COVID-19
IN-CLASS (IN-PERSON) INSTRUCTIONAL AND TEACHING LAB GUIDELINE

Prepared by
Environmental Health & Safety
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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.

The University has provided guidance documents in the areas of academic excellence, research, environmental health & safety, student experience, residences, and more. As the situation evolves, we will update our community and guidance documents as needed.

This guideline outlines strategies and best practices for making instructional spaces ready for increased occupancy, and for addressing the needs of employees and others who will be returning to the workplace. Teaching labs are considered distinctive spaces and should not be used to perform research.

Foundational to this guideline are the COVID-19 General Workplace Guidelines (GWG) and the General Assessment Tool (GAT) imbedded in the guideline and available through the links provided and found within the Leadership Toolkit. The GWG describes the requirements for safe return to work and the GAT is a form that describes how the workplace (e.g. the instructional spaces and personnel in a department or division) meet the GWG requirements. For instructional activity to occur on campus a GAT must be completed for the division (e.g. Faculty of Music) that covers the spaces and people involved in the planned instructional activity. The GAT should be aligned with the requirements described within this guideline document, and it must be approved by the unit lead before instructional activities can begin. An overview of process responsibilities and scope is below and visualized in Appendix A:

- Each **space owner** [academic division, institutional office [e.g., Learning Space Management (LSM)], and other instructional space providers (e.g., Federated or Constituent College, Koffler Scientific Reserve, etc.), create a document specifying the strategies in place to apply COVID-19 exposure-reducing controls, strategies and precautions in the operations of the space within their control. The document is basically a GAT with only the parts completed that describe **space preparation** and management of this space (For St. George campus, please refer to COVID-19 ACE/LSM Classroom General Assessment Tool in the HR COVID-19 leadership tool).

Ownership of spaces and roles and responsibilities for allocation of space vary across
organizations within U of T. For example, spaces may be owned by the University, college or other entity. For the purposes of this guideline: A space owner is the party that owns or controls allocation or assignment of a space in accordance with local space management allocation procedures. A space user is a party to whom a space is allocated or assigned. Processes and responsibilities for allocation may differ across and within campuses and should be accurately reflected in GATs.

b) Each academic division (i.e. space user) will produce a GAT that speaks to how they will handle in-person activity associated with:

(i) all undergraduate courses for which the Faculty/Division is the primary org in ROSI

(ii) all graduate courses for which the Faculty/Division is the co-secondary org in ROSI (SGS is the primary org for all graduate courses but is not involved in the delivery of those courses)

Units can copy wording in the space owner’s GAT (see above in a)) regarding space preparation when completing their teaching GAT. If applicable, units could produce omnibus GATs for teaching activities that apply across different courses (e.g. an omnibus GAT for all courses where lecture-style teaching is the only activity and teaching spaces have all been prepared the same way). If the same GAT is used for multiple courses, the courses should be clearly identified within the GAT.

It is possible that within larger divisions/units there may be a need for two or more of these documents – e.g., each department within a departmentalized Faculty may need to have such a document to the extent that they have authority and responsibility for specialized space; for LSM, they may have slightly (or very) different protocols in place for specific spaces based on the space purpose, location, etc.

Plans are reviewed/approved by the Divisional Dean's Office and Chief Administrative Officer to ensure health and safety guidelines are met and human resources plans are approved.

c) If a division is going to make use of space it does not own in a way other than what is outlined in the space owner’s document, this needs to be described in the division’s GAT with the explicit knowledge and agreement of the space owner.

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. If you do not have access to the Toolkit, please consult with your divisional CAO.
SCOPE

This guideline 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).

2 MEASURES TO REDUCE RISK

GENERAL MEASURES FOR ALL IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION

All members of the UofT community are to follow general COVID-19 prevention measures (e.g., hand hygiene and respiratory and cough etiquette) and self-screen using Ucheck (or paper equivalent of Ucheck if they do not have electronic access to the app) prior to entering UofT buildings. All UofT community members (faculty, librarians, staff and students) are required to complete the UCheck Self-Assessment before coming on campus each time. More information on the introduction of UCheck is available in HR Memo #60 or https://www.utoronto.ca/utogether/ucheck.

Upon completion of the UCheck self-assessment, if the individual receives 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, where applicable. They must also contact Occupational Health (ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca). Procedures are available on the EHS website: Procedures in the Event of a UCheck Red Screen, Confirmed Case, and/or COVID-19 Symptoms.

For the latest information about U of T’s COVID-19 response, please see the University’s Coronavirus page and take time to review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and the Human Resources & Equity page on COVID-19. 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.

As outlined in the GWG, referenced in section 1.0, each divisions’ CAO and Academic Lead are to complete the GAT, with the assistance of local property/facilities groups, caretaking, classroom owners, etc., outlining the measures that will be taken as applicable and appropriate for in-person instruction. The GAT can serve as a detailed checklist for units.

In the case of in-person instruction including teaching labs (wet and dry labs, including computer labs), the Vice or Associate Deans are the critical leads. They should familiarize themselves with institutional guidance in order to implement a communication plan for their faculty, librarians,
staff, teaching assistants, and students on:

- Steps to follow if a student does not comply with COVID-19 procedures, which may follow similar existing processes for non-compliant behaviour in a classroom or teaching lab [e.g. student not wearing proper personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect from chemical hazards].
  
  o Student non-compliance should be dealt with in a stepped approach, whereby the instructor first speaks with the student. If the behaviour continues, the instructor may elevate the matter to the division head, who could also engage with the student. If necessary, the division head may wish to consider the Code of Student Conduct, specifically offence 1 (c) No person shall knowingly create a condition that unnecessarily endangers the health or safety of other persons, at which point OVPS should be contacted for advice.

- Where appropriate, implement cleaning procedures to supplement the [Tri-Campus Caretaking Strategy for Return to the University](#). Departments should coordinate with the classroom operator/owners and caretaking to ensure clear messaging and instructions are developed for room users. In some cases, this may mean ensuring dedicated/individualized equipment is provided (e.g. markers, microphones, headsets).

- Steps to follow when a student, staff, Faculty feels ill during instruction and requires assistance (note: Campus Police have developed COVID-19 procedures when responding to incident and emergency calls). Follow the usual protocols:
  
  o Call emergency services at (9) 9-1-1
  
  o Notify Campus Police - Emergency:
    - 416-978-2222 (St. George Campus)
    - 905-569-4333 (Mississauga Campus),
    - 416-978-2222 (Scarborough Campus)
  
  o Verbally assess the patient from a distance of 2 metres away.
  
  o Establish, at the scene, a safe, designated isolation area for the individual to wait at least 2 metres away from you and other passers-by until Campus Police (CP) and EMS arrive. Remember to avoid face to face conversations within 2 metres, stand to the side of the individual and if required, when assisting with assuring individual is comfortable while waiting for EMS.

- For procedures in the event of illness with COVID-19 related symptoms please also visit [Procedures in the Event of a UCheck Red Screen, Confirmed Case, and/or COVID-19 Symptoms](#).
The above information should be part of the training available to instructors, teaching assistants, and lab staff, and, where relevant, part of the guidance available to students. Resources are to be developed by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, in consultation with Tri-Campus Teaching Centres, and will be made available to all CAOs and Academic Leads in order to assist with this training and guidance. For additional resources, please refer to the HR COVID-19 leadership tool.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO POLICY ON NON-MEDICAL MASKS

Non-medical masks are to be worn indoors, including classrooms and common areas in residences on University property. In instructional spaces, physical distancing and capacity limits do not apply and non-medical masks must be worn. Please ensure you have a non-medical mask ready when on-campus to meet this policy. Units are being encouraged to provide masks where and if applicable/appropriate, e.g. for those who forget them, teaching labs, student/client/reception facing areas, etc.

