Arts and Humanities Return to Campus Plan

Executive Summary
This document is to serve as a guide for faculty, graduate students and staff to be able to return to campus. It is the expectation that this plan will require revision as conditions change or unintended consequences reveal themselves.

Goals
Goal 1: Safety of our People
Goal 2: Fulfilling our societally critical missions
Goal 3: Safeguarding our reputation

Our primary goal is the safety of our people. This includes both their actual safety and their perception of being safe. Ultimately, reducing the risk of person-to-person transmission of COVID-19 will be the focus going forward and the considerations below are aligned with the Universities University’s recommendations on how to do so.

The first level of protection reduces risk by limiting the number of people present in the workplace at any one time. Working remotely remains an option for those faculty, staff and students who can do so without a negative impact on their work. The fewer people on campus the better because it minimizes the overall risk to people who are required to be on campus to complete their work.

Completing the Return to Work Questionnaire available on the Western HR website is mandatory for each visit to campus regardless of the duration.

Where physical distancing isn’t possible, engineering controls, including the installation of plexiglass barriers to separate people, will provide an important second level of protection. Forward-facing locations where students, faculty or other members of our community enter office spaces will be the priority for most Departments.

The third level of protection uses administrative controls such as rules and guidelines to keep people physically separated. Signage and posters are being installed across campus for elevators, dining areas, shared spaces and washrooms, to name a few examples. Simultaneous sharing of closed office spaces is not recommended or supported by the Faculty. Rotating schedules and assignments will be developed by Departments for shared spaces where applicable.

When the first three levels of protection aren’t enough to control people’s risk, the fourth and final level of protection is PPE. Non-medical masks, when worn properly, can reduce the spread of one’s own respiratory droplets. Supplies are limited and those responsible for procurement are managing orders on a case by case basis as the return to campus phases move forward. Each Department will be required to centralize orders with their administrative support staff.

The expectation is that faculty, staff and students will take responsibility to ensure that they follow the guidelines within this framework to keep themselves and our community healthy and safe.
Arts and Humanities Return to Campus Plan – Distribution DRAFT

This document is to serve as a guide for faculty, graduate students and staff to be able to return to campus. It is the expectation that this plan will require revision as conditions change or unintended consequences reveal themselves.

When permitted, and in accordance with the staged return being conducted by the University, the plan for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities to return to campus in order to serve students, partners and stakeholders will follow a handful of guiding principles developed to achieve the following goals.

If anything in this plan conflicts with Federal, Provincial or University guidelines or recommendations related to COVID-19, those guidelines or recommendations shall prevail.

**Goals**

**Goal1:** Safety of our People  
**Goal2:** Fulfilling our socially critical missions  
**Goal3:** Safeguarding our reputation

Our primary goal is the safety of our people. This includes both their actual safety and their perception of being safe.

**Principles**

**Subsidiarity:** Decisions are best made by those closest to the coal face, as long as these decisions are also local in impact.

**Mental Habits:**
We must adapt to a safety mindset that aligns with the current situation. New habits and behaviors will need to be developed and formed through communication, education and persistent reinforcement.

**Scientific Principles:**
In the current pandemic we must proceed BOTH by minimizing the probability of transmission between people AND, in the event that this is ineffective, at least ensuring that people are exposed to as few other people as possible.

*Minimizing Probability of Transmission:*
We can minimize the probability of transmission with the right physical distancing, the right protective equipment, the right cleaning protocols, and the immediate and frank disclosure of information.

*Minimizing transmission through individuals clustering together:*
By keeping to well defined ‘tracks’ and minimizing the use of social space we can reduce the number of distinct individuals to whom we physically come in contact. This will reduce the potential for a large outbreak and make contact tracing easier in the event that this is needed. Much of the remainder of the plan is designed around this objective.

Openness and Honesty:

We must be open about our health status and honest with ourselves if we feel we are not safe to go to work because we are feeling ill. Contact tracing requires an honest recollection of who we came into contact with, where and when – and this is facilitated by regular, minimal, and unvarying routines.

General Planning

Each member of the Faculty is expected to have unique personal situations that will impact their willingness and/or timing of their eventual return to campus. Being flexible to the needs of our members as well as keeping Goal 1 (Safety of our People) the priority, there are several areas to address as we return. Ultimately, reducing the risk of person-to-person transmission will be the focus going forward and the considerations below are aligned with the University’s recommendations on how to do so.

