COVID-19 Fall Planning Measures: Preparing Departments to Assess Departmentally Booked Instructional Spaces

Following University directives, Physical Resources (PR) has taken preliminary measures to help prepare campus workspaces, including centrally booked classrooms, washrooms and main circulation spaces, for occupancy and use for the 2020 Fall semester. These guidelines are for departments who operate non-centrally owned classrooms and teaching laboratories to begin independent assessment and planning. Physical Resources can be contacted for support and consultation.

While these instructional spaces were traditionally departmentally managed and scheduled, during these unprecedented times, University directives require all face-to-face courses and course components be scheduled centrally. This is critical to ensure that in-person interactions are tracked and scheduled to ensure campus flows minimize person-to-person interactions while moving about campus.

The physical space will be just one aspect of developing safe practices for these spaces. A website dedicated to Return to Campus preparations will be online shortly at [www.uoguelph.ca/COVID19/return](http://www.uoguelph.ca/COVID19/return). Signage guidelines will be posted on that site when it is live. In the meantime, the COVID-19 Signage guidelines can be found on the Physical Resources website [www.pr.uoguelph.ca/](http://www.pr.uoguelph.ca/).

The below guidelines complement scheduling and new policies by outlining strategies for departmentally booked instructional spaces in a COVID-19 environment. Signage is a key component and all the signs referred to here are outlined in detail in the COVID-19 Signage Guidelines as mentioned above. Alterations for these rooms will depend on their program and function as well as how instruction has been modified. Many of the measures below can be put in place with planning and minimal expenditure in the short term.

Two main concepts for improving the safety of physical spaces:

- Ensure **physical distancing** is made as intuitive as possible and reinforced in the physical environment through layout, barriers and/or signage.
- Safe practices concerning **hygiene and sanitization** is reinforced with signage and supported within the physical environment.
  - Enhanced cleaning measures are posted to the physical resources website - [www.pr.uoguelph.ca/what-we-do/custodial-services](http://www.pr.uoguelph.ca/what-we-do/custodial-services).
  - Custodial Services will be doing a daily clean on any spaces booked through the registrar’s office.
Departments must ensure students and faculty are aware they need to wipe down all touch points in their own work / seating area at the beginning of their session. Standard Signage has been developed and is explained further below.

Physical Distancing Strategies

Reduce Densities

The number of people within a physical space needs to be reduced. This will reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Faculty and students are required to wear face coverings (e.g., non-medical masks, face shields). In lab settings, additional protective measures, including personal protective equipment, may also be required. Additional classroom safety protocols have been distributed to department chairs.

- Ensure all students and the instructor have a desk or area where they can be two metres apart from one another. Eliminate desks that are face-to-face. Try to stagger students in rows to allow for easier circulation.

![Diagram No. 1](image_url)
• Physical Barriers can be installed to increase capacities where it makes operational and fiscal sense. Examples such as Plexiglass or Lexan barriers between lab benches, equipment or zones within instructional spaces maybe warranted. Rough budget figure for these screens range from a $200 minimum and upward per tabletop station installed depending on complexity and size. Larger screens that sit on floor on feet or castors are typically $300 (36"W x 66"H) or greater. Contact Physical Resources to investigate if this may be appropriate to your space and budget. Below see some of the typical sizes and barriers but there are many more materials, sizes and fastening options that PR can assess and facilitate ordering and install.

Above: Rm. 1004 Photo of Sign 1-CHK to show approved computer terminals

Left: Illustration of Use of Sign 2-CRS to show how to use Cross. Station looks appropriate but isn’t due to proximity of Teaching Podium.

THORNBROUGH, Bldg. 159, Rm. 1004 Example of Signage Application.
• In rooms with **moveable furniture** use 10 square meters (108 square feet) as a conservative area per person as an early to guide for planning. Take the room area in square meters (or square feet) and divide by 10 square meters (or 108 square feet) to determine an approximate area per person.
  
  o You can request floor plans or area calculations through the PR work order desk.
• For a more detailed analysis on rooms with moveable furniture see example and diagram below for typical spacing.
• Stack and/or remove furniture (where moveable) or sign areas on built-in furniture where work areas need to be eliminated to preserve physical distancing. If storage is required, find it within your departmental assigned space, then contact PR if there are no options.

• Add safe practice protocol signage to a prominent place at the entry to the instructional space with Safe Learning Spaces (Sign 14-SLS).

