

COVID-19

GUIDELINES

USASK SAFE RETURN TO CAMPUS

**Framework for a Staged Transition
to Increased On-Campus Activity**

UPDATED APRIL 2021



**UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN**

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Introduction

This document describes the “Framework for a Staged Transition to Increased On-Campus Activity” at the university including research, teaching and learning, administrative and support service operations that must be conducted in university spaces, including our physical campuses and university-operated properties and sites. The framework applies to activities involving faculty, staff, and students as well as any contractors and visitors to campus. Given the broad range of university activity, this document will reference or highlight specific areas as needed, and provide detailed information that guides Stages 1 to 5.

This Framework approach has been developed alongside the Saskatchewan Re-Open plan and we gratefully acknowledge insights from many other institutions in shaping this document.[1]

In its current iteration, this document was designed to assist those responsible for planning a transitional return in fall. The material contained within is made widely available in order to be transparent about important directions being taken and to be clear on key elements involved in returning operations to campuses in a safe manner that is aligned with Public Health and the Province of Saskatchewan. There is other work yet to be done both within academic units and within administrative units that support the teaching, learning and research missions.

This document was not developed with the intention that it be the primary method of communicating to stakeholders. As such, full implementation work is yet to emerge and will be developed and communicated throughout the spring and summer so that staff, faculty and students are fully aware of what is necessary and expected in order to keep everyone safe. Further, additional communication will come forward to ensure that important visitors to campus such as community- and school-based partners, alumni, parents or other connected members such as emeritus professors are well-positioned to understand when we can safely welcome you back onto the various parts of our campuses and into the various activities that animate our mission. Finally, in advance of fall, we will take special care in making sure that elders and knowledge keepers are given the information they will need for a safe and successful return to in-person activities.

Goal

To keep everyone involved in university activity healthy and safe, while increasing activity in a staged approach as health and safety becomes easier to maintain.

Guiding Principles

We are guided by the principles that were developed early in the pandemic, embedded within planning documents, and used to guide the activities and decisions made thereafter.

VALUE, PROTECT AND SUPPORT OUR PEOPLE. We will seek and implement the best guidance possible for the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff, and to ensure the return of people to campus will be done in a conscious, careful, and methodical way. We will strive to minimize financial hardship to employees when contemplating reward and employment strategies, and ensure that all legal and regulatory obligations are fully considered. We will be mindful of the financial challenges faced by our students brought on or exacerbated by pandemic circumstances.

DELIVER THE ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN. We continue our important academic, research, and community engagement work as the University the World Needs. Continually strive to facilitate as much core mission activity as possible to proceed without disruption, while respecting the necessary limits required by the evolving situation and understanding the potential to return to stricter limits should the situation require.

SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS. We prioritize students' academic progress, provide them with the supports they need, and strive to minimize adverse impacts to their academic progress.

ENSURE THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN'S LONG-TERM EXCELLENCE AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY. We are responsible not just for the university's success today, but for its long-term sustainable future, and we will actively seek opportunities to improve the way we deliver on our mission. CoVID-19 is having a significant negative impact on the university's financial situation on both a one-time basis and ongoing. Significant and immediate actions are required that support long-term cost reductions and revenue enhancements to protect the university's longer-term financial sustainability and reputation.

ENGAGE AND CONTRIBUTE. We will effectively and tangibly contribute to the province's efforts to respond to the rapidly shifting public-health situation and the province's recovery, while also significantly contributing to global efforts to address the coronavirus pandemic.

ACKNOWLEDGE IMPACT. We recognize and appreciate that decisions the university makes, and the actions taken may have an impact on our external communities. We are committed to factoring that impact into the ongoing decision-making on our staged approach to increasing activity.

COMMUNICATE AND CONSULT WITH OUR COMMUNITY. We will share and seek input regarding our CoVID-19 status, plans, and actions around increased activity with internal and external stakeholders to ensure transparency and timeliness.

Overview of the Framework Stages 1-5

The Framework is shown on pages 5 –10, and describes all five stages for the transition to increased on-campus activities.

Early in the pandemic, USask developed a framework alongside the Saskatchewan Re-Open Plan to guide the gradual, staged approach to increasing on-campus activity. Since March 2020, USask has progressed through stages 1 to 3 and has now updated the framework to include the final stages of re-opening, in response to the direction provided by provincial and public health guidelines:

- **STAGE 4A** – leading up to Fall Term 2021 (Current)
- **STAGE 4B** - transitional Fall Term 2021 (September 2021)
- **STAGE 5** – fully open Winter Term (January 2022)

The remainder of the document highlights procedures currently in place for Stages 2, 3, and 4A; along with a more comprehensive section outlining newly developed details for Stage 4B.

Questions about this document can be sent to Danette Stang (danette.stang@usask.ca).

Stage	External Conditions	Research Summary	Operations Summary	Teaching and Learning Summary
1	<p>COVID-19 cases rising.</p> <p>Ongoing concerns about personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages.</p> <p>Public health directives remain stringent.</p> <p>University resources needed to support Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA).</p> <p>Other universities continue to strictly limit on-campus research activity.</p> <p>Caregiving services, including childcare centres, are not available.</p>	<p>Campus activity allowed for research on COVID-19, clinical care, and ongoing animal/plant/living organism studies.</p> <p>Research activity allowed in other exceptional cases, as approved by deans and the VPR.</p> <p>Strict expectations for health and safety plans, including minimum personnel, physical distancing, and disinfecting plans and training.</p>	<p>Campus activity allowed to support essential operations related to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) maintaining safety and security of campus infrastructure (heating plant, protective services), regulatory or financial requirements (waste disposal, stores, treasury). 2) teaching, learning and student supports (residence, on-line instruction). 3) research supports (COVID-19, clinical care, and ongoing animal/plant/living organism studies). <p>Activity allowed in exceptional cases, as approved by VPFR on advice from PRT.</p> <p>Strict expectations for health and safety plans, including minimum personnel, physical distancing, disinfecting plans and training, and exposure control plan.</p>	<p>Faculty and support staff involved in the development and delivery of the academic programming all working remotely.</p> <p>Academic programs for spring and summer delivered remotely.</p> <p>All student supports and services offered remotely.</p> <p>Any incremental on-campus activity allowed in exceptional cases, as approved by the Provost on advice from PRT.</p> <p>Strict expectations for health and safety plans, including minimum personnel, physical distancing, and disinfecting plans and training.</p>

Preparation for next stage:

- COVID-19 Safety Manual completed and available (including requirement for all faculty, instructors, staff, students, and contractors returning to campus to register for and complete the COVID-19 Health and Safety Course online, and incorporating clear information about the Occupational Health and Safety obligations and liability)
- Systems established for screening and monitoring on-campus personnel for symptoms
- Proper (necessary) PPE and other safety supplies not needed by the healthcare system are made available and personnel trained on proper use
- Necessary operational staff and resources in place (e.g., Maintenance and Custodial; Facilities; Procurement; Safety)
- Approved process in place for determining which activities can resume or begin
- Approved process in place for determining which services and supports are required on campus in the next stage