There may be unique close contact learning situations where personal protection equipment (PPE) may be required. Please refer to the section on Teaching Labs and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).

For more information, please refer to the Policy on Non-Medical Masks, the Joint Provostial and Human Resources Guideline on Non-Medical Masks at the University of Toronto and Chapter 6 of the COVID-19 General Workplace Guideline.

Students who require an accommodation from mask use (e.g. medical accommodation or other accommodation recognized under the Ontario Human Rights Code) are expected to contact Accessibility Services before arriving to campus. For more information, please also refer to the Tri-Campus Student Non-Medical Mask Accommodation Workflow Process.

Instructors who wish to seek an exemption to mask use for pedagogical reasons should complete the Instructor Mask Removal Request for Indoor Instructional Spaces Questionnaire and send it to EHS (ehs.office@utoronto.ca) for review.

IN-PERSON TEACHING ROOM CAPACITY AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Effective September 7th, 2021, physical distancing and capacity limit requirements are no longer in effect for INDOOR instructional spaces/activities (i.e., indoor instructional areas such as classrooms; teaching laboratories; libraries; in-person experiential learning, etc.) at post-secondary education institutions.

Definition of In-person instruction: Classrooms, teaching laboratories and in-person for-credit experiential learning refer to spaces/activities where 1) the activity in the space is directly related to an academic program of study; and 2) there are dedicated resources, equipment and/or teaching staff supporting a specific academic course/program of study that is not available elsewhere. Physical distancing also does not apply to in-person exams, including midterms. In such spaces where physical distancing does NOT apply, non-medical masks must be worn at all
time and activities that require masks to be removed (e.g. eating) should be relocated to spaces with physical distancing (e.g. lunchrooms) in place.

The definition of in-person instruction also applies to academic research laboratories that involve a learner or group of learners (graduate students, undergraduate students, postdocs and other research staff) 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. These spaces must also meet 1) and 2) above. Divisions would be permitted but not required to apply this definition within their specific contexts. Here are some scenarios to assist units in determining if an academic research lab meet the definition:

**Scenario 1** - The definition of in-person instruction space should apply to the space that the faculty member uses for their research group. If this is a space that has trainee workspaces that the supervisor oversees and in which they interact with trainees, then that is their academic research lab in this context. In that case, the full capacity option would apply. The supervisor does not have to be there all the time for it to qualify (although they are there on a regular/semi-regular basis) and the type of research is, of course, specific to the disciplinary unit. Also, the space is allocated to one or more specific faculty member's research team by the department. This is a key part of the definition of a lab. This would qualify as in-person instructional space and physical distancing would not apply.

**Scenario 2** - In some humanities/social sciences departments, there are graduate rooms with cubicles that are controlled by the department admin staff for sign up. These rooms are not allocated to any faculty member and the students working in those spaces are not usually being overseen, instructed or interacting with their supervisor in that space on a regular/semi-regular basis. In other words, there is no supervisor-specific "research group" in this context and there is no academic lab in this case. This would not qualify as in-person instructional space and physical distancing would apply.

The definition of in-person instruction may apply to graduate spaces (whether in lab or in nearby offices) where instruction is given or used for required academic work. If such spaces are considered in-person instruction, these spaces should be restricted to graduate students who have assigned desks/space and spaces should be assigned to facilitate contact tracing. Where there are multiple users of the space, the definition of in-person instruction space may apply during specific times.

In multi-use areas, common rooms etc. physical distancing and capacity limits continues to apply when carrying out activities that are not associated with in-person instruction (e.g. workplace meetings/training, research etc.).

- Step 3 requirements remain in effect for outdoor instructional spaces, including physical distancing and capacity limits.
- Physical distancing (2m) is required in non-instructional spaces in the building. For more
information, please refer to the COVID-19 General Workplace Guideline. Academic units are to work together with local building/facilities management to mitigate congestion in common areas such as elevators, stairwells and lobbies. Instructors should also consider mitigating factors if a student should arrive late to class (e.g. line up for elevators).

