

Continuity Education Plan 2021-22

Plan pour la continuité de l'éducation

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uOttawa

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Introduction

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Ottawa has adapted its activities, on campus as well as distance learning, to pursue its education and research mission during these unprecedented times.

As the situation will remain unpredictable, including the emergence of COVID-19 variants, public health advice and requirements may change accordingly. As such, uOttawa remains vigilant and agile to ensure compliance and continuity of academic and research activities.

Maintaining a safe environment is a shared responsibility that also requires students, faculty, staff, and visitors to take measures to protect both their health and safety, as well as those around them.

In compliance with the *Postsecondary Education Health Measures Framework for Fall 2021* released by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities on August 31, 2021, the 2021-22 Continuity Education Plan of the University of Ottawa includes the following:

- Information about health and safety protocols in the event of an emergency;
- Information about continuity of education in the event of a disruption to in-person teaching and learning ; and
- links to useful resources in the event of an emergency.

In addition to this plan, information and safety protocols can be found on the [uOttawa COVID-19 webpage](#).

2021-22 Academic Year: Overview

Teaching and Learning

The University's goal is to provide a full, enriching on-campus experience to as many students as possible in 2021-22, with an objective of 30 to 50% courses delivered in person or using hybrid/bimodal formats, and the remainder offered online.

Table 1. Course offering and student registration progress (as of September 14, 2021)

	In-person & Hybrid	Bimodal	Distance
Spring-Summer 2021 Session (Final)			
Courses, sections & other learning activities (#)	5	2	1,084
Confirmed student registrations (#)	78		42,827
Individual students registered to in-person activities (#)	78		
Fall 2021 Session (Preliminary)			
Courses, sections & other learning activities (#)	1,206	468	3,516
Confirmed student registrations (#)	27,023	26,904	190,389
Individual students registered to in-person activities (#)	20,970		
Winter 2022 Session (Preliminary)			
Courses, sections & other learning activities (#)	1,546	557	2,806
Confirmed student registrations (#)	33,718	24,350	122,054
Individual students registered to in-person activities (#)	20,641		

Research & Scholarly Activities

Following the March 2020 orderly wind down of research activities on campus at the beginning of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Ottawa's Office of the Vice-President Research (OVPR), in close collaboration with the Research Commission and Faculties, struck a **Research Restart Taskforce (RRT)**. The RRT developed a *guide for the safe remobilization and resumption of research activities on campus* in May 2020. Since that time, research activities on campus have progressively resumed, in accordance with local, provincial and federal public health guidelines, always with the safety and health of faculty, staff and students as the core guiding principle. Details of the University's **Research Remobilization Plan** can be found [here](#).

Each Faculty developed its own research remobilization plan, reviewed and approved by the OVPR. Key to the plan was the remobilization in 3 Phases:

- Phase 1: up to 33% of regular research activities – implemented in Summer-Fall 2020
- Phase 2: up to 66% of regular research activities – implemented in June 2021
- Phase 3: up to 90% of regular research activities – implemented in July 2021

Research activities fully resumed effective September 7, 2021. While [Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for Areas at Step 3 and at the Roadmap Exit Step](#) removed physical distancing and capacity limit requirements for indoor instructional spaces (e.g., classrooms, laboratories, etc.) at postsecondary education institutions, the requirement to wear a mask and safety glasses where required will remain in effect.

If public health guidelines and directives require a quick decrease in activities or winddown, the University will follow its contingency plan. Faculties will implement their remobilization plans in reverse order, and move back by phases, as required.

In the unlikely event that a full campus shutdown be required, Faculties will focus on maintaining critical operations of scientific instruments and systems of the small subset of research laboratories that have been identified by the March 2020 wind down to require daily/weekly/periodic attendance (e.g. those requiring cryogenic replenishment).

Continuity and Reintegration Planning Process

The strategy adopted by uOttawa for the continuity of its academic and research missions is based on **maintaining a safe environment for campus community**. As such, uOttawa is committed to:

- Maximizing the number of students on campus so that they may have the best learning experience.
- Ensuring a planned and progressive return to in-person on-campus activities in accordance with public health directives and recommendations.

Planning was conducted at the institutional level and across Faculties and Services. It began with pilot projects and the evaluation of different workplace configurations before proceeding to a phased return to campus.

- For academic activities, the Provost and Vice-Presidents, in conjunction with academic and administrative leaders determined which in-person on-campus operations and at what level was possible for the Fall 2021 session while respecting current public health protocols.
- For research activities, the Vice-President Research, in conjunction with research and administrative leaders, determined which on-campus research activities could continue, in particular those related to combatting the Pandemic.
- For support activities, the Vice-President Finance & Administration, in conjunction with the leaders of critical services, determined which on-campus activities were required to support academic and research activities within the constraints of public health measures.

Planning Considerations

Planning for the return on campus is driven by the need to maximize student presence on campus and the student experience, which includes:

- Value-added course offerings and learning activities
- Residential Life
- Comprehensive campus-wide programming
- Academic support
- Academic and administrative services

Planning of these activities, programs and services is limited by the usable space, as determined by public health regulations, including physical distancing measures.

Guiding principles

Planning for the return of on-campus activities is governed by the following principles:

- Health and safety, including the mental health and well-being of all members of the uOttawa community remains our top priority
- Activities to be done remotely until public health directives allow for a safe return to campus
- Continuity of academic, research, and administrative activities
- Agility, flexibility, and iterative planning

- Institutional principles and local solutions
- Care and concern for our whole community

Prioritization of uOttawa community members

To prioritize the on-campus presence the following groups of individuals are considered:

- **Individuals who conduct essential services on campus** – those who have been working on campus either since the onset of COVID-19, or those who have returned to campus over time due to changing needs. This includes students, researchers, as well as faculty and support staff whose work requires on-campus presence.
- **Individuals whose work is student-facing or serving other groups** – those whose work is best delivered face-to-face to ensure a full student experience.
- **Individuals whose work is best performed on campus** – those whose work includes functions that cannot be fully completed remotely.
- **Individuals whose work requires occasional or periodic on-campus presence** – this includes functions requiring, but not limited to, access to specific IT systems, equipment or information not available remotely, access to educational technologies and equipment for faculty training and support
- **Individuals who require accommodation** – this includes individuals who are deemed unable through appropriate HR processes to effectively perform work remotely due to either health or family circumstances.
- **Individuals who prefer to work on campus** – such cases should be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the manager.

Engineering and administrative controls

When maintaining physical distancing is not possible, the hierarchy of hazard control can be used to mitigate COVID-19 risks, with engineering and administrative controls preferred over the use of personal protective equipment (PPE):

- **First, Engineering Controls** - Includes design modifications and retrofit of workstations/workspace, systems or processes that reduce the source of exposure. Items could include the use of card access systems to reduce unwanted traffic, signage, and locking doors where areas are especially challenging. It also includes increased cleaning of high touch surfaces and increased ventilation.
- **Second, Administrative Controls** - Controls that alter the way the work is done, including timing of work, policies and procedures, and work practices such as standard operating procedures (including training, housekeeping, and equipment maintenance, and personal hygiene practices). Online booking tools, staggered schedules and shifts sharing are all recommended to avoid having to isolate an entire cohort/team disabling the services offered. Greeting people to control traffic is encouraged in enclosed offices. Administrative controls also include:
 - Enhanced cleaning and sanitization of shared PPE, equipment, space, and high touch surfaces by student, faculty, staff, and cleaning/custodial services.
 - The management of foot traffic across common areas, high-traffic areas, and office clusters, as well as key congregation points.
- **Third, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** - Equipment worn by individuals to reduce exposures to the hazard (ex. droplets, aerosols, etc.). The requirements for PPE will change based on the latest

public health science. This may vary based on location, type of activity or type of occupancy. Note: PPE requirements for COVID do not override existing PPE requirements for labs or other areas that require the use of PPE.

Contingency Planning

A key principle for reintegration planning is the readiness to reduce, ramp down or shut down activities as quickly as possible in the event of a positive case, an outbreak within a faculty or service, or subsequent wave(s).

