

Guidance for Supervisors - Priority Access to Campus During COVID-19 Pandemic

McMaster’s phased ‘Return to Campus’ framework has been developed in accordance with government requirements and information provided by public health. Effectively responding to COVID-19 requires careful planning and a gradual approach to protect the health and safety of all members of our campus community.

Within this framework, there has been an identified need to provide a forum for faculty and staff to request Priority Access for occasional on-site work in extenuating circumstances.

Purpose

This document is provided to guide supervisors in their consideration of requests for Priority Access to work onsite. Materials should be read in conjunction with the [Workplace Health and Safety Guidance During COVID-19](#).

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Priority Access

Outside of approved work in accordance with the University's phased Return to Campus framework, there may be extenuating circumstances where an individual is provided approval for **Priority Access** to work on campus.

Priority Access will not be granted when an employee does not have a substantial amount of work that can be completed while working remotely.

Priority Access is not intended to be a full time return to campus, but rather an arrangement to enable limited and controlled access to campus in support of overall employee health, safety, and wellbeing.

Approval Process for Priority Access

1. An individual experiencing extenuating circumstances may request Priority Access to work on campus by speaking with their supervisor.
2. The supervisor considers the request in accordance with the following principles:
 - There are extenuating circumstances requiring the individual's Priority Access to work on campus outside of the University's Return to Campus framework. Examples of extenuating circumstances may include, but are not limited to: intermittent or lack of access to reliable internet remotely, mental health and wellbeing, and challenges relating to child care.
 - Priority Access will not be granted when there is limited or lack of work for the employee to perform while working remotely.
 - The extenuating circumstances cannot be mitigated through other supports or resources to enable remote work.
 - A Priority Access plan can be established that effectively provides limited and controlled access in accordance with support of overall employee health, safety, and well-being.
3. If supportive of the request, the supervisor establishes a Priority Access plan with the employee. The plan must include:
 - the timeframe and schedule for access to campus,
 - the building and office/lab space the employee will occupy, and

- confirmation that the supervisor and employee will complete the McMaster University COVID-19 [Supervisor Checklist](#) and the [Employee/Researcher COVID-19 checklist](#) and adhere to [McMaster Health and Safety Guidance During COVID-19](#).
4. The supervisor submits the Priority Access plan to the Department Chair or Director for approval.
 5. The Department Chair or Director submits the Priority Access plan to a Central Area Approver, as follows:
 - In the Faculties, the following individuals (or their delegates) are the Central Area Approvers:
 - **Faculty of Engineering:** Nancy Balfourt, Director of Finance and Administration
 - **Faculty of Science:** Kathleen Blackwood, Director of Finance and Administration
 - **Faculty of Social Sciences:** Evan Saunders, Manager, Finance & Data Analysis
 - **Faculty of Humanities:** Antoinette Somo, Executive Officer and Senior Academic Coordinator
 - **DeGroot School of Business:** Susan Mitchell, Director of Finance and Administration
 - **Faculty of Health Sciences:** Laura Harrington, AVP, Faculty of Health Sciences
 - Outside of the Faculties, the Central Area Approver is the applicable Assistant/Associate Vice-President.
 6. The central area approver confirms their approval with the Department Chair or Director.
 7. The Department Chair or Director confirms their approval of the Priority Access plan in writing (e.g. via email) to the supervisor and individual employee. Confirmation must also be copied to Facility Services (konopka@mcmaster.ca) in order to notify Facility Services staff of any access to facilities issues.
 8. Priority Access to campus is subject to review by the supervisor on a monthly basis.
 9. Priority Access requests must be managed responsibly by all Departments in order to limit the number of individuals working on campus as much as possible.

Requirements Before Priority Access Begins

Effective July 10, 2020, prior to the individual beginning their Priority Access to campus, the following is required:

1. The supervisor must:
 - complete the McMaster University COVID-19 [Supervisor Checklist](#)
 - comply with the [Guidance to Supervisors in Preparing Access to Campus](#) (Appendix A)

2. The individual must:
 - complete the [Employee/Researcher COVID-19 checklist](#)
 - complete the COVID-19 awareness training
 - complete the COVID-19 self-assessment tool **on a daily basis, prior to arrival on campus**

If the individual will be working alone while on campus, the supervisor and employee must also review and follow McMaster's [RMM304 Working Alone Program](#).