Stage	External Conditions	Research Summary	Operations Summary	Teaching and Learning Summary
2	<p>COVID-19 cases within the province are low and largely flattened.</p> <p>Sufficient PPE and other safety supplies available.</p> <p>Public health directives remain stringent but do not explicitly impede or conflict with approved activities on campus proceeding.</p> <p>University resources still needed to support SHA but not to the extent that some increased activity on campus will present problems.</p> <p>Other universities moving in the direction of allowing more activity on campus.</p> <p>Caregiving services, including childcare centres, remain largely unavailable.</p>	<p>Restriction on campus activity loosened to allow more time-sensitive and deadline-driven research, where continued delay jeopardizes viability of the research, but with significant ongoing limitations.</p> <p>Priority given to graduate students and postdocs close to completing their degree or term of appointment.</p> <p>Priority also given to projects involving funders (including industry partners) that have not granted leniency and whose end dates are within three months</p> <p>If access to facilities (e.g., lab space) needs to be scheduled, consideration of primary caregiving responsibilities as well as individuals with disabilities who may require accommodations.</p> <p>Some increased library research supports (e.g., the Library is working on a plan to provide access to physical materials, including the creation of procedures for contact-less pick-up of requested material and potentially a “scan-and-send” service for portions of books following fair dealing guidelines).</p> <p>Researchers must be prepared for the need to modify, scale back or shut down, if needed.</p>	<p>Restriction on campus activity loosened to allow more time-sensitive and deadline-driven operations, where continued delay jeopardizes viability or contractual obligations, but with significant ongoing limitation.</p> <p>Consideration of supporting bookstore and retail service in accordance with Provincial timelines.</p> <p>Priority also given to projects with contractual obligations or those that directly support the infrastructure for remote delivery.</p> <p>Expanded on-campus safety resources to support preparations for increased on-site operations and conduct fire and life safety system equipment inspections.</p> <p>Strict expectations for health and safety plans, including minimum personnel, physical distancing, and disinfecting plans and training and exposure control plan.</p>	<p>Restrictions on campus activity are loosened to allow for increased opportunities to visit campus (e.g., office, lab, classroom, studio) to develop learning resources that cannot be done remotely.</p> <p>Access considered only for those preparing to teach classes in the fall of 2020 (includes faculty, postdocs, graduate students) where campus access is deemed essential, and access considered on a request/ approval basis only for discrete visits.</p> <p>Access to physical library material (e.g., allowing faculty to order books and materials with contact-less pick up, “scan and send” service for portions of books following fair dealing guidelines).</p> <p>Faculty and staff must be prepared for the need to modify, scale back or shut down, if needed.</p>

Preparation for next stage:

- Systems for screening and monitoring on-campus personnel for symptoms can be scaled up
- PPE and other safety supplies are increasingly available
- Approved process for determining services and supports needed in next stage updated and support/services (e.g., maintenance and custodial, student-focused, research-focused) have capacity to accommodate needs associated with increased campus activity in the next stage

Stage	External Conditions	Research Summary	Operations Summary	Teaching and Learning Summary
3	<p>COVID-19 cases in the province remain low or within manageable limits.</p> <p>Significant testing and identification of new cases, with appropriate self-isolation.</p> <p>PPE and other safety supplies increasingly available.</p> <p>Public health directives loosening somewhat more.</p> <p>University resources still supporting SHA in some respects, but able to support increased activity on campus.</p> <p>Caregiving services, including childcare centres, increasingly available.</p> <p>Other universities moving in the direction of allowing more activity.</p>	<p>Additional time-sensitive and deadline-driven research approved as circumstances allow for more on-campus activity.</p> <p>Limited, staggered office access allowed for faculty, postdocs and grad students (e.g., 1-2 days per week) to allow for focused work, psychological relief and family harmony (with physical distancing, disinfecting practices, and established maximum occupancies).</p> <p>If access to facilities (e.g., lab space) needs to be scheduled, consideration of primary caregiving responsibilities as well as individuals with disabilities who may require accommodations.</p> <p>Researchers must be prepared for the need to modify, scale back or shut down, if needed.</p>	<p>Activities approved that did not quite make the cut in stage 2 (similar decision-making guidance as #2, but with increased capacity compared to scenario #2).</p> <p>Limited, staggered office access allowed for workforce (e.g., 1-2 days per week) to allow for focused work, psychological relief and family harmony (with physical distancing, disinfecting practices, and established maximum occupancies, exposure control plan).</p> <p>Limited access to students and faculty to University Library spaces and in-person services.</p> <p>Re-opening of some services with appropriate protocols such as physical distancing, disinfecting plans, exposure control plan and training.</p>	<p>Limited, staggered but more regularized office/lab access allowed for faculty and staff (includes postdocs or graduate students who are also teaching) For example, 1-2 days per week) to allow for focused work (with physical distancing, disinfecting practices, and established maximum occupancies). Such access must still be sought and approved.</p> <p>Limited access to students and faculty to University Library spaces and in-person services.</p> <p>Faculty and staff must be prepared for the need to modify, scale back or shut down, if needed.</p>

Foundations for Stage 4

As we prepare for and move through a transitional Fall term (2021), we enter into a two-tiered Stage 4 that is guided by the following foundational priorities. We will:

- Continue to follow our key priority that “USask will not contribute to the pandemic.”
- Continue to value and protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our university community and will treat these elements as paramount in our planning.
- Recognize the important benefits of an in-person learning environment to our students, and remain committed to reopening our campus in an intentional manner, to the greatest extent possible, in alignment with public health directives.
- Ease back from universal adherence with “if it can be done remotely, it will/should be done remotely” – may be applied to certain groups for periods of time through a staged re-opening fall approach (where appropriate) as opposed to using it as, we have in the past as, a directive for ALL activity considerations.
- Ensure required services and supports are co-ordinated and phased in appropriately (light dimmer switch) (e.g., maintenance and custodial, student-focused, research-focused, administrative-focused) and have capacity to accommodate needs associated with increased campus activity.

Stage 4 is divided into two tiers of planning and activity roll-out:

- 4A will encompass planning/activities that lead up to fall term.
- 4B will encompass transitional re-opening that leads to a fully open winter term (January 2022), when we expect normalcy in academic, research, administrative and operational activities.

Stage	External Conditions	Research Summary	Operations Summary	Teaching and Learning Summary	Administrative Staff
<p>4A</p>	<p>COVID-19 cases in the province remain low enough to be managed by the health care system. Widespread testing and identification of new cases, with appropriate self-isolation.</p> <p>Vaccination rolls out according to provincial targets within predicted or accelerated timelines.</p> <p>PPE and other safety supplies widely available.</p> <p>Public health directives increasingly relaxed though precautionary measures remain (e.g., masks, continued distancing)</p> <p>SHA/Sector/ government/ partners work together to develop institutional re-opening plans</p> <p>Childcare options available for parents.</p> <p>Continued international travel restrictions anticipated but improvement demonstrated for the return of international students. Robust quarantine plan for the return of international students remains approved by provincial and federal governments and continues to function effectively.</p>	<p>Continued expansion of research activity on campus to now allow non-time sensitive research, while maintaining reduced in-person density, disinfecting practices, exposure control plans and training.</p> <p>Researchers must be prepared for the need to modify, scale back or shut down, if needed.</p>	<p>Continued expansion of operations on campus, while maintaining physical distancing, disinfecting plans, exposure control plan and training.</p> <p>Work would continue to be a blend of remote and in-person. In-person activity would be prioritized to those that directly support the teaching/ learning, research, and services happening in-person while other indirect support would continue remotely.</p>	<p>Continued expansion of teaching and learning activities on campus, while maintaining physical distancing and disinfecting practices.</p> <p>Remote provision will be the norm for academic programming enabling access for international students or those wishing or needing to remain resident in communities without access to a physical U of S campus.</p> <p>Approval of in-person teaching and learning activities undertaken through consideration of learning outcomes and the extent to which in-person delivery is required to achieve learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Work would continue to be a blend of remote and in-person. In-person activity would be prioritized so those that support the teaching/learning, research, and services happening in-person while other indirect support would continue remotely.</p>

