



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Office of the Head
Department of Educational Studies**

Faculty of Education
Education Centre at Ponderosa Commons
6445 University Boulevard
Vancouver B.C. V6T 1Z2
CANADA

Tel: 604-822-5374

Fax: 604-822-4244

February 3, 2022

Dear EDST Members:

Re: Return to in-person instruction on campus starting from Monday, February 7, 2022.

UBC [announced](#) a return to in-person classroom teaching as of February 7, 2022. Accordingly, starting from that date, “courses at UBC will return to the format in which they were originally scheduled. If there are exceptions, Faculties and instructors will communicate them to students.”

In this letter you will find information and contact details regarding the conditions under which return to campus takes place. You will also find information and resources regarding EDST’s *specific support to instruction during Winter Term 2* (Refer to page 3). This support – which has been instituted for all EDST-related courses expected to be taught in-person, on campus – represents one important component of the Department’s commitment to ensuring the health and safety of instructors, staff, and students returning to campus. Please familiarize yourself with the contents of this letter, and do access the various hyperlinked supplementary information. These links should be considered as part and parcel of the overall framework regarding the conditions under which the return on campus will take place starting from Monday.

Returning to Campus

(Source: [UBC Broadcast](#), January 26, 2022)

In anticipation of the return to in-person classroom teaching, UBC “has put in place multiple layers of protection to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in response to information on the progression of the pandemic. Below are the safety measures now in place on our campuses:

- All members of our community are required to follow the COVID-19 Campus Rules. More details can be found at: <https://srs.ubc.ca/campusrules>
- All students, faculty, staff, and others must assess themselves daily for COVID-19 symptoms prior to engaging in in-person UBC activities on our campuses, and must stay home if they are experiencing relevant symptoms. Access the self-assessment tool at <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>
- All members of our community are required to wear masks in public indoor spaces on campus and it is strongly recommended that masks are of a medical grade. You can learn about different types of masks at <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks>. For those who need masks, they will be made available for members of the UBC community. More details can be found at <https://srs.ubc.ca/masks> and <https://ok.ubc.ca/covid19/health-safety/masks/>
- Updated COVID-19 Safety Plans are in-place for the return to the majority of in-person instruction. More information about safety measures can be found at <https://srs.ubc.ca/covid-19/covid-19-return-to-campus/> and <https://ok.ubc.ca/covid19/health-safety/>
- UBC continues to operate its COVID-19 Rapid Testing Program <https://rapidtesting.covid19.ubc.ca/>”

Please note: rapid test kits are being made available for students, faculty and staff who display symptoms of COVID-19. Test kits will be available from the week of February 7, on both campuses with the presentation of a valid UBC identification card. More information can be found at <https://srs.ubc.ca/athometestkit> and <https://ok.ubc.ca/covid19/testing-reporting/>. We also urge you to be fully vaccinated, and to register for your booster dose as soon as you are eligible. Register for your COVID-19 vaccine at: <https://immunizebc.ca/>.

Workers' Rights Regarding Accommodation

Every faculty member's/worker's rights are inalienably protected under law and under UBC regulations/policies. If the return to campus raises personal concerns regarding health, please contact the [UBC Human Resources Office](#). The faculty/worker would be guided how to submit a request for accommodation. EDST is bound to respect any injunction this specific office makes. EDST and the serving head are neither authorized nor in a position of expertise to determine accommodation for any member outside the HR procedures.

If no HR injunction is communicated to EDST regarding a claimed accommodation, EDST cannot determine the case. This means that, not having a formal HR injunction, the faculty/worker concerned is bound to return to class to in-person teaching, as applicable for the particular course or courses they teach. Any questions on this aspect of our work should be directed to the Human Resources Office after consulting the related UBC policy.

Planning the Return to Campus

(Source: Dean Hare's email, dated January 28, 2022 @ 8:46AM PST)

Beginning February 7, faculty and staff are expected to resume on-campus work at the same levels as prior to the winter break. Staff will resume work according to the remote work arrangement they made with their supervisors during Winter Term 1.

Please follow all university-level guidance about on-campus work, including performing a daily [self-assessment](#) for symptoms of COVID-19. Faculty and staff who experience COVID-19 symptoms are asked to stay home and discuss with their unit head or direct supervisor whether to take a sick day or work remotely.

- *Masks or face coverings while on campus*

As a reminder, masks or face coverings must be worn in all [indoor public spaces](#) by everyone age 5 and older, including lobbies, hallways, public bathrooms, classrooms, and laboratories. Please take a moment to review UBC's [policy on mask-wearing](#), including the [exemptions](#) that are permitted for certain persons. The Faculty will continue to share reminders about mask-wearing on our digital signage system and through social media.

Masks are necessary to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, with medical grade masks and respirators providing better protection when worn properly. UBC strongly recommends the use of medical grade masks as a face covering when possible.

UBC will be providing a supply of medical grade masks to all students, faculty, and staff starting February 7. The Dean will release an update with more information on how and where to obtain a mask as soon as the information is made available.

- *Testing on both campuses*

There are two testing programs operating at UBC:

1. The Required COVID-19 Rapid Testing Program, which is a requirement for those who are unvaccinated, partially vaccinated or have not disclosed their vaccination status. Read: [More](#).
2. The Rapid Antigen Testing Kit Distribution Program, which will provide kits to students, staff and faculty who display symptoms of COVID-19. A UBC identification card is necessary to obtain a kit, which will be available at the University Commons outside the AMS Nest beginning February 7 (Vancouver campus) and outdoors at the northeast corner of the Commons Building (Okanagan campus). Read: [More](#) for the UBC Vancouver campus.