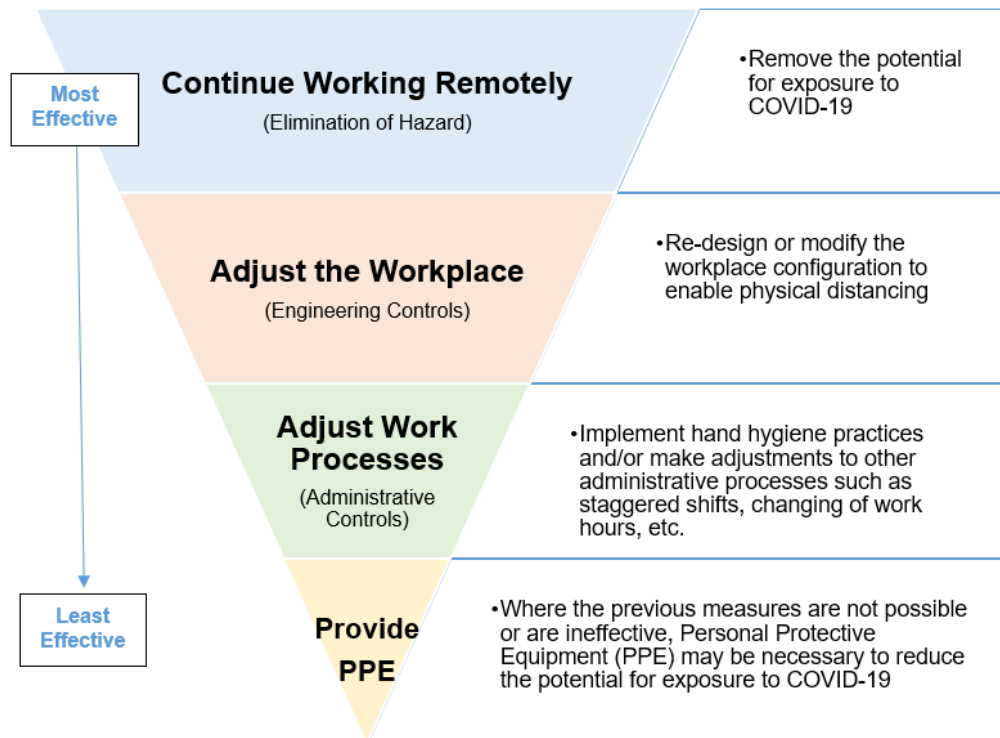
APPENDIX A

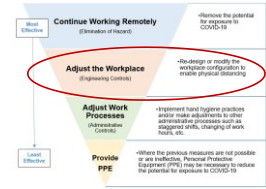
Guidance to Supervisors in Preparing Access to Campus

In accordance with Ontario's Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA), the University has the responsibility to keep a safe and well-maintained workplace and to take all reasonable precautions to protect workers from illness and/or injury by ensuring a work environment free from hazards.

COVID-19 is a new hazard in the workplace requiring the University's careful planning and implementation of all reasonable precautions for the protection of workers. Hazard mitigation should always focus on implementing measures to eliminate or reduce the risk – which, in this case, is contact with COVID-19.

For this purpose, the **hierarchy of measures to control the hazard** must be considered, as outlined below. Specific guidance to supervisors in considering each of these measures is set out in these guidelines.





Adjust the Workplace

1. Enable Physical Distancing

Enabling physical distancing of at least **6 feet (2 metres)** between individuals must be the primary consideration as supervisors prepare for the return of employees to campus.

Solutions may differ depending on how many individuals are expected to be present in the work area as well as the operational requirements of the work tasks.

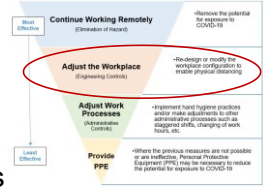
2. Consider Physical Restructuring of Workspaces

The physical restructuring of workspaces may be necessary to ensure physical distancing, for example:

- Separate individual workstations by at least 2 metres.
- Where workstations cannot be separated by at least 2 metres, use alternate strategies to ensure physical distancing, such as:
 - use only every other desk, seat or workstation (checkerboard)
 - add workstations to spaces previously used as meeting rooms
 - identify where barriers may need to be installed between workstations (e.g. plexiglass shields or panels between desks). Information on ordering can be obtained through [Procurement](#). Consultation will be available from [EOHSS](#) or [FHSSO](#).
 - consider assigning temporary space – no office belongs to any one person but is used temporarily each day by a different person. This will maximize office space; however, good house cleaning practices are extremely important – wipe down surfaces before you use and also before you leave.
 - move balances to opposite ends of the lab
 - move centrifuges or other equipment away from fume hoods or areas where others work regularly to avoid close proximity of students and staff

3. Control Traffic-Flow within Workspaces

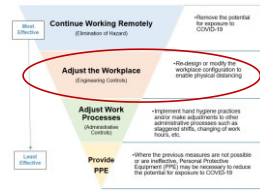
- Limit the number of individuals (employees, customers, students, patients) permitted to be present in the workspace



- Consider using a scheduling program such as Outlook so that all group members when and how many people are in the workspace at all times. Review available [IT continuity tools and services](#).
- Designate the direction of foot-traffic in main circulation paths such as corridors and entryways (use signage or other markings). University signage will be available through [Media Production Services](#) for supervisors to use in their specific departments and workspaces.
- Use floor decals to mark 2 metres spacing for physical distancing where queues could form. These will also be available through [Media Production Services](#).

4. Restrict Access to Shared Spaces

- Close shared spaces where physical distancing is difficult (e.g. kitchenettes, smaller lounges, break rooms, and meeting spaces as being closed) to minimize transmission during eating/breaks. [Larger break spaces have been identified on campus](#) for opportunities to each lunch within buildings.
- Remove shared appliances such as kettles, coffee makers and toaster ovens as much as possible. For any appliances that cannot be removed (i.e., fridges), disinfectant must be made available with signage reminding individuals to clean regularly touched items and surfaces. Specific signage is available through [Media Production Services](#).
- For any appliances in use, wipes must be available for cleaning between uses.
- Advise employees they will need to bring food and beverage items from home and to manage them individually (e.g., ice packs and coolers, rather than accessing shared refrigerators). Please note that individual workstations/offices will not be on a regular cleaning schedule with Facility Services at this time. All garbage should be removed from the workstation/office by the employee.
- Individuals should be reminded of the need to continue to maintain physical distancing during lunch/break times. Staggering of lunch/break times is recommended.
- Identify the locations where staff and faculty may take breaks as needed. Locations should allow for physical distancing while seated, easy cleanup of food spills, provide food waste disposal facilities and provide a mechanism for hand hygiene.

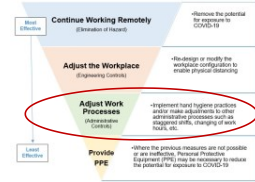


5. Prepare the Physical State of Labs

- Water may not have been run in the labs for weeks. Sinks, including pot sinks, may have air pockets due to shut offs – at first use turn taps on slowly and run until clear. Ensure the flushing of the eyewash/showers for at least 15 minutes.
- Check all rubber tubing before connecting to glassware – it may have dried out and cracked. Replace as necessary.
- Check all solvent stills and peroxide formers before using. Consider hazardous waste disposal as necessary.
- Drain traps may have dried out – this will create a sewer gas odour in some labs. Pour water down the floor drains to refill the traps (running the sinks will have helped but some floor traps may be missed). Contact Facility Services for trap oil which will float on top of the water and prevent it from drying out.

6. Prepare for Access to the Location

- Note that some buildings have restricted access at this time. If additional access is required, please contact axiomrep@mcmaster.ca. Individuals must ensure rooms are locked and secured after use.
- Signage and directional guidance have been installed at most McMaster buildings. Consider additional signage or directions that may be needed within your department/unit. Additional signage may be ordered from [Media Production Services](#).
- Ensure that all staff and faculty are aware of the current protocols for site-specific parking. Campus parking gates will be lowered as of July 6, 2020, and individuals will need to park in their designated lot. Visitors will be charged the normal visitor rate. The shuttle service will resume on that date, with specific social distancing protocols. Some off-site locations may require transponders to be reinstated their transponders if they opted to suspend them while working remotely, and there may be a time lag before this occurs.
- Ensure that you understand how your building is serviced for cleaning/maintenance.
- Many buildings on campus remain locked and secured. If an individual requires access to a building, arrangements can be made by contacting axiomrep@mcmaster.ca. Supervisors must approve increased access for employees.



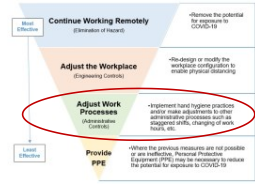
Adjust Work Processes

1. Implement Hygiene Practices

In combination with physical distancing, hygiene etiquette practices are critical for preventing the transmission of COVID-19. It is mandatory that hygiene etiquette practices be incorporated into procedures directed at working safely during the pandemic.

