

To: Deans, Associate Deans Research and Principal Investigators

From: Alice Aiken, Vice-President Research and Innovation
Marty Leonard, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Date: Tuesday, July 20, 2021

RE: Grad students and access to lab spaces

At the first of two virtual Student Town Halls this morning, several graduate students expressed concerns about being unable to gain appropriate access to their lab spaces to perform required research.

Addressing concerns from graduate students should be an immediate and urgent priority for all researchers on campus, given the potential impact on our students' academic progression.

Immediate priority should be given to graduate student returns in any lab spaces where these returns are not already underway.

Our lab spaces are generally very safe from a COVID perspective, with over 160 of them receiving thorough assessments through the formal R2R process. There are only a small number of research spaces where pre-existing ventilation concerns have been identified and where special consideration is required. Our teams in Facilities Management and Environmental Health & Safety are already working directly with these researchers. In all other cases, lab spaces are ok to reoccupy.

Please keep in mind that, until the province enters Stage 5 of reopening plan, general COVID precautions should remain in place. Among them:

- Open windows where possible to enhance ventilation
- Practice physical distancing where practical
- Use face masks when physical distancing is not practical and where masks do not pose an additional risk (such as when working with pyrophoric materials, arc-flash concerns, etc.)
- Maintain diligent hand hygiene practices
- Clean shared equipment frequently
- Avoid entry to the lab if feeling unwell or showing any COVID symptoms
- Being mindful to remain diligent of these controls even when on breaks, etc.
- Routine asymptomatic COVID-19 testing is encouraged
- Full two-dose immunization is encouraged

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Alice Aiken
Vice-President Research and Innovation

Marty Leonard
Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies