Letterhead / Logo inserted here

July 28, 2021 **BY EMAIL** (ENTER EMAIL ADDRESS HERE)

Insert Name

Insert Title

Insert Mailing Address

Insert City, Province, Postal Code

Dear Insert Name:

**Re: Safe September Reopening in Post-Secondary Education Organizations**

The pandemic isn’t over. SARS-CoV2 and its variants are still circulating in the community, able to cause COVID-19 after exposure and infection. Should there be a resurgence in the number of cases of COVID-19, it is anticipated to occur in the Fall as people start returning and remaining indoors for longer periods of time. For this reason, it is crucial that we be prepared for that possibility and to ensure that we have safe shared air and safe shared space so that research and teaching may resume safely. Ultimately, that is the goal.

The World Health Organization[[1]](#endnote-1), the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention[[2]](#endnote-2) and the Public Health Agency of Canada[[3]](#endnote-3) have indicated that the risks of transmission of COVID-19 include inhaling COVID-19 aerosols from a person who is breathing, talking, sneezing, coughing, singing and shouting.

In principle, the COVID-19 vaccination status of an individual is important when that individual is exposed to SARS-CoV2. In the occupational context, the inference is that the vaccination status of an individual is important when the infection prevention and control methods have not been successful at preventing a worker’s exposure to the SARS-CoV2. After the exposure, whether an illness develops is now a medical question answered by testing or the development of symptoms. Vaccination means that a worker is harder to infect, and that in the event that infection does occur, the illness would be less severe and of shorter duration. While still being effective against the variants of concerns, current vaccine formulations have a reduced efficacy when compared to the wild-type strain of SARS-CoV2[[4]](#endnote-4). In addition, it is difficult to appreciate how post-secondary education organizations could ensure that everyone who could be found on campus is vaccinated for a myriad of reasons, logistical, medical, human rights or otherwise.

Therefore, it is important to ensure that public health measures remain in effect until they are lifted. For this reason, CUPE Local XXX is asking that meetings of the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) be scheduled during the summer to ensure that risks of transmission are properly evaluated to consider those areas and tasks where workers may interact with students or members of the public in conditions that could be favourable to aerosol transmission.

Those conditions that are favourable to aerosol transmission of COVID-19 include;

* where there is close contact (within 2 metres),
* where there is continuous exposure (more than 15 minutes),
* where there is repeated exposure (people who work with members of the public, for example),
* where individuals are not wearing face coverings,
* where the indoor environment is cool, closed or with inadequate ventilation,
* where there are crowded conditions.

We are asking that the JHSC be provided with current copies of the risk assessments for COVID-19 transmission that contemplates the known and identified risks. In addition, the JHSC should also be provided with evidence that the implemented programs are maintained so that they can evaluate if there are still situations that could still pose risks to the health and safety of workers.

This is important work and crucial to ensuring that another wave of COVID-19 does not become a reality in post-secondary education organizations.

Sincerely,

Insert signature here

Insert Name

Insert Title

1. https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-how-is-it-transmitted [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html#vaccination

   lf/cope 491 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)