Stage	External Conditions	Research Summary	Operations Summary	Teaching and Learning Summary	Administrative Staff
<p>4B</p>	<p>COVID-19 cases in the province remain low and managed by the health care system. Widespread testing and identification of new cases, with appropriate self-isolation.</p> <p>Vaccination targets have been nearly achieved, and majority of population over the age of 18 have been fully vaccinated.</p> <p>PPE and other safety supplies widely available.</p> <p>Public health directives almost completely relaxed, with the removal of distancing measures. The use of masks remains in place.</p> <p>SHA/Sector/ government/ partners on-side for institutional re-opening implementation</p> <p>Childcare options available for parents.</p> <p>Continued international travel restrictions anticipated but improvement demonstrated for the return of international students Robust quarantine plan for the return of international students remains approved by provincial and federal governments and continues to function effectively.</p>	<p>Further expansion of research activity on campus, including accommodating more of those who researched remotely in earlier stages to make room for those who could not do their research in a remote fashion. All activity will adhere to public health and institutional policies and practices in place at the time .</p> <p>Researchers must be prepared for the need to modify, scale back or shut down, if needed.</p>	<p>Phased return of in-person operational support and services to expand (but still subject to health restrictions) while some activity while still in whole or in-part having remote operations. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person dining • Recreational Facility/ Programming use • Retail Shopping • Expanded IT support presence • Expanded student support presence where needed 	<p>Teaching and Learning activities will still involve remote delivery along side a substantive increase in in-person offerings</p> <p>Colleges and schools provided with planning parameters regarding use of space, maximum class size, and optimization of timetable and asked to develop a plan for their academic programming that significantly increases the proportion of in-person delivery and appropriately manages risk during the fall transition period.</p> <p>Faculty and staff must be prepared with a contingency plan to handle unforeseen and short-term events (e.g., handful of students in a class must self-isolate for a period; instructor must self-isolate for a period)</p>	<p>Phased increase of in-person administrative work while still maintaining some remote operations</p>
<p>Foundations for Stage 5</p> <p>It is expected that when entering into Stage 5, normalcy in academic, research, administrative and operational activities will be achieved. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to follow our key priority that “USask will not contribute to the pandemic.” • Continue to value and protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our university community and will treat these elements as paramount in our planning. • Recognize the important benefits of reopening our campus in an intentional manner, to the greatest extent possible, in alignment with public health directives. • Enter into the final stage for ALL activity considerations. • Ensure required services and supports are co-ordinated and phased in appropriately (dimmer switch) (e.g., maintenance and custodial, student-focused, research-focused, administrative-focused) and have capacity to accommodate needs associated with increased campus activity 					

Stage	External Conditions	Research Summary	Operations Summary	Teaching and Learning Summary	Administrative Staff
5	<p>Vaccine widely available/administered and used in combination with widespread testing and identification of new COVID-19 cases, with appropriate self-isolation.</p> <p>SHA/Sector/ government/ partners on-side regarding institutional re-opening plan</p> <p>Full lifting of public health measures, including social distancing restrictions and mask use.</p> <p>Full lifting of international travel restrictions.</p>	<p>All types of research allowed on campus.</p>	<p>All types of work and activity allowed on campus.</p> <p>Anticipate that some permanent remote work arrangements may be maintained where employee and operational needs can be accommodated</p>	<p>All types of on-campus teaching and learning activities allowed on campus.</p> <p>Anticipated that some remote activities will continue (as we have always had on-line learning offerings) where demand exists and where pedagogical benefits can be realized.</p>	<p>All types of on-campus administrative activities allowed on campus.</p> <p>Anticipated that some remote activities will continue, but decision to do so is more from an operational lens than in response to the pandemic.</p>

Current process for increased activity Stages 2, 3, 4A

(prior to fall term 2021)

Assessing Requests for Increased Activity

For requests regarding increased activity within stages 2, 3 and 4A, we will follow the structured process outlined below:

1. Normally, a request for increased activity comes from a Dean/Executive Director or AVP/Vice-Provost signalling that the request is considered, by that leader, to be of sufficient priority at the time of submission to warrant the compilation of material and necessary review.
2. Applications for increased activity will proceed as follows:
 - a. A common approach for research, operations, and teaching and learning development activity will be used, which requires application for the resumption or commencement of activity, using a form outlining the following:
 - i. The location of the activity;
 - ii. The nature of the activity;
 - iii. The reason it should (re)start without delay;
 - iv. Any consequences of further delaying the work;
 - v. The members of the team (where applicable);
 - vi. Service requirements (Facilities (e.g., custodial), Safety, Procurement, Student Services, etc);
 - vii. Agreement to follow the COVID-19 Safety and Expectations Manual (or explanation of why deviation is necessary and the associated mitigation strategy); and
 - viii. A contingency plan in the event the work must end (e.g., due to renewed government restrictions or illness amongst team members).
 - b. Additional requirements for applications to increase research activity will request the following information be provided:
 - i. For increased research activity, college/schools/centres may also have a more detailed forms that technical staff and/or lab managers can use to prepare labs for resumption of research activity.
 - ii. Key prioritization criteria checkboxes. Examples include:
 1. Involvement of trainees;
 2. Projects near completion;
 3. Grants or industry contracts that cannot be extended;
 4. Need for preliminary data to prepare for a critical grant application; and
 5. High-risk to study materials, organisms, or data accuracy if research is delayed.
 - iii. Any special scheduling needs or accommodations of all research team members may have (e.g., caregiving responsibilities or accommodations for disabilities).
 - iv. Required acknowledgement of faculty-supervisor obligations and liability under Occupational Health and Safety legislation
3. The application for increased activity is then submitted for a formal review and sign-off by the Crisis Operations Team (COT). This review may require additional information be collected.
 - a. Applications for increased research activity must also include confirmation from the Research Services and Ethics Office that there are no valid impediments to the activity proceeding prior to the VPR's final approval.
4. Following the sign-off from COT, the Dean/Executive Director or AVP/Vice-Provost (or other unit lead) conducts a review and PRT is aware of the approved activity from each unit
 - a. As noted above, the role of PRT is modified, with representatives included in advisory committee processes, for decisions regarding delivery mode of classes or increased research activity
5. The PRT (or a delegated subgroup) reviews, prioritizes and makes a decision (unless otherwise noted). An affirmative decision from PRT confirms that there are no valid impediments to the activity proceeding and to set a target date for resumption of activity, to ensure proper coordination across campus.
6. In some instances, it may be appropriate for PEC to consider an appeal of a PRT decision.
7. Approved applicants will be provided with a "COVID-19 Safety Permit" (that confirms they have been approved to resume or commence activity).
8. Communication of approved activity to be communicated where appropriate.

