Amendment Log

The Return-to-Campus Guidelines are updated periodically, as necessary, to align with evolving guidance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 25, 2021</td>
<td>Updates:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Updated guidance from the BCCDC – Attachment 2: <strong>BCCDC Return to Campus Public Health Guidance</strong> including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Updated contact tracing and notification guidance. Note that the contact tracing and notification protocols previously outlined in Attachment 2 have been replaced with the new BCCDC guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ BCCDC guidance that the benefit of <strong>routine asymptomatic testing</strong> diminishes as immunization rates increase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Updated Program Specific Considerations for individuals in a health care location for training or research purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 23, 2021</td>
<td>Updates:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Updated <strong>PHO Orders on Gatherings and Events</strong> – September 10, 2021.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Updated <strong>Food and Liquor Serving Premises</strong> – September 10, 2021: related to the <strong>Proof of vaccination and the BC Vaccine Card</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 3, 2021</td>
<td>New Content:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Attachment 3: New Return to Campus Public Health Guidance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Updates:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• B.C.'s Restart: A Plan to Bring Us Back Together – <strong>Updated information on return-to-campus and step 4 alignment</strong> and <strong>Updated PHO information on implementing health additional measures</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Updated PHO proof of vaccination requirements information has been included in the following sections: <strong>Moving Forward, Post-Secondary Examples of B.C.'s 4-Step Restart Plan, Campus logistics, Student housing and Dining Facilities, and Related Public Health Guidelines</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Updated PHO mask requirements information has been included in the following sections: <strong>Post-Secondary Examples of B.C.'s 4-Step Restart Plan, Navigating Life with COVID-19, Core Public Health Measures and Campus Logistics, Post-Secondary Examples of B.C.'s 4-Step Restart Plan and Core Public Health Measures</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Moving Beyond COVID-19: Getting Back to Normal – <strong>New Return to Campus Public Health Guidance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Updated WorkSafeBC resource information on communicable disease prevention has been included in the following sections: <strong>Core Public Health Measures</strong> and <strong>Transitioning to Communicable Disease Plans</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Program Specific Considerations - <strong>New PHO vaccination requirement information</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 5, 2021</td>
<td>Launch of the COVID-19 Return-to-Campus Guidelines</td>
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The COVID-19 Return-to-Campus Guidelines (“the Guidelines”) provide updated public health guidance to support the full return to in-person education, research and on-campus services for B.C.’s post-secondary institutions. Both public and private post-secondary institutions, post-secondary sector stakeholders and the general public can utilize these Guidelines. The Guidelines were developed by a team of experts from B.C.’s post-secondary sector, the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, regional health authorities and the BC Centre for Disease Control.

B.C.’s Restart: A Plan to Bring Us Back Together
While the Return-to-Campus Guidelines align with B.C.’s Restart Plan launched on May 25, 2021 to bring British Columbians back together, the Provincial Health Officer has advised that the full return to in-person learning is not dependent on the province transitioning to Step 4 of the B.C.’s Restart Plan. The four-step plan is designed based on data and guidance from the BC Centre for Disease Control and B.C.’s Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry. Getting vaccinated is the most important tool supporting the B.C. Restart Plan. In addition to the province-wide proof of vaccination requirements, residents must be vaccinated to live in post-secondary housing. Institutions seeking to introduce their own proof of vaccination policies are responsible for doing their own due diligence and working with public health. Public Health has advised that while institutions may consider a vaccination policy for employees, they are not supportive of proof of vaccination requirements for students participating in educational activities (e.g., classrooms, labs, field schools, tutorials etc.).

Moving Forward
The goal for the fall is to transition from highly prescriptive COVID-19 specific orders and protocols back to more general institutional policies and guidance on occupational health and safety. This includes continuing to work with First Nations and Indigenous community partners to meet the unique needs of Indigenous learners and communities.

As conditions evolved throughout the summer, most of the more restrictive public health measures affecting our personal and professional lives were relaxed and replaced with more general health-related behaviours for reducing the spread of viruses. This includes the rescinding of the Provincial State of Emergency and most public health orders.

B.C. remains in Step 3 of the B.C. Restart Plan. Provincial restrictions on gatherings and events however, do not apply to educational settings. On campus instruction resumed with classrooms at full capacity with evidence-based or best practice prevention measures in place as recommended in Attachment 2 – BCCDC Return to Campus Public Health Guidance.

