

**University of Saskatchewan
Guide for (H1N1) 2009 Pandemic Influenza
Academic Unit Planners**

September 29, 2009

This document has been prepared by the Crisis Operations Team to assist academic unit planners in preparing for (H1N1) 2009.

FINAL VERSION

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CONTEXT

Public Health authorities anticipate that most people who become ill with (H1N1) 2009 influenza will experience flu symptoms for four to seven days. Not all students or faculty will become ill at the same time, which will result in a series of “rolling” absences in most classes.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) states that to help reduce transmission between ill persons and those who are healthy, prompt recognition of symptoms and early self-isolation (stay home) of symptomatic individuals is key. Individuals with influenza-like illness (ILI) should self-isolate until symptoms are resolved and they are able to participate fully in day to day activities. Symptoms are usually resolved in seven days or less.

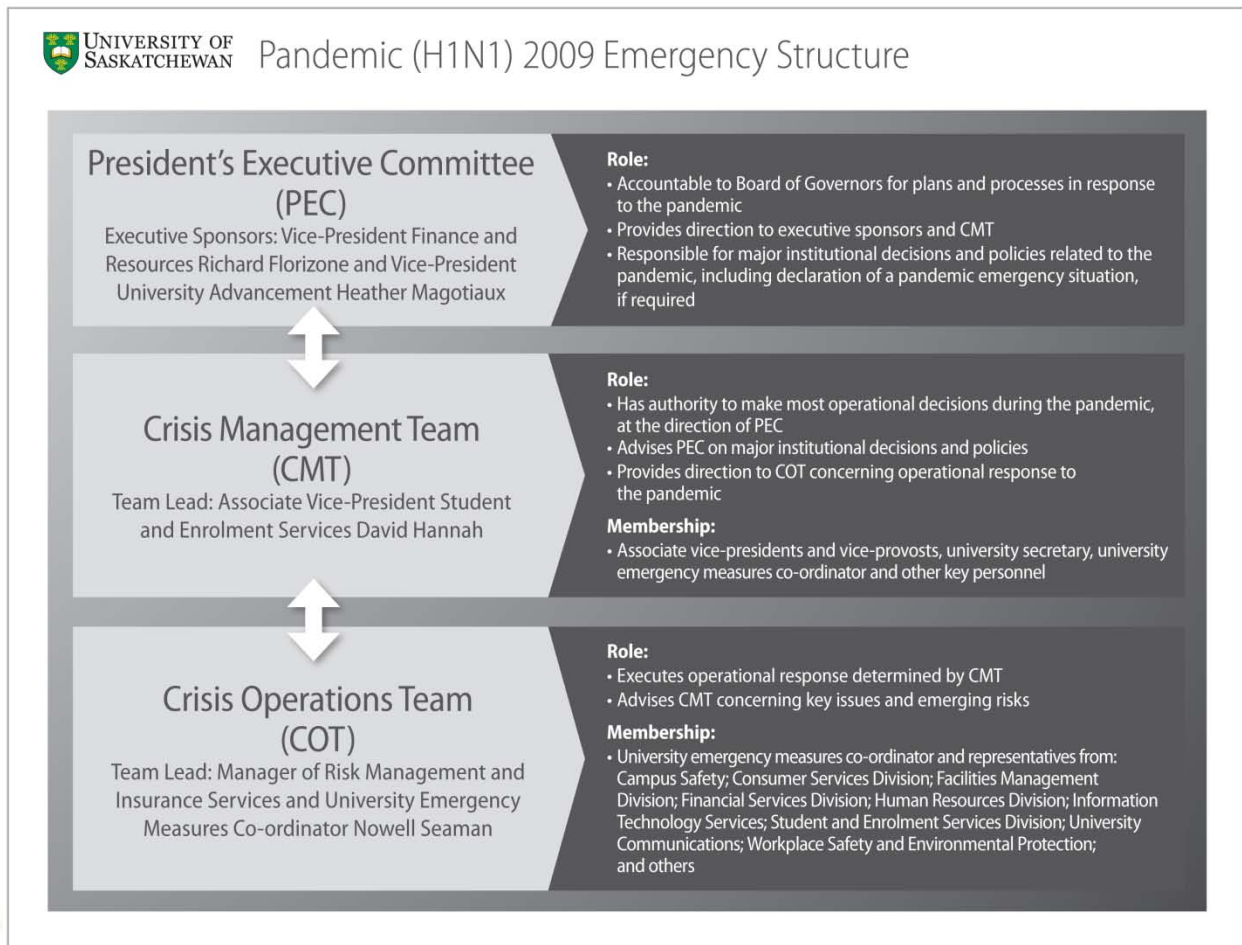
All university colleges and units must create their own pandemic plans which will become part of the university's overall pandemic plan. This abbreviated guide has been created to assist college pandemic planners across campus in focusing on academic continuity.