Criteria for Approving Increased Activity

1. Government restrictions do not impede the activity from proceeding.
2. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and safety supplies available for the individuals and the team (where applicable).
3. The activity complies with the COVID-19 Safety and Expectations Manual (or, if deviation is absolutely necessary, an acceptable mitigation strategy is clearly articulated and approved by Safety Resources).
4. With respect to approval of research activity, specific priority will be given to research projects:
 - a. Involving trainees;
 - b. Near completion;
 - c. Involving grants or industry contracts that cannot be extended;
 - d. Needed for preliminary data to prepare a grant application; and
 - e. Presenting high-risk to study materials, organisms or data accuracy if the research is delayed.
5. With respect to approval of teaching and learning activity, specific priority will be given to activity focused on the development of learning resources and preparation for classes delivered in the fall of 2021.

Process for increased activity through transitional Fall Term 2021 – Stage 4B

Introduction

With the increase in vaccination and the improved situation related to COVID-19 within the larger community, the University of Saskatchewan (USask) intends to increase operations on our campuses with focused expansion at safe and allowable levels, resulting in enhanced student experience and research activities.

USask is committed to the health and safety of all students, staff and faculty and will continue to ensure this commitment is the foremost consideration for all changes in increased on-campus operations. In order to implement this commitment, a diverse set of safety measures will be employed, taking into account the variety of workplaces and learning environments on campus. The safety measures, as implemented throughout the pandemic, and expanded with the increased return to campus, have been developed in consultation with public health authorities.

USask aligns with the Government of Saskatchewan and the Government of Canada in its support of COVID-19 vaccination and follows the government recommendation that all people eligible to receive the vaccine are expected to do so. As such, USask will promote vaccination by trusted communication, measures designed to increase vaccine confidence by providing ready access to reliable information, compliance with recent changes to The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations that allow for paid time-off from work for an employee to get vaccinated for COVID-19, and other focused efforts.

As the return to campus evolves, it is likely the COVID-19 pandemic and public health restrictions will be adjusted as well. USask is committed to managing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic as they develop and to enacting proactive and adaptable protocols and processes in order to support the health and safety of our students, staff and faculty. As a campus community, we each have responsibility for managing and supporting the health and safety of both ourselves and others. USask is committed to ensuring all campus operations, whether virtual/remote or in-person, are (re)established to be as safe as possible.

As implemented throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, USask will continue to provide regular updates to the campus community and to engage with internal and external stakeholders (e.g. unions, government, communities, public health) as circumstances change and protocols, processes and plans develop.

Buildings and campus infrastructure have been assessed, prepared and will re-open based on parameters established to ensure a safe return to campus. A set of USask safe return to campus guidelines is contained within this document (below) and provides an overview of the preparations completed to support an expanded return to campus, to identify requirements and expectations for all members of the USask community and also to provide tools to enable everyone's commitment and participation in ensuring a safe campus environment.

Appendix A contains a set of definitions intended to ensure clarity in the material documented herein.

Planning Assumptions

In order to move forward with a substantial increase of on-campus activity, the following assumptions are made:

- We will continue to follow and adhere to Public Health Orders as well as any requirements set out by the Province (i.e., Reopen Saskatchewan) and the Ministry of Advanced Education and we assume that our position on Fall will be impacted by these sources.
- There must be clarity around expectations (e.g., What can faculty, staff and students expect from the university? What is expected of faculty, staff, and students?).
- At the core of the return to campuses - our risk can be mitigated with widespread vaccination and we will do what is within our power to provide accurate information, encourage confidence, and promote high levels of vaccine uptake of members of the university.
- We anticipate provincial restrictions will be lessened in a number of key areas including:
 - a. social distancing requirements
 - b. occupancy limits
 - c. contact tracing
 - d. cleaning/disinfecting including a positive case response
- We will continue masking protocols for activities on our campuses and we will ensure that the type of masks worn optimize protections following up-to-date recommendations.
- Handwashing, and increased cleaning of high-touch/high-traffic areas will remain in effect in full or part of the fall term
- All people returning to campus will continue to require USask Return to Campus Health and Safety online course completion and will be required to retake/renew training at appropriate intervals.
- We will not be returning to pre-pandemic levels of on-campus activity in the Fall term. The months-long period of Fall term will serve as a transition to get the university to January, 2022 at which time we anticipate it will be possible to resume any face-to-face activity desired.
- Increased in-person academic activity (teaching and research) will remain the priority. In order to ensure appropriate resources to support the increased activity, some activity will need to remain remote and be phased in accordingly.
- We will make significant gains in in-person academic program delivery.
- It is likely that we might face some potential risk of outbreak on campus, requiring that we retain a reporting and response plan in support of public health. The requirement for wide-scale closures will diminish with increasing success in vaccination. Our situation can change on short notice, however, and our planning and ability to respond must be flexible. In-person delivery must have short-term contingency plans should the need to respond emerge.
- It is likely that travel across provinces will get easier but that international travel may remain more complicated into the fall. Active and persistent lobbying has improved the access international students have to study permits but those starting out or returning to campus for fall may still face challenges.
- We will support international students coming to or returning to USask with careful attention to the provision of needed information and a robust and holistic quarantine strategy. We will also continue to advocate federally and provincially for the needs and circumstances of our international students.
- Indigenous students and their communities remain top-of-mind as we think through what students will need in the transition back to campus and/or the desired opportunity for continued remote learning.

Expectations for Increased Activity

All members of the USask community who will be on campus or have face-to-face activities must:

- Follow all government public health guidelines and protocols;
- Comply with all USask COVID-19 protocols, guidelines and the rules specific to the area or activity, including:
 - a. Adhering to the university's protocol on masks, ensuring the required type of masks are properly worn while at all times and in all locations on our campuses
 - b. Practicing hand hygiene; and
 - c. Cleaning and disinfecting workspaces.
- Fulfill public responsibilities by doing everything possible to protect oneself and each other by getting vaccinated;
- Complete the USask Return to Campus Health and Safety online course before accessing campus;
- Self-monitor for symptoms daily;
- Log their locations on campus (using the Daily Pre-Screening Log PAWS tool or the PDF Work Location Log);
- Not come to campus if feeling unwell, or if there is the possibility you may have COVID-19, awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test, someone in your household (partner, spouse, child, roommate, etc.) awaiting a COVID-19 test or if Public Health has identified you as a close contact to a COVID-19 positive case; and
- Report all hazards, incidents, and issues as they relate to the COVID-19 pandemic and general health and safety.

As noted, we will follow and adhere to all provincial Public Health directives.



MASKING

The use of single use, 3-layer masks are mandatory in USask spaces (indoors and outdoors) regardless of your COVID-19 vaccination status. Cloth masks are not allowed, unless worn together with a single use, 3-layer mask.

More information on the protocol for mandatory mask use as well as details of what kind of masks are appropriate for use can be found at the [USask COVID-19 website](#).

Specifics on mask use can be found here: <https://covid19.usask.ca/working-on-campus/ppes.php#Masks> and in the labs here: https://covid19.usask.ca/about/masks_in_laboratories.pdf



VACCINATION

It is expected that everyone will fulfill their responsibilities and as such, it is strongly recommended that all eligible students, staff, and faculty receive complete COVID-19 vaccination as soon as it is available to them and before returning to campus or living in residence.