1. The first level of protection reduces risk by limiting the number of people attending the workplace. Western’s phased return does just that, allowing units/faculties to permit employees who must return to campus to have a gradual, rotational, and periodic presence on campus.

   o Completing the Return to Work Questionnaire available on the Western HR website is mandatory for each visit to campus regardless of the duration.
   o The initial stages of return will be voluntary and occur over the course of the summer with the intention of ramping up into the fall.
   o For members with underlying health concerns, including mental health conditions, accommodations may require the support of Rehab Services. If that is the case, you should work with your HR Supervisor to navigate that support.
   o Working remotely remains an option for those faculty, staff and students who can do so without a negative impact on their work. This approach falls under the assumption that less people on campus minimizes the overall risk to those who are required to be on campus to complete their work.
   o Time on campus should be limited to a level deemed necessary to complete one’s work.

2. Where physical distancing isn’t possible, engineering controls like installing plexiglass barriers to separate people are an important second level of protection. Western is reviewing several areas of campus where installing plexiglass will help prevent the spread of the virus.
The Faculty will be working with Facilities Management (FM) to have each high-traffic area assessed for proper traffic patterns through areas as well as physical barrier requirements. This work is being prioritized by FM according to the Phased Return to Campus developed by the University.

Forward-facing locations where students, faculty or members of our community enter office spaces will be the priority for most Departments.

Special consideration be given to the specific requirements of the work being done in studio spaces, labs or general-use classrooms.

Faculty and staff will be expected to continuously clean high touch areas and the immediate area surrounding their working environment. Disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer will be made available to complete cleaning of these surfaces after use. Examples of high-touch surfaces are electronics, keyboards, office equipment, and studio equipment.

Physical distancing measures are expected to be observed in all areas and buildings of the Faculty. Signage has been posted near elevators, washrooms and other common spaces regarding the correct safety measures that should be taken in each instance.

FM will be supplying additional signage and floor stickers to remind everyone of social distancing requirements and correct traffic flows.

3. The third level of protection uses administrative controls such as rules and guidelines to keep people physically separated. Western is working with a global architectural and space planning firm to inform our guidelines, signage, and wayfinding. Signage and posters are being installed across campus for places like elevators, dining areas, shared spaces and washrooms.

Common areas like kitchenettes or lunchrooms and shared equipment like coffee machines will not be available for the foreseeable future since available resources will be used to focused on classrooms, restrooms and other high touch surfaces.

In an effort to manage the overall capacity for workspaces, a scheduling system will be made available. The intention of the scheduling application is for users to be able to book time and space when required to complete their work on campus. The schedule will be monitored at a department level to ensure that traffic does not exceed the capacity recommended for each space.

Simultaneous sharing of closed office spaces is not recommended or supported by the Faculty. Keyboards, desks, computer mice, chairs and other high-touch surfaces are considered areas of risk for transmission by public health experts.

Graduate student space, already in short supply, will be further reduced which will create pressure on availability.

There is a high possibility that the Faculty will not be able to facilitate the lending of equipment out to students. The equipment is considered high risk due to contact with a person's face (camera) or proximity to their mouth (microphone). The Faculty will continue to seek guidance on this topic from the Health and Safety experts on campus.
4. When the first three levels of protection aren't enough to control people’s risk, the fourth and final level of protection is PPE. Non-medical masks, when worn properly, can reduce the spread of one’s own respiratory droplets.

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is being procured centrally and is available to order through the Dean’s Office. Hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes and—until University supplied non-disposable face coverings are available—disposable face masks will be ordered based on the total number of occupants that are identified to be on campus regularly.
- Supplies are limited and those responsible for procurement are managing orders on a case-by-case basis as the return to campus phases move forward. Each Department will be required to centralize orders with their administrative support staff.
- Western requires the use of non-medical masks/face coverings in the presence of others and in common and shared spaces on campus. These act as a personal hygiene measure to protect others from potential infectious droplets. If you have any questions or concerns about face coverings, please discuss them with your leader/supervisor.
- Members may bring their own from home if they feel more comfortable with that rather than wearing a University-supplied face covering.