The transition period between July 1, 2021 (Step 3) and September 7, 2021 was an important time for post-secondary institutions as they ramped up operations and welcomed back to campus faculty, staff and students. In alignment with public health guidance, post-secondary institutions began easing restrictions in workspaces and common areas, including the need for barriers or occupancy limits, during this transition period in order to be ready for the return to campus.

The following graphic has been adapted to illustrate the progression over time to less prescriptive COVID-19 measures during the lead up and return to full campus activities.
# Post-Secondary Examples of B.C.’s 4-Step Restart Plan

**NOTE:** The table below provides post-secondary return to campus examples for the implementation of B.C.’s Restart Plan. The list is not exhaustive and provides examples only. The period between July 1 (Step 3) and September 7 is a transition period during which PSIs should begin easing COVID-19 restrictions in workspaces and common areas, based on up to date public health guidance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guidance</th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
<th>Step 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Delivery</strong></td>
<td>• Primarily virtual</td>
<td>• Primarily virtual</td>
<td>• Continued increase face-to-face on-campus</td>
<td>• Primarily on-campus with student learning accommodations and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gradual increase face-to-face on-campus</td>
<td>• Continued increase face-to-face on-campus</td>
<td>• Gradual reduction of COVID-specific restrictions</td>
<td>• Maximum capacity for buildings/rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Building/room occupancy limits apply</td>
<td>• Increasing building/room occupancy limits</td>
<td>• Increased return to campus</td>
<td>• Fully re-opened offices and workplaces w/ staff accommodations and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offices / Workplaces</strong></td>
<td>• Primarily remote, limited return to campus</td>
<td>• Primarily remote, increased return to campus</td>
<td>• Gradual elimination of COVID-specific restrictions</td>
<td>• Communicable disease plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Building/room occupancy limits apply</td>
<td>• Increasing building/room occupancy limits</td>
<td>• Reduced crowd management measures</td>
<td>• All spaces fully reopened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common Spaces</strong></td>
<td>• Sector-specific restrictions remain in effect</td>
<td>• Sector-specific restrictions lessened</td>
<td>• New communicable disease plans</td>
<td>• Communicable disease plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Crowding discouraged w/ controls</td>
<td>• Crowding discouraged but with lessened controls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work / Organized Gatherings</strong></td>
<td>• Primarily virtual</td>
<td>• Primarily virtual</td>
<td>• Increased indoor and outdoor gatherings capacity, with safety plans</td>
<td>• Full capacity allowed with increased or hybrid virtual options to continue (expected)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Indoor: 10 or less</td>
<td>• Indoor (seated) and Outdoor: 50 or less</td>
<td>• Gradual reduction of COVID-specific restrictions</td>
<td>• Proof of vaccination for specific activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Outdoor: 50 or less</td>
<td>• Sector consultation begin for large gatherings</td>
<td>• Communicable disease plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Building/room occupancy limits apply</td>
<td>• Increasing building/room occupancy limits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social / Personal Gatherings</strong></td>
<td>• Indoor: 5 or less</td>
<td>• Maximum 50 outdoor (e.g., sports spectators)</td>
<td>• Return to usual on indoor and outdoor personal gathering</td>
<td>• Normal social contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Outdoor: 10 or less</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• No indoor/outdoor spectator limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work with faith-leaders to bring back-in-person worship services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Activities</strong></td>
<td>• Small gatherings with friends</td>
<td>• Student group/club meetings, with safety plan</td>
<td>• Yoga/dance/rehearsals etc., with safety plans</td>
<td>• Normal social contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Indoor: 5 or less</td>
<td>» Indoor: 50 or less</td>
<td>» Increased indoor capacity</td>
<td>• Sports events/concerts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Outdoor: 10 or less</td>
<td>» Outdoor club/team sports (soccer, softball, volleyball, etc.)</td>
<td>• Increased spectator and events/orientations</td>
<td>• Pubs/bars and nightclubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Organized student group meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Bars/nightclubs with small group</td>
<td>• Student group activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Indoor: 10 or less</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Events and parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Proof of vaccination for specific activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sector-Specific Guidance for Post secondary Institutions

Protecting the health and well-being of students, faculty, staff and campus visitors remains the top priority, while being mindful of the importance of adaptability as conditions change. Post-secondary institutions have already demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability by quickly shifting to remote and hybrid learning in order to remain open and available for learners. While there are many lessons learned from this experience that can enhance opportunities for flexible teaching and learning moving forward, the focus of the Return-to-Campus Guidelines is on public health guidance for the fall.