- The U of S will follow the lead of the World Health Organization (WHO), Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health and the Saskatoon Health Region in guiding our response to a pandemic.
- Historically, influenza pandemics occur in a series of waves. Canada experienced the first wave of (H1N1) 2009 during May-July 2009. A second more serious wave is anticipated sometime in the fall or winter of 2009. Subsequent waves may occur sometime in 2010 or later.
- Absentee rates for students and employees during a pandemic wave may vary significantly, depending on infection rates, severity of the disease, and effectiveness of infection control and other factors. For planning purposes, **unit plans initially should assume that the second wave of (H1N1) 2009 could result in a 15% absentee rate for a duration of several weeks during the fall, 2009 or winter 2010 terms. However, planners need to consider the possibility for more serious scenarios with absentee rates of up to 35%.**
- Since it first appeared in April 2009, the (H1N1) 2009 virus has not mutated into a more serious strain. Accordingly, while public health officials expect to see higher infection rates, the vast majority of people should recover in about seven days.
- Planners need to consider the needs of employees and students with underlying medical conditions who may become more ill than the majority. Seek advice from COT concerning such situations.
- In the future, public health authorities may place restrictions on large gatherings but we have been advised that closing schools and/or post-secondary institutions will only be considered as a last resort.
- Some students, faculty and staff may stay at home due to sickness or in order to care for sick family members.
- Colleges should identify core activities and develop plans to redeploy staff to key areas. While the prioritization will be different across the colleges, all colleges are expected to place a high priority on sustaining operations that will maximize the opportunities for students to complete their classes and programs.
- Planners may want to explore off-site work options for some college staff. Faculty should be prepared to allow students to work from remote locations. For students, this will depend on the ability of faculty to post their teaching and/or assignments electronically. Unit management will determine which employees should work from home and will identify any equipment/software etc. needed to enable them to do so.

UNIVERSITY CRISIS RESPONSE - GOVERNANCE AND AUTHORITY STRUCTURE

An authority structure and decision-making protocol has been developed to coordinate and manage the university's response to crisis due to pandemic influenza or other events. The structure includes a Crisis Management Team (CMT) that reports through an executive sponsor, either the provost and vice-president academic or the vice-president finance and resources), to the President's Executive Committee (PEC). A Crisis Operations Team (COT) reports to the CMT.

For (H1N1) 2009, the executive sponsors are Vice-President Finance and Resources Richard Florizone and the Vice-President University Advancement Heather Magotiaux. The CMT leader for each crisis is determined from a pool of three Associate Vice-Presidents (AVPs) according to specific circumstances. Associate Vice-President (Student and Enrollment Services) David Hannah is designated as CMT leader for (H1N1) 2009, and the COT chair is Manager, Risk Management and Insurance Services and University Emergency Measures Co-ordinator Nowell Seaman.



OVERVIEW OF KEY (H1N1) 2009 PANDEMIC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This document has been prepared to clarify roles, responsibilities and decision-making authority (especially regarding academic decisions) in the event that a pandemic emergency is declared at the University of Saskatchewan. If the H1N1 pandemic situation escalates, it will be particularly important that a heightened level of consultation and communication be maintained among faculty members, department heads, deans and university administration (represented by the Crisis Operations Team [COT]) to ensure that we are able to effectively monitor and respond to the evolving situation. In particular, it will be important that instructors keep their department heads and/or deans well informed regarding unusual levels or patterns of student absenteeism, instructor illness, significant changes to course delivery methods, requirements or deadlines, concerns re: examinations or other assessment activities, etc.

PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS

Individuals are responsible for practicing good infection prevention behaviors which include:

- ✓ keeping themselves informed regarding H1N1, college and university pandemic plans, etc. See www.usask.ca/pandemic for information and updates on these matters.
- ✓ washing hands frequently
- ✓ coughing and sneezing into elbow/sleeve rather than hand
- ✓ minimizing physical contact with others
- ✓ staying home if sick with influenza-like illness (fever and cough)
- ✓ receiving H1N1 vaccination (highly recommended)

INSTRUCTOR

- passing on to students university communications re: pandemic information and the university's plans and responses
- reinforcing key messages where appropriate and referencing U of S pandemic planning website (www.usask.ca/pandemic)
- structuring courses and preparing instructional materials and assignments so as to minimize disruption in the event of instructor illness
- providing alternative instructional methods (on-line delivery, independent readings, etc.) where possible & appropriate
- encouraging students to stay home if they are experiencing influenza-like illness (ILI)
- being as flexible as possible re: attendance requirements, and not requiring medical excuse notes for absences due to ILI
- forwarding any received student affidavits (Student Declaration of Absence due to Influenza Like Illness (ILI) Form) to college office. This form can be found at: http://www.usask.ca/uofs/notices/pandemic/Influenza_declaration.pdf

- extending course assignment deadlines where necessary
- in consultation with department head, assistant/associate dean or dean, determining whether the nature of course work, the weighting and timing of assignments, or any other aspect of a course outline should be adjusted and informing students of such changes
- monitoring and reporting student absenteeism (for specified “sentinel” classes only)
- informing department head or dean of instructor illness so that appropriate arrangements can be made to cover the affected classes
- informing students of class cancellations due to instructor illness
- informing department head or dean of location of instructional materials (in cases of instructor illness)
- preparing and filing copies of major exams with department head or dean at least two weeks prior to scheduled exam dates

DEPARTMENT HEAD (or designate) (dean or designate in non-departmentalized colleges)

- ensuring appropriate arrangements are made to replace absent instructors, teaching assistants, etc.
- assigning invigilators and/or markers for absent instructors (or instructors who are substituting for other instructors)
- designating alternate department heads (line of succession)
- designating alternate grade approvers for final grades, which could be in another department or at the college level (unless this requirement is suspended)
- communicating and coordinating university pandemic plans and responses with third-party supervisors (e.g. non-university supervisors in clinical or practicum situations)
- postponing or cancelling departmental events (e.g. public talks, departmental receptions) if warranted
- informing students, dean and the COT via flu_info@usask.ca of all class cancellations

COLLEGE DEAN (or designate)

- canceling entire classes (in consultation with the Provost)
- cancelling or making alternate arrangements for continuity of graduate courses (and informing the Dean of Graduate Studies & Research of same)
- if so delegated under the Provost’s pandemic emergency powers, authorizing overrides of/exceptions to college policies & practices re: missed classes, examinations, late assignments, etc. and informing the COT via flu_info@usask.ca
- deciding what steps to take/arrangements to make in situations where clinical/practicum activities are significantly disrupted due to student or faculty absences or placement restrictions
- deciding whether final exams should be replaced by alternative forms of evaluation (in consultation with Provost, and where acting as his delegate under Council’s motion of September 17, 2009)
- deciding whether students will be permitted to pass classes without writing the final or handing in all course work (in consultation with the Provost, and where acting as his delegate under Council’s motion of September 17, 2009)
- designating an alternate dean (line of succession)

- postponing or cancelling major college events (e.g. awards ceremonies, dinners, etc.) if warranted.
- NOTE: in the event that a pandemic emergency is declared, all graduate programs will shift to “Flex 2” operating procedures to expedite graduate admissions and program management until the pandemic emergency is lifted. In this event College Deans will be responsible for:
 - ✓ rescheduling graduate classes or making alternative arrangements for satisfying graduate course requirements, including final exams (and advising the College of Graduate Studies and Research ((CGSR)) of same)
 - ✓ cancelling entire graduate classes (in consultation with the Provost and the Dean of CGSR)
 - ✓ postponing PhD thesis defences (and immediately advising the Dean of CGSR of same)

UNIVERSITY (Provost & V.P. Academic or delegate)

On September 17, 2009 University Council passed the following motion:

That in the event of a pandemic emergency, for the year 2009/10, Council delegates authority for academic matters significantly affected by the emergency to the Provost or his delegates.

Examples of matters that may be covered by this motion include:

- authorizing changes to those university, college and department academic policies and processes that are normally under University Council’s authority
- authorizing suspension of, or overrides, exceptions or modifications to university policies and practices re: missed classes, examinations, late assignments, etc.
- authorizing changes to the Exam Regulations (e.g. academic deadlines, final exam requirements and schedule, supplementary and deferred exam regulations, grading requirements, grade approval and grade submission deadlines, etc.) and informing the COT so that this information can be communicated appropriately
- authorizing changes to the academic schedule or other published deadlines (including course drop and add deadlines, scholarship/bursary deadlines, etc.) and informing the COT so that this information can be communicated appropriately
- authorizing modifications to, or postponement or suspension of critical administrative processes (admission processing, class build, final exam scheduling, grade submission, convocation checking, etc.) and informing the COT so that this information can be communicated appropriately
- delaying or cancelling convocation or other large public gatherings if warranted (in consultation with the President) and informing the COT so that this information can be communicated appropriately
- suspending, shortening, extending or cancelling an entire academic term or year (in consultation with the President) and informing the COT so that this information can be communicated appropriately.

Crisis Operations Team (COT)

- advising Crisis Management Team (CMT) of key issues and emerging risks regarding pandemic
- receiving input from the university community regarding academic, human resource and all other issues
- consulting, determining and executing operational response of the institution to the pandemic, based on guidance and advice from public health agencies. Our operational response to the pandemic includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:
 - ✓ providing leadership and advice and adopting best practices as recommended by public health agencies
 - ✓ developing protocols for emergency procedures and providing clarity about decision-making authority
 - ✓ implementing mechanisms to coordinate decisions and actions in academic units, administrative units and throughout the university as a whole
 - ✓ communicating to the campus community
 - ✓ maintaining U of S pandemic website www.usask.ca/pandemic
 - ✓ maintaining pandemic planners PAWS group
 - ✓ communicating to external stakeholders
 - ✓ responding to Frequently Asked Questions
 - ✓ sentinel reporting of student and staff absences to public health authorities, while ensuring individual privacy is maintained
 - ✓ monitoring Human Resource questions and ensuring that answers are developed and communicated
 - ✓ supporting immunization clinics and providing recommended immunizations for students and employees within health care facilities
 - ✓ personal protective equipment issues
 - ✓ residence and food services issues
 - ✓ technology issues
 - ✓ cleaning issues
 - ✓ coordinating institutional response with key partners (Saskatoon Health Region, City of Saskatoon, Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, Public and Private School Systems, SIAST [Kelsey])
 - ✓ liaising with local safety committees
 - ✓ making recommendations to CMT regarding travel advisories and/or banning travel on university business as per Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
 - ✓ communicating to the campus community regarding major changes to the university's academic schedule
 - ✓ providing support to colleges and units regarding pandemic planning
 - ✓ communicating and coordinating with all campus pandemic planners

Crisis Management Team (CMT)

- making institution-level decisions during the pandemic, at the direction of PEC
- providing direction to COT concerning operational responses to the pandemic
- making recommendations regarding major policy decisions to the PEC

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACADEMIC CONTINUITY

STUDENTS, CLASSES, ATTENDANCE

- Identify the trigger points for scale back or suspension of classes, programs, services.
- Instructors will need to be flexible with teaching assignments, most notably for students who miss class work due to influenza-like illness. Encourage instructors to consider creative ways for students to 'catch up' if away and unable to work due to illness by altering assignments and clinical experience (assignments, exams, lab components, clinical placements, practica, internships, field camps) in ways that maintain learning and program requirements.
- Delivery modes for 'classroom-based' learning may need to be altered. In planning for wider absences of faculty and students, some colleges may decide to increase electronic delivery of teaching information such as lectures. While there are limitations to rapidly moving many University courses to these existing services, there are options if done in smaller numbers or in simpler ways. For more information about available services, please contact Cyril Coupal at 966-1755 or Cyril.Coupal@usask.ca, or contact your local IT resources.
- More flexible attendance policies within individual classes need to be considered to accommodate a higher level of absenteeism of students.
 - What alternative instructional or evaluation processes are possible for classes? Develop guidelines for instructors with regard to the management of quizzes or mid-term examinations. An institutional response for final exams will be established if necessary.
 - Consider alternatives to sit-down/in-class exams if necessary.
 - Consider implementing policies that will enable examinations to proceed in the event of instructor illness. (e.g. instructors to file exams with department office two weeks prior to exam date)
 - Discourage well-meaning instructors from creating their own plans for final exams without department/college/university coordination.
 - Medical notes should not be required to excuse absences. To assist in this process, students can fill out the *Student Declaration of Absence Due to Influenza-Like Illness (ILI)* found online at: http://www.usask.ca/uofs/notices/pandemic/Influenza_declaration.pdf
- If your college offers classes and/or programs at multiple sites, consider the actions necessary at each of these sites.
- Is there a role students may be asked to play (or wish to play) in providing volunteer support during a pandemic?
 - If so, how might this affect their academic studies, and what will your response to such situations be?
 - What arrangements may need to be made to accommodate such situations?
 - What will you do if some students choose to provide such services, and others do not?
 - Will instructional activities continue as regularly scheduled in such a situation?
 - If so, what arrangements might need to be made to accommodate students who miss instructional time to provide clinical support?
- Are any of your students regulated health care practitioners (e.g., nurse practitioner students, medical residents, post-diploma RN students, etc.)? Such regulated learners may be deployed or asked to assist health care authorities where they are most needed.
 - How might you be able to accommodate such situations? Each situation will need to be considered on an individual basis to determine whether a particular learner can still meet the objectives of the class despite absenteeism from the educational setting.