GAA Support for Teaching in EDST

To ease the transition back to in-person classroom teaching, the Department of Educational Studies instituted support for teaching during Winter Term 2 (till April 8, 2022). The Department has engaged the support of the following graduate students who will be available daily, in shifts, to support instruction throughout the term:

- Archana Koli : <akoli04@mail.ubc.ca>
- Maria Jose Athie : <maria.athie@ubc.ca>
- Puthykol Sengkeo : <puthykol@student.ubc.ca>
- Rosemary Okolie : <sroseok@mail.ubc.ca>

Responsibilities of the GAA Support Team for W2:

- Learn the hardware and software components of the Faculty of Education classrooms, UBC AV Zoom cart and mobile recording kit;
- Support classroom and hybrid instruction, problem solve the hardware and software systems and to facilitate participation of remote students;
- Assist with booking of AV Zoom cart or other equipment;
- Set up the equipment in the classroom and online tools for blended instruction;
- Work with the Educational Technology Support (ETS) team and with the EDST course instructor to deliver synchronous /asynchronous graduate courses.

The GAA Support Team will be contacting each instructor teaching in EDST during Term 2 to present themselves. The GAA Support Team will remain available throughout the remainder of the term. The Team has been assigned PCN Room 3052 and given access to the Third Floor.

Please reach out to your respective GAA Support person in advance in relation to classroom equipment you will need in your different sessions.

The [ETS](#) Website provides further information about available resources.

Course Drop Deadlines & Accommodation for Absence

(Source: Dean Hare's email, Feb 2, 2022 @ 11:55AM PST)

“The deadline for students to drop or withdraw from courses is February 6, 2022 at 23:59 (one minute before midnight). The majority of our programs return to on-campus instruction on February 7, 2022.

This year poses particular challenges for students who are contemplating dropping a course. While COVID case numbers are currently trending down, it is still possible that students or their family members may become sick, necessitating a quarantine period and an absence from in-person classes. An important consideration for students is what accommodations will be offered should they become ill or be required to quarantine.

While the Faculty of Education expects that in-person courses will return to on-campus instruction on February 7, accommodations for students can be offered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of instructors. You may wish, for example, to allow students to access materials online if they are quarantined or sick, or you may wish to provide extensions for deadlines. Please consult with your Department Head or Area Coordinator to determine what policies are in place in your unit.

It is important that you provide as much information as possible to students about the accommodations you are prepared to make for absences related to the Pandemic. This information should be provided to students by 5 February, so that students have relevant information as they make decisions about whether to drop courses.”

Classroom Space

If you feel that the number of students in your classroom requires the re-assignment to a larger classroom, please let email EDST's Administrative Manager, Shermila Salgadoe <shermila.salgadoe@ubc.ca>. That said, please note that re-assignments to larger classrooms may not always be possible. It is contingent on availability, and can be anywhere on campus.

Wellbeing Support

For any students, faculty and staff needing support for their mental health and wellbeing, resources are available:

- For students, please visit: <https://students.ubc.ca/health/mental-health-during-covid-19>
- For faculty and staff, please visit: <https://hr.ubc.ca/working-ubc/working-during-covid-19>

UBC Updates & Announcements

Please bookmark the following webpages to find the latest updates and announcements during W2:

- <https://covid19.ubc.ca/>

Ministry of Advanced Education & Skills Training Guidelines for the Post-Secondary Sector

(Source: Dean Hare's email, dated January 28, 2022 @ 4:53PM PST)

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training has updated its [COVID-19 Return-to-Campus Guidelines](#) to reflect evolving public health guidance. The document includes links to updated BCCDC

guidance for the post-secondary sector and the January 2022 letter from Dr. Henry regarding the prioritization of on-campus instruction. I ask that all members of our Faculty of Education community review these guidelines in advance of our return to in-person instruction on February 7.

The Ministry has also shared a reminder about the following COVID-19 resources:

- COVID-19 Return-to-Campus Guidelines are hosted on government's [public website](#).
- Guidance and recommendations from the Provincial Health Officer are available online at the [COVID-19 Provincial Support and Information](#) website.
- If you require advice regarding a potential COVID-19 case, please contact your local [Medical Health Officer](#).
- WorkSafeBC guidance is available on [communicable disease prevention plans](#).

All of the above resources are available from the Faculty of Education's [COVID-19 page](#).

Conclusion

In her email message dated January 28, 2022 (@ 8:46AM PST), Dean Jan Hare observes that, *“While it will no doubt feel challenging for some faculty, staff and students to return to campus on February 7, I feel confident that we can accomplish this transition safely and with minimal disruption to operations and student learning.”* Ensuring that this transition to in-person teaching is accomplished successfully fully depends on our familiarity with established policy and guidelines, as shared in this message and hyperlinked documentation. It also depends on each and every person's effort to remain updated. The return to campus is not a “carte blanche” to indiscriminate behaviours on campus. It is fully contingent on the specific conditions under which we can come together, relate to each other, teach and learn under the current pandemic circumstances, Public Health Orders, and UBC and Faculty of Education guidelines.

Upholding hygiene and related safety protocols and guidelines remains therefore a critical and an absolutely *necessary* aspect of a successful resumption of on campus teaching and learning in safe and viable ways.

Thank you for your attention, care, and follow-up.

With best wishes,

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