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Health and Safety Checklist for University Re-opening

July 16, 2021

If the University of Toronto Administration wishes to schedule significant in-person activities while COVID-19 remains a public health concern, a number of conditions must be met before faculty, librarians, staff, and students can have confidence that our campus is safe enough for in-person teaching, learning, and other work.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of steps that a University Administration must take, at a minimum, to reduce the risks associated with university re-openings. These steps, once implemented, will make universities safer for students, staff, and the broader community over the long term.

In terms of return-to-campus planning, the University Administration must:

1. Strongly encourage and support everyone in the University community to get vaccinated while recognizing that vaccines alone are insufficient to protect the community from COVID-19 and must be used in conjunction with several other mitigation strategies as set out below.

2. Design and prepare re-opening plans for all occupied spaces aimed at addressing the reality of airborne transmission of COVID-19 through respiratory particles (“aerosols”) that can travel significant distances (i.e., farther than two-meters) and remain suspended in the air for long periods of time.

3. Proactively and transparently share information with Joint Health and Safety Committees, and campus unions, faculty associations, and other employee representatives, so that the sufficiency and efficacy of the safety precautions that are in place can be assessed. This information should include, at a minimum:
a. The filtration level being achieved in each building;
b. The ASHRAE (The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) ventilation standards (e.g., 62.1-2007) that are being met in each occupied space in the building;
c. Records regarding the measurement of ventilation rates and equivalent air exchange rates (“ACHeq”) in occupied areas of buildings; and,
d. Tests results for Legionella, as well as information on how issues with building water systems are being resolved (i.e., “remediated”).

Click here for the complete Health and Safety Checklist for University Re-opening, compiled by public health experts at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health who serve on the UTFA side of the U of T Central Health and Safety Committee.

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