

Employee Guide: Return to Campus

COVID-19 Related Tips & FAQs

Human Resources

Sheridan

Employee Guide: Return to Campus Tips

Preparing for a Return to Campus

Sheridan recognizes that the transition to resuming work on campus will be a unique experience for everyone. For some, the day when we can once again engage with students and teammates in person will be a welcome change. For others, there may be personal circumstances that affect their ability and readiness to return to campus. As we have weathered many challenges and changes throughout the pandemic, it is entirely natural to have concerns, questions, or be experiencing a range of emotions.

To help you prepare in advance for returning to campus, here are a few tips from LifeWorks, formerly Morneau Shepell, your [Employee and Family Assistance Program](#) provider:

Find out what to expect of your workspace when you return

Ask your manager what to expect upon your return. Individual Faculties, program areas, departments, etc. will develop a COVID-19 Health & Safety Standard Operating Procedure for any on-campus activity to prevent COVID-19 transmission. This will be shared with all staff in the respective area in advance of their return.

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Additionally, Occupational Health & Safety Services has developed specialized training regarding Covid-19 and Health & Safety at Sheridan. **Completion of this training module is required by all employees prior to returning to campus.** You may find it helpful to familiarize yourself with the [Covid-19 Health & Safety Guides](#) which outline the enhanced cleaning and sanitization protocols, hygiene expectations, personal protective equipment guidelines, and physical distancing measures while on campus.

Finalize your arrangements for personal and family needs

Going back to the workplace might mean that the routine and systems that you and your family have become used to during the pandemic may shift. If you are expected to return to the workplace, but have children whose schools are still closed, who will watch them? If you are caregiving for an older relative, who will look after them? If someone is at high-risk for COVID-19, do you have a routine for coming home at the end of the day that minimizes their exposure, such as washing your hands immediately? Having these conversations ahead of time will help make sure that expectations for you, your partner, and your family are clear.

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Plan your return with your manager

It's always a good idea to check in with your manager on what priorities are, even if you've been doing this while working from home. Are there projects that you hit "pause" on at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic that will "un-pause" when you're back? This will help ensure you are aware of what the priorities and expectations are upon returning to the workplace.

Be kind to yourself and others

Remember that, just as it was an adjustment for you not to go to the workplace, it might be an adjustment to return to the workplace. You might be operating with new health and safety guidelines in place. Remember that it's OK if you're slow to start at your job, as long as you're doing so safely. Be mindful about those around you who might also be struggling. Before long, you'll all settle into a routine that will feel natural.

Take Charge of your emotional well-being

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Are you feeling stressed or anxious about your return to campus? Are you looking for ways to combat some of the worrisome thoughts you have? Recognizing that you may be feeling more stressed or anxious than usual is the first step toward getting help. The good news is, there are many resources and supports available to you, a few are outlined below, and you are encouraged to access them and take charge of your emotional well-being.

[Workhealthlife](#) by LifeWorks, formerly Morneau Shepell:

- Online Group Counselling - Supporting you during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Anxiety
 - Online Group Counselling - Supporting you during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Parenting
- COVID-19 Microsite (helpful articles, videos)

[AbilitiCBT](#) - an internet-based cognitive behavioral therapy program, including a special program to help you address anxiety symptoms related to the challenging aspects of pandemics: uncertainty, isolation, caring for family and community members, information overload and stress management.

[WellCan](#) - free well-being resources to help Canadians develop coping strategies and build resilience to help deal with uncertainty, mental health and substance abuse concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[BounceBack](#) - a free program from the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) that helps you build skills to improve your mental health.

Frequently Asked Questions

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I have been told I will be returning to work on campus, but I have a health condition and I am concerned. What should I do?

Your health & safety is Sheridan's top priority. We encourage you to let your manager know if this applies to you, keeping in mind you are NOT required to disclose your health condition. You can discuss with your manager the availability of flexible work arrangements, including a continuation of remote work where operationally feasible.

You can also request a formal [workplace accommodation due to disability](#) through the Workplace Abilities Office by completing the [Workplace Accommodation Request Form – Disability \(COVID-19 Related\)](#). Contact your designated HR Business Partner or the [Workplace Abilities Office](#) for further guidance.

I have been told I will be returning to campus, but I live with an individual who has a health condition, what should I do?

We encourage you to let your Manager know if this applies to you. You can request a formal [workplace accommodation due to family status](#) by completing the [Workplace Accommodation Request Form – Family Status or Other Protected Ground](#). Contact your HR Business Partner for further guidance.

What options do I have if I am required to return to working on campus, but I do not have child / elder care?

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Sheridan recognizes there is ongoing uncertainty regarding how schools and childcare agencies will be operating over the next year, and understands this may pose as a challenge to your ability to return to campus. We encourage you to discuss with your manager what they can do to assist with childcare challenges and review opportunities for flexible work arrangements.

There are different leaves you may be eligible for either as part of the [Support Staff](#) or [Academic](#) Collective Agreement and/or under the [Ontario Employment Standards Act](#). Of note, the [Infectious Disease Emergency Leave](#) provision under the ESA (2000), allows you to apply for a job-protected leave to care for your child who will not attend school/child-care due to COVID-19.

Depending on your individual circumstances, you may be eligible for a [workplace accommodation due to family status](#). Contact your designated HR Business Partner for further guidance.

What do I do if I have to take time off to care for a sick child or another family member?

In this situation, we recommend exploring with your manager or HR Business Partner the different leaves you may be eligible for either as part of the [Support Staff](#) or [Academic](#) Collective Agreement and/or under the [Ontario Employment Standards Act](#).

A formal [workplace accommodation due to family status](#) may apply depending on your individual circumstances and applicable legislation. Contact your designated HR Business Partner for further guidance.

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Do I have to wear a mask / face-covering while on campus, even if I am vaccinated?

Yes. At this time, provincial and local public health directives require everyone, including those who are fully vaccinated, to wear a mask indoors. All Sheridan community members (i.e., students, employees, contractors, and visitors) share the responsibility of preventing COVID-19 transmission including wearing a Sheridan issued medical-grade mask in classroom and office spaces and a face mask while in the common areas on campus.

There are certain exceptions when employees may remove their masks while on campus. For example, employees who are seated at their own workspace can remove their masks if they are separated from all others by at least a 2m distance or a physical barrier. For more information, please read [this guide](#).

Sheridan recognizes that not every person can participate in wearing a mask or face covering and that certain exemptions may apply. If you have concerns or are unable to wear a mask we encourage you to let your manager know, keeping in mind you are NOT required to disclose any confidential or medical information.

If you require workplace accommodations you can request a formal [Workplace Accommodation due to Disability](#) through the Workplace Abilities Office. Contact your designated HR Business Partner or the [Workplace Abilities Office](#) for further guidance.

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I have yet to be vaccinated for COVID-19, and do not feel comfortable returning to campus at this time. Am I able to continue to work from home until I am fully vaccinated?

Regarding work from home requests, this will be reviewed through the Workplace Accommodation Request procedures outlined above, if the nature of your request is related to family status or disability (i.e a medical condition). However, as a first step, we encourage you and your Manager to discuss your health and safety concern, engaging your HR Business Partner or Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator for further support and direction.

What measures are in place to ensure my health and safety in the workplace is protected?

The health and safety measures implemented at Sheridan in response to COVID-19 are framed by the COVID-19 Campus Policy. The measures follow a system known as the Hierarchy of Controls, which identifies the most effective to the least effective ways to control a hazard.

[Click here to view the full safety plan](#) from Sheridan's Occupational Health and Safety Services team.