Return to Work Plan for the Department of Chemistry

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Overview
This document outlines the Chemistry’s plan to permit access to the Chemistry’s spaces for approved course preparation and purposes. Those who wish to apply for such access should read this document carefully. The general process for accessing spaces within Chemistry is:

1. Review the activities qualifying for access at this time (section 2).
2. Follow Chemistry’s process for applying to access on-campus spaces (section 3). Applying for access involves justifying why access is needed (section 2) and explaining how you will adhere to all safety requirements (sections 4).
3. If access is granted, you may access the space according to the approved schedule. When doing so, all safety requirements (section 4) must be followed and access to the spaces must proceed according to the approved rules for movement within Chemistry (section 5) or access will be revoked.

1. Introduction.
As restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic begin to ease, Queen’s University is implementing a phased return to campus. Access to campus has now been approved for researchers who qualify under Priority Timelines 1 and 2 and educators who require intermittent access to on-campus resources for remote course development. Queen’s employees who have been granted site access should regularly check the Queen’s University Covid-19 website for up-to-date information.

This document outlines the mechanism for requesting access to spaces within Chemistry and the requirements that must be met while using those spaces. It is critical that people
adhere to these guidelines that describe various safety protocols. Flexibility is key to the following process because the situation could change rapidly based on the local situation and government directives.

Permission to conduct work involving the Animal Care Facilities, human participants, or field work cannot be approved through the process outlined in this document. Individuals requiring access for these kinds of research should follow the procedures available on the VPR’s COVID-19 site.

2. Qualifying for Access.
Access to Chemistry’s on-campus spaces can be approved by the unit in cases that meet all three of the following criteria:

a. Access can be provided without exceeding room capacities and while meeting all relevant health and safety laws, regulations, and guidelines.

b. The activity requiring on-campus access requires the use of resources that cannot be reasonably relocated to a remote work environment.

c. The activity requiring on-campus access will involve one or more of the following:
   i. Preparing for remote or in-person teaching (see section 2.1).
   ii. Conducting research falling within Research Priority Timelines 1 and 2 (see sections 2.2 and 2.3).
   iii. Graduate students who do not have sufficient data to continue to make progress on their research but who do not fall within priority timelines 1 and 2 (see section 2.4).
   iv. Employees and graduate students who have not made the progress expected since moving to a remote working environment Note that access is only granted for the period of time needed to conduct work that meets these three criteria (see sections 2.5 and 2.6).
   v. Critical graduate student exams (see section 2.7).

2.1. Intermittent access to develop courses for remote delivery: This category is intended to provide instructors with access to on-campus spaces/resources in order to conduct activities that cannot be reasonably completed at home in support of the remote or approved in-person delivery of courses. Examples of such activities include recording lectures or demonstrations. Access to offices for quiet spaces to record material for remote delivery is permitted, but access is not permitted for individuals to conduct work related to teaching that can be achieved while working from home.

2.2. Priority Timeline 1 Research: This category is intended to provide access to on-campus spaces to conduct research in order to avoid, or minimize, negative outcomes that would occur if the work was not conducted by the end of the current academic term.
2.3. Priority Timeline 2 Research: This category is intended to provide access to on-campus spaces to conduct research in order to avoid, or minimize, negative outcomes that would occur if the work was not conducted by the end of the next academic term.

2.4. Collecting Data to Continue Remote Work: This category is intended to provide access for students who can no longer make research progress through remote work, but whose research does not fall within Priority Timelines 1 and 2. The goal is to provide students in this category brief access to collect a sufficient amount of data to continue to make progress through remote work. Researchers requesting access in this category must demonstrate that they cannot continue to work remotely with available data, provide a clear description of the work that must be done to collect sufficient data to continue to work remotely, and provide an estimate of how long access will be required to collect that data.

2.5. Extenuating Circumstances (Graduate Students, Postdoctoral Fellows): This category is intended to provide access to on-campus office spaces to conduct research and other academic work for graduate students who are unable to make effective progress on their research while working remotely. Requests for access to offices in cases where remote research progress has been inadequate should include a clear statement illustrating how progress has been insufficient while working remotely. This statement will be assessed by the supervisor, Graduate Coordinator, Unit Head/Director, and Associate Deans Research and Graduate Studies in FAS.

