



## **COVID AND POSTGRADUATE TRAINING AT U of T: Frequently Asked Questions**

### 1. When do I need to be in Toronto?

Trainees commence their placements throughout the year. Please ensure you arrive in Toronto in time to participate in your scheduled hospital orientation activities (typically July 2 this year) or your first clinical activity (possibly July 1), whichever comes first, considering possible self-isolation requirements per next item.

### 2. Do I need to self-isolate upon arrival/return?

You must self-isolate if you are returning from out-of-country or have been working in a role with a high risk of exposure to COVID-19 (Long Term Care facility or declared COVID outbreak unit) within the 14 days prior to commencing your postgraduate clinical placement. Please contact the occupational health office of the institution where you are next to report for clinical duty for further instructions about how to proceed.

### 3. What should I do if I am an immunocompromised individual?

If you are immunocompromised, please notify the Postgraduate Wellness Office (PWO) and your program director. The PWO, your program director and your hospital site lead will work together to identify an appropriate plan that will both fit your needs and ensure the fulfillment of academic requirements. In some cases, it may be appropriate for a postgraduate learner to consider a Leave of Absence (LOA). Please contact PWO if you require further support or possible accommodation.

### 4. What should I do if I live with someone who is immunocompromised?

Depending on the circumstances, one consideration would be to develop a plan of how to isolate yourself from that individual or organize an alternative living arrangement for the length of your training. Please contact PWO if you require further support or possible accommodation.

5. What social restrictions must I follow when outside of the clinical environment?

Please review the fact sheet resources provided by Public Health Ontario to familiarize yourself with the Province's recommended best practices.

6. Are there activities I cannot partake in before/during clinical placements?

You must not participate in activities with a high-risk of exposure to COVID-19. This includes (but is not limited to) working/volunteering at long-term care facilities or attending large social gatherings. Engaging in such activities will necessitate a self-isolation period.

7. Can I see my friends and family?

Toronto is currently in Stage 2 of the Ontario reopening plan. According to Public Health Ontario, 'People must still practice physical distancing, by keeping at least two metres away from others outside of their direct household.' Further details about Stage 2 reopening are available at (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/framework-reopening-our-province-stage-2>) . Postgraduate learners must comply with the recommendations outlined in the Physical Distancing fact sheet prepared by Public Health Ontario.

8. What if I feel uncomfortable entering the clinical environment?

The University prioritizes the safety of postgraduate learners and the learning environments. The revised program curricula reflect these safety considerations of the program.

If you have specific concerns about entering the clinical environment, please contact your program director or the PWO for further consultation. They will work together and with you to develop a mitigation strategy. Depending on individual scenarios, this strategy may include consideration of pursuing an LOA.

9. How will my skills be updated to ensure I am prepared for the clinical environment?

PGME has designed a program to ensure you are ready to safely enter the clinical environment; it includes a donning and doffing virtual module and in person practice at your training site. You should have received an invitation to complete the online training if you start your first postgraduate experience on July 1. Otherwise all resources, PPE and clinical, are linked on our website:

<https://pg.postmd.utoronto.ca/the-latest-on-covid-19/>

Please note you will be required to sign a postgraduate learner declaration form that states you have completed your donning and doffing simulation and have up to date mask fit testing for appropriate PPE.

10. [What other training should I expect to receive?](#)

While participating in clinical activities, you must complete all safety orientation and training offered by your placement site and adhere to their health and safety processes, procedures, policies and directives. You are also expected to keep up to date on all communications and announcements of COVID-19 related policy or procedural changes at U of T and your placement site. Your program will have developed specialty-specific training opportunities related to the care of COVID patients.

11. [Can I see suspected COVID-19 patients?](#)

Yes. As part of training, and with appropriate protective equipment and supervision, postgraduate medical learners can see patients with suspected and confirmed COVID 19. In addition, depending on competency and specialty, you may also engage in high risk (aerosol-generating) procedures. There may be restrictions to how many providers can engage with a given patient or procedure; in efforts to preserve PPE or minimize risk. In some cases, only the most experienced individual may participate in some elements of care; these will be local decisions.

Note: We recognize that patients may present asymptotically with COVID-19. You should be wearing appropriate PPE at all times in the clinical setting.

12. [What happens if there is a second wave of COVID-19?](#)

We wish we could predict what the next few months will bring. Unfortunately, there are many unknowns. We are confident that we will work together to problem solve around any eventuality, while keeping postgraduate learner and patient safety as our top priority.

13. [What should I do if I feel unwell or am showing known symptoms of COVID-19?](#)

If you feel unwell or are showing known symptoms of COVID-19, you should not enter the clinical environment. You should report this immediately to your supervisor, Occupational Health at your base hospital, and your program director.

14. What should I do if I am diagnosed with COVID-19?

Please follow the same instructions as above. Do not visit the University or clinical site until you receive clearance to do so from the relevant Occupational Health Nurse and/ or the occupational health lead at your hospital.

15. Can I travel during weekends, holidays or during other periods of time-off?

You may travel, but are discouraged from travelling out-of-country, as this would necessitate a 14-day quarantine upon return.

16. What kind of PPE will I be required to wear during my clinical rotations?

You must wear PPE as defined by the hospital policies of your current placement site or the Ministry of Health guidelines for community settings.

17. How do I acquire PPE for my clinical rotations?

As per the University's affiliation agreement, hospital sites will provide appropriate levels of PPE to you during your placement.

If you are participating in community office placements as part of a hospital rotation, your Hospital will provide you with enough PPE for the length of the placement. Hospitals will be in touch with you shortly to share information about where to pick-up your assigned PPE.

For rotations occurring outside of a hospital clinic or unit, the university will work with your program to ensure you have the PPE required at the point of care.

18. Can I use campus space for studying and other activities?

While the majority of campus remains closed, some spaces are beginning to open and are available for postgraduate learner use.

Beginning June 18, computer and Wi-Fi access will be available to current University of Toronto postgraduate learners who require it for academic work, within current public health requirements during the COVID crisis. This service will operate in the Gerstein Science Information Centre's Wallace Room, the large reading room on the north side. All other areas of Gerstein and its collections will remain closed. In-person library services will also remain closed at this time. The Wallace Room black and white printer will not be available for use.

A maximum of five postgraduate learners at one time will be able to book a seat in one of two zones – a library computer zone and a bring-your-own-device zone. Seats can be booked up to 24 hours in

advance for one 3-hour period per day. The service will operate by appointment only. For more information, visit: <https://www.utoronto.ca/utogether2020/faqs> (search for “2.3 Which buildings and facilities are open at U of T? Which are closed?”).

19. [Can I ride the TTC?](#)

Yes. At the time of development of this FAQ, the Toronto Transit Commission has announced that, effective July 2, masks or face coverings are mandatory when travelling on the TTC. Please stay up to date on the TTC’s safety measures by visiting their webpage regularly.