**Local Considerations**

**Common Areas**

- Elevators
  - Occupancy of elevators will determine usage (pending assessment)
- Stairwells
  - Can be used to go up, and down.
  - Individuals descending will have priority. *(We may require signage for this)*
- Copier Areas
  - Departments to ensure that sanitizer and disinfectant wipes are kept close to each copier so that users can clean their hands and the machine after each use.
- Mail Room(s)
  - Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to be provided for users accessing mailboxes.
    - Stevenson, Lawson Secure Mail Room
    - University College Dean’s Office
    - WIRB *(need more information on where mail is delivered)*
  - Directional signage will indicate that only person is to be in this room at a time. *(Pending Assessment)*
  - Directional signage will be placed on floors in hallways to ensure proper physical distancing in high traffic areas. *(Pending Assessment)*
- Lunchroom(s) – to remain closed until September 1 pending review
  - UC 4th Floor
  - WIRB – (location?)
- Stevenson – (location?)
- Lawson – (location?)
- Visual Arts – (location?)

- Kitchenettes, Coffee Stations, other beverage or food points etc.
  - These areas, **when opened for use** – users are required to keep these tidy and to wash hands thoroughly before use.
  - When finished, users are required to clean common touch surfaces such as counter handles and taps with a soapy cloth or a disinfectant wipe.

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - While not mandatory, if others are present in corridors, it is advisable to use a mask covering your nose and mouth. The exceptions are when you are in the confines of a room in which you are the sole occupant or when you can’t wear a face covering for medical reasons.
  - Hand sanitizer and wipes will be placed throughout the buildings. Please take only what you need since supplies are short. Stock shortages should be reported to your Departmental support staff.

**Shared Office Spaces**

- Graduate Student Offices
  - The risk of transmission of COVID-19 is believed to be higher the longer one spends in an enclosed space with others who may be infected, even when one is physically distant from them. Limiting time in such an environment will mitigate the risk.
  - Nevertheless, based on maximum occupancy rates (pending assessment), graduate students may share a physical space on a rotating basis. More clearly, if two people share an office, they are expected to limit use to their own designated area and belongings within the shared space. No sharing of phones, keyboards, etc. is permitted.
  - Exceptions may occur where students are otherwise related and/or share a living space off campus. These scenarios will be handled on a case by case basis by the Department.
  - Schedules are to be determined by Departments with respect to available spaces.
  - High-touch surfaces like door handles, light switches, equipment etc. should be cleaned with disinfectant wipes before and after each use.

- Faculty Offices
  - If faculty decide to volunteer their offices to their students, please expect to do so for the duration of the term. Offices are considered single occupant spaces so rotating a schedule is not permitted at this time.
  - High touch surfaces like door handles, light switches, equipment etc. should be cleaned with disinfectant wipes before and after each use.

- Department Offices
  - Department offices will be a focus of building assessments to determine maximum occupancy and optimal traffic flows.
  - Physical barriers will be put in place where recommended by the assessors in addition to other PPE.
These high traffic areas will need to be cleaned regularly using the available supplies and low inventory on stock of PPE should be reported immediately to the Department support staff who can, in turn, report to the Dean’s Office.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Development of a PPE check list. We will need to identify areas in each Department that should have stock of sanitizer and wipes. i.e. photocopiers, front desks, meeting rooms etc. A designate or designates will need to continuously monitor supplies to ensure that we are adequately stocked.

Other

- Every building we have will require an assessment of capacity for decisions to be made regarding when and how to permit occupants or conduct operations. (PENDING)
- Computer labs are currently configured to allow for as many computers as possible. Physical barriers and reconfiguration or both will be a part of the solution for labs.
- Visual Arts Studio Spaces
  - Equipment sharing (tools, easels etc)
  - High volume traffic rotation
  - Cleaning in between classes
  - PPE requirements in addition to, or in coordination with existing protective equipment
  - Computer labs

Visual Arts is the highest priority area within the FAH due to complexity and requirements.

- Many of our buildings are shared across multiple departments/schools. The total occupancy of our buildings should be viewed as cumulative since washrooms, stairwells hallways etc. are shared. Solutions for sharing those spaces will need to reflect that reality as opposed to managing space isolated within a Department.