- Clearly demarcate the flow of traffic into and out of the room and provide instructions on the order the seats that will be filled to reduce positional overlap in the paths of travel.

- A barrier may be installed if warranted by risk assessment and public health requirements/guidance (e.g. singing, playing wind instruments). Additional physical distancing (3m) may be required in some circumstances. Please contact EHS for assistance. Please also refer to the Ch3 of the COVID-19 General Workplace Guideline, under Dramatic Performances and Music Club Rehearsals.

- Provide instruction to students to contact instructor by virtual means for assistance instead of approaching the instructor (close-contact) at the podium / lectern / presenter area.

- To avoid gathering in hallways/corridors/outside of the buildings, allocate time for staggered arrival and departure when accommodating a large class; consider cohorting within a large class.

- Instructors (faculty, TA etc.) required to participate in in-person instructional activities – please refer to the In-Class Instructional and Teaching Lab Guideline.
  - TAs should hold office hours online, book 1-to-1 meetings in person where feasible; units, where feasible, should provide spaces for Instructors to be used for required work activities e.g. marking, office hours, prep etc.
  - Instructors may be able to use their designated research area for instructional related activities if physical distancing can be applied.
  - In some cases, if a research space can be dedicated solely for the purposes of a designated instructional activity e.g. office hours, course content review, facilitated study sessions etc. For example: A TA is able to conduct required instructional activities in their lab when no other persons will be present conducting work/research in that lab for the duration of the proposed instructional activity. Approved by OHS only. In these approved cases, where medical masks and other PPE are required for tasks and where physical distancing is a challenge within teaching labs instruction has been provided in keeping with University guidance in this poster: https://ehs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Medical_Mask.pdf.

Some instructors teaching online courses temporarily in the early part of the semester and are now teaching in-person courses may be approached by students asking to continue taking these courses online. Their reasons could include having applied for and been denied an exemption from the university’s vaccination policy; other health-related reasons that are not formally documented; or because of ongoing travel-related barriers to their being on campus. While they may ask their instructors to consider requests for continuing to take in-person courses online, the instructor is not obliged to provide such an accommodation. Individual instructors decide whether to grant such requests, specific to the
circumstances of their courses. Programs and instructors should inform students who cannot be accommodated to contact their college Registrar’s office to look into their options, which could include switching into any available online options, removing all Fall term courses, and/or taking a leave of absence.

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.

ACCESSIBILITY

- ‘Access’ and the principles of universal design should be considered and incorporated throughout the planning process. Please contact the AODA office for assistance.

- Accessible seating may need targeted messaging for access.

ENTRY AND EXITING SEQUENCE, CIRCULATION PATHWAYS

- Clearly demarcate 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 and number of students. When queuing outside of an instructional space, physical distancing must be followed and a non-medical mask must be worn.

- Post signage and visual cues (e.g. signage, arrows, and floor decals) to direct all to move only in a clockwise direction.

- Where possible, entry and exit paths should be through separate marked doors, otherwise, keep to the right.

- Stagger scheduling of in-person instruction with sufficient transition time in between change of classes to allow for de-densifying main corridors and for cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces.

- Consider providing COVID-19 related training on procedures, UofT policies, expectations, behaviour to all students during the orientation week, the first lecture or during first in-person session.

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. Consider options for co-location in areas with multiple classrooms.

- 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.

- Replenishment may need to be planned in areas of higher traffic. Monitor and in coordination with caretaking groups, a feasible schedule for replenishment.

- 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.

LOGISTICS & SCHEDULING IMPACTS

Campus wide consistent approach will allow a smooth efficient flow while supporting the physical distancing considerations especially with shared facilities and in common areas such as cafeterias.