Post-secondary institutions received sector-specific direction on March 8, 2021 from B.C.’s Provincial Health Officer, advising institutions to begin planning for a full return to on-campus teaching, learning and research in September 2021 (see Attachment 1). Dr. Henry stressed the importance of getting back on campus for everyone’s mental health and well-being. Additional guidance to help institutions prepare for a fall return to campus was provided in the COVID-19 Return-to-Campus Primer released on April 30, 2021. Following the release of the Primer, Dr. Henry participated in two town halls with post-secondary administrators and labour organizations, and student leaders to discuss the preliminary public health guidance for September 2021. The public health guidance for B.C.’s post-secondary institutions is consistent with the guidance provided for all British Columbians in the Restart Plan.

Navigating Life with COVID-19

While elimination of the COVID-19 virus will not occur in the near future, we can take measures now to adapt to living with COVID-19 as we do with other manageable seasonal ailments such as influenza. Immunization, infection prevention, and exposure control measures are the tools we have to make everyone less vulnerable to getting COVID-19 or experiencing serious outcomes.

Based on guidance from the Provincial Health Officer and experience to date within B.C., environments such as post-secondary educational settings are low-risk sites for COVID-19 transmission.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 relies on everyone doing their part, including:

- immunization,
- daily self-administered health checks,
- staying home when sick,
- wearing masks when advised by public health, and
- practicing hand hygiene.

Strong public health management of cases, clusters and outbreaks also has an important role to play. Authorized vaccines have proven to be highly effective at reducing serious outcomes from the COVID-19 virus. As immunization programs roll out across B.C., their positive effects are already evident at the population level, reducing transmission in communities, decreasing serious outcomes of COVID-19, and thereby even protecting unvaccinated individuals.

While no single layer of protection against COVID-19 is perfect, when multiple layers of protection are combined, the risk of transmission is significantly reduced. Due to the demonstrated effect of B.C.’s immunization program, the layering of core public health measures, and the tailoring of prevention and control measures, physical distancing including the use of protective barriers, partitions, and directional signage will not be required in most settings, especially in educational environments such as post-secondary classrooms and instructional settings.
Core Public Health Measures

Core measures that are expected to remain in place, until otherwise determined by the Provincial Health Officer, include:

- Completing a daily self-administered health check and not attending campus when ill (NOTE: It is a personal responsibility for everyone accessing a post-secondary campus to complete a daily health self-assessment);
- Following handwashing and hygiene protocols;
- Transitioning COVID-19 specific safety plans into communicable disease plans inclusive of strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19. WorkSafeBC guidance is available;
- Following regular pre-COVID cleaning protocols in all indoor settings and on high touch surfaces; and,
- Adhering to the Provincial Health Officer requirements regarding the use of non-medical masks. Where masks are not required by the PHO, wearing them is a personal choice.
- Following proof of vaccination guidance for discretionary events, activities or businesses identified under the Provincial Health Officer order.

Working with Local Medical Health Officers

Institutions should continue to work with their local B.C. medical health officer to develop effective infection prevention and exposure control measures, as well as COVID-19 case management and response processes.

Medical health officers in B.C. are responsible for monitoring and assessing the health status of the community, including making recommendations for strategies to address health issues and implementing immediate actions when necessary to protect the health of the public.

Public Health Management of COVID-19

Case and contact management were central to COVID-19 control in the absence of a vaccine. However, the public health approach to COVID-19 is evolving. While it is possible that COVID-19 contact tracing and notification protocols may still be required as part of the transition back to a more normal life, local medical health officers will guide public health approaches to COVID-19 as the population becomes immunized.

As part of contact tracing, close contacts are notified by public health and informed of what subsequent actions they should take. Public health will also facilitate general notifications more broadly within the campus community or post the information to Regional Health Authority websites when necessary. Post-secondary Institutions are not responsible for contact tracing, and should not provide notifications to faculty, staff or students about potential or confirmed communicable diseases cases (including COVID19) unless requested to do so by public health. For more information see Attachment 2 – BCCDC Return to Campus Public Health Guidance.
Safety is Everyone’s Responsibility

We can all contribute personally and professionally by getting vaccinated (as we are able), following campus safety plans, performing our daily health check, staying home when sick, wearing masks as required, following handwashing and hygiene etiquette, and following public health guidance both on and off campus.

