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<b>Date:</b>	<b>January 19, 2022</b>
<b>To:</b>	All Students and All Employees
<b>From:</b>	Cheryl Regehr, Vice-President & Provost Kelly Hannah-Moffat, Vice-President, People Strategy, Equity & Culture
<b>Re:</b>	Winter Term Update

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We are writing to update you on plans for the winter term and the steps the University of Toronto is taking to balance the learning needs of our students with the need to minimize the spread of COVID-19. The University [shifted](#) to a predominantly remote model for learning and work in December to respond to the emergence of the Omicron variant.

We know that there is uncertainty and apprehension around returning to in-person study and work, and we are relying on expert advice to support our community with enhanced safety measures. We believe that the continuum of education from pre-school through post-secondary is essential to the wellbeing of our society and as the Ontario Science Advisory Table notes, is vital to students' mental health.

Our students have told us how important physical presence on campus is to them – both for their academic work and for their mental wellbeing. U of T currently hosts thousands of students in our residences, many of whom have travelled far from home to learn and interact with their professors, classmates and friends.

For these reasons, in the coming weeks, we will return to more in-person activities on all three U of T campuses.

### **Return to In-Person Learning**

With all of this in mind, we are sharing with you the following plans:

**Effective Monday, February 7, we will increase in-person teaching and activities across all our campuses and Faculties.** Exact plans will vary depending on local factors. For example, some undergraduate Faculties will deliver their winter 2022 courses as originally planned, including many in-person sections. The Health Sciences Faculties will work in consultation with their partners in the health and social care systems to increase in-person teaching in a way that supports the health system at a time of great strain. Programs that include placements in settings such as schools may prioritize in-person placements while continuing remote instruction for other elements of their programs. Campuses, divisions, and departments will be reaching out to students and instructors to confirm arrangements, as needed. **Students should refer to the information by campus and Faculty available [here](#).**

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities has confirmed that for post-secondary institutions, there are no restrictions on in-person instruction on our campuses, and no distancing or capacity limits for instructional spaces due to the array of public health measures we have successfully implemented on our campuses, including the very high level of compliance with our vaccination mandate.

We want to acknowledge those staff members who have been working in-person on our campuses throughout the pandemic, including caretakers, lab technicians, library and residence staff, grounds and maintenance staff, and campus safety services. **Employees currently working remotely should be ready to return to campus as of Monday, February 7** to support increased in-person teaching and learning and related activities. Staff will be contacted by their managers to discuss specific return-to-campus plans. [Alternative work arrangements](#) will need to be in place beyond February 7 for staff roles that have approval to work in any hybrid capacity - i.e., employees with approval to work any portion of the work week remotely. Faculty members and librarians should contact their Dean, Chair, Director or Supervisor to discuss their workload assignment if applicable.

All employees are expected to be within commuting distance of their workplace, unless [approval is obtained in advance](#) to work outside of Ontario. We continue to encourage flexibility and support for employees with childcare responsibilities resulting from potential cancellations of in-person classes for school-age children or day care closures.

### **Enhanced Safety Measures**

The University of Toronto is closely monitoring the latest public health guidance and continues to update the [12 ways to ensure our campuses provide a safe place](#) in which members of the U of T community can study, learn and work.

**Everyone must wear masks in indoor spaces at the University.** Evidence points to the increased efficacy of medical masks. The University is working to make the appropriate masks available, as supplies allow, to U of T community members who are unable to obtain them due to cost or supply chain issues. More information will be available in the coming days at the [UTogether site](#).

**The University has a limited supply of rapid screening kits at this time** and we are prioritizing their use for higher-risk situations. We encourage those community members who are registered in U of T's rapid screening program to continue uploading their results into [UCheck](#).

**All students with on-campus activities and all employees, whether or not they are immediately required on campus, must upload proof of vaccination to UCheck** as required by the [Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health](#). Almost 110,000 people have uploaded their vaccine information into UCheck. We are pleased that 99% of our community members are fully vaccinated, with the majority of those remaining on their way to full vaccination. Members of the community continue to be required to complete the UCheck self-screening and have a green screen before coming to any U of T location.

In addition, UCheck is being updated the week of January 31 to allow you to voluntarily upload documentation related to additional (booster) doses. **We encourage everyone to receive an additional vaccination (booster) dose as they become eligible.** More appointments are added to the [provincial portal](#) and [local pharmacies](#) daily. For those without an Ontario health card, appointments are available at the [Discovery Pharmacy](#) in the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy.

Divisions will make non-classroom spaces available to students to support studying and eating between classes in a distanced fashion. Robarts and Gerstein Libraries on the St. George campus are open to members of the U of T community, as are the UTM Library and UTSC Library. Other campus libraries are open as well, and information can be found [here](#). Operations staff on each campus will be working with divisions to find ways to address this need.

As we plan for an increasingly vibrant in-person experience for our students, we want to reiterate our commitment to doing all we can to provide safe conditions for working and studying at our campuses. We remain vigilant about evolving public health conditions and continue to adjust and adapt our plans based on the guidance of our community of experts. We look forward to seeing you soon.

## **Wellness**

We appreciate the stress that these rapidly changing circumstances may have on members of our community. We encourage anyone who needs support to please reach out for assistance. U of T's [My Student Support Program](#) (My SSP) provides students with real-time and/or appointment-based confidential, 24-hour support for any school, health, or general life concern at no cost.

The [Employee & Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\)](#) is available to employees of the University of Toronto. This program is provided at no cost 24/7 and 365 days a year. Call toll free 1-800-663-1142.

## **Questions?**

- For general questions regarding the University's COVID-19 response, please visit the University's [UTogether site](#)
- Students – please contact your registrar's office regarding your courses and academic programs
- Faculty and librarians – please contact your Dean, Chair, Director, or Supervisor
- Staff – please contact your manager and/or divisional HR office