

Memo to introduce the UGME COVID-19 Examination Safety & Prevention Protocol

As we had the chance to discuss at prior class meetings, UGME will be holding the next upcoming final examinations in-person on campus. We have shared with you our rationale behind that decision:

- Ensuring academic integrity,
- Providing fair and equitable assessment to all students,
- Committing to patient safety,
- Providing quality assessment.

In-person final examinations are only one type of in-person learning activities that UGME worked to organize for you during the fall semester. Other examples include:

- (for Med 1s only) anatomy labs, LFME clinical sessions, US sessions, one PA meeting
- (for Med 2s only) anatomy labs, RAC segment of CM II
- (for Med 3s only) MMP course (med 2 course), simulation center skills sessions, clinical activities
- (for Med 4s only) simulation center skills sessions, clinical activities.

We certainly would have wished to offer more, however at the time, these were the essential learning activities identified and that we were able to organize in person. In-person final examinations have been in the UGME plan for the fall semester since the beginning of the summer and approved by all university committees mid-July, but unfortunately, due to logistical challenges, we were not able to move to in-person final examinations until now.

Based on your input, McGill guidelines and Public Health Recommendations, please find attached the UGME COVID-19 Examination Safety & Prevention Protocol. The exact arrival schedule for your specific exam will be provided to you closer to your exam date. As a compliment to the protocol, we also created a FAQs based on your questions and other possible scenarios.

Some of you have expressed concerns about in-person examinations, and we hope that this protocol will highlight all the measures put in place to ensure your safety. We took your feedback seriously and will be requiring that all students, administrators, and invigilators present during an exam wear a mask.

(For Med 1s and Med 2s only). We also re-looked at the administration procedures for the anatomy exam with the anatomy teachers and were able to come up with a remote administration procedure that would ensure that the four principles outlined in the first paragraph are respected. This will represent a slight change to the way that anatomy exam was run remotely in your last block. Like the typical anatomy exam held in the anatomy lab (prior to the pandemic), 'a bell-ringer' system will be used for the remote anatomy exam. This means that the students will have a pre-determined amount of time to answer and all students will move to the next question (with no possibility to go back to the previous question).

UGME Exams FAQs

1. We are concerned about taking Public Transit, especially if the commute is long.

In addition to wearing a mask at all times while using public transit, please find tips to prevent transmission in the Public Transit as suggested by the Quebec government: -maintaining a 2 m distance with other passengers when possible and:

- Avoid touching surfaces except if necessary
- Avoid eating or drinking in public transit
- Avoid touching one's own face during public transit
- Wash your hands upon exiting from public transit.

2. What are the explicit contingency plans if there is a COVID exposure event given quick turnaround between exams?

As the anatomy exam for med 1s and med 2s will be remote, there will be no risk if a student were to develop symptoms compatible with COVID-19 after the first exam. Evidently, if a student were to develop these symptoms less than 48 hours from being on campus, the student MUST call 398-3000 and follow public health and [McGill procedures for reporting COVID-19 infection](#).

3. If there is an exposure during an in-person exam, does everybody get tested?

As students will be wearing appropriate PPE during the in-person exam and that social distancing will be maintained, this will not constitute a high or medium risk contact, but a low risk contact. For more information about the definitions of low/medium/high risk contacts, please look at [McGill Potential COVID-19 exposure website](#).

4. If a student gets tested for COVID before the exam, but is still awaiting results, what happens?

Any person awaiting a COVID test result cannot come on campus, except if specifically advised that they can come to campus as per Public Health or Occupation Health and Safety Office of a clinical site (for clerks or practising healthcare workers, this particular situation could occur if, for example, a student requires COVID testing prior to going to a rural rotation and is not symptomatic). A student in such a situation will not be allowed to come to campus to write their exam, therefore, the exam will be deferred. The student will need to submit an absence request in the Absences & Leaves platform and submit proof of COVID testing (indicating the date that the test was done as an equivalent to the medical certificate required when absent on an exam) by email to studentleaves.med@mcgill.ca.

5. If a student lives with someone who is awaiting a COVID test result, what happens?

The student must follow the instructions of their local Public Health Authority. If the person that the student lives with is declared positive, the student must follow the [Instructions for people who have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19](#).

6. If a student has children who are sent home due to COVID at their school, what happens?

If a student's child is positive for COVID-19 infection, the same instructions apply to the student as in the question above. If a student's child was sent home because of an outbreak at school but the child

himself/herself doesn't have a confirmed COVID-19 infection or COVID-19 compatible symptoms, then the student does not need to self-isolate, except if told otherwise by Public Health. When in doubt, the student should contact his/her local public health for instructions. Having said that, some students may not be able to find a babysitter or someone to look after their child on the exam date and may need exam deferral. In this situation, a student should reach out to the WELL Office.

7. If a student has symptoms on the day before or morning of, what to do?

If a student develops COVID-19 symptoms the day prior to the exam, the student must follow local Public Health Instructions and get tested. Quebec offers an online [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#). Proof of testing (confirming that the student went to be tested on date x) can replace a medical certificate required for an absence on an exam. The student must submit prior to the start of this exam this absence with the supporting documentation. If a student develops COVID symptoms the morning of the exam, the student must follow local Public Health Instructions and get tested. As the timing is short, the student must inform by e-mail the applicable UGME administrator as indicated in the exam communication received in the Info MDCM, submit their absence in the Absences & Leaves Platform prior to the start of the examination and provide supporting documentation following the testing.

8. How will it be ensured that students are not penalized (e.g. having to come in during the holidays) for being responsible and not potentially exposing their classmates given the somewhat non-specific symptoms COVID can have?

A student following the instructions above will have their exam rescheduled. There is no impact on the student's grade.

9. How will it be ensured that students with symptoms do not present to the exam?

Students must answer a health questionnaire upon entrance of a McGill building. If a student presents COVID-19 compatible symptoms, the entrance to the building will be refused. It is unprofessional to lie and negate present symptoms. This type of behavior puts the health of everyone at risk. A student will be flagged for professionalism lapse if found to have made a false declaration.

10. Will students who have academic accommodations via the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) be able to be accommodated?

UGME will put in place the accommodations approved by OSD for students who requested them and had them approved. There has been regular discussion between UGME and OSD since this summer to ensure that all measures were put in place.

11. What if a student is immunocompromised? Are there possible accommodations?

Given that all the safety and prevention measures are respected, that wearing a mask is compulsory for all individuals present during an in person exam and that social distancing will be maintained during the exam, there is no accommodation for the exam itself. Given that one location requires taking an elevator, a student who is immunocompromised may be accommodated to take the elevator alone (and not with other people – maximum of 4 people per elevator as per regulations). A student who is

immunocompromised and would like to request this accommodation needs to reach out to the WELL Office.

12. What if a student lives with someone who is at higher risk of COVID-19 complications or is immunocompromised?

Given that all the safety and prevention measures are respected, that wearing a mask is compulsory for all individuals present during an in person exam and that social distancing will be maintained during the exam, there is no accommodation possible for students in this situation.

13. What about exam anxiety, which can be an OSD accommodation pre-COVID?

Academic accommodations related to exam anxiety are determined by the OSD based on the same analysis as before. Students need to follow the OSD procedures as outlined on [OSD website](#).

14. For in person exams, we have been told that if we have any symptoms of COVID, that we can't come to campus. Because our exams are so close together, how will make-up exams be administered if we cannot come?

It is correct that a student presenting COVID-19 compatible symptoms will not be allowed on campus. What to do in such a situation is explained at question 7. Make up exams will be scheduled at a later time when it will be possible for students to write their exams. The same holds true for remedial exams. If a student were to fail a final exam, a remedial exam would be scheduled when the student is not presenting COVID-19 symptoms. Make up and remedial exams are held in the same modality as the original exam, thus if the final exam was in person, the make up or remedial exam will be held in person.

15. What do we do if we live with someone who has tested positive, been exposed to someone with COVID19, or has COVID19 symptoms, but we are asymptomatic?

If the person that the student lives with is declared positive, the student must follow the [Instructions for people who have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19](#) and this means starting self-isolation and going for testing as soon as the person is found positive. If the person is still waiting for their result, the student should verify with their local public health, as the recommendation will depend on the symptomatology of the person.

16. I do understand the concern of academic integrity, but still finds that there are some risks to hold in person examinations. Many students feel this decision is arbitrary (why now? what significant difference will this one time make) and is very inappropriate timing during a high infection rate period.

The decision to move towards in person final examinations was taken and approved through the various university committees months ago. Unfortunately, it was not possible to put into action this decision sooner as we were only able to secure adequate rooms on campus very recently. Last spring, when the first wave broke, it was not possible to have any in person learning activities. As the pandemic evolved and recommendations changed, planning for the fall semester occurred and essential in person learning activities were permitted, even when most regions in Quebec are in the red alert. Safety procedures have been adapted to the latest recommendations. For example, wearing a mask during this exam is a rule consistent with the latest recommendations. In-person final examinations were identified as essential in person learning activities as other activities such as LFME clinical sessions, anatomy labs, simulation center

skills sessions to name some. We are committed to providing a safe learning environment and maintaining the quality of our educational program.