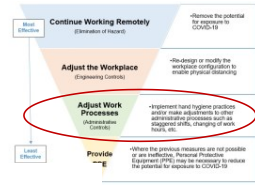
Educate Employees on Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

- Post the following in visible areas within the workplace and review hygiene expectations with employees before they enter the workplace.
 - [Cover Your Cough poster](#)
 - [Hand Washing poster](#)
 - [Handwashing Hygiene techniques](#)
- Communicate the following information to your staff and faculty:
 - **Self Assessment Tool**
 - All individuals must complete the [Ontario COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) no more than 1 hour before coming to the University, save a PDF copy of their outcome from the tool and email their direct supervisor to advise them of their result (whether they are clear to attend campus, or have been advised to get tested for COVID-19 or to isolate).
 - **Hand Hygiene**
 - Wash your hands regularly, following proper handwashing hygiene techniques
 - Practice hand hygiene directly after contact with high touch areas
 - In areas with no proximity to a sink, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ensure hand sanitizer is available in the work area)
 - **Respiratory Etiquette**
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes (cough/sneeze into upper sleeve or elbow instead of your hands)
 - Turn away from others when coughing or sneezing
 - **Avoid Touching the Face**
 - Avoid touching your eyes, face and mouth



Coordinate Cleaning & Disinfection

- Establish routine cleaning of high touch surfaces within the work area, recognizing that cleaning within labs and individual workspace is the responsibility of the occupants.
- Individual offices will not be on a regular cleaning schedule at this time. Custodial Services is focusing on high contact areas in buildings (corridors, washrooms, entrances, stairwells), as well as research labs and studio spaces for recording lectures. Please do not leave garbage in the office area and leave the space clean for the next user.
- Communicate the following information to your staff and faculty:
 - At the start of your work and before you leave, disinfect everything you are using/have used.
 - Disinfect common touchpoints (door handles, light switches, etc.).
 - Avoid sharing of equipment, if possible. If sharing of equipment is necessary, speak with your supervisor to ensure appropriate procedures are in place.
- Ensure hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes are available in the work area. Please use only alcohol wipes on electronic equipment.
- For all disinfectants, follow the manufacturer's direction for use, including contact time. Read all safety and warning labels on all disinfectants.
- Assess the need for additional sanitization of work surfaces prior to beginning work in high traffic/high touch areas.
- Work items that cannot be disinfected easily should be stored and not used during this time.
- If shared use of equipment or tools is necessary, ensure that you are cleaning the tools both before and after use for and the required supplies for disinfection are located within the room. Ensure mechanisms are in place to book shared infrastructure/equipment to avoid congestion at these stations. Posters for shared equipment/tools is available for order through [Media Production Services](#).
- Supplies may be ordered through the Campus Store, which is located in the Health Sciences Centre, room 1G1, and the basement of Gilmour Hall.



2. Consider Adjustment to Shifts or Hours of Operation

In order to enable physical distancing, it may be necessary to consider adjusting shifts or hours of operation.

- Introduce extended hours and staggered shifts, or evening, night, or weekend shifts to minimize the number of people present on campus at any given time. Please consult with Employee & Labour Relations or your Faculty of Health Sciences HR Consultant for guidance on notifying employees of changes to their schedules.
- Schedule specific lunch and break times for individuals and restrict gathering in groups.

3. Consider Adjustments to Work Tasks or Deliverables

In order to enable physical distancing, it may be necessary to consider adjusting work tasks or deliverables.

- Defer certain tasks that would increase the potential exposure to risk.
- Some tasks/experiments may be limited or restricted during this time due to the physical distancing requirements. Organize and plan accordingly.
- Clearly outline what tasks/experiments cannot be performed.

4. Consider Adjustments to Methods of Working

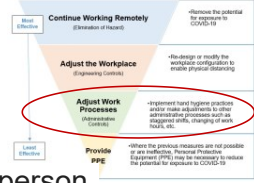
In order to enable physical distancing, it may be necessary to consider adjusting methods of working, or the way in which work is normally performed.

- Leverage technology for communication, rather than in-person meetings.
- Do not permit in-person meetings or gathering of groups.
- Require employees to leave campus immediately once their essential tasks are completed.

5. Restrict University-Related Travel

Currently, no University-related international travel is permitted. As we prepare to move through subsequent phases, the necessity of all University-related travel should be considered and evaluated.

- All travel requests must be reviewed by the Department Chair or are AVP. As part of this review, consider if travel is restricted to certain countries or regions by [Global Affairs Canada](#).



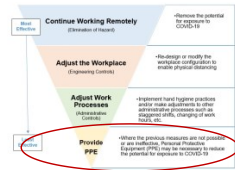
- Global Affairs Canada risk ratings are dynamic and is the responsibility of the person travelling to check these ratings up to the proposed time of departure. If L3 or L4 ratings for the country are declared, travel plans may be cancelled or significantly altered.
- Purchase of travel insurance is highly recommended to minimize loss of any funds.
- Travel related to Student Placements outside of Canada, Field Research and Field Activity should follow the [RMM 801](#) and [Global Affairs Canada](#) travel restrictions.

