

COVID Guidelines for Research. Faculty of Science uOttawa:

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Adherence to Government and Institutional Directives: All applicable local, provincial and federal public health directives, guidelines as well as direction from uOttawa, will be diligently followed in planning the reopening of labs and restarting research.

Safety: The health and wellbeing of our uOttawa Faculty of Science community is a priority above all other considerations as we restart research operations. This includes incorporating newly accepted norms of hygiene, physical distancing and use of PPE in all areas of research to prevent the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Equity: The phased-in approach selected must be equitable to all research teams and adequately supported by research services and facilities.

Monitoring: The Faculty of Science and uOttawa will establish monitoring procedures to ensure new safety measures are followed.

The Proposal:

This proposal describes the process and guidelines for the restarting of research activities at the Faculty of Science. Below is a set of guidelines that research labs can use to develop their own lab protocols during the pandemic

Determining Capacity and Guidelines for Distancing

- Individual workspaces should ensure physical distancing is adhered to. Please keep in mind:
 - 1 researcher per bay or fume hood except for benches longer than 2m
 - Benches are not 2m wide, hence staff sitting face-to-face across from each other is not permitted
 - Utilization of bench spaces directly beside each other is not permitted unless the space is greater than 2m.
 - Assigned bench space should not be near heavily used common equipment or heavily used corridors in open concept labs.
 - In open concept labs where bays are shared between labs, the PIs must coordinate the use of bays.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to:

- Establish a daily schedule that prioritizes projects and the needs of trainees to complete degrees in a timely manner.
- When spaces within labs do not have the area (m²) to allow for more than 1 researcher, it is the responsibility of the PIs to establish a schedule for the room that ensures physical distancing and equitable access
- For shared equipment rooms between PIs (e.g., microscope rooms), the PIs must establish a schedule that ensures physical distancing and equitable access to equipment.

Allowable Capacity by Phase:

Phase 1: 33%

Due to the varying nature and size of each laboratory, this percentage necessarily refers to capacity of labs and not percentage of students. This allows newer researchers with fewer graduate students to bring more of their students to work while respecting the 33% room capacity. It is understood that there will be exceptions based on lab configuration. Health and Safety staff from the Faculty of Science could provide guidance in this respect, when necessary.

Phase 2: 67%

The same guidelines for capacity as phase 1 applies.

Phase 3: 90% or the new normal capacity (Current Phase)

The same guidelines for capacity as phase 1 applies.

Back to normal: 100%

Only when Covid19 pandemic is officially deemed over.

Phase 3 Guidelines

Restrictions:

- It is understood that if a 2nd outbreak occurs, whether locally or nationally, that all research activities at the Faculty of Science may be immediately halted. When planning research activities, researchers should consider that an immediate halt to research may occur at any time that may be more restrictive than the original COVID-19 derogations.
- Researchers, staff, students who can conduct their research off-campus should continue to do so. During Phase 3, all activities (including but not limited to writing, analysis, reviewing, videoconferencing and marking) that can be completed from home must be conducted off-campus.
- During phase 3, on site access will be restricted to only research activities that must take place on campus (e.g., wet-bench work and access to restricted database portals, software or speciality computers required for certain projects).
- Shared office space can be used while experiments are run but will follow the same capacity guidelines listed above. Note that all research personnel will be encouraged to perform at home those activities that do not absolutely necessitate their presence on campus.
- No visitors will be allowed on-site including visiting scientists, relatives, and children. Exceptions will be granted for service personnel and vendors according to guidelines under development. All service personnel must be accompanied by approved faculty/staff and adhere to physical distancing and PPE guidelines at all times.

- No in-person meetings of more than 5 participants are to be conducted until further notice (including lab meetings / seminars / conferences / thesis defences / meetings with external groups/ etc.). Video or teleconference should continue to be used until further notice. If one-on-one meetings are required (maximum of 5 participants) physical distancing must be respected and face masks may be worn.
- uOttawa restrictions on international travel will remain in place until specifically lifted.