It is up to each one of us to do our part, but it is our collective efforts that will make the difference. This is the time to be kind, to be calm, and to be safe.

General Campus Planning

In addition to a comprehensive immunization program, a number of core public health measures and tailored infection prevention and control measures are expected to continue to support the safe resumption of on-campus activities. The measures outlined below are guided by evidence and the expert advice of public health professionals.

Campus Logistics

- Daily self-administered health checks will be a personal responsibility. Students, faculty, staff and campus visitors are not required to confirm that they have completed the health self-assessment prior to accessing campus. Individuals experiencing symptoms should stay home, consult the B.C. COVID-19 self-assessment tool to determine if COVID-19 testing is needed, and contact 811 or their healthcare provider for medical advice as necessary.
- Institutions should continue to follow the advice of the Provincial Health Officer to ensure the campus community is aware of current mask requirements and have a plan for communicating changes in recommendations.
- By order of the Provincial Health Officer, proof of vaccination is required to access certain events, services and businesses on campus such as gyms, indoor ticketed concerts, and student housing.
- WorkSafeBC continues to advise that building ventilation systems, in good operating condition, do not contribute to the spread of COVID-19. Institutions should ensure that building ventilation (HVAC) systems are operating and maintained in accordance with WorkSafeBC requirements and relevant ASHRAE Standards for indoor air quality.
- Institutions will not be required to manage the flow of pedestrian traffic within buildings or confined areas, or post occupancy limits for spaces such as elevators or washrooms.

Cleaning and Hygiene

- Hand hygiene should be actively promoted. Hand sanitization stations are recommended for placement at regular intervals throughout common spaces and at the entrances/exits to all public spaces.
- Educational and public spaces should be cleaned routinely. Increased disinfection and cleaning protocols for high touch areas such as door handles and elevator buttons are not required since surface transmission of COVID-19 is not a significant risk. Cleaning between classes is not required.

1 ASHRAE – the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers
Communicable Disease Plans

- Institutions are required to have **communicable disease plans** to reduce the risk of all respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19.
- Communicable disease plans should reference the core public health measures noted earlier including staying home when sick, hand hygiene, as well as any additional health and safety protocols prescribed by local and provincial medical health professionals.
- WorkSafeBC and public health experts have developed a **guide** to assist employers in developing their communicable disease plans.

Student Housing and Dining Facilities

- By Order of the Provincial Health Officer, all students, staff and faculty will need to provide **proof of vaccination**, via the BC Vaccine Card, to access certain discretionary non-essential activities, events and businesses on post-secondary campuses – as outlined in the PHO orders on **Gatherings and Events** and **Food and Liquor Serving Premises**.
  - Post-secondary on-campus cafeterias do not require **proof of vaccination**.
- In addition, proof of vaccination will be required as a condition of living in **post-secondary on-campus housing**.
- Post-secondary institutions must be able to provide the medical health officer with the name and contact information for all residents in post-secondary housing, including a record of residents who have not provided proof of vaccination.
- On-campus student housing providers can plan for full or close-to-full occupancy for the fall. Institutions are strongly encouraged to hold back 1-2% of total student housing beds for the isolation or quarantine of students in the event of infection.
- It is anticipated that dining facilities for student housing and cafeterias serving students, faculty and staff at educational institutions will continue to be exempt from any provincial closures for restaurants and bars. On-campus cafeterias, restaurants and pubs should follow the provincial requirements for food and liquor serving premises.

Faculty and Staff Considerations

- Some faculty and staff will feel anxious or hesitant about a return to campus. Employees should be clearly informed of new or updated workplace safety procedures, and how they are designed to protect faculty and staff from COVID-19 before returning to the workplace.
- All faculty and staff should follow institutional health and safety prevention measures which continue to be guided by public health.
- Institutions are strongly encouraged to administer formal requests for accommodation, including medical accommodation, based on the individual circumstances and in accordance with collective agreements, legal obligations and established accommodation review timelines.
- Faculty and staff are eligible to take up to three (3) hours without loss of pay to be vaccinated against COVID-19. **Amendments** to the **Employment Standards Act** provide this support for both doses of the vaccine.
- Faculty and staff absences may be higher than during pre-pandemic periods due to seasonal respiratory illnesses (flu-like symptoms), ongoing self-assessment and self-isolation requirements. While community transmission is expected to be very low, employees may need to take time off or work from home if diagnosed with COVID-19, or advised to self-isolate or quarantine as part of the contact tracing process. Workers may be eligible for up to 3 days of paid leave under the **Employment Standards Act** if they need to **stay home** because of COVID-19. The **BC Employment Standards Act paid COVID-19 leave program** is in place until December 31, 2021.

