



OFFICE *of* THE VICE-PRESIDENT

FINANCE & OPERATIONS

To: ULT
From: Sharmilla Rasheed, Vice-President (Finance & Operations)
Date: September 30, 2021
Subject: Answers to your COVID-19 questions: Information to support operations

Dear ULT members,

With the fall semester now well underway and more faculty and staff returning to our campuses and facilities, I wanted to help clarify a few points that have been asked in different leadership meetings. I apologize in advance for the length of this message but there is a lot of information to cover. Below is a summary of the information contained in this communication. The bullets are linked to the relevant sections for your convenience:

- [Rapid testing not to be used for fully vaccinated individuals](#)
- [Proof of vaccination: Enforcement and expectations](#)
- [Rapid testing compliance: Partially vaccinated or exempt](#)
- [Rules for accessing U of G grounds and field trips](#)
- [Visitors, volunteers and contractors](#)
- [COVID-19 testing on campus](#)
- [Reporting positive cases](#)
- [Safety measures in the workplace: Masks](#)
- [Communicating with the U of G community](#)

Please share this information with your teams; the more communication channels we use, the more informed and more confident our community feels. As University leaders, we rely on you to be one of our most influential communication channels.

Rapid testing not to be used for fully vaccinated individuals

Day-to-day life during a pandemic is stressful and we appreciate that our community members want to keep themselves and their loved ones safe.

Several colleges and other units have made inquiries about offering regular rapid testing to all those coming to campus and our facilities, including testing individuals who are fully vaccinated, as a way of reassuring our community members of their safety.

While we appreciate the intent, the University will not permit this reassurance approach to rapid testing for the following reasons:

1. The Ministry of Health provides U of G with a defined supply of free rapid test kits. The University is prioritizing these kits for individuals with exemptions and those who are awaiting their second shot as these groups are at the highest risk for COVID-19. Allowing that supply of kits to be accessed by the broader U of G community is detrimental to this high-risk group and in turn the University as a whole
2. There is a significant University resource requirement to implement and administer the rapid testing program. Extending the program to all faculty, staff and students coming to campus is not feasible.
3. If units choose to purchase kits themselves, it creates an inequitable environment across the University. Not all units have funds for such testing and not all employees are associated with a unit requesting this approach. Such unit-based programs could create an inequitable sense of “haves” vs. “have nots”. The University has its centrally organized rapid testing program for the groups identified above. Unit funds are considered part of the overall University budget and should not be used to run rapid testing programs.
4. The [Ministry of Health](#) does not recommend rapid testing for individuals who are fully vaccinated as such individuals are more likely to get false positive test results. The University will follow the MoH’s direction for rapid testing.

Fully vaccinated individuals who are symptomatic should go for PCR testing rather than rapid testing.

Proof of vaccination: Enforcement and expectations

The University of Guelph’s COVID-19 Vaccination Policy has been in effect since Sept. 7, 2022. Full vaccination is required for those coming to our campuses and facilities through the winter semester.

All U of G faculty and staff – including those who are working remotely - are expected to upload proof of vaccination or an exemption request through the [University’s Vaccination Proof and Exemption system](#). This information helps us better understand the vaccination rate in our community.

Exemptions

The University will provide faculty, staff and students with exemptions on medical and other grounds protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code. Those who are denied an exemption are expected to comply with the University’s COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. Individuals waiting for a response to their exemption request are not permitted to access U of G campuses or University-managed facilities. Follow-up communications have been sent to these individuals, letting them know they must be fully vaccinated if they intend to come to our campuses or managed-facilities.

Compliance and enforcement

Students - We are cross referencing records to identify students who are registered for in-person learning and who have not uploaded proof of vaccination or who do not have an approved exemption. We have reached out to these students with reminders about complying with the Vaccination Policy. Those who are not in compliance by Oct. 15 will be de-registered.

Staff and faculty - Staff and faculty who are not in compliance with the Vaccination Policy will be placed on an unpaid leave. We have followed up with all those who have not yet provided their vaccination status. We are also following up with those who were denied an exemption. Managers and supervisors are permitted to ask individual employees if the employee is in compliance with the University's COVID-19 Vaccination Policy but may not ask for proof of vaccination.