ACCESS To UOttawa (Building Access, and when to self isolate)

- All researchers/trainees/staff coming on-site must complete the uOttawa COVID-19 self-assessment
 - If potential COVID-19 symptoms report to Manager/Supervisor and/or uOHealth & Wellness (hrhealth@uottawa.ca)
 - Stay at home and self-isolate as directed
- As per Public Health authorities, researchers/trainees/staff are recommended, regardless if they display symptoms, to self-isolate (quarantine) for 14 days and advise health and wellness if:
 - They have travelled anywhere outside of Canada
 - Live with, provided care for, or spent extensive time with someone who has:
 - Tested positive for COVID-19, OR
 - is suspected to have COVID-19, OR
 - who has respiratory symptoms (fever, cough, or shortness of breath)

Researchers/staff/trainees who have been identified as having potentially been exposed to the virus or exhibit symptoms of the virus are required to not return to work until they have received medical clearance.

- Access will be by card-key only and everyone on-site must have the appropriate employee or student card.
- Designated Entry and Exit points will be established and must be used.

Physical distancing measures and face mask requirements for Phase 3:

The phased-in reopening of research at uOttawa seeks to minimize risk of exposure to, and spread of, COVID-19. It is recognized that employers, including the direct supervisors, have obligations to protect workers from hazards in the workplace as set out in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and the directives coming from the Chief Medical Officer of Health for the Province of Ontario.

The guidelines outlined below can be changed/modified at any time to suit your laboratory specific needs.

In many lab environments, it will be difficult to comply with physical distancing measures of 2m minimum. This is especially true in open labs where equipment is shared and/or due to traffic flow. Additionally, cloth-masks/surgical masks are only effective when worn by everyone working within 2 meters of each other. For these reasons, face masks should be worn at all times

- Face masks (surgical or cloth) are required in the following situations
 - Laboratories that have high traffic (require students to regularly come into close contact)
 - Shared spaces, including common equipment rooms or any space with a high cross section of personnel entering (to prevent contamination of equipment)
 - Areas where signage indicates mandatory use of masks (IE: corridors where two-way traffic is allowed)
 - Conditions where a 2m distance cannot be maintained such as in-person meetings.

If you have determined that your laboratory OR space within your laboratory requires the use of a mask please indicate this with the signage below. (Select image → Copy → Paste in new document → Resize image to desired size → Print)



- As presently required by Faculty of Science health and safety, all researchers working in a lab are required to wear safety glasses and lab coat. NOTE: We are presently working to determine the feasibility of on-site laundering service.
- Gloves should continue to be used as required following recommended laboratory safety procedures established pre-COVID-19. They are to be used in lab facilities as normal but gloves should not be used on door handles or in hallways, except where a one glove policy is required for safe handling of laboratory materials. In specific common equipment or core facilities, specific policies may be posted.
- It is recommended that researchers on site wash their hands immediately on entering the lab and again prior to leaving. Handwashing should preferably be done frequently with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- It is recommended that researchers change their clothes immediately upon returning home and consider all items brought on site as “contaminated”. Clothes should be laundered, and items decontaminated as appropriate.

Physical distancing measures that apply to specific areas:

Lunch and breakout areas:

- Staff should stagger their break times.
- Signage will indicate the maximum number of people in areas for coffee/lunch with appropriately spaced chairs and tables.
- Chairs/tables will be clearly marked and reconfiguring lounges and table/chairs is not permitted.
- It is recommended that kitchenette areas, shared refrigerators, microwaves, kettles etc. should not be used. Lunches/snacks that are brought on-site must not require refrigeration or heating. The use of cooler packs is to be encouraged.
- If deemed necessary, additional space that meets physical distancing requirements will be identified and advertised for lunches/breaks.
- **As usual - Food and Drinks are not allowed in any laboratories.**

Hallways and Stairs:

- In many areas of the buildings there will be new traffic flow measures that will be clearly marked including:
 - One-way entrances and exits
 - One-way hallways
 - Stairways designated solely for up or down traffic.

Elevators:

- The use of elevators will be restricted to members of our community with mobility issues and for those transporting equipment and carts.

- Elevators will have new maximum capacity limits and those using elevators must maintain 2m physical distancing. (1-2 people)

Washrooms:

- Guidelines for each washroom will be clearly posted and procedures must be followed.

