d. Remove face mask by grasping bands that go around head or ears – do not touch the front of the mask. Dispose of face mask in garbage
- e. Remove lab coat and place on assigned hook, and/or if done for the day into plastic bag for laundering.
- f. Perform hand hygiene

For teaching labs, students are responsible for bringing their lab coats. If the department finds students are forgetting to bring or purchase lab coats, please consider the following guidance:

- Send regular reminders to students.
- Investigate the feasibility of selling lab coats on-site

- As a last resort, to keep up with demand, quarantine shared lab coats used (e.g. once for 3hrs) for 3 days (72 hours) before lending again. There should be a system to record when the lab coat can come out of quarantine and will have separate storage spaces/holding areas for each set of lab coats based on when they can come out of quarantine. Continue regular laundry of lab coats per usual processes.
- Please contact EHS for a review. Depending on lab activities, there may be additional considerations (e.g. type of chemical, biological or physical agents) on whether lab coats can be reused, for example, from a chemical contamination standpoint if there has been a spill the shared lab coat should be laundered.

TRAINING

- Safety orientation for each practical session should include COVID-19 reminders and infection prevention, control procedures and reporting of non-compliance.
- Reminders provided at the beginning of each laboratory session that some procedures might have changed.
- Signage posted throughout lab/work benches regarding proper practices.

11 Events

Departments are encouraged to review their activities and to gradually phase in in-person events where feasible. As more researchers, students and staff have returned to campus, departments are expected to plan events with local facilities management or property management groups to mitigate potential issues with congestion in common spaces. For more information on returning to campus, please refer to the most recent all-community [COVID-19 planning memo](#) update. For any University activities occurring off-campus at a third-party venue (i.e., non-University owned or leased spaces), please follow the 3rd party venue requirements for the event.

SCOPE

This guidance applies to events organized by both external event organizers and internal event organizers of events that use [or “being held on”] premises owned, occupied, or operated by the University, including spaces being set-up for events/gatherings (e.g. holding a gathering in an atrium space, weddings and filming on campus spaces). Where only portions of an event are held on University premises, this guideline applies to each portion of such an event. Please follow the current legislated gathering limit (if any) and any applicable University limit for events.

In general, event organizers (UofT or external) must ensure measures and procedures to ensure risks are assessed and mitigated to protect the health and safety of participants and event staff/volunteers

and working with their UofT contact to mitigate potential health and safety concerns. In addition, any event impacts to the University community must be assessed with the UECP to protect the health and safety of the University community. All parties should be familiar with the [Procedures in the Event of a Confirmed/Symptomatic Case or Known Exposure to COVID-19](#).

PHASE APPROACH TO RESUMING EVENTS

The risk of transmission will vary depending on activities that take place. Some activities may confer a higher risk. The following table outlines activities that may confer a higher risk of transmission and alternatives/considerations for planning.

Events activities permitted	Potential alternatives
Indoor in-person events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual events (<i>best option for reducing transmission</i>) Outdoor in-person events Consider hybrid events with a small in-person component for those who wish to attend virtually
Activities resulting in close contact or increased risk of aerosolization/transmission risk with others (<2m) such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dancing, hugging High contact sports or group sports (e.g. wrestling, basketball) Activities that foster boisterous or competitive play that may lead to close contact Exposure to bodily fluids/aerosol High contact equipment (e.g. slides, inflatables) Sharing personal items/equipment Singing (e.g. Karaoke), chanting, shouting, cheering (e.g. pep rallies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual events Outdoor in-person events Activities modified to maintain physical distance (2m) where possible Activities that do not foster boisterous or competitive play (e.g. yoga within an individual circle, modifying competitive sports to drills) Activities modified to eliminate transmission risk Individualized equipment Equipment that is disinfected between each user
Food/beverage provision or consumption that increases transmission risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-site cooking sharing kitchen equipment Buffet with shared utensils/dispensers Sharing food/beverage with others Food service that can cause crowding (e.g. during service, line ups, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual cooking events Bring own food/beverage and do not share with others Boxed/individually packaged food/beverage and hand washing/sanitization available. Organized pre-order, pick-up, seating and/or service to prevent crowding

Potlucks and homemade foods are permitted and should be individually packaged or boxed. No utensils should be shared. Food preparers must follow good hygiene practices when preparing the food. As with any food distributed at an event, food should be distributed using a contactless method. Where there are line ups/queuing, mask use should be in place. Potlucks must be private events and not be opened to the general University community or student populations. For additional guidance regarding potlucks: <https://food-beverage.utoronto.ca/policies/potlucks>.

COMMUNICATIONS/INSTRUCTIONS

The communication strategy will vary depending on the business unit but here are some suggestions/recommendations:

- Communications may take the form of memos, emails and meetings.
- In addition to workers in the unit, consider communications with event organizers, organizations and other departments that you work with routinely.
- Update your website, email signature with instructions on new procedures.
- Update procedures for scheduling appointments. Signage to remind workers and to inform the University community.
- For high traffic flow areas, consider providing a resource in the area to explain procedures for that area and direct visitors.
- Communications may need to occur more than once. The procedures may need to be adjusted over time, for example as restrictions continue to lift, and re-communicated to relevant parties.
- It is important to get feedback from workers who may have additional suggestions to improve the event procedures.

RESOURCES FOR EVENTS

- [Freedom of Speech at the University of Toronto](#)
- [Government of Canada's Risk Informed Decision-making for Mass Gatherings During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

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 [FAQs](#). Faculty, librarians and staff can also refer to the [Human Resources & Equity page on COVID-19](#) (e.g. Return to Work Processes during COVID-19 Response document).

HR-RELATED COVID-19 RESOURCES

- [Working Remotely, Alternative Work Arrangement Guideline](#) and the [EHS Working from Home Checklist](#).
- [PSEC Divisional COVID-19 Materials](#)
- For COVID-19 management resources, please visit the [COVID-19 Leadership Toolkit](#) (site is UTORid password protected).

RESEARCH

- [Update on COVID-19 and Research Operations](#)
- [EHS Off-Campus Safety](#)

EHS COVID-19 INFORMATION (INCLUDING GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC HEALTH RESOURCES)

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