



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AND DEAN

Memo

To: Academic Staff and Contract Academic Staff
From: Dr. Carol Ann MacGregor, Vice President Academic and Dean *CAMacGregor*
Date: January 25, 2022
Subject: Preparing to Return to Campus

Dear Colleagues,

As many of us prepare to return to campus on February 7th (I'm teaching SOC 417- Sociology of Higher Education on Monday evenings), this memo attempts to bring together in one document information about key policies and resources related, primarily, to in-person instruction. Several Faculties have sent similar messages to their Academic Staff and it is anticipated that you may see one from the Faculty of Arts soon. The information in this memo is based on what we know at present time and is subject to further update if and when we receive new information.

PPE

The university has acquired a quantity of KN95 masks. Masks have been distributed to the campus mailboxes. More are available by email to Tracy MacDonald (tracy.macdonald@uwaterloo.ca) or via RT. We anticipate that we have sufficient masks on hand for all employees working in person for the remainder of the term and will continue to make every effort to secure more through available supply chains as needed. To preserve the supply of masks available for those teaching and working in person, we ask that you do not request additional masks if you are working remotely and that you do not share them with non-employees.

The university placed an order of antigen tests in early December but supply chain issues have resulted in delays in that supply of tests arriving. Should we be able to provide access to tests to members of our community, we will update you accordingly.

Large Classes

At the time of writing we have not received any update to provincial guidelines around classroom capacity. Across the university faculties have made decisions regarding what constitutes "large" for their individual circumstances, with >150, >175, and >200 being common standards. At SJU, two courses have enrollments >150 and will thus remain online until February 28th, with the commitment of providing at least 14 days' notice of changes to the

mode of delivery of these specific remote offerings. Three further courses have enrollments slightly over 100, but can be scheduled in rooms where the room capacity is less than 50%.

Room Capacities

Above and beyond what is formally required by public health directives, SJU is seeking to ensure wherever possible we have put a course section in the largest classroom available during that time slot. This means many courses are already scheduled in rooms that are significantly below their official capacity. As it stands, before today's drop date, nearly half of our course sections are assigned to rooms below 50% capacity and around 75% are in rooms below 60% capacity. If you are concerned about the room you've been assigned please reach out to Christina Mancini who can advise you about other possibilities or constraints for your time slot and class type.

Course Delivery Mode and Students Who Ask to Stay Remote

The delivery mode as originally decided upon and that appears on the Schedule of Classes is considered the required delivery mode for the course. It is the university's contract with students. While we want to have compassion for students in difficult circumstances and know that many students simply did not believe that the university was really going to return in person, University of Waterloo messaging to students has been consistent and unwavering in its emphasis that the term would return to in person at some point and that presence in Waterloo should be planned for.

The university does not ask that you accommodate students who request to take your course remotely for the remainder of the term or endorse that you do so outside of formal accommodation processes. Having contingency plans for possible absences is, of course, a good/necessary idea, but choosing to teach a course in multiple formats leads to a variety of concerns. For instance, since all students are registered in the same course, not separate courses, any difference in how students are experiencing the course leads to possible inequities, which could subsequently lead to grievances. Possible inequities are also a concern for courses with multiple sections: if one instructor offers their course in an unadvertised hybrid mode, then students in other sections that may have also wanted such an option face a disadvantage due to the luck of the draw regarding what section they were assigned. As well, please consider that your decisions can impact your colleagues. More than likely yours is not the only in-person course in a student's schedule; your choices can lead to other instructors feeling pressured to do the same, despite the increased workload and possible complications of such a choice. Although, of course, many students are facing difficult circumstances and choices, they have had, and do have, chances to work with their advisors to plan a path for their continued progress in their degrees.

Managing Instructor Illness/Isolation

It remains vitally important that if you are experiencing symptoms or are advised through the Campus Check In process that you are not cleared to be on campus that you stay home.

If you cannot be present for an in-person class, please inform your students through whatever means you usually contact them (e.g., email/LEARN announcement) and inform them of your plan for the class (e.g. canceled or transitioned to remote). If you've already included this

contingency plan in your course outline, students will have some sense of what to expect but, regardless, please also inform your Department Chair and email Morgan Regehr (morgan.regehr@uwaterloo.ca) so that a paper sign can be added to your classroom door for any students who miss messages you provide.

In the event that you need to make arrangements for a longer term absence and/or are too ill to work, please be in touch with your Department Chair. You know what is best for your course and how to ensure the students can continue to meet the course's goals. If your situation requires you to miss multiple classes, your Department Chair can work with the VPAD's office on a solution that is tailored to the unique context.

If you are ill as a result of COVID-19, you should follow this protocol for reporting your illness: https://uwaterloo.ca/coronavirus/sites/ca.coronavirus/files/uploads/files/employee_protocols_for_covid_jan_20_22.pdf

The provincial program that provides three paid sick/caregiving days to workers who don't already have a greater benefit has been renewed until July 2022. Further information about this program can be found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0/infectious-disease-emergency-leave#eligibility-paid-leave>

Managing Student Illness/Isolation

The university also expects that students honestly answer the campus check in questions and complete self-declarations of illness as appropriate. Further details of what information students have received about this process can be found at:

- <https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/undergraduate/student-support/accommodations-illness-or-extenuating-circumstances>
- <https://uwaterloo.ca/quest/help/students/how-do-i/self-declare-my-illness>
- https://uwaterloo.ca/coronavirus/sites/ca.coronavirus/files/uploads/files/student_protocols_for_covid_jan_20_22.pdf

Faculty members may find more information about viewing self-declared illness forms here:

- <https://uwaterloo.ca/quest/faculty-and-staff/how-do-i-view-self-declared-illnesses>

Classroom Technology

For those of you returning to a classroom for the first time since Spring 2020 and in need of a refresher on campus equipment, please contact IT who will be pleased to assist you. Kindly use the Jira ticket system to request IT support:

<https://uwaterloo.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portal/14>

SJ2 1002, 1004, and 2002 are all equipped with wireless mics to assist with voice projection (if needed) when teaching while masked. Smaller classrooms may not need mics but if you would like one please work with IT.

Protocols for Office Hours

You should continue to hold office hours. You may do so virtually if that is what works best for you and for your students. In person meetings should follow campus policies around masks. A

review of our spaces suggests that 2 metres of distancing is possible in offices but if you have concerns about the configuration of furniture in your space please submit an RT.

All Contract Academic Staff teaching on campus have use of an office that will be occupied by only one person per day.

This document will almost certainly not have addressed every possible contingency or unique circumstance. In addition to consulting [COVID-19 Guidelines for Instructional Space](#) (login required) we encourage you to reach out, as soon as possible, to your Department Chair, the Associate Dean, or VPAD's office with points of concern. The Academic Staff Association also continues to advocate on your behalf.