SIGNAGE/SCRIPTS

- Centrally approved signs are available from EHS website: (https://ehs.utoronto.ca/covid-19-information/) for units to download/print. Instructions on how to order through the Brand Hub in also available on this website. Classroom-specific instructions/signage may be required in addition to centrally approved signage.

- Extensive system of wayfinding and informational signage is recommended to support in-person instruction, in order to communicate the following considerations:
  - Physical distancing, maximum room capacity, restricting seating in non-instructional spaces, such as seating in hallways.
  - Path of travel, both inside and outside of the classroom.

- Behavioural expectations/rules of engagement: Instructors, teaching assistants, support staff should reiterate the mask policy, self-screening (UCheck) and physical distancing outside of instructional space message using institutionally provided teaching resources (slides, scripts, etc.) and in various ways:
  - ‘Hi there, welcome, just a reminder that everyone is being asked to stay two metres apart when outside of the classroom (e.g. lobbies, washrooms).’
  - “Hi there, welcome, just a reminder that everyone is being asked to wear a mask in
order to decrease COVID-19 transmission risk and to keep you and everyone safe”

- “For everyone’s safety, we expect any individual who attends on-campus activity has completed a symptom self-assessment prior to arriving. Using UCheck is an easy way to do that. Anyone with symptoms should not come to campus. Please go to the UCheck web portal and complete a self-assessment before coming on campus.”

- Recommended health and safety measures should be reiterated:
  - Follow proper hand hygiene, as this is the first line of defense against infection.
  - Encourage the following prevention strategies:
    - Avoid touching your face, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
    - Practice proper etiquette, such as sneezing and coughing into a tissue or bent arm (dispose of tissue immediately)
    - Maintain physical distancing of two metres or more in non-instructional spaces outside of the classroom
    - Stay home if you are sick

  - Ready to Teach Resources have been centrally developed – course instructors, TAs and other course staff who do not have access to the COVID-19 Leadership Toolkit can contact their program administrator, Chair or Dean’s Office for these resources:
    - COVID-19 In-Class Instruction Guidelines for Course Instructors
    - COVID-19 In-Class Instruction Guidelines for Course Instructors – First Class or Tutorial Slide Deck.

  To facilitate compliance, instructors should update their course webpages with the most updated information from the above resources.

FURNITURE/SHARED ROOM ELEMENTS

- Reduce/eliminate shared collaboration tools such as chalk/whiteboard markers and advise users to bring personal supplies.

- Reduce/eliminate the use of wireless microphones and rely on podium/lectern/fixed microphones or bring personal microphones. 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, e.g. ready to use wipes. Ensure disinfectants are available and accessible.
CRUSH SPACE

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. physical distancing, circulation pathways).

COMPLIANCE

- Provide education and instruction to students on COVID-19 requirements; if required, lab technicians/TAs can escalate non-compliance to the appropriate supervisor; endeavor to work with students to understand whether an accommodation applies; if accommodation is required, this may be discussed with the lab technician/TA, their supervisor and/or Student Accessibility Services;

- When observing COVID-19 non-compliance and if/when it is not safe to approach person(s) with a reminder, please contact Campus Police by calling the non-emergency phone number 416-978-2323 (St. George); 905-569-4333 (Mississauga Campus), 416-978-2222 (Scarborough Campus) or use the CP app to report the location and type of non-compliance. Please note that only Campus Police has the authority to check ID and escort a person out if the person is not a member of the UofT community.

