



# COVID-19 In-Class Instruction Guidelines

As government regulations and public health advice continue to evolve, the University is looking ahead to resuming in-person instructional activities. In so doing, the health and safety of instructors, teaching support staff, and students is a priority. In addition to the health and safety measures being put in place, a key element of the planning process for a return to in-person instruction is classroom management. The following guidelines have been developed to support the safe provision of instruction.

In addition to your normal classroom management strategies, such as understanding how you will run your classes and setting ground rules with students, the following provides guidance and key considerations on how to prepare for and undertake in-person instruction in the COVID-19 context.

Additional questions can be directed to your program administrator, Chair or Dean's Office.

## What should I do before my first class?

### Understand and integrate the U of T prevention measures

Familiarize yourself with [general COVID-19 prevention measures](#) (e.g. hand hygiene and respiratory and cough etiquette) and self-screening practices, i.e. [UCheck](#) – all faculty, staff, and students are required to complete a UCheck screening prior to entering any U of T buildings.

- Ensure students know self-screening and vaccination requirements and that they are required to wear masks while in all common indoor spaces in all U of T buildings (hallways, lobbies, elevators and other common use facilities) when measures such as physical barriers are not available.
- Remind students to maintain two metre physical distancing in common spaces such as hallways and lobbies.

### Review the University's [Policy on Non-Medical Masks](#)

- The policy requires non-medical masks to be worn indoors in all common-use spaces on University property, including by instructors in classrooms. Certain activities and individuals, including individuals with an underlying medical condition that inhibits their ability to wear a mask, are exempt from this requirement. Please refer to the [Joint Provostial Guideline](#) for the full list of exemptions. For more information, please also refer to Ch 6 of the [COVID-19 General Workplace Guideline](#).
- Non-medical masks will not be required in learning and teaching environments if an instructor recommends an exception on the basis that wearing masks would materially impair the effectiveness of the learning activity. If instructors recommend that masks are not required in a particular class, they must ensure that the learning activities are carried out safely according to public health and University guidance, following the procedures outlined in the Teaching Re-Entry Planning section of the University's [COVID-19 Leadership Toolkit](#). Approval for an exception to wearing masks in your class should be directed to your Dean's Office with the guidance of U of T's Environmental Health & Safety office.
- You may want to bring a box of non-medical masks to class (available from MedStores or from your division) to provide to a student if they have forgotten to bring theirs. If a student is not wearing a mask, offer them one while being sensitive to the fact that they may have an exemption from the



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mask requirement based on a medical condition/disability-related need. You cannot ask a student about the specific condition or disability, but you can ask if they have gotten an exemption/accommodation granted by the University. A letter will be produced by Accessibility Services for the student to provide to the instructor (or shared by Accessibility Services with the instructor) where a mask exemption, or another reasonable alternative, has been established for medical/disability-related needs.

## Review your divisional plan

Review your divisional plan for classroom cleaning and hygiene practices and supplies; be aware of any instructor or teaching support staff responsibilities. Questions regarding this plan should be directed to your program administrator.

## Visit and prepare your classroom

When your division indicates that classrooms are ready for the term and may be entered, visit your classroom to familiarize yourself with the room and equipment.

- Assess directions for movement throughout the classroom.
- Plan for any materials you will be required to bring into the classroom each session, such as chalk, white board markers, erasers, personal microphones, etc. Questions related to teaching materials should be directed to your program administrator.

## Connect with your teaching team

Connect with the members of your teaching team (co-instructor(s), course coordinator, TA(s), technical support staff), to discuss the teaching plan and ensure they are familiar with the [prevention measures](#), UCheck screening requirements, space logistics and considerations, and mask protocols.

## Connect with your students

Reach out to students enrolled in the in-person course sections to share your expectations for them, including in-class behaviour, participation, and interaction with you and the teaching team.

- Prepare students for the safety practices of the in-person experience, including the [general COVID-19 prevention measures](#) and UCheck screening requirements, space logistics and considerations, and [mask protocols](#).
- Ensure students are aware that the University has suspended the need for a doctor's note or medical certificate for absences if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.



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## What's important to share with students during the first class?

### Orient students to the space

Guide students where to sit, and ensure they are familiar with the flow of traffic in the room (there should be clearly marked signs showing which direction to enter/exit the room, move through aisles, etc.). If cleaning supplies are available, such as a hand sanitizer dispenser, note their location.

### Remind students of the institutional safety measures

- Provide a visual and verbal reminder of the [general COVID-19 prevention measures](#), [self-screen practices \(i.e. UCheck screening\)](#), the mask [Policy](#) and [Guideline](#), and any other protocols required by your division.
- Feel free to adapt the [PowerPoint presentation](#) provided to use on your first day of class and within Quercus.
- Add to this a reiteration of your expectations for in-class behaviour, participation, and interaction with you and the teaching team.

### Review the course structure and types of activities

Describe how class time will be structured, and what kinds of learning activities students can expect to experience during class sessions.

## How should I manage issues that arise in my class?

### What do I do if a student doesn't comply with the safety regulations put in place?

- You will not be asked to enforce the [Policy](#) on masks, or other safety measures.
  - You should not ask students for documentation of medical exemptions or other accommodations related to masks.
- It is recommended that you approach these situations in the same manner you would approach any other classroom management issue – making expectations clear and providing education or reminders about the mask [Policy](#) and [Guideline](#) (along with reminders that not everyone is able to wear a mask due to disabilities or other reasons).
- Enforcement by the University will focus primarily on an educational approach. The University will focus on educating members of the community about these measures, including the benefits of non-medical mask use with regard to community transmission of COVID-19, as well as the importance of accommodation and personal privacy regarding medical or other conditions.

### What do I do if someone in my class says they feel sick?

- If an instructor, librarian, staff or student experiences a COVID-19 related symptom on campus and immediate medical assistance is not required, the individual should immediately take the following actions:
  - Go home.
  - Report their sickness to their manager/supervisor/course instructor etc. in accordance with departmental processes.
  - Email U of T's Occupational Health Nurse at [ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca](mailto:ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca) who will conduct a remote assessment, contact tracing and provide further direction.



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- Instructors, librarians or staff who become aware of a probable/confirmed COVID-19 case amongst students, contractors or visitors should also contact the U of T Occupational Health Nurse.
- The Occupational Health & Safety team at Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) will work with the appropriate offices to inform those who have had contact with the individual in U of T workplaces, in keeping with public health directives (for cases which are probable/confirmed as per Occupational Health Nurse/Public Health). Public health authorities may also contact exposed persons as is their usual practice. All contact tracing for the University must be conducted by the Occupational Health Nurse. Departments and divisions cannot conduct contact tracing themselves.

## What do I do if someone in my class requires immediate medical assistance?

- If a student says they feel sick and requires assistance, call emergency services at (9) 9-1-1 (note: Campus Police have developed COVID-19 procedures when responding to incident and emergency calls)
- Notify Campus Police - Emergency:
  - 416-978-2222 (St. George Campus)
  - 905-569-4333 (Mississauga Campus)
  - 416-978-2222 (Scarborough Campus)
- Verbally assess the patient from 2 metres away
- Establish at the scene a safe, designated isolation area for the individual to wait at least 2 metres away from you and other passers-by until Campus Police (CP) and EMS arrive. Remember to avoid face to face conversations within 2 metres, stand to the side of the individual and, if required, assure the individual is comfortable while waiting for EMS.