RESEARCH SERVICES DURING PHASE 3

Chemistry & Earth Science Secretariat:

- Secretariat offices will be open at reduced staff on site
- Secretariat will be available 8:30 - 3:00 PM (12-1:00 PM lunch)
- Due to the small size of this office there will be no entry into the secretariat at any time without invitation or meeting discussed with staff
- In order to prevent unauthorized entry the front wicket will remain closed and all meetings will be setup by appointment only:
 - Annette Campeau (Annette@uottawa.ca; Chemistry)
 - Lisa-Robin Murphy (lmurphy@uottawa.ca; Earth Science)
 - Caroline Doré (geolrec@uottawa.ca; Departmental Assistant in Earth Sciences)

Math & Physics Secretariat:

- Secretariat offices will be open at reduced staff on site
- Secretariat will be available 8:30 - 3:00 PM (12-1:00 PM lunch)
- Due to the small size of this office there will be no entry into the secretariat at any time without invitation or meeting discussed with staff
- In order to prevent unauthorized entry the front wicket will remain closed and all meetings will be setup by appointment only:
 - Mayada El Maalouf (melmaalo@uottawa.ca; Math)
 - Patrick Laliberté (Plalibe2@uottawa.ca; Physics)

Biology Secretariat:

- Secretariat office will be open at reduced staff on site
- Any members needing services from the Biology secretariat is asked to contact:
 - Gita Kanags (bio@uottawa.ca; biology)

Graduate and Undergraduate Office:

- Will function at reduced capacity
- Will not provide any services to students in person

Common Equipment & Technical Services:

Autoclave (Nathalie.Bourassa@uottawa.ca)

- This service will operate the same as before. No difference to schedule or protocols.

Machine shop (contact: herveb@uottawa.ca; ext. 6778)

- Shop services will be available with reduced staff on site

- If entry to machine shop is necessary, there is a counter setup within the lab where you must wait until you are seen by a machine shop member
- Online demands will be accepted
 - A drop and pick-up station for parts will be set outside shop door
- Technical drawings are to be sent by email
- Any additions and or changes to these documents can be discussed via phone or email (given above)

Electronic shop

- Electronics shop will work at a reduced capacity.
- No in person visits to Electronics Shop is permitted without setting up an appointment
- Online Work Requests can be submitted here <https://services.science.uottawa.ca/>
- Additional Contact info:
- **Telephone:** (613) 562-5800, ext 6745
Email: science.elecshop@uOttawa.ca
Website: <https://science.uottawa.ca/en/faculty-services/electronics-shop>

IT Department

- Will continue to be available via the Self-Serve Portal (<https://topdesk.uottawa.ca>)
- Technician will be present on campus based on needs.

Common Equipment Areas

- Common rooms will be zoned to maximize space between shared equipment, and maps/signs as well as maximum occupancy limits will be posted next to the door.
- In some cases, equipment may have been moved to accommodate physical distancing requirements and to improve access.
- Booking procedures will be tightly monitored to accommodate the limited work times.
- Decontamination procedures will be clearly marked for each piece of equipment.
- Information will also be provided online so you can plan your day.

CORE FACILITIES

- While all efforts will be made by cores to provide services, it is important to note that each core facility may offer a different range of services and have unique COVID-19 guidelines / policies in place.
- Room capacity and decontamination procedures will be clearly marked for each piece of equipment.

Science Stores

- Science Stores will have a specific method for the ordering of COVID related PPE (hand sanitizer, surface cleaner and masks)
- For any special requirements, please do not hesitate to send your request to science.store@uottawa.ca

Facility Management

- SciFac have normal hours of service, but with reduced staff.
- Requests for new installations, modifications and moves will require justification and will only be reviewed if critical to current activities or for preparation of next reintegration stage.

Keeping it clean in labs and office areas:

Coronaviruses on surfaces can easily be cleaned with a common household disinfectant. Studies have shown that the SARS-CoV2 virus can survive up to 72 hours on plastic and stainless steel, less than 4 hours on copper and less than 24 hours on cardboard. (Source: World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>)

Increased cleaning and sanitization frequencies, particularly in high traffic areas and with shared tools and equipment is important. High traffic areas AND personally used tools, equipment and work areas should be cleaned and sanitized at minimum twice a day. Shared tools and equipment should be cleaned pre and post use.