2.6. Extenuating Circumstances (Faculty and Staff): This category is intended to provide intermittent access to on-campus workspaces for employees who are experiencing extenuating circumstances. Some examples of extenuating circumstances include but are not limited to: the physical layout of the space is not conducive to productivity, the presence of roommates, the presence of small children, care giving responsibilities, insufficient internet access, an inability to separate work life and home life and/or due to mental health issues that are exacerbated through remote work. This process is not intended to allow any full-time returns, but rather enable limited and controlled access to campus, as allowed by capacities and health and safety considerations, in support of overall success, safety, and well-being. Access requires approval of the employee’s direct supervisor. In the case of faculty members, the supervisor is the Unit Head/Director.

2.7. Critical Graduate Student Exams: This category is intended to provide one-time access for students and others, e.g. proctors, who need an on-campus space to conduct key graduate examinations such as thesis examinations, comprehensive examinations or field exams. Efforts should be made to conduct these exams remotely to the greatest extent possible, but this category provides students with interruption-free access to on-campus spaces with reliable internet and items such as white boards to participate in exams that may otherwise be held remotely. The faculty member conducting the exam should apply for access and the approval requires endorsement of the Unit Head/Director and the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies and Global Engagement) in FAS.

The process for requesting access to space in the Department of Chemistry involves the following steps:

1. Complete the **Department of Chemistry Access Application Form** and submit the completed form as a ‘.docx’ file to the relevant on-site access group noted on the department’s website (covid-19 section) and in the Department of Chemistry Access Application Form.

2. Forms will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Safety Committee, and sent to the Department Head for a final decision. In cases where a clear decision cannot be made, the form may be forwarded to the Associate Dean (Research) for further review. The Safety Committee will approve, reject, or ask for revisions to the application as quickly as possible to ensure that work is not impacted.


This section outlines requirements for all people accessing spaces in Chemistry. Failure to follow any of these guidelines will result in permission to access the unit’s spaces being revoked. Depending on the severity of any violations, access may be revoked for an individual, a research group, or even a whole unit.

4.1 Queen’s University Return to Work Guidelines: Queen’s University has developed **Return to Campus Guidelines** based on recommendations from government and public health officials that must be reviewed and followed by all campus users. These Guidelines will be updated as additional information is available and as regional and provincial measures are amended. As necessary edits are made, a summary of the changes from previous versions are available on the Campus Operations Group webpage. Approval for access to university space can be rescinded if university and public health guidelines are not followed.

The Queen’s University Return to Work Guidelines cover a wide range of scenarios for people accessing campus. The following guidelines are particularly relevant for those accessing spaces in Chemistry through the process outlined in this document:

i. Supervisors and employees should familiarize themselves with the passive and active monitoring guidelines, and follow these practices. All those accessing campus space must complete the COVID-19 assessment tool in the SeQure app. Web versions and document versions of the assessment are also available. In particular, research personnel should check-in daily with their supervisor to confirm that they are not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. (requirement)

ii. Anyone who is sick or is awaiting results from a COVID-19 test should not attempt to access on-campus spaces under any circumstances. If you become unwell during the working day, please leave campus. If you notice a colleague appearing unwell, encourage them to go home and inform your direct supervisor. (requirement)
iii. In the case of a **confirmed positive case** the supervisor/manager must immediately inform Dan Langham, Director Environmental Health and Safety (613-533-6000 x74980, dan.langham@queensu.ca). Personal health information must be treated confidentially and emails with the infected individual's name should not be sent. No other action is to be taken unless instructed to do so by Environmental Health & Safety. (requirement)

iv. Proper hand hygiene and maintaining physical distancing of at least 2 metres (6 feet) remains the most effective way to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19. When physical distancing is not possible, e.g. when passing individuals in a hallway, any contact with less than 2 metres of separation must be kept as brief as possible. (requirement)

v. Queen’s is **requiring** anyone on campus to wear a face covering in all common areas; particularly in spaces where maintaining physical distancing is challenging. 2 **masks/employee** are available for free through Print and Postal Services. (requirement)

4.2. FAS Return to Work Guidelines: Further to the requirement to review and adhere to the University’s Return to Work Guidelines, the following requirements and recommendations should be followed when accessing spaces in FAS:

i. Returning to work on campus is voluntary and it should be clear that no one is required to return to work until the department is completely opened. **No penalties should be assessed against anyone for declining to enter the building to continue on-site work.** A person that does not feel comfortable returning to work should continue to work remotely. (requirement)

ii. Access will only be granted as permitted by the capacities of spaces indicated in the unit’s space plan. If access must be declined due to capacity limitations, access for teaching and priority timeline 1 research takes priority over access for priority timeline 2 research. (requirement)

iii. Normal safety rules still apply. Do not allow the focus on COVID-19 to distract you from practicing normal safety protocols. (requirement)