International Students

- The Canadian border is open to international students; however, some federal travel restrictions may remain in place in the fall. It is anticipated that students entering Canada to study will continue to be permitted entry if they are attending an institution that is on the federal list of approved Designated Learning Institutions managed by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. These students will be required to continue following federal requirements in place at the time of entry into Canada.
Related Public Health Guidelines

- For guidelines that relate to other aspects of campus operations beyond the delivery of post-secondary education and training, the post-secondary sector will continue to rely on public health guidelines developed and updated for other sectors (e.g., competitive sports, use of athletic and recreational facilities, public transit, travel, retail services, etc.).

- Institutions should continue to work with their local medical health officers for campus-specific questions, local / regional public health guidance, and COVID-19 case and contact management.

- COVID-19 vaccines are available at no charge to everyone ages 12+ living, working or studying in B.C. during the pandemic. You do not need a Personal Health Number (PHN), B.C. Services card, or to be enrolled in B.C.’s Medical Services Plan to get the vaccine. However, all students are encouraged to obtain a PHN in order to use the provincial on-line vaccination booking system. Students can call 1-833-838-2323 to obtain a PHN number and register to book into a local ImmunizeBC vaccination clinic.

- Students that have been vaccinated against COVID-19 outside of Canada may still need to receive vaccinations here. Students are encouraged to submit their COVID-19 vaccine record to B.C.’s immunization registry.

- All students are eligible to receive the vaccine, including international students and their families. The COVID-19 vaccine will not be mandatory. However, ImmunizeBC highly recommends getting the vaccine.

- Rapid point-of-care screening for COVID-19 is being used by B.C. Health Authorities for COVID-19 testing in settings with increased risk of transmission and/or outbreaks. Point-of-care testing for COVID-19 is available to post-secondary institutions that meet the indications outlined in B.C.’s Rapid Point of Care Testing Strategy. Institutions interested in rapid COVID-19 point-of-care tests can contact their local medical health officer and email RapidPOCTeam@phsa.ca for an intake assessment. The BCCDC has posted guidance for those post-secondary institutions that choose to introduce rapid testing as an additional COVID-19 prevention measure. The routine screening of people without symptoms (i.e., asymptomatic screening) is not recommended by public health outside of specific settings such as student housing.

- Routine asymptomatic testing of unimmunized students has been proposed by some institutions to further reduce the likelihood of transmission on campus. The benefit of this intervention diminishes as immunization rate increases. Based on a review of literature, local modeling, the benefit of routine asymptomatic screening of unimmunized students and staff is limited when immunization coverage is 80% and vanishingly small at 90%. It is recommended that those with symptoms should continue to follow BCCDC guidance on when to get tested. If you are considering using point-of-care tests for asymptomatic screening of unvaccinated students, faculty and staff, consult your local Medical Health Officer prior to implementation to ensure appropriate guidelines are followed.
Indigenous Students
(First Nations, Métis and Inuit)

Engaging with First Nations and Indigenous Communities

Indigenous people have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and may face elevated health risks linked to social determinants (e.g. income, culture, access to health services, etc.). As such, they may maintain increased safety measures, and experience heightened anxiety related to COVID-19.

- Indigenous students may be experiencing increased racism related to the pandemic, including regarding the prioritization of Indigenous people for vaccination. Institutions should continue to work with students, faculty and staff to create culturally safe and inclusive campus communities free of racism.
- Institutions should continue to work collaboratively with local First Nations and Indigenous community partners to ensure that the health and safety of Indigenous learners and communities are taken into account.

First Nations Students Living on Reserve

- While much of the province will be significantly easing restrictions, due to the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Indigenous people, First Nations may be maintaining increased safety measures, including states of emergency that keep communities closed. First Nations have the authority to make these decisions. This means that some students may not be able to attend in-person classes.
- In the spirit of Reconciliation and consistent with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, institutions should work with local First Nations and any students that are impacted by the closure of their communities to ensure access to academic programming and services.