Vaccination, in combination with other risk-mitigating measures, is a vital step towards:

- preventing the spread of CoVID-19;
- educating the severity and impact of CoVID-19; and
- protecting yourself and everyone against COVID-19.

Updated research on vaccinations as well as the opportunity to ask questions about vaccines is available on the USask website. <https://covid19.usask.ca/about/vaccinations.php>

To stay updated on your eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccination, visit the [Government of Saskatchewan's COVID-19 vaccination information site](#).



TRAINING

Recertification/Completion of the USask Safe Return to Campus online course is required for all faculty, staff, and student workers accessing any USask campus or facility. The training addresses the new health and safety requirements of the university.

Registration for the USask Safe Return to Campus course will be available at a later date via Canvas.

COVID-19 Testing and Monitoring

USask will continue to provide oversight and actively monitor for COVID-19 cases and transmission on campus, in coordination with the Saskatchewan Health Authority. This includes the Reporting Guidelines and Response Plan available at covid19.usask.ca. We anticipate that the requirement for members of campus to self-monitor and pre-screen (using the USask app) alongside our efforts to monitor and track positive cases when needed will continue for as long as contact tracing is in place within Public Health (SHA).

The use of COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits is being considered for screening and surveillance of asymptomatic individuals. This is most likely to occur in areas of increased transmission risk or in response to known COVID-19 cases or transmission on campus.

As an additional monitoring strategy, USask will use targeted testing and monitoring through the analysis of wastewater. This information will inform proactive responses to anticipate and manage infection in student residences, teaching, and learning, and/or operational areas.

Should students, staff, or faculty require a COVID-19 diagnostic testing, please follow government guidelines for testing and receive a testing referral from HealthLine 811 or your health care provider.

Building Return Process and Parameters

Given the principles and assumptions above, Facilities, Safety Resources, and ICT will work in the coming months to ensure that buildings are set up and operational for returned activity. Since the start of the pandemic, although many buildings had reduced activity, or no activity at all, buildings and spaces were continually monitored for system and infrastructure failures that required mitigation. With this said, work by these groups will increase in the coming weeks and months to ensure buildings are ready and prepared for return.

Facilitating a successful phased/scheduled return for approved activity will allow for teams to be ready to assess and respond to any unforeseen stresses put on facilities and infrastructure without overloading the system all in one day. The schedule of return of approved activity will be developed with input from senior leaders with specific attention to the academic calendar. It is anticipated that the scheduled return will ramp up in June and continue through the summer, relying on the academic calendar to determine priority such that programs are ready to commence as scheduled.

Facilities SBAs and IT College Coordinators are working with the college leadership to schedule a phased and coordinated return that will allow effective transition back to campus. Administrative unit leaders are asked to develop plans for a phased return with priority placed on the return of staff members that are required to be physically present in order to support teaching, learning and research activities.

RETURN OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Removal of office equipment to facilitate at home working happened in a more gradual/trickle effect during the closure of campus. It is anticipated that it may be the opposite for the return of office equipment. Return of office equipment will occur in a scheduled fashion in order to avoid large gatherings and congestion. Identification of drop off spots, access points, and moving equipment will be made available to support a transition back to the workplace safely.

BUILDING OCCUPANCY AND ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT

With planning parameters set such that there will be a substantive increase in academic program activities delivered in-person including labs and tutorials and based on the assumption made of still requiring some restrictions to mitigate infection (increased cleaning and supplies, limiting unnecessary traffic, increased IT demands) actions are required. Specifically, it will be important to assess the type of activities happening in buildings in order to ensure these activities can continue to ramp up over the fall and support services can meet the increased demand. As part of the initial return, work that does not directly support academic delivery and research activity and can continue to be done remotely should continue to be. Unrestricted capacity for other work can be anticipated by the winter term.

THE FUTURE OF REMOTE AND HYBRID WORK AT USASK

During this time, it may be prudent for leaders to consider what staff and operations may be optimal for both the unit or individual on a long-term remote or hybrid-remote arrangement. Long-term remote and hybrid work may present opportunities for increased employee engagement and productivity, as well as potential to reduce, condense and convert overall space to realize financial savings, additional space for research and opportunities to address fit-for-use challenges.

Additional details to support this assessment and decision making will be available in the coming weeks.

What to Expect Upon Return - A Shared Responsibility to Stay Safe

The largest success factor in mitigating infection is working within established building guidelines, exercising both diligence and personal responsibility.

INDIVIDUAL CLEANING

Personal responsibility for disinfection of our workspaces has evolved due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Faculty, staff and students will be asked to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer each time they enter campus buildings and working areas. All faculty, staff and students are responsible for ensuring they have a clean area/personal space for their activities and may be required to disinfect their space and the equipment they contact before and after use.

Please note: keyboards and other electronics are cleaned by the users and/or hand hygiene must be utilized.

HAND SANITIZER DISPENSER DEPLOYMENT

While proper handwashing is the recommended method for cleaning and disinfecting hands, sanitizer dispensers will supplement hand washing facilities.

- Hand sanitizer dispensers will be located at primary building entrances and other high traffic locations throughout campus. Facilities is responsible for the placement and refilling of these hand sanitizer dispensers.
- For personal offices, shared offices, open workspaces, meeting rooms, and lunch spaces, the department should encourage handwashing or supply pump-style hand sanitizer bottles. Procurement of additional dispensing units is discouraged due to potential issues with supply, mounting, and refilling the units.
- All faculty, staff, and students are expected to clean their own equipment such as keyboards, office equipment, lab equipment, and kitchen equipment.
- Specifics can be found here: <https://covid19.usask.ca/documents/classroom-disinfection-covid19-guidance.pdf>

CUSTODIAL OPERATIONS

USask's Facilities' Custodial Operations is responsible for the cleaning protocols for authorized public spaces and is following enhanced cleaning protocols in response to COVID-19. The team is consistently adjusting cleaning/disinfecting protocols, schedules, and routines as activity changes and new information is available.

For the most current information visit: <https://covid19.usask.ca/working-on-campus/facilities-support-during-covid-19.php>

BUILDING VENTILATION MEASURES

The ventilation systems installed in campus buildings have varying capabilities. Where applicable and possible, the following measures will be implemented:

- Maximize or increase the intake of fresh air into buildings. Opening windows (where able) during warmer months will assist with air exchange.
- Set ventilation schedules to optimize fan run times before and after primary building occupied hours.
- Prioritize ventilation system preventative maintenance including regular filter changes.
- Discourage the use of personal desk fans, window air conditioners, and similar devices which may create high velocity air flow within an open or shared space.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

ICT is auditing and refreshing classroom and meeting room technology and equipment. The physical in-room help documentation will be refreshed, and electronic help documentation updated with the rooms' capabilities over the Spring/Summer Term in preparation for fall.

Wifi signage and services will be increased in the classrooms and common spaces to accommodate the increased need that students and instructors have for wifi enabled classrooms and other gathering spaces across campus.

Shared printers will be serviced and refreshed. Specialized cleaning supplies and directions on safe printer use will be posted and available. Use of the PaperCut Mobile Phone app will be promoted to avoid unnecessarily touching the printer.

