Updated September 15, 2020

Principles and Guidance for Returning to On-Campus SRC Activities

Overview

This document outlines the principles and instructions to be followed to ensure a careful and safe return to on-campus SRC activities. It is informed by conversations with other universities via the Council of Ontario Universities, as well as understanding some of the unique needs of our urban, integrated campus, such as our community's heavy reliance on public transit. In our planning, we abide by public health directives and take into advisement provincial reopening guidance. Any new information or guidance will be reflected in updates to this document.

Guidance related to a return to human participant and/or field-based SRC is provided within the Principles and Guidance for the Limited Return of Critical Human Participant / Field SRC Activities.

Guiding Principles for Limited Return to On-Campus SRC Activities

The reopening of Ryerson's on-campus SRC activities will continue to follow a cautious, coordinated, phased-in process that is **first and foremost guided by a commitment to the safety and security of our faculty, students, staff, and research infrastructure and facilities.**

Under all circumstances, if someone is experiencing symptoms associated with cold/flu or COVID-19, they should not come to campus and/or access SRC spaces.

Pursuant to public health directives, Ryerson faculty and personnel should **continue SRC activities remotely if at all possible**. Off-campus SRC activity should continue as long as there is negligible or little impact on the efficiency or quality of SRC activities and/or outcomes, and no sacrifice or compromise to ethical standards or confidentiality.

Faculty members and other supervisors should consider equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and equal access in their planning for on-site SRC resumption. They should not compel students or employees to work on campus if those individuals have concerns about their safety, or are experiencing other COVID-19-related barriers. Students (undergraduate or graduate) will also be asked to complete and sign an Informed Consent for Participation in SRC Activities form as part of their return to on-campus SRC activities.

All research to be carried out on campus or in Ryerson-leased spaces must be approved by the relevant Chair/Director, Dean, and the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (VPRI), and must conform to any rules and regulations of building management in leased spaces. This approval may be modified or rescinded at any time in response to directives from public health authorities or local situations. Faculty members should be prepared to quickly shut down their SRC facilities to comply with these directives should they arise.

Phased-In Approach: Returning to On-Campus SRC Activity

Ryerson has employed a prioritized, phased-in approach to resuming SRC activities on campus. For Fall 2020, we are restricting capacity and density of normal operating personnel to maintain safe physical distancing standards. Therefore, we will focus on SRC activities where:

1. There are adequate personnel (students, staff) available to safely conduct the research either by respecting physical distancing measures (at least 2 metres distance between people) or by providing appropriate PPE for exceptional activities where 2 metres distance cannot be observed**.**

   AND

2. There is a demonstrated need to sustain on-campus SRC activities, such as in **any** of the following cases:
   - Any and all COVID-19-related SRC activities.
   - SRC activities that cannot be effectively, efficiently and compliantly accomplished remotely and when there is an impact to student timelines (e.g., undergraduate or graduate theses, major research projects, capstone projects, research practicums, etc.) or project timelines.
   - Maintenance of critical infrastructure and equipment that cannot be safely shut down, or prevention of material and data loss (e.g., longitudinal studies, long-term maintenance or storage of biological materials).

For SRC activities that do not fit the above criteria, future phases of the resumption of other on-campus activities will be communicated as they are developed and as operational and public health circumstances permit.

Principles for Requesting On-Campus SRC Facility Access

Faculty members must first determine if their SRC activities meet the above priority criteria. Faculty members whose SRC activities meet the criteria, and who wish to apply for access to their SRC spaces, will be required to complete a Ryerson University Safe SRC Plan Form. A Safe SRC Plan is required for each identifiable space, and for collaborative, co-working, or

shared spaces or resources.

When developing their Safe SRC Plan, faculty members must adhere to the guiding principles stated at the outset of this document. That is, faculty members must consider and prioritize in the order indicated by the following 3 points:

1. **Continue SRC activities remotely if possible and when there is negligible or little impact on the efficiency or quality of SRC activities and/or outcomes, and no sacrifice or compromise to ethical standards or confidentiality.**

Students (graduate or undergraduate) or research staff whose timelines or project deadlines are impacted by a delay in access to SRC facilities should be prioritized for returning to on-campus SRC activities.

In keeping with commitments to EDI and SRC here at Ryerson, a broad spectrum of SRC activities will be considered throughout the reopening of Ryerson's on-campus SRC facilities and spaces. The nature (methodology, approach, specific tasks) of SRC activity will not dictate the approval of Safe SRC Plans, but rather the ability to identify and mitigate risk and offer practical solutions to both SRC activity- and space-specific issues and common challenges of working safely during COVID-19.