• Consider waiting and queuing areas outside of instructional space. Add signage to indicate where to wait while maintaining physical distancing outside of classroom. To calculate the distance for a queuing line, use the formula: (no. of students – 1) * 2m (6ft). You can adjust the line from being straight to accommodate more students, but you must maintain the 2 meters physical distancing between each person. If the corridors are narrow and/or classrooms in use are close to one another consider staggering schedules. Signage for queuing is Wait Here (Sign...
4-WH-Y) or (4-WH-R). Use this sign for the first 1-3 positions in line then if needed add red duct tape at appropriate 2m spacing beyond.

- Shared seating in waiting areas: Ensure users can maintain two metres between seats. This typically means eliminating every second seat on large cushioned bench seating. Apply the **Check Mark** (Sign 1-CHK) only if needed to indicate where users can sit. **Cross Sign** (Sign 2-CRS) is also available to indicate where not to sit but should be used sparingly in the rare occasions the check mark doesn’t work. If chairs can be moved to the side and stacked, then have the cross sign applied to the stack to conserve the number of stickers needed to be used.

- Consider circulation spaces within the room (i.e., places people use when moving from one area to another like corridors, aisleways and paths) to separation and organized flow within space. In some cases, a one-way directional policy in these spaces with **One Way Sign** (Sign 10-OW) applied to floor or wall, may be necessary. Refer to Diagram No. 1 and Image No. 1 above for an example.

While departments are conducting their own self-assessments, contact the PR work order desk for any assistance, recommendations and/or to order and install physical distancing material such as screens and signage, at: [www.pr.uoguelph.ca/submit-work-request](http://www.pr.uoguelph.ca/submit-work-request).

**Hygiene / Cleaning**

Disinfecting surfaces regularly will be essential to reducing/controlling the spread of viruses. As a best practice, students and instructors should never assume a surface has been disinfected between use. When using common items and areas, remind students to disinfect the space or item before using it, rather than assuming it has been disinfected by the previous user.

- Have supplies on hand for frequent disinfectant cleaning of common areas such as meeting rooms, copier, printers and supply areas. Some common items, while supplies remain available, may be ordered from the stockroom [https://www.pr.uoguelph.ca/customer-services/stockroom](https://www.pr.uoguelph.ca/customer-services/stockroom)
- Reduce clutter and underused items to make cleaning as simple and straightforward as possible.
- Make hand sanitizer available in highly visible areas and add signage to encourage appropriate personal hygiene for hands.
- Place consistent onus on ‘incoming’ person so it is a consistent expectation and responsibility remains directly with user, not dependent on any previous user.

**Signage**
University branded COVID-19 signs and decals are available through the stockroom as outlined in the COVID-19 Signage Guidelines. Many common signs are available for order (subject to availability of decal inventory) or are 8½” x 11” ready for printing by department. To maintain the University brand and achieve cost-efficiencies, do not order generic COVID-19 signs from external vendors. When ordering signs from the stockroom, please start conservatively to manage available supply and reduce unnecessary expense.

If your area requires signage not included in the COVID-19 Sign Inventory, you can design one by following these steps;

1. Email brand@uoguelph.ca with information about the sign you need.
2. The Return-to-Campuses steering committee may identify your sign as one that is needed in many spaces. If that is the case, design assistance will be provided.
3. Consult this document for design guidelines.
4. You can access icons and patterns on the University’s Digital Asset Management tool.
5. Create a draft of the sign.
6. Email your draft to brand@uoguelph.ca.
7. Your draft will be reviewed by representatives from the Return-to-Campuses steering committee.
8. If any revisions are required, update your design.
9. Send your final design to brand@uoguelph.ca and print.

Adhesive decals should be put on surfaces with a durable finish (e.g., doors, plastic laminate, glazing and NOT painted drywall) so they can be peeled off with no damage and minimal issue. Floor decals should be used sparingly and watched for curling edges as they may become trip hazards. If flooring is smooth tile, consider adding signage to walls, decals will adhere well to carpet tile but not as well as to smooth tile surfaces. If printing your own signs and posting please follow the rules to adhere to durable surfaces first. If painted drywall surfaces are your only choice use painter’s tape or push pins to minimize damage.

Standard Signage can be printed directly and/or ordered by contacting the Stockroom, see COVID-19 Signage Guidelines for chart of what is available in which format. Go to https://www.pr.uoguelph.ca/customer-services/stockroom to order applicable signs. Refer to Sign no. to order.

For Questions or Additional Information:

Please contact the PR work order desk, https://www.pr.uoguelph.ca/submit-work-request, if your department requires assistance in reviewing and implementing these guidelines. PR is here to serve as a resource and will address questions as quickly as possible.