



June 15, 2020

Dear OISE Community,

Re: OISE Restart and Recovery

The leadership of the University of Toronto has developed a roadmap for moving forward in the context of COVID19 under the umbrella of public health recommendations and provincial government regulation. The Universities [UTogether 2020](#) plans are framed in terms of three guiding principles:

1. Promoting health and safety
2. Advancing academic excellence
3. Meeting the needs of our community

Slowly and Carefully Moving Forward

OISE faculty, staff and students are currently working from home, and we expect that this will continue for quite some time. Even when government regulations allow us to move into a more “open” mode, we expect that most of our services and activities will continue to operate virtually, and that most faculty and staff will work from home. We transitioned to on-line courses in the summer, and we expect that almost all courses will continue to be offered on-line in the fall and winter sessions of 2020-2021.

A key factor in all decisions related to the use of OISE’s buildings is the reality that we will need to maintain social-distancing in order to promote the health and safety of our community, and it is important to understand the implications of these requirements. Maintaining a two-meter distance between individuals means that an OISE elevator may be able to hold only three people at one time, that a seminar room that might have comfortably held 25 students will only be able to hold 4, and the Nexus lounge, which can normally be used for events of over 120, will be unable to hold more than 17 people seated two meters apart. Even when the building becomes more “open,” fulfilling health and safety requirements may mean that we will need to monitor and restrict access to the building (and to each floor), ensure that additional cleaning requirements are being fulfilled, and operate very few in-person services. There are additional challenges associated with the Jackman Institute of Child Study, which will need to fulfill the health and safety requirements that will govern the opening of elementary schools, as well as fulfilling all University of Toronto requirements.

Given these circumstances, moving forward in the context of COVID19 will need to proceed slowly and carefully. Almost all courses and orientation activities will take place on-line, and social-distancing requirements will play a key role in determining how our buildings will operate even when we might be able to open under government regulations. We are currently working with academic department and administrative unit managers on plans for reopening the building, including identifying ways to reduce potential COVID19 exposure by

minimizing the need for on-site and in-person interactions, while continuing to support our key education and research activities. All reopening plans will be communicated to our community after they have been completed and approved by the University. We do not expect that the building will be reopened for some time.

Restarting In-Person Research

Many OISE students and faculty members have been able to adapt their research in order to continue research activities remotely despite the restrictions necessitated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Restarting in-person research activities, including activities taking place within the OISE building, will be a slow and phased process as we work with the University and public health guidelines to minimize risk to our community.

OISE's Deans and Chairs group will serve as the divisional Research Recovery Committee. In anticipation of the gradual resumption of in-person research activities that were curtailed or suspended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee drafted a divisional Plan for Research Recovery and Adaptation. We will be circulating a draft of this plan within the four academic departments for review and feedback.

The Plan is consistent with the School of Graduate Studies' guidance for students and faculty supervisors. Students and faculty supervisors are encouraged to discuss together implications arising from COVID-19 for student research, including but not limited to the need to adapt or change research methods and changes to student research timelines.

Research that can be conducted remotely may continue and is encouraged. Adapting existing research to remote methods may raise new ethical (risk) considerations and require changes to current protocols (e.g., information disclosure and consent, protection of privacy considerations). Researchers should amend ethics protocols and obtain Research Ethics Board approval as needed.

Similarly, developing new research proposals in a pandemic/post-pandemic context should consider remote options to the extent possible, as restrictions on face-to-face interactions and travel, physical distancing requirements, and changes to regulations and requirements based on public health information will have significant impacts on in-person research for the foreseeable future.

Michele Peterson-Badali, Associate Dean Research, International & Innovation, and Normand Labrie, Associate Dean, Programs, will host three drop-in sessions for faculty and students who have questions or comments regarding their research in the context of COVID-19. Sessions have been arranged for June 18th 3-4pm, June 22nd 10-11am, and June 24th 2:30-3:30pm. Details on how to register will shortly be forwarded to students and faculty.

Please be sure to continue to stay up to date with the University of Toronto latest updates by visiting the [UofT Information and Resources website](#). Also, for OISE specific information, please continue to visit the [Deans Updates and Information website](#).

Take care,



Glen A. Jones, Ph.D.
Professor and Dean