2. **Scheduling personnel, logging attendance and use of equipment. Creating schedules for equipment access to limit personnel density and/or other risk-inducing practices, while respecting principles of EDI in decision-making and maintaining safe SRC practices. Logging use of facilities and equipment is an important step in contact tracing if needed.**

When scheduling research personnel, no one should be required or pressured to come to campus. Students should only be included in Safe SRC Plans with their consent, and will be asked to also complete an Informed Consent for Participation in SRC Activities. Considerations or accommodations must be made for individuals who fall into the high-risk categories for COVID-19 illness (people with underlying medical conditions or weakened immune systems, and older adults) or those with limited availability due to other COVID-19-related circumstances (e.g., child/elder care, etc.).

Each identified SRC space must have a log or calendar that is utilized and kept on file detailing the dates and times that each and every personnel accesses the space(s). Logging attendance of personnel in facilities and use of equipment provides important contact tracing information for public health agencies, should it be required. In addition, SRC spaces should keep a separate log or sign-in sheet to track the attendance of any non-research personnel accessing the space during normal operating hours (e.g., external visitors such as specialized equipment technicians approved to enter the space, etc.).

The plan and distribution of personnel within the SRC space should allow for each person to maintain a minimum working space of 2 metres (or approximately 6 feet) radius. As a result, small labs or spaces (e.g., less than 120 square feet of usable space) will likely only allow, at

most, 2 people at a time, depending upon the configuration. Working schedules should be developed that conform to these limitations.

Faculty members might utilize rotating schedules, days or shifts to accommodate increased numbers of research personnel who can receive access while observing occupancy limits imposed by physical distancing.

Staggered personnel start times are a good means of avoiding density in common entrance areas, and to avoid peak transit or commuter times.

Please note that Ryerson is discouraging faculty from utilizing 24-hour scheduling (outside of the 7am - 10pm window) as a means to increase access to SRC facilities, or the intensity of SRC activities, as the safety and security of students and staff cannot be guaranteed. Furthermore, there is no scheduled regular cleaning of SRC spaces on weekends. Limited after-hours access (overnight and on weekends) will only be allowed for personnel to perform critical or time-sensitive activities or to access particularly high-demand, specialized equipment.

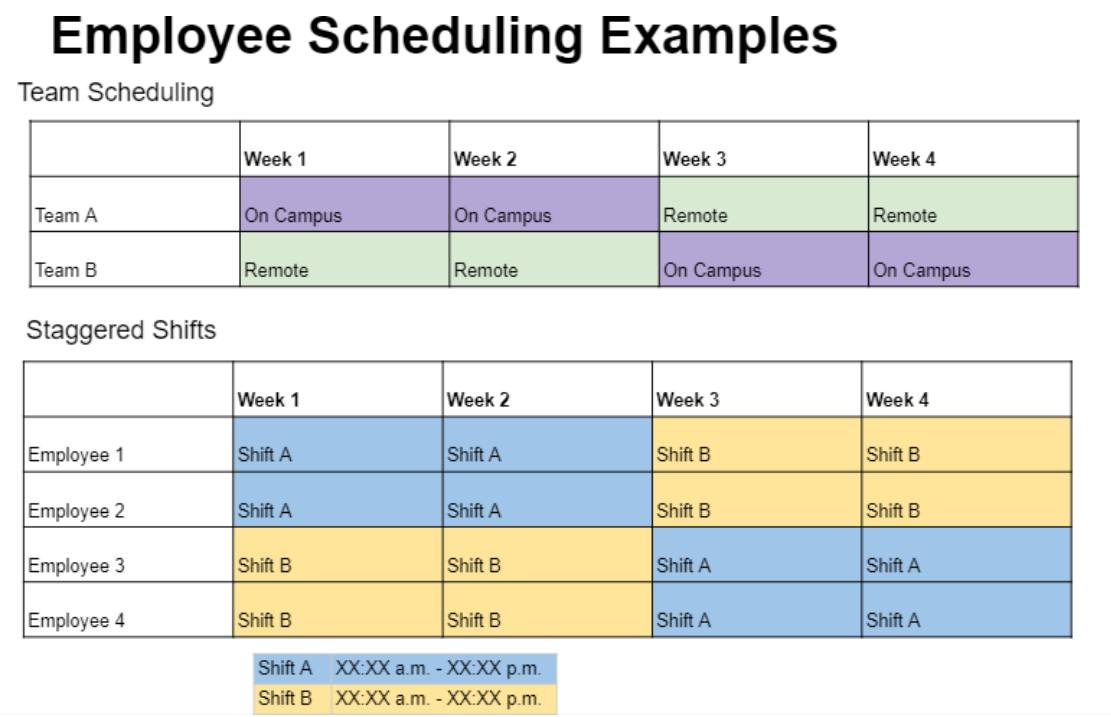
In cases of shared SRC facilities or spaces, **all faculty members** affiliated with the space must approve the Safe SRC Plan for that space. Planning, consultation and coordination amongst faculty members are crucial in this regard. In cases of shared or collaborative SRC spaces with many faculty members participating (e.g., iBEST, MaRS, Ryerson Analytical Facility, The Catalyst), the striking of a Safe SRC Planning Committee, with representation from participating faculty members as appropriate to the space, is advisable. This committee would coordinate planning around access to shared spaces and equipment and develop a comprehensive Safe SRC Plan for the space that recognizes interdependencies in terms of scheduling and occupancy levels. The committee could also act as an internal mechanism for enforcement and troubleshooting.