SIGNAGE GUIDELINES FOR OCCUPIED OFFICE-SPACE

Signage will be adjusted to focus more on personal hygiene, personal responsibility for cleaning, and masking, and encouragement to vacate spaces when scheduled activity is completed.

Return to Office Activities

Each workplace must assess its pre-COVID-19 workplace norms and behaviours and adjust these to minimize the transmission and risks of COVID-19. The following section includes guidance and materials to aid faculty, staff and student workers in identifying and implementing these adjustments.

For assistance with your assessment, please contact Safety Resources at 306-966-4675 or safetyresources@usask.ca.

RETURN TO WORKPLACE

While USask has inspected shared spaces, laboratories, and classrooms as faculty, staff and students have returned to campus, personal office spaces may not have been inspected. It is the responsibility of each faculty or staff member to ensure their office space is safe for work. This includes inspecting the room and workstation and reporting any new or worsening issues that need to be addressed to your supervisor.

Please watch for further communication on returning university assets (furniture, computers etc.) as guidance will be provided.

An inspection checklist can be found in Appendix B for you to complete your workspace inspections.

IN-PERSON MEETINGS

Use of meeting spaces and number of participants should be minimized, video or audio conferencing is preferred. One-way presentations or town halls are to be conducted virtually. College IT Coordinators are identifying meeting rooms that have web conferencing capabilities and are reviewing web conferencing needs for unit leader offices.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

USask has created a variety of documents for the USask community. It is expected that all faculty, staff and students returning to campus will follow these guidelines available at covid19.usask.ca or as listed below. COVID-19 guidelines must be adhered to in shared offices spaces.

- **Reporting COVID-19 guidelines** <https://covid19.usask.ca/documents/covid-reporting-guidelines.pdf>
- **Lunchrooms** <https://covid19.usask.ca/documents/lunch-room-guidelines-poster.pdf>
- **Vehicle use** <https://covid19.usask.ca/documents/vehicle-use-guidelines-poster.pdf>
- **Mask use** <https://covid19.usask.ca/working-on-campus/ppes.php#Masks>
- **Mask use in Labs** https://covid19.usask.ca/about/masks_in_laboratories.pdf
- **Classroom Disinfection** <https://covid19.usask.ca/documents/classroom-disinfection-covid19-guidance.pdf>
- **Classroom and Academic Lab Operations Manual** <https://covid19.usask.ca/documents/covid-19-classroom-and-academic-lab-operations-manual.pdf>
- **COVID-19 Strategies for Safety in the Workplace** <https://covid19.usask.ca/working-on-campus/safety-strategies-in-workplace.php>
- **Feeling sick guidelines** <https://covid19.usask.ca/about/safety.php#Feelingsick>
- **Reporting COVID-19 guidelines** <https://covid19.usask.ca/documents/covid-reporting-guidelines.pdf>

If you have concerns about safety guidelines not being followed you can let your supervisor know, or fill out this hazard reporting form (anonymous reporting option available).

Committing to Safety

REPORTING HAZARDS AND NON-ADHERENCE TO GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS

The university is fundamentally committed to the safety and wellness of all who work and study here. As such, it is critical that students, staff and faculty feel confident in staying away when sick, reporting illness to their supervisor, faculty member or instructor, and reporting hazards and non-adherence to USask guidelines and protocols. This means that all faculty, staff and students must feel confident that adjustments can be made if they are away for illness-related reasons.

In USask's interdependent safety culture, everyone is responsible for the safety of themselves and others. If a hazard or non-adherence to a protocol is observed, address and rectify it (if able) or report it to your supervisor. However, issues can also be reported via Safety Resources' Hazard Report Form.

We consider first the general approach applied to non-adherence before turning to specific concerns about the failure to mask and/or wear masks properly.

FOR FACULTY AND STAFF – failure to follow safety protocols and procedures outlined for return to office work will lead in the first instance to an offer of assistance followed, when necessary, by the intervention of the Dean/Director (or designate). Continued non-adherence to safety protocols and procedures may, when necessary, be subject to coaching, performance management and/or progressive discipline processes as per respective collective agreements, USask policies, and provincial legislation.

FOR STUDENTS – failure to follow safety protocols and procedures may result (where possible) in the offer of assistance and a reminder about the need to adhere to requirements. Continued disregard for safety protocols will be identified and escalated as necessary and guidance will be sought from the Department Head and/or Associate Dean Academic/Students within the college. Disciplinary action may be pursued under the Standard of Student Conduct in Non-Academic Matters and Procedures for Resolution of Complaints and Appeals.

FOR ALL - when it comes to hazards, one specific emergent matter is masking and concerns that some members of the university community will fail to mask or will not wear a mask properly. From the earliest introduction of the masking protocols on campus, the university has not called on anyone to "police" other members of the community with regard to masking. In the last year, we have provided reminders (whenever possible) and we have avoided conflict or confrontation. In advance of Fall, a specific process is being developed with the goal of eliminate any real or perceived need to "police". The approach will involve steps to remind (whenever possible), remove oneself (when the problematic behaviour doesn't correct immediately), and report (that a hazard has been observed to enable follow-up to achieve resolution).

Committing to Wellness

We recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic and returning to the workplace may be stressful for our employees and their families. Uncertainty about COVID-19, along with concerns over personal safety when returning to work, can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in people. If employees need help working through emotions, learning about coping tools and strategies to become more resilient, we encourage employees and members of their households to use the university's **Employee and Family Assistance Program**. EFAP can offer one-on-one counselling, has online tools and resources on how to support mental health, prepare for returning to work, and staying healthy at work and home. To review the guides please go to: <https://pages.e2ma.net/pages/1807892/21230>. In recognition of diverse wellness philosophies and approaches, EFAP has added Indigenous counsellors and workshops for Indigenous faculty and staff that focus on Indigenous perspectives and practices of wellness.

In addition to taking care of one's mental health, it is also important to take care of one's physical health including getting proper and quality nutrition through diet, staying active and physically fit and getting adequate sleep. All of these components affect our overall health, and can reduce the incidence and severity of disease.

NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT

- EFAP offers nutrition information and coaching: <https://wellness.usask.ca/help/efap.php#Accessingservices>
- Eat Well Saskatchewan: a free service for connecting Saskatchewan residents to a registered dietician <https://eatwellsask.usask.ca/>
- Wellness website: <https://wellness.usask.ca/be-well/nutrition.php#EatWell>

SLEEP SUPPORT

- Wellness website articles: <https://wellness.usask.ca/be-well/feeds/rest.php>
- EFAP – can assist if there are work or personal stressors impacting your ability to get a restful, uninterrupted sleep. Try talking to a counsellor who may be able to provide recommendations or your routine, strategies to distress, etc.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Government of Canada Guidelines: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/being-active/physical-activity-your-health.html>
- USask Rec: provides online classes, personal training, etc. <https://rec.usask.ca/index.php>
- Wellness website articles: <https://wellness.usask.ca/be-well/feeds/physical-activity.php>

HOLISITC WELLNESS AND SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

- Spiritual and faith-based website articles:

INDIGENOUS SUPPORTS

- <https://waniskahk.ca/mental-wellness>
- <https://waniskahk.ca/mental-health-therapist-list>
- <https://www.fnha.ca/wellness/wellness-and-the-first-nations-health-authority/first-nations-perspective-on-wellness>
- <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/traditional-healing>
- <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1579274812116/1579708265237>
- <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1576441552462/1576441618847>
- <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>

Other great tools to support you and your family include:

- **Sun Life's Lumino Health** – resources, tools and supports, including virtual health care. Visit <https://wellness.usask.ca/help/virtual-health-care.php> to access.
- **Wellness Strategy**

Addressing Concerns about Returning to Campus for Work

SAFE RETURN WORKPLACE ASSESSMENT – A PROCESS FOR FACULTY, STAFF, GRADUATE STUDENTS, AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS EMPLOYED AT THE UNIVERSITY.

