



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
OISE | ONTARIO INSTITUTE
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

To: OISE Community
From: Dean Glen Jones
Date: May 14, 2020
Re: Important Update for Fall/Winter and Student-Related Information

2020-21 Fall/Winter Statement

OISE is actively preparing for the Fall-Winter 2020-2021 academic year, along with the University of Toronto, and the School of Graduate Studies, and under the guidance of public health directives. The evolving pandemic is uncertain and as such, OISE is getting ready to make all our courses deliverable in formats that will allow for adjustments as requirements for social distancing change over time. We have two primary goals. The first is to protect the health and well-being of our students, staff and faculty, their family and friends, as well as members of our broader community, including the most vulnerable individuals. The second is to continue to pursue our core values and mission to offer graduate programs of study of the highest quality.

All our courses will be delivered in flexible formats that allow for seamless movement between face-to-face, online, synchronous and asynchronous modalities. Moving forward, the format and modality of the classes will be determined by factors such as the safety of the students and instructors, the nature of the content and context of the class, and the feasibility of students attending class in person. Given the current public health situation, we anticipate there may be changes across the term. However, whether attending in-person, in-class, and/or accessing remotely, all participants will interact at least to some extent with online mediated teaching and learning environments.

While academic requirements and learning objectives are integrally maintained, the format in which courses are delivered may differ depending on the choices made by each individual instructor. OISE is providing instructors and students the support needed to deliver and complete graduate courses of the highest quality in an online environment, with a particular attention to equity and accessibility.

As one of the leading faculties of education in the world, OISE has decades of expertise in online mediated pedagogy combined with a strong focus on equity and accessibility. Building on its expertise in terms of fundamental and applied research and innovation, as well as in the online delivery of graduate courses, a suite of resources is being consolidated to support faculty, students and staff through the [Education Commons](#), the [OISE Library](#) and the departments, including a substantial initiative for [Teaching and Learning Online](#) developed by experts from the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning. Many different state-of-the art teaching and learning platforms are available and supported at OISE and the University of Toronto, some of which, such as PeppeR and

Knowledge Forum, have been developed by OISE world-leading experts, and are precisely designed and/or adapted for graduate education.

Similar to the rest of the University of Toronto, OISE is making a rapid move towards online teaching and learning in its repertoire of pedagogical formats. This is a tremendous change but also an opportunity for us to make a real difference in education by embedding new and emerging technology in pedagogical design and delivery. For all of the graduate student members of our community, your unique perspectives will help OISE grow and learn together. The current situation is not what any of us expected, but using a caring, creative and critical lens, we can make a difference. Your contribution is essential to the successful completion of the coming academic year, and also to advancement of education that will benefit society here and globally.

Updates on courses and other academic issues can be found on the [ORSS website](#).

School of Graduate Studies COVID-10 Form

Faculty at the University of Toronto have been invited by the School of Graduate Studies to contact their supervisees to identify the challenges they face in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as mitigation strategies they may consider. The purpose of the SGS COVID-19 Mentoring Form is to make sure that all students enrolled in research-based programs and degrees (MA, Ph.D., Ed.D.) have had a chance to connect with their supervisor to discuss the challenges they may be facing in the research in the context of COVID-19, and any mitigation strategies they consider. It is also intended to allow the Graduate Chairs to develop a meaningful understanding of the breadth and depth of the various impacts of COVID-19 in their academic progress. Finally, it is intended to document such impacts for each individual student.

Departmental Graduate Student Leadership Meetings

Department Chairs are working with the local departmental graduate student leadership representatives to arrange meetings to hear how students are doing. Associate Dean Programs, Normand Labrie has offered to be available to support these conversations.

Microgrant Program

The Office of the Vice-President, International of UofT has just launched the [COVID-19 Student Engagement Award](#). The COVID-19 Student Engagement Award provides financial support to interested University of Toronto undergraduate and graduate students working in collaboration with one another, including in interdisciplinary teams. Projects that contribute to building and fostering a global community during the COVID-19 pandemic, from across all disciplines, are invited. OISE contributes financially to this new award and OISE students are eligible. Please, take the time to examine the award description and application guidelines.

I wish all of you the very best as we navigate through these challenging times.