- Faculty members and Instructors will not be asked to enforce the Policy on Masks. In circumstances where a student is attending an in-person class and is not wearing a mask the following non-compliance measure may be applied:
  - Faculty members and instructors may ask the student to confirm that they are not wearing a mask because they have already arranged an accommodation. If one applies, do not ask for a specific diagnosis. The particular limitations or barriers a student is facing in wearing a mask will be communicated on a need-to-know basis in the student’s Letter of Accommodation in order to better understand alternatives or options that may be available in that setting so that a student may be able to participate where possible.
  - In instances of non-compliance with the Policy where a student does not have an accommodation but needs one (e.g. they state they have or could get a medical note), faculty members and instructors may advise the student that they are expected to seek accommodation through Accessibility Services in order to provide the student with adequate resources and to mitigate any difficulties for the student as they navigate on campus. If the non-compliance occurs during a class and if feasible the student may be accommodated by providing them an area to sit that is physically distanced from others so that they may complete the class. Where a physically distanced alternative seat is not possible the student may be taken aside and provided information on alternate course delivery methods for that session and advised that an accommodation will need to be in place in advance of the next class.
In instances of non-compliance with the Policy for reasons that do not relate to an accommodation need, faculty members and instructors should make best efforts to diffuse the situation as a course management issue. Education and compassionate engagement should be our first approach. In circumstances where non-compliance creates a material risk of harm to the health and safety of others or includes other forms of conduct that involve other University policies or, regulations and practices, faculty/staff who are unable to diffuse the situation on their own may request immediate assistance from their supervisor for additional guidance and may engage other units such as Human Resources or Labour Relations.

TEACHING LABS (WET, DRY, AND COMPUTER)

CAOs/Academic leads are responsible for assigning resources for implementing the measures outlined in the GAT (e.g. lab manager, instructor, teaching assistant). 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:

Physical Setup

1. Teaching lab protocols

   - Instructor to review course learning outcomes and determine what teaching/instruction should be remote and what portions should be in-person experiences. For in-person offerings, consider what protocols will be put in place to mitigate crowding. For example, keeping a clear path to shared equipment or facilities (e.g. a fume hood).

   - For faculty, librarians and staff who are legally permitted to come to campus to complete course delivery preparation (i.e. are operating under an approved GAT) and require access to classrooms/labs, ensure that they have been granted permission to access the necessary space. Booking procedures should be followed to ensure physical distancing.

   - In-person activities such as filming a lecture or lab procedure may require instructors to be physically on-campus. In-person filming or other activities of this type must be centrally approved through a GAT. If filming in a lab, please refer to the Guidelines for Images in Research and Teaching Laboratories.

   - Review scheduling and stagger start/end times where possible.

   - Plan should include managing queuing outside of the labs (e.g. visual cues such as tape or decals on the floor, posting instructions, communications to students ahead of time).

2. Space use

   - Determine a method for conducting regular counts of occupants per lab (quadrant, bench etc.) and informing students about the procedures. Examples are:
- Instruct students in advance of performing procedures.
- Consider having the lab technician or a TA demonstrate procedures virtually before the class.
- Divide students in small groups (stations) within a lab, instruct them in advance about procedures (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.
- Designate a teaching assistant or technician to operate shared equipment, (e.g. multiple students running samples through one machine).
- Instruct students on orderly entry and exiting.
- Review of procedures with students at the beginning of class using institutionally developed slides, scripts and other resources.
- Where support staff are not present (e.g. computer labs), signage and communication to be provided outside each classroom

3. Circulation spaces

- 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). See Figure 4 for examples.
- 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.
- Optional: Mark 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.

4. Shared equipment

- Review any shared equipment (e.g. scales, fume hoods, biological safety cabinets (BSCs), and so on) and determine ways to de-densify these areas to reduce the occurrence of students congregating in those areas (e.g. queuing instructions or markings on the floor).
- Review the use of shared lab experiment equipment. Ideally, every piece of equipment should be used by only one person, or as few people as possible. Where equipment must be shared, disinfected between users and wash hands frequently.

5. Meeting and shared spaces associated with labs

- Decommission and re-purpose large gathering spaces.
- Communicate maximum occupancy based on physical distancing via signage and room reservation tools.

**HIGH-TOUCH SURFACES / SHARED EQUIPMENT**

- Establish appropriate lab cleaning protocol to disinfect surfaces throughout the day and before and after each group of students come to the lab. Please also review the sections pertaining to research labs in the [COVID-19 General Workplace Guideline](https://www.utoronto.ca/environmental-health-safety) for additional guidance.