6. Establish Standard Operating Procedures

Develop standard operating procedures (“SOP”) for specific tasks within the workplace to enable physical distancing and hygiene practices. [Guidance documents](#) are available for common practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, including:

- Research Lab Use
- Travelling on Campus
- Vehicle Use
- Fieldwork
- Accessing/Working in Shared Studio Spaces
- Building Evacuations
- Face Coverings and Masks
- Clinical Areas and Waiting Rooms
- Client Facing Areas
- Handling Mail and Packages
- Retrieving Supplies/Equipment from Office Spaces
- Use of Office Spaces for Instructor Recording

Clearly communicate standards and operating procedures with staff and faculty.



Provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

1. PPE Related to COVID-19

The steps described above (Continue Working Remotely, Adjust the Workplace, and Adjust Work Processes) should always be considered to eliminate or reduce the risk before implementing PPE.

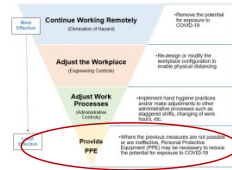
If employees are observing physical distancing and hand washing as per the Public Health guidelines, no specific PPE is necessary as it relates to COVID-19. Non-medical masks or face coverings are not PPE (see guidance document on [masks and face coverings](#)).

Before determining PPE is necessary, supervisors are advised to:

- consider all other measures of control as described in the sections above
- where these measures are not possible or are ineffective, consult with [EOHSS](#) (Environmental and Occupational Health Support Services) or [FHSSO](#) (Faculty of Health Sciences Safety Office).
- EOHSS and FHSSO will assist supervisors with establishing appropriate Standard Operating Procedures in line with evidence-based guidance from Public Health officials

Where, in consultation with EOHSS or FHSSO, PPE related to COVID-19 is determined necessary, the following guidelines will apply:

- **Masks**
 - only medical masks will be used and not N95 respirators
 - if implementing the use of medical masks, adequate supplies must be available
 - individuals must receive instruction on proper donning and doffing of masks and ensure they perform hand hygiene
- **Eye Protection**
 - will only be required where workers may come into contact (less than 2m) with individuals who are known or suspected to be COVID-19 positive
 - in such cases, safety goggles or a face shield will be the recommended practice, in order to achieve an appropriate seal
 - if implementing the use of eye protection, adequate supplies must be available
 - eye protection must be cleaned and decontaminated after each use



- **Gloves**

- gloves should be worn if in their role the employee is expected to have contact with blood and body fluids and/or contact with equipment, materials or surfaces that could potentially be contaminated where hand hygiene is not possible
- wearing gloves does not replace the need to perform hand hygiene and would not be required if hand hygiene is possible
- individuals should avoid touching their eyes, face and mouth even if wearing gloves
- hand hygiene should be performed both before and after wearing gloves
- if implementing the use of gloves, adequate supplies must be available
- individuals must receive instruction on procedures for proper donning and doffing of gloves

2. Regular PPE in Labs

Regular PPE necessary for the lab environment should be provided as usual by the PI or supervisor. Additional considerations regarding the use of regular PPE include:

- Ensure an adequate supply is available before starting experiments.
- PPE that is shared, such as laser safety eyewear, must be disinfected after each use. Develop a system to indicate this – label the pouches ‘sanitized’ for example.
- Do not share lab coats – assign/label and provide to individuals.
- Lab gloves should not be worn outside the lab.
- Use a pen or elbow to activate door openers and elevator buttons.

3. Host Sites

McMaster employees working at host facilities (hospitals, McMaster Innovation Park, other institutions, etc.) are required to adhere to the appropriate PPE protocols of the specific host if above the University standard.

Supervisors are advised to familiarize themselves with such requirements and to proactively communicate these requirements to employees before they access the site. If any employee has concerns with the requirements of the host site, supervisor may seek guidance from Employee & Labour Relations or their FHS HR Consultant.

Monitor and Evaluate

Continue to regularly check in with reliable sources of information:

- [McMaster University](#)
- [Government of Ontario](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)
- [Public Health Ontario](#)

As new information becomes available, reassess the applicability of the measures in place and evaluate if additional or modified measures are required

Access Supports and Resources

McMaster has prepared a comprehensive collection of information regarding health and safety in the workplace during the next phase of ramping up.

To help you prepare for staff and faculty return to site, please review this information at:

<https://hr.mcmaster.ca/resources/covid19/>

Questions related to this process can be directed to:

- Environmental and Occupational Health Support Services (EOHSS) – ehss@mcmaster.ca
- Faculty of Health Sciences Safety Office (FHSSO) – fhss@mcmaster.ca