	Required to work on-site	Currently working remotely based on operational plan*
Fully vaccinated	Access the U of G Vaccination Proof and Exemption system and upload your proof of vaccination. You are permitted to access U of G locations provided you complete the U of G COVID-19 Daily Screening Tool and follow all COVID-19 safety protocols.	Access the U of G Vaccination Proof and Exemption system and upload your proof of vaccination.
Partially vaccinated	<p>Access the U of G Vaccination Proof and Exemption system and record your vaccination status. You must be fully vaccinated by Oct. 15.</p> <p>From now until Oct. 15, you are permitted to access U of G locations provided you participate in rapid testing, complete the U of G COVID-19 Daily Screening Tool and follow all COVID-19 safety protocols.</p> <p>After Oct. 15, until you become fully vaccinated you will be placed on unpaid leave for the portion of time you are expected to be on-site.</p>	<p>Access the U of G Vaccination Proof and Exemption system and record your vaccination status.</p> <p>You must be fully vaccinated or have an approved exemption before you return to working on-site.</p>
Unvaccinated with an approved exemption	You are permitted to access U of G locations provided you participate in rapid testing, complete the U of G COVID-19 Daily Screening Tool and follow all COVID-19 safety protocols.	When you return to work on-site, you will be permitted to access U of G locations provided you participate in rapid testing, complete the U of G COVID-19 Daily Screening Tool and follow all COVID-19 safety protocols.
Unvaccinated without an approved exemption	<p>You are not permitted to access U of G locations and will be placed on an unpaid leave.</p> <p>If you choose to become vaccinated, please refer to the "Partially vaccinated" and "Fully vaccinated" sections of this chart.</p>	You must be fully vaccinated before you return to working on-site.

The University is exploring further enforcement methods for students, staff and faculty.

To protect our community members' privacy, policy compliance will be managed centrally. Instructors and managers will not be provided with a list of students' or employees' vaccination status.

If you have concerns that a specific individual is not in compliance with the Vaccination Policy:

- For situations involving a **student**: please send an email to r2w@uoguelph.ca for follow up.
- For situations involving **faculty or staff**: speak to your HR or FASR representative.

Rapid testing compliance: Partially vaccinated or exempt

Faculty, staff and students with an approved exemption or who are partially vaccinated must participate in U of G's [rapid testing program](#). Once an individual is fully vaccinated against COVID-19, that person is no longer required to do rapid testing.

Those participating in rapid testing must upload their test results to the University's rapid test reporting system. The University will monitor this system to ensure that individuals are testing on a regular basis and will follow up with those who are not regularly submitting test results.

Rules for accessing U of G grounds and field trips

U of G's COVID-19 Vaccination Policy applies to University of Guelph campuses and University-managed facilities - not just our buildings, but our grounds as well.

The policy also applies to all in-person learning activities (regardless of location). This means students participating in field trips must be fully vaccinated or have an approved exemption.

Visitors, volunteers and contractors

Visitors, volunteers and contractors must be fully vaccinated to access our campuses and University-managed facilities. These individuals must be vaccinated and attest to their vaccination status through U of G's COVID-19 Daily Screening tool. Departments are required to ensure guests they host on campus comply with the University's Vaccination Policy.

More information on expectations for visitors, volunteers and contractors will be available soon.

COVID-19 testing on campus

Student Health Services offers [on-campus appointments](#) for COVID-19 testing to those who are symptomatic and to those who are asymptomatic but who have been exposed to a positive case. Appointments can be booked by calling 519-824-4120, Ext. 52131.

Faculty, staff and students who are partially vaccinated and awaiting their second dose and those with approved exemptions are required to participate in U of G's [rapid COVID-19 testing program](#).

Reporting positive cases

U of G's [Case Reporting page](#) lists confirmed positive COVID-19 cases where the individual has been at a U of G facility within the last 14 days.

Through contact tracing, Public Health will directly connect with any individuals deemed to be high-risk contacts. If Public Health determines there is a significant health and safety risk to the

University community, the University will be provided with directives and will take appropriate steps.

If a student or an employee informs you that they have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, please direct the individual to call the COVID-19 call centre at 519-824-4120, Ext. 53906. This starts the intake process, allowing U of G to provide the individual with supports and to coordinate next steps with Public Health.

Safety measures in the workplace: Masks

As a reminder, masks are required indoors at U of G campuses and managed-facilities. This includes while delivering lectures and while working in cubicles. For the limited scenarios in which masks can be removed while indoors, please review the [Masks section](#) of our Safety Practices webpage.

Masks are also required outdoors when physical distance cannot be maintained. This may include certain outdoor events.

Communicating with the U of G community

COVID-19 information is shared with the U of G community through the following channels. Please remind those in your areas that these channels are available to them and ensure you are sharing COVID-19 messages with them.

- [COVID-19 Update emails](#) sent regularly to all faculty, staff and student uoguelph.ca addresses
- [U of G's Intranet](#) – U of G's main information page for all faculty, staff and students. COVID-19 Updates are also posted here.
- [U of G's COVID-19 website](#) – quick access to information about U of G's response to the pandemic. All of the links below are accessible through this site.
 - [COVID-19 Screening Form](#) – tool that must be completed daily before coming to campuses or managed-facilities
 - [Case Reporting page](#) – information on cases at U of G facilities within the last two weeks
 - [Practices page](#) – information on safety protocols at U of G
 - [Spaces page](#) – information on expectations for safely navigating University spaces
 - [Vaccination FAQs](#) – answers to questions about U of G's Vaccination Policy and linked to the Vaccination Proof and Exemption system
 - [Protocols and Guidelines](#) – access to guiding documents used in U of G's response to the pandemic and a list of Return to Campus subcommittees and their membership

Thank you, as always, for your support in helping us navigate the challenges of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Sharmilla Rasheed
Vice-President (Finance and Operations)