- Create an online schedule and log to track access to SRC facilities or shared pieces of equipment or infrastructure. These schedules/logs are crucial to maintaining orderly access. In addition, they help to facilitate contact tracing should there be a positive case of COVID-19 at Ryerson.
- Only personnel with a need to access physical locations to advance SRC activities should be on-site. Even those personnel should minimize time on campus as much as possible and restrict their activities to those requiring on-campus SRC facility access. They should do other work remotely. All other personnel should remain working at home to help maintain physical distancing. Meetings should be conducted remotely.
- Only those SRC activities that can be safely accomplished while maintaining physical distancing should be considered, and personnel must have the capacity and capability to perform the SRC activities without constant, close oversight or mentorship.
- SRC activities requiring hands-on training will require a Safe SRC Plan that identifies and mitigates common risks in the training environment (e.g., close shadowing over the shoulder, co-observing equipment or screens, etc.). For training activities, physical distancing should be observed whenever possible, and where impossible, other safety

measures including physical barriers (plexiglass) or appropriate PPE (face masks or coverings, face shields, goggles, etc.) should be utilized.

- Recognize and try to mitigate structural barriers that might exacerbate or create inequities in terms of access to facilities or equipment for certain groups of individuals.
- Be sensitive to the home conditions of research personnel in devising work schedules, including limitations that might prevent participation in on-campus activities (e.g., child care, care for family members, etc.) or cases where working remotely might not be conducive to the productivity or the mental health or wellness of students or other research personnel (e.g., limited connectivity or computing resources, difficult personal situations, etc.).

The below sample scheduling calendar is provided for your reference.



Employee Scheduling Examples

Team Scheduling

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Team A	On Campus	On Campus	Remote	Remote
Team B	Remote	Remote	On Campus	On Campus

Staggered Shifts

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Employee 1	Shift A	Shift A	Shift B	Shift B
Employee 2	Shift A	Shift A	Shift B	Shift B
Employee 3	Shift B	Shift B	Shift A	Shift A
Employee 4	Shift B	Shift B	Shift A	Shift A

Shift A	XX:XX a.m. - XX:XX p.m.
Shift B	XX:XX a.m. - XX:XX p.m.

Source: Human Resources, Ryerson University

3. **Employ simple engineering solutions to avoid the proximity of personnel and opportunities for virus transmission.**

Some locations may require the reconfiguration of interior space (where possible and easily accomplished) to relieve bottlenecks and maintain space between research personnel. FMD personnel can be on hand to plan and assist with moving simple equipment or fixtures in SRC spaces.

Ryerson has potential options for the provision of plexiglass shields or other in-house manufactured solutions that can limit potential for viral transmission. Departments or faculty

members should consult with their EHS representative in determining the appropriate use and procurement of engineering solutions.

Ryerson has created a suite of signage that can be placed within and outside the SRC space(s) and used to remind personnel of physical distancing, Ryerson's face mask policy, and to direct traffic, etc.

4. **Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE).**

Regular PPE, which is required based on safe lab practices (e.g., lab coat, gloves, closed-toe shoes, safety glasses, etc.), is different from PPE that may be considered during COVID-19.

Primary controls for COVID-19 infection prevention and control (physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and surface disinfection) should be implemented before considering additional PPE as a control strategy. In the event that these controls cannot be maintained in your workplace, as a last resort, additional PPE may be necessary. Before additional PPE is considered, contact EHS at ehs@ryerson.ca for consultation.

EHS, FMD and HR have worked to develop the SRC Facilities Pre-start Health and Safety Checklist for SRC Spaces, studios, and workshops to help guide faculty in restarting their SRC facilities as well as considerations and instructions to abide by in developing their own Safe SRC Plan. Please note that these documents provide general guidance only, and that the specifics of each individual space might dictate unique requirements or solutions. **Faculty members must be responsible for the development of their own Safe SRC Plan as they are best positioned to speak to the specifics of their facilities and spaces.**

SRC activities proposed to take place in Ryerson-leased spaces must adhere to local building rules and regulations, in addition to the guidance provided by Ryerson. Faculty should contact their local leasing representative to ascertain any requirements, processes or rules that need to be abided by when developing their Safe SRC Plan, and ensure that personnel are aware and compliant.