As such, and in accordance with [Policy 125 -Emergency Management and Business Continuity](#), Faculties and Services must have a Business Continuity Plan that includes measures and arrangements to stop or move their activities online.

For COVID-19 continuity purposes, the following additional requirements apply:

- Maintaining a list of:
 - Personnel required on campus for life safety activities
 - Personnel required on campus for essential research and academic activities
 - Individuals whose duties can be fulfilled off campus i.e. work from home, as authorized by their supervisor
- Making arrangements for the retrieval of work materials and personal effects of students and employees and ensuring the process is in line with the current public health protocols at the time. This needs to be closely managed by faculties and services.
- Ensuring that employees working at off-campus work sites/areas adhere to applicable site-specific restrictions that are in effect.

Implementation

Reintegration of faculty and staff on campus started in June 2021, to support the resumption of some in-person and on-campus academic activities for the Fall 2021 session. The reintegration and resumption of activities is coordinated by **uOttawa's Crisis Management Structure**. This structure is established by [Policy 125](#) and provides strategic, operational, and tactical leadership and coordination that can quickly adapt on-campus activities in response to changing public health requirements. The university members involved are:

- **CMT** – The Crisis Management Team (CMT) provides necessary governance and decision making in support of campus reintegration and resumption of activities. The CMT is led by the President and consists of the Provost, all Vice-Presidents as well as certain key Associate-Vice Presidents.
- **EOC** – The Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) provides operational leadership and coordination during emergencies or significant disruptions and brings the situation to a stable state.
- **CRTF** – The COVID-19 Reintegration Task Force (CRTF) was established by the EOC to ensure the development and implementation of measures and arrangements necessary for the safe resumption of all University activities and for the provision of assistance to help University community members recover their physical and emotional health for the duration of the 'new normal'. The CRTF reports to the Provost, the Vice-President Research and the Vice-President, Finance & Administration and its areas of focus are:
 - Infection Control
 - Academic Affairs
 - Research Enterprise
 - Student Affairs
 - Human Resources
 - Infrastructure and Operations
 - Finance and Procurement
- **Heads of Units (faculty and services leaders)** - Faculties and services are responsible for coordinating their workforce reintegration and resumption of activities with other faculties, services on the advice and recommendations from the CRTF. This includes the management of personnel as well as the use of buildings, workspaces, common areas and equipment.
- **Community Health Ambassadors Program** – Reporting to Students Affairs, Ambassadors are uOttawa students hired to promote a culture of awareness and safety, to conduct outreach and education on following public health measures and to report on overall compliance of established measures.

Mandatory Vaccination, Self-Declaration, Accommodation, and Rapid Testing

Vaccination against COVID-19 is mandatory for anyone who intends on coming to campus for any reason.

- All members of the uOttawa community – students, faculty, staff – must certify their vaccination status using the **COVID-19 Assessment Tool** whether they intend to come to campus or not.
- Anyone visiting uOttawa for any reason, including contractors, vendors, tenants, and visitors, are also required to certify their vaccination status using the **COVID-19 Assessment Tool**.

Accommodations must be individually requested through the **COVID-19 Assessment Tool** and will only be considered for medical grounds or other grounds recognized by the ***Ontario Human Rights Code***.

Those students, faculty, or staff members who have been granted an accommodation, who are waiting for accommodation approval, or who are waiting to be considered fully vaccinated must follow the University's **rapid screening protocols**. As this requirement might change, all information pertaining to rapid testing will be available and updated regularly in the **uOttawa COVID-19 webpage**.

Visitors who require testing are required to use the **COVID-19 Assessment Tool** and provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test that has to be administered within a maximum of 48 hours prior to visiting campus through a function within the **COVID-19 Assessment Tool**.

Once they have received confirmation from uOttawa that their Vaccination Declaration has been registered, every person who receives confirmation that they are permitted to come to campus will need to follow these additional measures:

1. In accordance with Ontario Government regulations, every person must fill out the **COVID-19 Daily Health Check-In form** online before coming to campus and must receive confirmation they are permitted to come onto campus.
2. Once on campus, everyone is required to strictly comply with all applicable public health protocols, directives, guidelines, and sanitary measures, including wearing a mask, keeping a safe distance from others, and washing hands frequently.

