Returning to Work on Campus
For Employees

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1. Introduction

The University of Ottawa Administration Committee has requested that a COVID-19 recovery process for the resumption of University activities begin.

Our community’s health and safety remain central to the University’s priorities. All of our decisions follow public health guidelines.

Employees play a key role in this effort. You have shown unprecedented determination and commitment when it comes to furthering the University’s academic mission despite the circumstances, and we will continue to ensure your well-being.

Human Resources has developed this return to work on campus guide to provide general instructions and advice for you. In particular, this guide:

- Provides information on HR practices that must be observed before and during the gradual return to campus.
- Promotes a work environment that reflects the University’s response to provincial and City of Ottawa public health guidelines.
- Relies on lessons learned from faculties and services who have had employees working on campus throughout the pandemic.

We are hopeful that the University-wide planning underway in the faculties and services will ensure a smooth return to campus, and that we will be able to completely fulfil our academic and research mission.

2. Return to work on campus

2.1 Orientation session before resuming work on campus

Health and safety are at the forefront of our plans. Before you return, we encourage you to complete the COVID-19 — Returning to Work on Campus: Protecting Yourself and Others orientation.

The session is meant to make sure that you’re familiar with the changes implemented on campus and what you must do daily to ensure your health and safety and that of others.

2.2 Well-being and mental health

Going back to work on campus after months of working from home may be difficult, especially if you continue having to deal with concerns about your health, the health of a family member or child care. It’s normal to be worried or feel anxious about resuming activities outside of home.
Since the start of the pandemic, many resources to help employees have been added to the Mental Health and Wellness website. They’re now available to all employee groups, including contract employees. We encourage you to see the following:

- Employee and Family Assistance Program
- COVID-19 mental health and wellness information for employees

2.3 If you have concerns about returning to work on campus
In the past few months, many changes have been implemented on campus to protect your health and ensure that it’s safe for you to return. If you have concerns or questions about returning to work on campus, speak with your supervisor or HR representative, or contact the Office of Risk Management or your union representative.

If you have health issues that prevent you from returning to work on campus, email the Health and Wellness section at hrhealth@uOttawa.ca.

2.4 Self-assessment questionnaire
As per Ottawa Public Health recommendations and uOttawa requirements, everyone who comes to campus must complete the University’s new self-assessment questionnaire to screen for COVID-19 prior to reporting to work each day. This is to prevent anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or who may have been exposed to COVID-19 from entering the workplace.

It’s important that you not report to work if you’re sick or have symptoms. This is critical to limiting the spread of the virus on campus.

If you answer yes to any of questions in the self-assessment questionnaire, you’ll be told to stay home, isolate from others and, depending on your circumstances, contact your health care provider.

If you must stay home
Advise your supervisor and the Health and Wellness Team (HRhealth@uOttawa.ca). In your message, include your name, contact information (phone number or email address), unit and self-assessment result. The senior health and accommodation adviser assigned to your faculty or service will contact you to ensure all public health recommendations are followed and confirm when you can resume work on campus.

2.5 If you get sick at work
Don’t come into work if you feel sick or have symptoms. If you become ill while at work isolate yourself from others immediately.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, contact your supervisor immediately and self-isolate until you can safely leave the workplace. If you need immediate medical assistance, Protection Services will be called.
If you can’t drive your own vehicle home, your supervisor will make arrangements for you to get home. Public transportation is not an option.

A ride with a family member or by taxi will be arranged. The cost for the taxi will be covered by the University. Wear a mask and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before getting into the vehicle, and sit in the back seat with the window opened. If transportation is by taxi, the company, name and number or operator should be recorded.

Health and Wellness will be advised that you reported feeling ill and an Accident, Incident, Occupational Illness or Near Miss report form must be completed. The senior health and accommodation adviser will contact you to determine what follow-up measures are needed.

You must also email Health and Wellness at hrhealth@uOttawa.ca, including your name, contact information (phone number or preferred email) and unit.

The senior health and accommodation adviser will contact you to ensure all public health recommendations are followed (self-isolation, testing, etc.). Health and Wellness will confirm the duration of your absence as well as when you can resume work on campus. All absences from work should be recorded in the FAST leave management system, as per usual. If you’re absent because of COVID-19, enter your leave, selecting the “Sick Leave (COVID-19)” category.

2.6 Requests for accommodation due to family status
Employees must send requests for accommodation for reasons related to family status to their manager. See the list of leaves under your employee category under My Info.

2.7 Work refusal under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act
During COVID-19, the provisions of the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act continue to apply, including your right to refuse unsafe work.

The University has implemented measures to meet public health requirements and ensure your health and safety. If you feel unsafe, you can initiate the University work refusal procedure.

The BounceBack program is a great resource if you’re feeling stressed, worried or anxious about events related to COVID-19. It’s a free resource offered by the Canadian Mental Health Association in many different languages.

For up to date information about the spread of COVID-19 in the community and testing centre locations, see the Ottawa Public Health website or the Ville de Gatineau COVID-19 website.

3. Ergonomic support
As activities resume on campus, ergonomic support continues to be available to you if you want to report musculo-skeletal difficulties (MSD) or ensure your campus workstation meets ergonomic standards. You can request an ergonomic assessment of a home or on-campus workstation to evaluate the risk factors for MSD by emailing healthhr@uOttawa.ca. As your supervisors are responsible for the health and safety of their employees, inform them that you’ve made the assessment request.
Learn more about ergonomics at uOttawa.

4. If you need an employee card
   • Take a picture of yourself, preferably against a white or neutral wall (no objects on the wall), and save it as a JPEG.
   • Email the picture to HRinfo@uOttawa.ca with the subject line “Employee card request — 100######” (your employee number).
   • When we receive the information, we’ll check your status in the Human Resources database.
   • If your file is up to date, we’ll print the card and send it by internal mail to your faculty or service.

5. Resources for employees
   5.1 Stay connected and healthy through COVID-19
       Human Resources has created a webpage titled Stay connected and healthy through COVID-19 for employees, with support and information on the following:
       • Home workspace
       • Taking care of your mental health
       • Taking care of your physical health
       • Managing child care or other personal responsibilities
       • Absences or returning to work
       • Staying safe — essential workers
       • Online training via Microsoft Teams
       • Action Learning Groups

       If you have any questions about these services, contact your HR business partner or HR manager.

6. Contact Human Resources
   • Benefits: hrbenefits@uOttawa.ca
   • Leave: leaveshr@uOttawa.ca
   • Employment and Immigration: immigrat@uOttawa.ca
   • Talent Management: hrtalentmanagement@uOttawa.ca
   • HR Info: HRinfo@uOttawa.ca
   • Leadership, Learning and Organizational Development: HRlearning@uOttawa.ca
   • Compensation: infopay@uOttawa.ca
   • Pension Plan: hrpension@uOttawa.ca
   • Performance Management Program: performance@uOttawa.ca
   • Labour Relations: hr_labor@uOttawa.ca
   • Health and Wellness: hrhealth@uOttawa.ca