**Future of Post-pandemic 'WorkSpace' Planning at University of Toronto
Tri-Campus Working Group**

Date Initiated: 2021-06-28
Updated: 2022-11-09
Institutional Guidelines and Best Practices

Context

It has been over two years since the World Health Organization declared CoVID-19 a global pandemic. Overnight, the way we work was, for many, upended and ever since we have all adapted as best we can. Fluid work practices have normalized over this period with both benefits and challenges arising out of this new normal.

The future of the work environment is now being examined the world over. There is no lack of articles, opinion pieces, or expert interviews and panel discussions on the subject of how the pandemic has change the landscape of workspace planning in the future, and we are all learning as we go.

In parallel to the review of the workspace planning, People Strategy, Equity & Culture continues to update, review, and formalize alternative work arrangements through the Alternative Work Arrangement Guideline. The WorkSpace Group will continue to consider how our new and existing spaces can be configured to effectively optimize space from a physical, technical and operational planning perspective in coordination with alternative work arrangements.

Objectives

Developing a tri-campus approach that provides some long-term institutional consistency while acknowledging divisional, departmental, and campus individuality is key to addressing variability across diverse workspace environments as we plan for a flexible, adaptable approach to the way in which we work through renovations and future major capital projects.

To this end, this WorkSpace Group has developed guidelines and best practices that help direct the University in decision-making on the type of space(s) to build, renovate and rehabilitate that will be most beneficial to the broader institution. The initial implementation of projects following these guidelines will focus upon central and academic administrative offices and support areas. These projects will be strategically evaluated upon their completion, such that they can further inform institutional best practices for subsequent projects into the future, including academic office areas.

The need to maximize utilization of our institution's spaces is all the more paramount given the volatility of the construction market that has arisen in the years since the pandemic was declared. Efficient planning and usage of existing spaces and future projects is a critical objective.

Guidelines and Best Practices

The WorkSpace Group proposes the following guidelines and best practices to help encourage and empower divisions, departments, and campuses to approach new capital projects and existing space renovations over the long-term. These guiding principles focus on matters of physical space planning and are both supported and impacted by technical and operational works by other University offices (ex: Information Technology Services; People Strategy, Equity & Culture; etc). They are intended to be in effect through the academic year 2022-23, after which they will be thoroughly re-evaluated as to what to maintain and what to adjust moving forward.

1. To promote the efficient and optimal use of University space, staff implementing an Alternative Work Arrangement (AWA) will normally be expected to share on-campus workspace. The type of sharing arrangement will be determined at a divisional and departmental level. This could include:

    i. fixed sharing – staff timeshare an assigned individual workspace with one or more fellow staff members; or,

    ii. hotelling – staff schedule use of an unassigned individual workspace on a dynamic basis prior to coming to their on-campus workspace.

    Note that sharing is expected to apply to both enclosed offices and open stations. In the case of offices, the method of sharing may include recalibration of the function of the space (eg. an office may be used as a collaborative meeting space during times when not in use as an individual workspace).

2. In the event 50% or more of a division or department's staffing count is expected to share on-campus workspace, it is anticipated that the division or department should initiate a re-imagining of their office's physical space plan, with consideration of the following:

    o a target number of individual workspaces that will reflect no greater than 80% of the total staffing count; and,

    o Dedicated individual workspace for staff members working on-campus full-time.

3. Normally, the size of workspaces shall aspire towards a modular approach to space planning. Below are average area targets for select typical workspaces. These average area targets should be optimized within the parameters of a project's space. Additional workspace typologies (ex. staff amenity spaces) can be included in the modular based on the specific needs of individual divisions / departments:

    ▪ ~11 net-assignable square metres (NASM) for enclosed offices that accommodate individual work with the capacity to host meetings with 1-2 in-person guests

- ~11 nasm for enclosed collaborative meeting spaces that accommodate 4-6 in-person users

- ~5.5 nasm for enclosed offices that accommodate individual work

- ~5.5 nasm for open workstations that accommodate individual work

- ~5.5 nasm for small collaborative rooms envisioned to be used for in-person 2 user meetings or as a private space for an individual to join meetings virtually

4. Workspaces dedicated to individual staff members working on campus full-time may be located in preferable areas of a division or department's office.

5. In the case of planning new major Capital Projects, the University Planning, Design, and Construction (UPDC) Office will work to ensure the Terms of Reference and Project Planning Report reflect the consideration of these Guidelines and Best Practices.

6. In the case of planning existing space renovations, the project's team will work to determine the:

- feasibility of reflecting these guidelines and best practices within the existing space. This may require study by an external consultant to determine factors such as occupancy, HVAC and electrical capacity, etc; and,

- plans for any physical space no longer required by a division or department.

7. UPDC Interior Designers can advise on and/or lead implementation of quality furniture solutions supporting new and renovated office spaces. For planning purposes, furniture solutions should work within the modular approach to physical space outlined above. Normally this would include the following:
   a. Individual workspace (dedicated or shared):
      o 4'-0" minimum width height adjustable desk (automated & extended range)
      o 6'-0" wide fixed height side table
      o task chair
      o under desk storage unit
      o clamp on adjustable monitor arm(s)
      o monitor(s)
      o clamp on power module
      o docking station

   b. Each staff member will have access to a dedicated lockable storage unit within their division or department's office space.

8. A staff member being assigned to a new office space will have access to training sessions focussed on introducing the physical space and any associated technological and operational practices.

END