As we continue to address the COVID-19 pandemic, our priority will remain focused on helping our students, faculty and staff maintain their health, safety and dignity. **There are several reasons why a student worker, faculty or staff member may be hesitant about or unable to return to work. To address concerns, USask utilizes** an inclusive and communicative approach, known as the Safe Return Workplace Assessment (Appendix C).

Led by Safety Resources, the Safe Return Workplace Assessment brings together the faculty, staff, or student worker, employee, supervisor/management, Human Resources, Safety Resources and/or other key stakeholders (i.e. Union, Labour Relations, Faculty Relations, Wellness Resources) to openly discuss and assess the risks and concerns of the faculty, staff, or student worker as they prepare to return to the campus workplace. Each case is discussed and evaluated for hazards and risks based upon its unique requirements and details. These requirements and details will facilitate a decision by the area's Dean/Director (or designate) regarding the return to workplace and adaptations or controls that are required.

Any faculty, staff or student worker employee who would like to initiate a Safe Return Workplace Assessment should speak with their supervisor. The supervisor will contact Safety Resources to initiate the process and bring relevant stakeholders together for discussion and evaluation of the details in order to facilitate a decision by the Dean/Director (or designate). Please initiate the process three weeks in advance of the return date to allow for stakeholder scheduling.

Among the many opportunities of facilitated solutions, there may be the opportunity, when there are reasonable grounds to believe the work is “unusually dangerous,” for faculty, staff and student workers to participate in a work refusal process as described in Section 3-31 of The Saskatchewan Employment Act. Should a claim of “unusually dangerous” work be made, please contact Safety Resources for support to the process and to those people involved in the claim.

A visual summary of the Safe Return Workplace Assessment, including contact information for initiating the assessment, is provided in Appendix C.

WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS

We recognize that some people with health concerns and chronic illnesses may be concerned about the potential impact of the COVID-19 virus. If you have been advised to work from home by your doctor please do the following:

1. Talk to your supervisor, advising them of your situation, and explore a work-from-home accommodation. If you are able to work remotely, no further steps may be required.
2. If your duties cannot be performed remotely, and/or reasonable workplace accommodations cannot be provided (in full or in part), you may qualify to access disability/sick leave benefits under the disability plan to which you are covered. However, alternate options and/or reasonable accommodations are to be explored with your supervisor, HR Strategic Business Advisor (SBA) and/or union (if applicable).

We recognize that the familial or caregiving responsibilities of employees may present disruptions to or concerns about returning to work. We endeavor to take a flexible approach to these situations; however, support can be provided by reaching out to your supervisor, HR SBA and/or union (if applicable).

Academic Planning

The academic program planning we need for Fall 2021 is different than where we have been before – Fall 2020, Winter 2021. Indeed, in our last two core terms we announced a “primarily hybrid” approach and then commenced planning to selectively identify what needed to be done in-person in order to achieve learning objectives.

This section of the document was developed in the first instance to provide a guide for academic administrators who, in turn, worked with faculty colleagues to determine a path forward within each college. Earlier versions of an academic planning guide were used from January onward to seek input from groups of senior leaders, students, faculty and staff that have been engaged in advising the PRT throughout the pandemic.

Academic Planning for Fall 2021 included the development of parameters related to space usage and on-going safety protocols. These parameters were developed following an extensive analysis of on-campus spaces and in consultation with the Medical Health Officer. Planning parameters included:

1. a maximum in-person class size of 120 (with a few exceptions made for classes of 150);
2. directions regarding the proportional use of each classroom such that 100% of seats can be used in a classroom; and
3. optimization of the timetable with in-person classes being spread out across available timeslots to the greatest extent possible such that a maximum of 50% of in-person classes are scheduled between primetime of 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday).

Given that a good number of our students are likely to have both in-person and remote classes this Fall, we will need to take into consideration a likely need students will have for study space on campus required specifically in instances when a remote class is scheduled in-between in-person activities.

The transitional return to greater in-person program delivery in Fall comes with significant logistical complexity. Key topics around safety protocols and operational considerations are included in other parts of this document. As has been contemplated elsewhere in the Framework materials, the return of students will introduce the requirement for at least some student support staff members to be present on campus in support of service delivery. With proper balance as a guiding principle, staff colleagues will be added back in a phased manner when their in-person presence is required and when it is safe to do so. The need to restart activities to support student needs includes consideration and planning by USSU and GSA student leadership and their respective areas of operation.

Additional areas of academic planning focus include:

1. DELIVERY MODELS

In planning for Fall, colleges, schools and departments have given consideration to various models of delivery. At one end of a continuum, much experience has been gained this year in the use of remote models – including fully online asynchronous and fully online with synchronous.

FULLY ONLINE — Fully online, asynchronous means that 100% of instructional hours are done online without any scheduled contact for the class as a whole. In some cases, our colleagues have used the model of fully online with synchronous – all instruction is online with some combination of synchronous and asynchronous. For example, focused synchronous periods of the class being together (e.g., tutorials, seminars, office hours, discussions) and all else in an asynchronous mode. Along the continuum, the next model would be hybrid delivery.

HYBRID — In a hybrid model there is a cohort of students who join each class in-person and a second cohort that is online in a synchronous manner for the scheduled class. These two cohorts are instructed at the same time – one in the physical teaching space and one joining synchronously online.

BLENDED — Moving closer to being more fully in-person, there is a model of delivery called “blended” where the entire class would be engaged in-person for portions of the instructional time (e.g., active learning/collaboration) and a portion of the instructional time that would occur on-line (e.g., transmission of content). Using a blended model, colleagues might, for example, use the Monday and Wednesday timeslots for in-person delivery and use the Friday timeslot as an opportunity for students to work independently with posted materials. The difference between hybrid and blended is about whether there are two streams/cohorts of students each engaged in a different type of delivery model for the course (hybrid) or one stream/cohort of students engaged with the instructor in different modes of delivery (sometimes in-person and sometimes on-line).

IN-PERSON — Finally, colleagues are well versed in the fully online approach where 100% of the instructional hours are done in-person. Even in fully in-person delivery, many of our colleagues use the learning management system (i.e., Canvas) for supplemental online activities. It is expected that in Fall 2021, courses will be offered using the full range of delivery models.

2. STUDENTS RETURNING TO CAMPUS

Unlike our typical start-of-year planning, Fall 2021 represents a transition period for the vast majority of our students – whether they are beginning their university studies for the first time, coming onto campus for the first time, or returning to campus after a year away. Given the unique nature of this fall, significant efforts are being put into planning to ensure that students will be well positioned to move back onto campus. Following our planning assumptions, we will pay careful attention to the return of our Indigenous students. In addition, international students will require special focus, particularly those who are joining or returning from their home country. We are well positioned in terms of people and supports available from the university and the relationships we have with other stakeholders who are equally committed to the success of our diverse groups of students.