4.3. Department Return to Work Guidelines: Further to the requirements and recommendations of Queen’s and FAS, the department issues the following recommendations:

i. Supervisors should inspect their own labs for safety and maintenance deficiencies periodically and especially after a long period of inactivity. This safety review should include, but not be limited to, concerns identified in the early-2020 safety inspections. Supervisors do not, however, need to check things like eyewash stations, safety shower, fire extinguisher, and fire alarms because the department has continued all of those monthly safety checks during the suspension.

ii. Adhere to all the departmental support services policies while conducting research to ensure physical distancing. Since these services are diverse, the policies delineated by the individual managers are different and research personnel need to familiarize themselves with the policies.
   a. Stores: Abide to the schedule and procedures for picking up items from Stores, which is now by appointment only.
b. Support Staff and Technicians: Follow the departmental COVID guidelines for permitting access to undertake necessary work in support of both teaching and research activities within the department.
   a. Main Office: The administrative staff in the main office are working remotely. Exceptions are made for office staff that need access to files and use of office infrastructure (e.g. programming key cards).

iii. Each faculty member should develop an individual work plan that details the safe operation of their groups within the space. These plans will be reviewed by the Department Head and Manager with assistance from the Safety Committee. The plans should include the following:
   a. Maximum and minimum number of people working at any given time. Detail any shift like situations and how the process would be managed.
   b. Protocols for using and cleaning communal equipment in the laboratory.
   b. Coordinate with other groups also using the space, particularly for shared laboratories to avoid crowding.
   c. Provide an exit and shut-down plan in the case that the group has to cease research rapidly because of a change in the criteria for work.

iv. Surfaces that are frequently touched by more than one person, such as doorknobs, lab phones, light switches and faucet taps must be disinfected frequently (several times per day). This is the responsibility of the managers of those rooms. DO NOT use a flammable disinfectant or sanitizer on any electrical device such as elevator buttons or light switches, as the vapors may ignite. Surfaces in common departmental areas are the responsibility of the building manager or their delegate. Surfaces in laboratories are the responsibility of the occupants of those rooms.

v. All people with leadership roles (department head, committee chairs, supervisors, facility managers) need to have a designated replacement in case they become sick.

5. Unit Space Information.
This section includes requirements and recommendations to safely access and use the space in CHEM.

5.1. General details.
   i. The number of people in a room must not exceed the room’s capacity. Supervisors can arrange work schedules to avoid violating capacities if necessary.
   ii. Signs related to room occupancy numbers, directions for movement, and usage of washrooms and other shared spaces have been placed throughout the building. Follow the instructions on these signs.
   iii. Try to limit interactions that violate physical distancing protocols, e.g., passing others in a hallway, to the shortest periods possible. If possible, one of two people meeting in a stairwell should exit through the nearest door to allow the other person to pass, and if two people meet in a hallway, the person nearest a retreat zone (a wider area of the corridor) should move to that zone to allow the other person to pass.
iv. All elevators are limited to one person at any time – NO EXCEPTIONS. If someone is already in the elevator, you will need to wait until it is vacant.

v. Do not congregate in the lounge on the 4th floor or the student lounges at the south ends of floors 3, 4 and 5, or in other common spaces.

5.2. Shared Facilities and Teaching Labs
   i. Facilities managers have provided detailed instructions on the management and operation of their specific facility in order to support research activities while maintaining interpersonal separation and minimizing risk of transmission and risk to themselves or users. The service availability will be reduced compared to business-as-usual. Restrictions limit the number of people in the room at one time, and there may be additional requirements for wearing or not wearing gloves, making appointments, or even forbidding users from entering the room (i.e., just dropping off samples).
   
   ii. Consult the specific guidelines on the departmental COVID website before attempting to use the facility to avoid any unnecessary delays and/or problems. It is your responsibility to know the specific rules for each unit as they are all very different based on the facility and the room footprint.
   
   iii. Users should understand that services will remain at reduced availability for some time, so plan accordingly, and be patient. Facilities managers are encouraged to communicate with users to manage expectations and set realistic timelines for requests.

5.3. Other Resources

Maps of department spaces and lists of room occupancies can be found at https://www.chem.queensu.ca/safety/covid-19.