

# Reopening and Operation of Physics Computing Services

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedures for the opening and operation of the Physics Computing Services (PCS) group. The PCS group provides information technology to the Department's research and teaching operations, including providing and supporting research computing, providing network and email services, supporting administrative computing, and general supporting Departmental IT activities. While much of this work can be done off-site, that are tasks that can only be done on site – for example restating systems after power outages, replacing failed components, and diagnosing network problems. Since most staff are working from home using remote connection to their office computers, the maintenance of the network is especially critical.

## Regular Review

This plan will be reviewed regularly and revised if changing circumstances warrant. This will be done in compliance with University policy and recommendations from Environmental Health & Safety (EHS).

## Principles

- Paramount will be the health, safety and protection of staff and all clients including faculty, students, post-doctoral fellows and staff
- Applicable EHS, FAS and Departmental directives and guidelines will guide the restart and ongoing operations.
- Planning and implementation will follow the principles described in this document and revisions.
- The Department will provide reasonable accommodation to staff members for personal circumstances while balancing the needs of the University and its members and adhering to agreements, policies, procedures, guidance documents and legislation.
- Public parts of the building, including classrooms and lecture halls will have specific requirements for teaching and not covered in this document, as will teaching and research labs. PCS staff will be required to follow any policies or procedures applicable when in those areas. This document will focus on PCS work areas.

## General Preparation for Reopening

This section outlines general guidelines for Physics Computing Services.

- All PCS areas will have prominent notices located at the corridor entrances outlining rules for clients. There will also be a COVID hygiene poster.
- It will be the responsibility of PCS staff to ensure that the signs are in good condition, barriers are in place and in maintaining any required supplies. These will be inspected at regularly.
- All standard safety practices are to be followed.

## REOPENING AND OPERATION OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

- Face masks will be made available, and should be used as directed by [University Policy](#). They should be worn in all common-use indoor University spaces (e.g. corridors, washrooms, stairwells, classrooms) but are not required in private offices unless physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Non-PCS persons will not be allowed into PCS work areas except for a specific tasks of short duration. Physical distancing must be maintained and masks worn while non-PCS staff are present.
- If necessary to manage activity in PCS areas, a reservation system will be setup for the PCS staff by email or using Microsoft Booking. This information will be circulated to the supported groups.

### General procedures for all Staff

- Staff should stay home if they feel unwell or are experiencing symptoms, and should report any absences to their Supervisor as soon as possible.
- If staff suspect they have COVID-19 symptoms or believe they may have been exposed to COVID-19 they should complete the [Ontario Ministry of Health self-assessment for COVID-19](#) and follow the directions provided. An employee who tests positive for COVID-19 should immediately contact U of T's Occupational Health Nurse by email at <mailto:ehs.occhealth@utoronto.ca>.
- Staff members are to practice physical distancing at all times, keeping a minimum of two meters apart. Work apart as much as possible.
  - If this is not possible (i.e. needing help with moving materials) then a face mask is required. All areas of common contact are to be cleaned afterwards.
  - Avoid sharing of office equipment or work areas. If they are shared then they must be sanitized between uses.
- Staff will eat at their desks; no common lunch room will be provided, and there will be no access to refrigerators, microwave ovens, etc.
- Hands should be washed frequently with soap and water, especially after contacting materials and surfaces others may have handled.
- Hands should be washed whenever re-entering the workspace.
- All personal work areas are to be cleaned at the start of the workday. This includes desks, counters & benchtops, phones, keyboards, tools, etc. Any materials, equipment etc. entering or leaving a personal workspace must be cleaned.
- Report hazards and concerns to the appropriate supervisor.
- All relevant COVID-19 protection procedures should be reviewed and followed.
- Any safety equipment and/or PPE normally used in the workspace should continue to be used.
- Consider changing clothes when arriving at and leaving from work, especially if using public transit.
- All regular safety protocol & procedures for workplace-specific hazards are to be followed.

### Standard Operating Procedures

- Schedules will be arranged and communicated to clients to minimize the time staff spend on-site.
- Anyone wishing to visit a PCS office or obtain help from the staff will make advance arrangements by email, or by using a reservation system.
- Maximum room occupancy will be one staff member; client should communicate to staff from the doorway.

REOPENING AND OPERATION OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

- Each PCS office will be treated as a private area, and accessed by a single PCS staff person only.
- Where possible, equipment, including client equipment, should be handled by one person only, and sanitized before and after handling.
- Clients will be informed of the user guidelines with signs and email notices and will be expected to respect them.
- Clients will be asked to leave if they deliberately behave in a manner not consistent with this document. Anyone refusing to comply with these guidelines will not be allowed access to PCS services and repeated behaviour will be reported to supervisors or an appropriate authority.
- Clients may have to wait in a safe area, asked to return later or make an appointment if in the opinion of the PCS staff, physical distancing will be compromised.