An element in this transition planning has to do with helpful and clear communication of key messages at the right time so that students have the information they need to make their academic program choices and to develop a robust understanding of what is expected of them – particularly in terms of safety protocols – should they be returning to study on one of our campuses. For the purposes of consistent communication and provision of support, if and when needed, we will ensure that faculty and instructors know where to direct students to find information what is expected of students returning to our campuses.

As has been the case throughout the pandemic, students have wanted and needed different things from the university when it comes to program delivery. This varied set of needs is unlikely to change in Fall 2021. A good proportion of students are eager to return to campus; while many others will continue to want access to remote learning opportunities and will not want to return to campus. It's also the case that a good number of students, particularly in the health sciences, spent the 2020-21 academic year doing at least some in-person academic study and as such, these students will have greater experience of safety protocols involved.

The registration system became viewable on May 7th and students are being encouraged to check the system regularly as they plan their studies for Fall. Registration windows begin to open in June. Students in some colleges will be required to be in-person for Fall to progress their degrees whereas students in other colleges will have access to courses that are to be delivered remotely and courses that are to be delivered in-person. Students who are not comfortable returning to campus in Fall will need to select remotely offered courses.

3. ACCOMMODATIONS

It is anticipated that in a small number of situations, there may be an officially documented reason why a student would not be able to be on-campus in Fall. In those instances, students are encouraged to contact Access and Equity Services (AES) and will be required to go through the standard processes involved in registration with AES. AES will examine the situation and the requirements of the student and the course on a case by case basis to determine if an accommodation is necessary. Please contact Access and Equity Services for assistance at aes@usask.ca or 306-966-7273.

4. COVID-19 CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR POTENTIAL IN-PERSON COURSE INTERRUPTION.

Fall 2021 will be unique as a “transitional” term for the institution. The return of many programs, classes and labs to in-person delivery will call us to be ready to deal with the challenges this term might bring. Accordingly, a document mapping possible contingency plans has been developed with suggestions to both prepare for and to manage unexpected circumstances around students or instructors needing to be away for periods of time due to COVID. This document can be found [here](#).

It is well known and entirely understandable that faculty and instructors have a discomfort or a sensitivity around the disruption caused by any need to pivot from in-person to remote (short period) and back to in-person. As such, the suggestions for contingency planning are designed to build in some easy and well known preparatory steps to minimize distress.

(5) INVESTMENTS INTO CLASSROOM SPACES

Following data gathering regarding the classroom inventory and discussions with colleges, plans are being confirmed in early May about modifications that will be made to some of our classrooms on the Saskatoon campus with a view to improving furniture or layout, upgrading multi-media equipment, and/or increasing wifi access. Alterations and additions to these spaces are being done with a view to improving the functionality of these spaces for program delivery in the Fall 2021 and in the years ahead.

Research Planning

Throughout 2020, the university worked to facilitate as much on-campus and field research activity as possible. Approval processes moved from having multiple stages in the spring and summer, to being almost exclusively the responsibility of Deans or Associate Deans of Research. This approach will continue into Fall 2021, with researchers wanting to work on campus or in the field seeking approvals from their colleges, schools or centres and with central support units (e.g., Safety Resources, Facilities, Maintenance and Custodial, Procurement, Connection Point, Animal Care, etc.) working to facilitate that activity to the greatest extent possible.

For those researchers who researched remotely in earlier stages to make room for those who could not do their research in a remote fashion, we anticipate that expanded activity in the fall will allow more of them who wish to resume on-campus research to safely do so.

Research-related travel will be expected to adhere to direction and guidelines from the federal government. Any exceptional circumstances will require approval of the relevant Dean or Associate Dean of Research, as well as the Pandemic Response Team.

Appendix A: Definitions

CLOSE CONTACT is anyone who, during the infectious period:

- lived with or was within two metres of a person who has COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more of cumulative contact, i.e., multiple interactions for a total of 15 minutes or more, even if a mask was worn during that contact, or
- has had direct contact with bodily fluids of a person who has COVID-19 (e.g., was coughed or sneezed on), or
- provided direct care for a person who has COVID-19, or
- had physical contact with a person who has COVID-19, such as handshake, hugging, kissing or sexual activity, or
- shared items with a person who has COVID-19 such as drinks, personal hygiene items, cigarettes, vapes, lipstick, eating utensils, etc.

COVID-19 VACCINE—includes any of the government approved vaccines. The most up to date information can be found [here](#).

MASK—Face mask, disposable face mask, cloth face mask and/or non-medical mask all refers to a mask that is homemade or purchased. Neck warmers, neck gaiters, bandana, scarves or other clothing not designed to act as a face mask cannot be used as a face mask.

PRT – USask Pandemic Response and Recovery Team.

SASKATCHEWAN HEALTH AUTHORITY is the organization responsible for ensuring the safety of patients, residents, employees, and physicians across the province.

SHARED SPACE – a shared space is anywhere multiple people can work, eat/drink, or exist on campus. They can include, but not limited to:

- Shared university vehicles
- Lunchrooms/areas
- Office work rooms
- Supply rooms/closets
- Multiuser offices
- Washrooms
- Recreational facilities
- Lobbies
- Study spaces
- Libraries
- Hallways
- Laboratories
- Classrooms
- Stairwells
- Bench or seating area
- Elevators
- Common areas or lounges
- Place Riel
- Marquis

Appendix B: Return to Workplace Checklist

Building:		Room number(s):
College/Department:	Unit:	
Completed by:		Date:

It is the responsibility of the faculty or staff member to ensure their office space is safe for work. This includes inspecting the room and workstation and reporting any new or worsening issues that need to be addressed to your supervisor.

Please submit completed checklist to your supervisor.

✓ Workplace Checks		
	All doors and locks are functional, and keys work.	Please contact Facilities at: https://paws.usask.ca/go/facilities to request service for any issues in your personal office space.
	Built in light fixtures are not damaged or burnt out.	
	No mice, other rodent, or insect issues observed.	
	There are no observed water drips, leaks or damage to ceiling, walls, floors, or windows.	
	No mould odours or mould growth is present.	
✓ Workstation Checks		
	Electrical equipment and power cords are in good condition and properly maintained, no burn/ scorch marks or cracks are visible.	Please contact your supervisor with questions or concerns. For immediate health and safety issues, please call: 306-966-8838 or email safetyresources@usask.ca .
	Cords are not exposed to foot traffic.	
	Kitchenette fridges emptied of spoiled foods and ready for use.	
	Office chairs and desks have been returned and are in good working order.	
	Power cords are not daisy chained (connected in series).	
	Work areas and work surfaces are in good condition.	
	Storage is appropriate and aisle ways clear	
	Furniture in is good repair with no visible damage.	
	Floors and the ground are clean and free of debris.	
✓ Other		

COVID-19 GUIDELINES

SAFE RETURN WORKPLACE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

As we continue to address the COVID-19 pandemic, our priority will remain focused on helping our students, faculty and staff maintain their health, safety, and dignity. There are several reasons why a student worker, faculty or staff member may be hesitant about or unable to return to work. To address concerns, USask utilizes an inclusive and communicative approach, known as the Safe Return Workplace Assessment. The following is a visual representation of what that process looks like.

