



Pandemic Absence Policy for Non-Teaching Employees

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Approver(s):	Vice-President, Finance & Administration; Vice-President, Academic & Provost.

1. Purpose

This policy provides guidelines and direction for addressing the absence of non-teaching employees and other related issues in the event of a pandemic.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all non-teaching OCAD University (“OCAD U” or “the University”) employees, including: administrative staff; academic and administrative managers; technicians; academic counsellors; teaching and research assistants; class assistants; models; student monitors; and temporary employees (not including temporary employees from an agency).

It is enacted in the event a pandemic, as defined in the University’s Emergency Response Plan, is formally declared at OCAD U, but the University is still open and operational, or may be enacted by the University in advance of declaration of a pandemic.

If a pandemic has been formally declared at OCAD U, and the University is required to close entirely, more elaborate measures will be taken, depending on the length of the closure, and will be communicated to non-teaching employees via email as soon as possible.

This policy ceases being in effect upon a formal decision to declare the pandemic no longer present at OCAD U, or at such time as the policy is formally revoked by the University.

3. Policy

OCAD U recognizes a duty of care to all members of our University community to protect them and keep them safe from harm while on campus. A flu pandemic presents particular challenges in this regard, and therefore, requires specific consideration with respect to potential absences.

Business as Usual/Regular Operations

OCAD U remains open in all but the most extreme circumstances. Unless an emergency closing is announced, all employees are expected to report to work, except as outlined below.

Employees are encouraged to take responsibility in protecting their own health by following recommended sanitary practices, such as frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer.

OCAD U non-teaching employees are expected to follow any advice and directives issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada. In the event they are ill with the influenza, are experiencing flu-like symptoms, or have been in direct contact with someone with the flu, employees are expected to not attend work, to minimize the risk of infection of others in the OCAD U community.

All non-teaching employees are urged to use their own discretion in deciding whether they can safely commute to and attend work. While it is recognized that employees may require leave from work to care for ill dependents, it is expected that they make every reasonable effort to arrange such care before requesting leave for this purpose.

During a pandemic, OCAD U recognizes the need for employees to demonstrate flexibility in ensuring minimal disruption to its regular operations. If the University is required to maintain operations at reduced staffing levels, employees may be assigned to alternate responsibilities either within their current departments or elsewhere in the University in accordance with existing practices.

As part of its business continuity planning, each department should have a plan in place for the potential employee absence from work and, to the extent possible, consider the options available in advance.

The intent of the University is to maintain regular policies except as outlined below.

Reporting an Absence

In the event of a flu pandemic, a non-teaching employee may require leave from work as a result of the employee's illness or exposure to someone who may have flu. Such employee is responsible for notifying their supervisor of their absence and alerting the Environmental Health & Safety Advisor in Safety & Security Services to any such illness or exposure as soon as possible. If direct contact with the supervisor or designate is not possible, contacting Human Resources is the preferred alternative. Under this policy, the requirement for medical documentation confirming an absence will be waived.

Pay, Benefits and Leave Provisions

Non-teaching employees who require leave as noted above who are unable to report to work in the event of an emergency closure, are expected to use applicable paid and/or unpaid leaves provided under established plans and policies.

An employee's pay will be maintained to the extent provided for under the applicable leave policies, which may include: occasional sick leave (leave for care of an ill dependent); short-term disability; long-term disability; compassionate care leave; emergency leave; and bereavement leave. A summary of such applicable policies is available on Sharepoint. [Pandemic Absence - Leave Provisions](#)

In administering the above policies, supervisors, in consultation with Human Resources, may use discretion and flexibility given the extraordinary circumstances surrounding a pandemic. Special consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis.

In cases where these benefits do not apply or an employee has exhausted these options, the employee may be eligible for benefits under the Employment Insurance Act, the Employment Standards Act and/or other government legislated benefits.

Return to Work

All non-teaching employees have a responsibility to make every effort to ensure that they return to work in a state of health and well-being which will not endanger others and will enable them to perform their work to the best of their abilities. While the requirement for medical documentation confirming an absence will be waived in the event of a pandemic, employees are responsible for obtaining the appropriate supervisory approval and medical clearance and/or documentation to support their safe return to work.