

Return to Campus Priority Access Requests – Extenuating Circumstances for Graduate Students – 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.

Outside of approved work in accordance with the University’s phased Return to Campus framework, there may be extenuating circumstances where a graduate student may request approval for **Priority Access** to work on campus.

As the overall framework for Return to Campus provides the authority for resumption of work on site, reasons for Priority Access do not include a lack of work to continue 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 the individual’s overall 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. If supportive of the request, the supervisor establishes a Priority Access plan with the individual. The plan must include:
 - the timeframe and schedule for access to campus,
 - the building and office/lab space the individual will occupy (dependent on space available within each Faculty, alternative arrangements for space on campus may need to be secured. This may result in a delay or inability to approve requests, but all Faculties are actively seeking options for graduate students during these times”, and
 - confirmation that the supervisor and the individual 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](#).

3. The supervisor submits the Priority Access plan to the Department Chair or Director, for approval.
4. 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
 - **DeGroote 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.
5. The central area approver confirms their approval with the Department Chair or Director.
6. The Department Chair or Director confirms their approval of the Priority Access plan in writing (e.g., via email) to the supervisor and the individual. Confirmation must also be copied to Facility Services (konopka@mcmaster.ca) in order to notify Facility Services staff of any access to facilities issues.
7. Priority Access to campus is subject to review by the supervisor on a monthly basis.
8. 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.