- Consider having cleaning supplies available for students to assist in disinfecting lab areas (e.g. work bench). Provide appropriate instructions, supervision and supplies for cleaning.

- Scheduling of labs should allow time to properly disinfect areas in between sessions.

- Consider relocating or grouping some equipment in one area of a large space creating “learning zone” to minimize traffic within the room.

- Consider assigning TAs to demonstrate some procedures with the equipment (run sample, calibrate, set up, etc.) if there is only one or only a few machines for a large class.

1. **Light/power switches**
   - Affix signage to remind occupants to keep switches ‘on’ all day.
   - Provide wall-mounted disinfectant dispensers.

2. **Doors and drawers**
   - Remove non-essential doors (where feasible, e.g. not a requirement of Fire Regulations).
   - Remove door handles if viable.
   - Affix doors in an open position, where feasible, in common areas e.g. not permitted in a laboratory.

3. **Collaboration Tools**
   - Meeting rooms: Remove/discourage use of shared phones and encourage the use of personal mobile phones or laptops.
   - Provide whiteboard cleaning solution and disposable wipes in the lab and others help/advise/participate virtually.

4. **Shared equipment**
● Reduce the quantity of printers and copiers to dissuade printing.

● Do not allow use of personal USB-drives or other devices for data transfer, encourage use of online platforms associated with secure data channels such as Quercus.

5. Supplies storage

● Secure supplies in storage areas and designate specific personnel (lab technicians, TAs) to manage stock and distribute items.

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. Deliveries to teaching lab

● 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) only.

● Try to coordinate delivery of all needed supplies for one day of the week, reducing the frequency during the week.

4. Human subjects in teaching lab

● Change/modify the type of practical teaching that would eliminate 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 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

For more information regarding the University’s policy, please consult the Policy on Non-Medical Masks and the accompanying guideline. The guideline on Non-Medical Masks will be updated periodically as our response to COVID-19 evolves. For any questions regarding accommodation, please contact HR&E for employees and the Office of the Vice-Provost, students for student queries.

In instructional spaces, physical distancing and capacity limits do not apply and non-medical masks must be worn. There may be unique prolonged close contact learning situations such as clinical learning environments where students are practicing exercises/procedures with each other and medical masks and eye protection (goggles or face shield) may be required. Instructional staff in teaching labs who are required to be in prolonged close distances to students during practical aspects of the instruction (e.g. in-depth demonstrations or examination of work that cannot be done from a distance) should wear a medical mask and eye protection. In all other non-instructional areas of the University, all workplace/public health requirements for medical masks/eye protection apply. If you have any questions regarding which type mask (and eye protection if applicable) to use for your designated tasks, please 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.

Wash/sanitize hands after removal. If your hands become contaminated during PPE removal, wash/sanitize before removing the rest of your 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)
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

**Training**

- Safety orientation for each practical session should include review of COVID-19 precautions and infection prevention, control procedures and reporting of non-compliance.

- Avoid touching your face, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Practice proper respiratory etiquette, such as sneezing and coughing into a tissue or your elbow. Dispose of tissue immediately in a waste receptacle.

- Do not shake hands.

- Maintain physical distancing of two metres or more in non-instructional spaces outside of the classrooms

- Stay home if you are sick.

- In order to support the above strategies, conspicuously post the University COVID-19 posters that are linked in the Resources section below.

- Reminders provided at the beginning of each laboratory session that some procedures might have changed.

- Signage posted throughout lab/work benches regarding proper practices.

For guidance on restarting a lab after a closure, please review the sections pertaining to research labs in the [COVID-19 General Workplace Guideline](#) for additional guidance.
COVID-19 In-Class Instruction and Teaching Lab Guideline
Oct. 29, 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, please visit the EHS COVID-19 webpage for the most up to date version.
3 ROLE-SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

SPACE OWNERS AND OPERATORS

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

- Develop and implement procedures for classroom/teaching lab use to support the measures in this guideline. Including:
  - Space out bookings to allow time between classes/bookings for cleaning (where applicable). Additionally, this will allow users to safely physically distance when entering or exiting the classroom or lab. The same principle applies when booking the classroom or lab for other purposes.
  - Coordinate with local property/facilities management groups on the posting of signage, instructions, floor decals, removing seating (where possible) or restricting seating with visual cues and/or barriers, etc. in support of physical distancing measures outside the space as it pertains to queueing. In order to make this assessment, please complete the GAT, linked in Section 1, and if you require assistance after completing the assessment, contact EHS. Please also refer the Resources section for links to University relevant COVID-19 posters.
  - 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.

ACADEMIC DIVISION LEADS

Vice or Associate Deans in academic division are the critical leads for ensuring that processes and guidelines outlined in Section 2 are in place for safe return to in-class instruction. They will work with Chairs, Directors, CAOs and their local Property Management unit, etc. to ensure the following
considerations are implemented. This work will be undertaken with assistance from, and in coordination with, all faculty and staff responsible for the delivery of programs and courses.

- Ensure a communication plan has been developed and deployed to all relevant faculty and staff outlining what activities can or cannot occur in-person and ensure activity delivery methods are in compliance with governmental directives. Resources developed through the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs and tri-campus teaching centres will be available to assist with this communication.

- Where in-class instruction occurs, work with CAOs and Property Management to complete a GAT, and apply principles and requirements therein.

- Ensure that appropriate guidance material is readily available and communicated to applicable faculty, librarians, staff and students.

- Advise academic administrators and course instructors on how to handle situations of non-compliance with public health measures (e.g. mask usage).

- Be familiar with Procedures in the Event of a UCheck red screen, Confirmed Case and/or COVID-19 Symptoms and assist the UofT Occupational Health Nurse with contact tracing as needed.

INSTRUCTORS, TEACHING ASSISTANTS, AND TEACHING SUPPORT STAFF

- Review general health and safety practices (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. Refer to the Signage/Scripts section above. Please refer to Chapter 3 for discussion on class sizes.

- Implement the re-entry plan as described in the GWG for their academic division/unit.

- Communicate training information provided by the University per the GWG to students.

- Report hazards and concerns to their supervisor, Chair or Director.

- Orderly entry and exiting.

- Be familiar with Procedures in the Event of a UCheck red screen, Confirmed Case and/or COVID-19 Symptoms and assist the UofT Occupational Health Nurse with contact tracing as needed.
CARETAKING GROUPS

- Implement the Tri-Campus Caretaking Strategy for Return to the University.
- If required, work with classroom owners/operators to coordinate cleaning/disinfection schedule and replenishment of hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes for room users.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

University of Toronto Safety Plans are posted on the [EHS website](#), including the Safety Plan for In-Class/Person Instruction and Teaching.

UofT COVID-19 posters are available from the [Environmental Health & Safety website](#).

Learning Space Management (LSM) classrooms on ST. George Campus:

- [LSM website](#)
- [LSM Fall 2020 – Classroom Technology COVID-19 Response document](#)
APPENDIX A: GAT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1. **Space owners** create “GAT Plug Ins” (parts of the GAT filled in by the space owner/manager unit related to space preparation and management - please refer to explanation in Ch 1 re: space owners). This space may be owned by a division itself or another unit (e.g. LSM, Federated Universities, another division). The parts related to how the people (instructors and students) will operate in the space and be trained or prepared for safely being in the space would be left blank for Divisions have to complete.

2. Each Academic Division (**space user**) creates one or a few GATs including the GAT plug-ins for all spaces they propose to use.

3. Divisional (**space user**) GATs are approved by the unit lead or per local processes. Through this process U of T has consistent provisions in place for all users in all spaces for instructional activities.