



November 10, 2021

Dear Members of the McMaster Community,

As we continue our planning for the winter 2022 term we thought it would be helpful to revisit and update the principles that McMaster has been following since the pandemic began.

The University's long-term commitment to our Vaccination Policy, to the health and safety of everyone at the University, and to the experience of our students continues to guide all of our decisions. We recognize how much has been done by so many to accomplish these goals and you have our greatest thanks.

As we plan the winter academic program and the ongoing return to campus for faculty and staff, it is important to remember that we need to do more than return to campus. We need to return to strengthening the sense of community that drives intellectual curiosity, inspires students, encourages creativity, and makes McMaster an exciting and successful University. The revised McMaster Guiding Framework outlined below reinforces these goals.

One of the challenges we need to face together is how to build community while not losing the benefits we've discovered from connecting with colleagues on Zoom and managing to find the balance between our work and our lives beyond work.

There is tremendous value in being on campus or on site at other McMaster locations. We need to be present for our students, our colleagues, and our broader community. A University is not a collection of buildings. A University is a collection of people all striving for excellence and learning as much from a hallway conversation as from a formal meeting.

The principles for Back to Mac include flexibility to support individuals and departments to achieve their goals. Units are developing approaches that will work for their areas, including pilot projects on ways to share work spaces, balance schedules, and manage meetings when people are in various locations. But the principle of strengthening our campus community is equally important. Ultimately it is what will allow McMaster to demonstrate that it is a resilient, caring, and an inspiring community of students, faculty, and staff who together can continue to change the world.

We have all been managing through the pandemic for a very long time. Many people at the University have been onsite throughout the pandemic when the University was very quiet. Others are adjusting to returning to campus or the idea of coming back to the University. Thank you for supporting your colleagues throughout these transitions. Our thanks as well for doing your part in keeping McMaster safe by getting your vaccinations. It is these actions that are allowing the University to come 'Back to Mac' and we are excited about what the future holds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DFR", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Farrar  
President and Vice-Chancellor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan F. Tighe", written in a cursive style.

Susan Tighe  
Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

**McMaster Guiding Framework for Planning Decisions During the Pandemic  
(updated November 2021)**

1. *For the 2021/22 academic year, we will continue to deliver on the academic and research mission of the University, while prioritizing the health, safety, and well-being of all members of our community.*
2. *In doing so, we will remain focused on supporting and enabling the success of our students, delivering a high-quality learning environment and overall student experience.*
3. *Our goal is to welcome new and returning students back to campus as soon as this can be done safely and in accordance with Public Health guidance and government protocols.*
4. *We will support return to work plans that deliver our programs, support our students, learning and research, and enhance McMaster's sense of community.*
5. *While activities and people will return to their McMaster location in the new year, we support flexible arrangements that will strengthen the ability for people to contribute to the success of their students, programs, and departments.*
6. *We will maintain our focus on research excellence and on supporting the work of our researchers across all disciplines, as well as enabling and advancing our long history of creativity and innovation.*
7. *We will continue to uphold our core University values, principles, and policies, including our focus on inclusivity, accommodation, and respect for one another, and our collegial decision-making processes. Any revisions or updating of policies will continue to be developed through the University's pre-existing governance processes.*
8. *We will continue to make fiscally prudent decisions that support our ongoing stability and success as an institution, balancing risk with opportunity.*
9. *We will continue to work together as a community to support our students, faculty, and staff across the University and will ensure that information, plans, and decisions are communicated clearly and promptly.*