The University of Ottawa COVID-19 vaccination policy requiring its employees, staff, contractors, volunteers, and students who attend campus to provide proof of full vaccination against COVID- 19 is available at the following **link** under Policy 129.

Mandatory Vaccination Documentation and Reporting

In accordance with the *Postsecondary Education Health Measures Framework for Fall 2021* that includes instructions issued by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH), the University of Ottawa will collect and maintain the following statistical (non-identifiable) information for disclosure to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities:

- the number of individuals that provided proof or attestation of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 ;
- the number of individuals that provided a documented medical reason for not being fully vaccinated against COVID-19;
- the number of individuals that completed an educational session about the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination where applicable; and
- the total number of individuals to whom the OCMOH instructions apply.

Table 2. Completed vaccination declarations and percentages of fully vaccinated vs. 1 dose vaccination (as of September 16, 2021)

	Vaccination declarations	Vaccination status	
		Fully vaccinated	First dose
Total	49,089 (100%)	91.00%	6.60%
Staff & Faculty	7,061	95.80%	2.60%
Students	38,449	89.00%	7.68%
Externals	3579	97.10%	2.54%

Assessment and Tracking of Active Cases

As an ongoing measure, the assessment and tracking of active cases on campus is conducted by the EOC and the [dashboard](#) on the uOttawa COVID-19 website is updated weekly.

Outreach messaging includes the need to get vaccinated, maintain public health measures and to get tested if experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.

uOttawa operates on an as needed basis, an [Assessment Centre](#) at its main campus, in the Minto Sports Complex. It can be accessed by registered students, faculty and staff and their immediate family members over the age of 17 years old. A **rapid testing centre** is co-located with the Assessment Centre and will be accessible for those that must follow the University's rapid screening protocols. A [vaccination clinic](#), which is operated in collaboration with the City of Ottawa and is adjacent to the Assessment Centre, is open to the public.

In addition, to increase outbreak readiness and track active cases, uOttawa conducts two environmental surveillance projects on campus: 1) wastewater surveillance and 2) the CUBE protocol, a sampling study that tracks the percentage of positive swabs for SARS-CoV2 on selected campus sites.

Reporting Protocols

Protocols for reporting COVID-19 symptoms or test results are in place for employees, students, contractors, tenants, and other visitors.

- **Employees** - Employees exhibiting COVID-19 like symptoms are to report the occurrence to Health and Wellness in Human Resources (H&W) via email hrhealth@uOttawa.ca.
- **Students:**
 - Undergraduate/graduate student (on campus) exhibiting COVID-19 like symptoms are to report the occurrence to the Office of Risk Management via email safety@uottawa.ca.
 - Undergraduate/graduate student (off campus—studying online) exhibiting COVID-19 like symptoms are to report the occurrence to their local health care provider and respective faculty for academic accommodations and next steps.
- **Contractors, Tenants or Other Visitors** - Contractor, tenant, or other daily users of campus are to advise their primary University contact of confirmed case(s) or individual(s) being tested.

Once advised, information is to be sent to the EOC for case management and coordination of actions as required.

Response to an On-Campus COVID-19 Outbreak

The Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) continuously coordinates with the CRTF via the EOC Director to maintain situational awareness and will lead the response to any on campus outbreak.

- The EOC may be activated as a result of internal notification, or notification by Ottawa Public Health.
- The EOC will activate the infection control group required for immediate infectious disease response and expanded control groups for high-risk or highly critical areas such as residences, research, and response units.
- EOC is responsible for Ottawa Public Health (OPH) liaison, communications, infection control and advising the CMT, when appropriate.
- The EOC, in accordance with OPH recommendations, will:
 - assess the need and implement as required, the temporary cessation of activities, including a closure of a space or facility and the relocation of people, in order to contain the spread of disease
 - assess the compliance to and/or effectiveness of the protective measures in place
- The EOC will, in accordance with the CMT:
 - will ensure the implementation of any necessary changes to protective measures before the resumption of activities can take place
 - implement the situation specific communications strategy