- What options are available to make up for instructional time lost in the event this takes place?
- Colleges should consider the implications when students may also be employees, for example in health regions, work experience programs, school divisions, etc.
- Study abroad and international programs may need to be rescheduled or curtailed and international borders may be restricted. Recognize the financial risks involved in cancellations.

INSTRUCTORS

- Consider instructor redundancy plans to ensure class coverage. Are there retired faculty, postdoctoral fellows, research associates, adjunct professors, sessional lecturers or graduate students who can fill in for instructors who become ill?
- Develop plans to accommodate absences of instructors for periods of one to two weeks.

STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

- Programs delivered off campus will involve different partners (e.g. health regions, school divisions); local emergency measures may apply in different regions of the province and may be different than for the Saskatoon campus.
- Where appropriate, develop joint plans with appropriate outside organizations (e.g., health regions, school divisions, employers) that consider the needs of college programs and activities.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Based on the elements of your college pandemic plan, establish a clear communication plan for dealing with college-specific issues (e.g. to inform students, faculty, and staff regarding class cancellations, modifications to individual classes, programs, assignments, deadlines, etc.). Do the same for individuals and groups external to the college (e.g., placement agencies, school divisions) regarding pandemic issues.
- Students need to be informed that disruptions to academic programs may occur and that every effort will be made to ensure that time will be made up outside of normal hours depending on the length of the pandemic and the college's or university's plans for program completion.
- Colleges are advised to provide explicit direction, support, and advice for instructors regarding class classroom management during the pandemic. Traditional practices may need to be altered and additional flexibility may need to be introduced in order to minimize the impact of illness and absenteeism on students' programs.
- Colleges are responsible for communication with accreditation agencies pertinent to their academic programs.
- Each college will need to determine at the point at which its program(s) cannot continue to be delivered, consult with the provost regarding possible options and responses, and communicate this information to the COT.
- Advice and instructions to teaching staff should be shared between colleges. Bear in mind that policies and practices in one college may impact students in other colleges.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Engage your college's human resources consultant regarding absenteeism due to the pandemic. http://www.usask.ca/hrd/manager/contacts_for_units.php
- See Appendix 1 : Managers' HR Guide for more information.

CLEANING

- Limiting the spread of infection is the most important mechanism to implement. Your plan should address the cleaning of personal touch areas, acquisition and installation of hand sanitizers (in areas not already deployed by the university's facilities management division), and conscientious application of the 'stay at home if sick' guidance.
- See Appendix 2: Custodial Services Summary for more information.

ABOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS

- Develop and document the principles that will guide your decisions during a pandemic.
- It is important to ensure your college is adequately prepared to respond to a wave of pandemic illness without creating a premature crisis regarding what may happen.
- Educate everyone in your college/unit about the importance of infection control methods (hand washing, coughing into sleeve, maintaining social distancing of six feet with someone who is ill, and staying home if sick based on guidelines in FAQ). Reinforce these key messages as necessary.
- Know that you can never plan for every scenario... keep your plan flexible.
- Identify and prioritize key non-academic activities and services that must be maintained. Your plans must address how you will maintain high priority activities and cut back or suspend non-essential ones.
- Identify key dependencies within and outside your college. Which units do you rely on to provide you with supplies, service, data, so that you can fulfill the academic agenda?
- Have a small group draft a plan for others to review.
- Flow charts may be helpful in organizing your thoughts.
- Consult college support staff.
- Ensure there is one single point of contact and authority for planning in your college and that all communications with central university authorities are channeled through this individual.
- Ensure that the designated college pandemic contact person has backups identified (in case he/she becomes ill).
- Create an up to date emergency contact list for key people in your college that includes home and cell phone numbers, home e-mail addresses, etc. Ensure your lists are kept current. Identify people in leadership positions and distribute this list to them. Clarify who will communicate with faculty and staff.
- Some health science colleges have already developed significant planning documents regarding students in clinical learning situations. These plans will provide helpful guidance to colleges whose students participate in various experiential learning programs and opportunities.
- Consider how your college plan could impact students, instructors and staff in other colleges.

PLANNING CHECKLIST

- Determine the scope of plan: is it most appropriate to divide the college up into multiple planning units, or can/should one plan cover all?
- Consider and assess the criticality of programs, services and other activities. The highest priority should be given to issues that could affect human health, safety, the environment, or those that have a significant impact on key academic and research operations of the university. High-priority services are those that **MUST** continue throughout a pandemic phase. Medium- and low-priority services are those that could be scaled back or cancelled, though efforts should be made to continue them for as long as practical.
- Identify which services and programs could be postponed, cancelled or offered in alternative ways.
- Determine minimum staffing levels needed to continue to offer high-priority programs and services.
- Ensure there is one person named to lead your planning team. Be sure to appoint a back-up for that person should he/she become ill.
- Identify areas where programs and services could be adversely affected due to circumstances occurring off-campus (i.e. supply interruption, etc.)
- Identify work that could be done from home and ensure arrangements are in place for this. Note that unit management will determine which work falls into this category.
- Develop and update employee/supplier/client contact lists
- Develop procedure manuals for critical service areas (deans' office staff, etc)
- Explore health, safety and environmental concerns (laboratories, safety systems, storage of chemicals and hazardous material, etc.) where faculty/staff expertise or availability has been compromised.
- Consider the impact of:
 - utility problems (electricity, natural gas, water, or telecommunications) on academic programs
 - critical computer and network service interruptions on operations
 - disruption in regular supply of other critical resources or services (supplies, fuel, spare parts, service and maintenance contracts, etc.) . Stockpile where necessary providing that funds are available to do so.
- Prepare a succession plan (deans, department heads, instructors, administrative staff, etc.)
- For assistance in support in planning, contact Don Litz, Emergency Planner, Risk Management & Insurance Services, Don.litz@usask.ca or 966-6929

(H1N1) 2009 PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLANNING CONTACTS

www.usask.ca/pandemic is where the university will provide up-to-date information, status updates, service updates, planning resources (“*the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Planning: Unit Planning Guide & Workbook*” http://www.usask.ca/uofs/notices/pandemic/pandemic_workbook.pdf) Our institutional response to pandemic issues will be posted there as well.

To allow COT/CMT to monitor emerging concerns, and to coordinate responses across the institution, colleges and units are requested to direct questions related to (H1N1) 2009 pandemic planning and response to their designated pandemic planning contact person.

General inquiries: flu_info@usask.ca

Planning Support: Don Litz
Emergency Planner, Risk Management & Insurance Services
Don.litz@usask.ca or 966-6929

For specific academic questions: Tonya Wirchenko
Acting Director, Student Retention, Support & Development, SESD
Tonya.wirchenko@usask.ca or 966-5757

For specific human resource questions: Current HR Consultant
http://www.usask.ca/hrd/manager/contacts_for_units.php

Coordinated by
Bob Bayles
Director, Human Resources
Bob.bayles@usask.ca or 966-1698

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CGSR	College of Graduate Studies and Research
CMT	Crisis Management Team
COT	Crisis Operations Team
ILI	Influenza like illness
PEC	Presidents Executive Committee
PHAC	Public Health Agency of Canada
SHR	Saskatoon Health Region
WHO	World Health Organization
WSEP	Workplace, Safety and Environmental Protection

While referenced in this guide, Appendix 1: Managers' HR Guide and Principles for the Current (H1N1) 2009 Influenza and Appendix 2: Custodial Services, were developed for and circulated to university managers under separate cover.