Faculty members will be responsible for ensuring adherence and compliance with the approved Safe SRC Plan and with all other prevailing safety and security protocols normally in place with regards to workplace safety, hazardous materials or biohazards/biosafety, and research integrity and/or compliance. Faculty members, as well as all approved personnel, are responsible for reporting any non-compliance through existing processes.

Process for Acquiring SRC Facility Access

1. Faculty member(s) must develop and complete their Safe SRC Plan using the Ryerson University Safe SRC Plan Form and the accompanying SRC Facilities Pre-start Health and Safety Checklist document in consultation with any other users of common areas or equipment. Faculty members are to consult with students and other identified personnel to confirm willingness to undertake the proposed on-campus SRC activities and have them complete the Informed Consent for Participation in SRC Activities form.

2. Should the proposed SRC activities be unable to conform to physical distancing standards or have other perceived increased risks in light of COVID-19, faculty members should consult with their local EHS representative in developing their Safe SRC Plans.
3. Faculty members must submit their Safe SRC Plan by emailing a copy of the form to their relevant Chair/Director to begin the approval process. There are three levels of approval: (1) first-level approval by the relevant Chair/Director; (2) second-level approval by the relevant Dean (or designate); and (3) final approval by the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (VPRI). The rate of approvals will be limited and prioritized to ensure a safe and cautious return to SRC activities in Ryerson buildings in accordance with FMD/EHS and local situations.
4. Once the Safe SRC Plan has been sent to the Chair, faculty must fill out the Request for Access - Limited On-Campus SRC Activity Google Form.
5. Upon approval of the Safe SRC Plan, FMD will begin an inspection and cleaning of the approved space(s). This process might take up to 2 weeks depending on the volume of requests, issues uncovered, and other priorities FMD might have in relation to the broader campus.
6. The faculty member(s) will be advised that their request has been approved and that they can return to their space. The faculty member (or appropriate designate) should first inspect the space and ensure it is in proper order to accommodate the Safe SRC Plan, post signage, distribute sanitation and cleaning supplies, and make simple engineering modifications. Only when satisfied should the faculty member allow a return of approved students and personnel to the SRC space in accordance with the approved Safe SRC Plan.
7. From time to time, the Department/School and Faculty, EHS/FMD, and OVPRI representatives may perform spot checks on approved SRC facilities to monitor progress, ensure adherence with the approved Safe SRC Plan, and to troubleshoot any emerging issues or concerns. EHS will also consider COVID-19 safety precautions during their normal laboratory safety inspections (biosafety, radiation, x-ray and laser labs) or in the course of their normal activities.

Process for Making Revisions to Safe SRC Plans

For incidental amendments and updates to their Safe SRC Plans, such as the addition or removal of personnel, faculty members must ensure that they:

1. Update their existing approved Safe SRC Plan Form with the updated list of personnel and SRC activities, mitigation plans and calendar/schedules, highlighting changes since last approval.
2. Submit for approval via e-mail to their relevant Chair/Director. There are two levels of approval: 1) Chair/Director; 2) Dean (or designate). Upon Dean-level approval, the approved revised form is sent to the OVPRI to update the central access database.

Revisions constituting significant changes to existing, approved SRC activities will be considered new applications and will follow the original 3-stage approval process utilizing the Safe SRC Plan Form.

Other Important Considerations

Group gatherings related to SRC activities should be restricted to City of Toronto mandated limits on gathering sizes. Other meetings should be conducted virtually.

Permissions for on-campus research are contingent on the availability of essential services, such as management and operations, and custodial services, as well as the availability of necessary supplies for SRC facilities, for example any PPE that might be mandated by Ryerson (e.g., Ryerson's policy on face masks) or the province.

Many departmental or school general offices may continue to operate remotely and campus food services will remain closed or operate under reduced hours. Many local restaurants and amenities in the community are also either closed or operating under reduced hours.

While working remotely, the Ryerson Research Ethics team continues to function normally and provide service to Ryerson's SRC community. They are available to review new protocols as well as amendments to approved protocols. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, they have seen an increased demand for these services, so researchers should plan ahead.

For guidelines related to the resumption of human participant SRC activity, please refer to the Principles and Guidance for the Limited Return of Critical Human Participant / Field SRC Activities.

Researchers who require animal facilities for their research should be in contact with their service provider to understand restrictions that are in place, and to coordinate SRC activity planning accordingly.