

Dear Graduate Students:

We understand that some graduate students are faced with difficult decisions regarding whether to leave University of Toronto campuses, and/or the city, and return home, given the increasing challenges with travel arrangements and advice around social distancing. While each student has a unique set of circumstances and will have to evaluate their own situation, the University is taking steps to ensure most graduate activity can continue to take place without having to be present on campus. Here is an update on where things currently stand:

## Graduate Courses

As of March 16 and continuing until at least April 3, all graduate courses across U of T's three campuses are being delivered through alternative means (which may include existing online platforms). Students are receiving details about courses and revised session dates from their graduate program directly. Please contact [your program](#) with any questions.

## Departmental Examinations

Most departmental examinations (e.g. qualifying, comprehensive, and/or general examinations) can take place without physical presence. More information will follow from your graduate program regarding arrangements for the completion of departmental examinations in your program.

## Placements, Internships and Other Program Requirements

Please refer to your graduate program for further information.

## Final Oral Examinations for Doctoral Students

For doctoral students with scheduled final oral examinations, SGS will make [accommodations](#) to allow these examinations to proceed as scheduled without physical presence. Alternatively, we will offer the option of postponement.

## Graduate Research

We understand that this is a highly stressful time for many of you and we remain committed to providing you with highly engaged academic support. The University is advising that all lab-based research operations must be shut down no later than 5 PM, Friday March 20, 2020, other than critical COVID-19 research and time-sensitive critical projects. Other research settings, including many off-campus sites, are also shutting down. Please stay informed of the status of activities in your own research setting. In many cases, plans for future research may also need to be changed and contingency plans developed. Consult with your research supervisor about your planning. Please also consult the [website](#) of the Office of Vice-President Research and Innovation which will be updated daily.

## Students in International Locations

The University is monitoring developments involving COVID-19, including the [Canadian government's latest advisory](#) that it is time to return to your home country. If you are a graduate student undertaking university activity outside of Canada and are registered with U of T Safety Abroad, you will have received a message from Safety Abroad recently. Safety Abroad has heard from many of you. If you have not yet responded, please do so.

Please note that the Government of Canada has announced that non-Canadians and non-Permanent Residents of Canada will not be able to enter Canada on flights scheduled to arrive after 12:00 p.m., March 18, 2020. Safety Abroad is supporting travel adjustments and students who have already responded to the recent message do not need to resend. Safety Abroad will reach out to you if you have completed the form for a flight. If you have booked your own flight, please send Safety Abroad a copy of your ticket and let them know when you have safely landed. You may be able to apply for emergency bursary support to assist with additional travel costs. If you are registered with U of T Safety Abroad and have not received an email, please check your @mail.utoronto.ca email inbox and respond as soon as possible.

If you are currently outside Canada on university activity and have not registered with U of T Safety Abroad, please contact [safety.abroad@utoronto.ca](mailto:safety.abroad@utoronto.ca) immediately. If you are returning or have just returned to Canada, please follow public health guidance for 14-days of self-isolation.

## Libraries and Graduate Spaces

Selected libraries remain open, with limited hours, limited services, social distancing measures, and with access restricted to U of T users. For up to date information, please refer to the University of Toronto Libraries [COVID-19 webpage](#). All University buildings will be closed as of 11:59 p.m., March 17, 2020 to the general public, members of the University community will need key or fob access to enter the buildings or present University identification to campus security. We advise all students to practice social distancing in line with the advice given by [Public Health authorities](#). Please consider carefully how this advice applies to your own circumstances and adjust your routines accordingly.

## Graduate Funding and TAs

Funded graduate students, including those on stipends, will continue to receive their funding packages as stated in their funding letters. Current TA contracts may need to be adjusted to reflect the fact that undergraduate courses are no longer in-person, but the overall number of hours allocated in the contracts will not be reduced.

## Emergency Funds

If you are experiencing immediate financial hardship, you can apply for an SGS [emergency loan](#) or [emergency grant](#). We are usually able to pay out emergency loans within 24-hours and emergency grants within one week.

## SGS Student Services

SGS operations continue with modifications in how we deliver our services. We are now offering virtual and phone appointments in lieu of in-person appointments. Full updates are available at [sgs.utoronto.ca/covid19](https://sgs.utoronto.ca/covid19).

## Your Safety and Community Safety

The University's response is guided by the need to ensure the health of our community and, as much as possible, the continuity of our graduate activities. **If you feel compelled by anyone to do something that, under the circumstances, feels unsafe, please contact your graduate Chair immediately to seek resolution. You may also contact the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies directly at [sgs.dean@utoronto.ca](mailto:sgs.dean@utoronto.ca).**

## Accessibility

Graduate students registered with Accessibility Services should continue to contact Accessibility Services to receive accommodations and supports.

## Monitoring COVID-19 Updates

We will update this SGS [page](#) regularly with important updates for U of T's graduate community. Check the University of Toronto's [coronavirus updates](#) and [frequently asked questions](#) pages for updates relevant to the whole U of T community, including links to travel advisories and public health guidance on self-isolation. It is also important to stay up to date with the advice provided by your [department/Faculty](#).

We know this situation brings a whole new level of stress for everyone – and some will feel this harder than others. Please know that if you are struggling, there are excellent resources you can use. The University has a [list of helpful Quick Links to health resources](#).

Sincerely,

Joshua Barker  
Dean, School of Graduate Studies and  
Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education