- Housekeeping services are being modified to reflect the new COVID-19 crisis and emphasis will be on wiping down door handles, railings and other highly used surfaces with approved disinfectants.
- As usual, housekeeping services will not be cleaning lab benches, desks, tables or any research equipment.
- PI's lab specific plans must include a daily plan outlining in detail who is responsible for the decontamination of common surfaces/equipment with 70% Isopropanol solution (for purchase at Science Stores). Every time a piece of equipment is used it needs to be wiped down with 70% Isopropanol or using the decontamination procedure recommended by manufacturer. These areas/surfaces include, but are not limited to:
 - o Equipment such as: incubator handles, fumehood glass, keyboards, microscopes, centrifuges, glove-box gloves/antechamber/glass, Rotovap, etc.
 - o Lab benches, faucets, equipment drawers
- Recommended that PI's post Signage reminding staff to wipe down areas. Signage below may be used (Copy image → paste in new document → resize as needed → Print)



- It is recommended that research staff refrain from sharing any personal tools and/or equipment

Plan for Circulation and Congregation:

- All Faculty of Science buildings will have various signage posted indicating direction of travel in common hallways and stairwells. For example, in DRO one end of the hallway will have a stairwell for those travelling up floors and the other end of the corridor will have a stairwell for travelling down floors
- Use of congregation areas is strongly advised against (like guidelines for office space and kitchenettes listed above)
- Signage will be posted on every other table within these space that state, "Do Not Use," to discourage large groups congregating.
- If these spaces must be used, groups should be less than 5 people

Human Resource Considerations:

- **Researchers, staff, students who can continue to conduct their research activities off-campus must do so. Until further notice, the use of faculty or student offices for writing, videoconferencing, analysis, administrative duties, marking etc. is not permitted.**
- PIs/Supervisors must identify essential personnel required on campus and will retain responsibility for team members under the principle of duty of care. It is the PIs responsibility to ensure that all COVID-19 guidelines are being respected by team members.
- PIs/Supervisor must take into consideration the needs/limitations of lab members with health conditions that make them more susceptible to COVID-19 complications and plan work schedules accordingly.

- When assigning work shifts to researchers/staff, PIs/Supervisors should take into consideration transportation challenges to/from work. Ideally staff/trainees should take all precautions to decrease COVID-19 exposure, including:
 - Taking private transport, such as personal cars, biking, walking and running.
 - Reduce use of car-pooling and car sharing
 - If public transport is to be used, consult the reduced schedules prior to planning work shifts
- When scheduling, PI/Supervisors must remain understanding of challenges associated with child or elder care.

Off-campus Research/Field Work:

Off-campus research/field work must conform to the same guiding principles of Adherence to Government and Institutional Directives, Safety, and Equity as research conducted on campus but faces additional challenges. Thus:

- Travel to off-campus research location and accommodation (lodging, food) on-site must be done in a way that ensures safety of the individuals who will carry out the research.
- It is possible that approval by local authorities may be influenced by the pandemic situation and researchers must ensure that they obtain authorizations in advance, if appropriate

Each off-campus research project is unique, and we recognize that researchers have the most complete knowledge of its peculiarities. Researchers are encouraged to discuss plans to carry out off-campus research with the Health, Safety and Risk Management officer Alex Daniels or with Vice-Dean Research

Monitoring:

In order to ensure the safety of our uOttawa community and their families, all COVID-19 guidelines made out to the research staff are there so that all members of the uOttawa community have a safe work environment. Anyone can report any real or perceived non-compliance.

The Faculty of Science will be putting in place inspections to regularly update PI's and staff of possible risks and how to avoid them. This will also be done so that PI can be informed if members within their lab space not following lab protocols

It remains the supervisors/PIs responsibility to ensure that their staff are aware of and complying with the new Covid19 workplace procedures. So that the PI can be informed if members within their lab space are not following lab protocols, the Faculty of Science will be

putting in place inspections to regularly update PI's and staff of possible risks and how to avoid them.

Reporting procedures.

- Any concerns regarding these guidelines or methods to reduce risk for COVID-19 related issues or general safety can be directed to the HSR team
 - Alex Daniels (HSRM – adaniel2@uottawa.ca)
 - Isabelle Marineau –HSRA – science.safety@uottawa.ca)