Response to COVID-19 Waves

The EOC maintains readiness to act on the direction of the Province, OPH or the uOttawa President and under the leadership of the CMT, by initiating the complete closure of campuses by (refer to Table 3):

- Suspending face-to-face classes
- Suspending all non-essential research
- Suspending all in-person events and activities
- Suspending all non-essential projects and maintenance
- Closing campus buildings
- Asking residents to report to their rooms and check-in with their Residence Coordinator
- Requiring residents that can return home, to do so
- Directing non-essential staff to work from home
- Reverting to online formats for all possible activities

Table 3. 3-step response process

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
<p>Day 1–2 Secure and Gather Information</p> <p>EOC convenes and updates the CMT on the situation. Communications go out to the campus community via email, social media and the SecurUO safety app.</p> <p>Heads of Units send direct, internal communications to personnel with their specific instructions.</p> <p>Non-essential research laboratories and research facilities, as designated by VP Research, begin safely shutting down by authorized personnel.</p> <p>All non-essential University activities are immediately temporarily ceased or restricted, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person classes • On-campus Support Services • All on and off events and activities <p>Facilities and ORM, in conjunction with Facility Managers and Health, Safety & Risk Managers work with Faculties and Services to begin rendering buildings, workspaces, labs, and research facilities safe including limiting access and setting up a regular inspection schedule.</p> <p>Non-essential workers, under the coordination of their supervisors, gather their materials and equipment needed to work from home and remain at home until otherwise directed.</p> <p>EOC seeks additional information from Public Health authorities to enable a more detailed and robust assessment of impacts on University activities and community.</p>	<p>Day 3–5 Assess and Plan</p> <p>EOC assesses impacts on University activities and community, develops transition plan and seeks approval from CMT for implementation, which may include but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential services continuing to operate • Essential Facilities projects and maintenance continuing wherever possible • In-person classes being suspended or moving to virtual platform • All events and activities ceasing until further notice • All uOttawa sanctioned travel (International and domestic), off-campus activities, and fieldwork is banned until further notice • Non-essential workers, under the coordination of their supervisors, gathering their materials and equipment needed to work from home and working from home until otherwise directed <p>EOC monitors the activity on campus, keeps the CMT updated and communicates regularly with the community.</p>	<p>Day 6+ Operational Steady State</p> <p>EOC monitors activities on campus to maintain situational awareness and coordinate response to COVID-19 cases on campus as well resolving any other pertinent issues.</p> <p>CMT is updated by the EOC on a regular and as required basis. Essential services continue to operate.</p> <p>Campus visitation is prohibited without authorization letters from Head of Units (Deans/AVPs). Protection Services secure buildings and ensure security of campus (access to non-essential buildings is suspended).</p> <p>Facility Managers conduct regular inspections of buildings, and report all deficiencies as required and coordinate their repairs.</p> <p>Provincial guidelines are to be followed at all times, including the implementation of protective measures as they become known.</p> <p>Planning for return to campus, coordinated via the CRTF, begins immediately upon stabilizing STEP 3.</p>

Mental Health

The University of Ottawa is committed to the well-being of its students, faculty, and staff throughout this pandemic. Good overall health allows students and employees to be successful in their studies and work, and to participate fully in university life. Mindful of the great stress and uncertainty that the pandemic can generate, the University has put in place various services for its community members to support them in these difficult times.

Our Mental Health and Wellness website acts as a central location for information and resources at the University and in the surrounding community. It is also an excellent tool for family members, friends, and colleagues who may need to help someone close to them who is studying or working at the University. A section dedicated entirely to support offered to students and employees during the pandemic has been developed and can be found on the [Mental Health and Wellness website](#). It contains advice and resources to help members of the University community stay well, healthy, and connected during the pandemic.

Links to Useful Resources

- [COVID-19 Campus Health and Safety Resources](#)
- [Reintegration Planning Guidelines 2021-22](#)
- [Returning to Work on Campus: Protecting Yourself and Others orientation](#)
- [uOttawa COVID-19 Assessment Tool](#)
- [Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Guidelines](#)
- [Services and Resources \(What's Open on Campus\)](#)