Community-based Programs

- Many institutions partner with other organizations to deliver post-secondary programs in community settings, including Indigenous communities and institutes. Institutions are encouraged to work with community-based partners to:
  - Jointly develop plans for safely resuming or continuing program delivery.
  - Determine whether additional supports are required for learners who face barriers to remote learning, such as lack of technology or online literacy.
- Institutions, faculty and staff should work with Indigenous community partners to understand and respect the health and safety precautions of the community.

Indigenous Gathering Places

- Indigenous Gathering Places provide important supports for Indigenous students. Institutions should work with local First Nations, Indigenous community partners, and Indigenous students to develop plans to safely operate Gathering Places and provide cultural supports for Indigenous students.
- Given that Indigenous communities may be taking increased precautions, including the closure of some First Nations, involvement of communities and elders may be impacted. Institutions should work with Indigenous partners and elders to develop plans for services and activities to be carried out safely, such as using technology.
- Institutions may also consider consulting the First Nations Health Authority for the latest guidance on providing services and supports for Indigenous people.
Educational Activities

Experience over the last year has shown that educational activities supporting teaching, learning, research, and student development are low-risk sites for COVID-19 transmission including activities in classrooms, lecture theatres, libraries, studios, workshops, labs, field schools, practicums, research settings, etc.

Educational activities associated with orientation events are encouraged, but they might look different based on public health advice on gatherings. Non-educational or social activities throughout the year should be planned according to the prevailing Provincial Health Officer guidance.

Classroom Logistics

The Provincial Health Officer has indicated that there are no limits on the number of participants for in-class educational activities. Fall classes can be scheduled without physical distancing requirements (e.g. a classroom with 30 seats can be scheduled with 30 students; a lecture theatre with 150 seats can be scheduled with 150 students).

Adhere to the Provincial Health Officer requirements regarding the use of non-medical masks. Where masks are not required by the PHO, wearing them is a personal choice.

Student Supports / Accommodation

Institutions are strongly encouraged to follow established accommodation or academic concession mechanisms to ensure that students who cannot physically be on campus (e.g., they are ill, adhering to quarantine rules, self-isolating, attending a vaccine appointment, etc.) are not disadvantaged in their educational pursuits.

Institutions are strongly encouraged to ensure that students with disabilities are supported and can continue their educational pursuits with appropriate academic accommodation.

Institutions are encouraged to work collaboratively with student societies, clubs and governments to positively reinforce COVID-safe behaviours both on and off campus.

Mental Health Supports

Students, faculty and staff may be anxious or experiencing increased stress about returning to campus. Mental health supports will be critical for everyone’s health and wellbeing as part of the return to in-person activities on campus. Communication plans should be in place to raise awareness of these supports including:

- Here2Talk, a free and confidential 24/7 mental-health counselling and referral service, and the new Capacity to Connect program which provides faculty and staff at post-secondary institutions with easy access to the tools and skills they need to provide intervention and help for students who are struggling with their mental health and wellness.

- The Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP) provides information and resources to communities to reduce the suicide rate and minimize the harmful consequences of suicidal behaviour.

- KUU-US crisis response service, a culturally-aware crisis support is available 24/7 to Indigenous people in B.C.

- Mental Health and Wellness Support resources are available through BCcampus.

- Faculty and staff can access counselling and wellness services through employee and family assistance programs.

- Virtual mental health programs and services are offered through the Province to support mental health and wellness.

- Let’s Talk About Suicide: Raising Awareness and Supporting Students is a facilitator’s guide to working with faculty and staff through detailed training on suicide awareness and response in a sensitive and respectful way.

Campus resources may include spirituality and wellness centres including:

- Counselling departments with trained counsellors who are available to students for career, educational, personal and crisis counselling.

- Wellness centres offering one-to-one health and wellness planning.

- Multifaith centres, chaplaincy and/or on-campus pastoral care providing one-on-one pastoral/spiritual counselling, and communal gatherings to support health and well-being.
Program-Specific Considerations

- Students and instructors will be expected to follow guidelines for specific settings where work integrated learning placements occur, including clinical, teaching, internships, co-op placements, and other community engaged work placements. Institutions should be knowledgeable of program-specific COVID-19 guidance and ensure that student and instructor risk is minimized in these placements.

- Vaccines are required for programs that have been identified in the COVID-19 Vaccination Status Information and Preventive Measures Order.

- A student, faculty member, researcher or staff member of a post-secondary institution who is in a health care location for training or research purposes must follow the Hospital and Community (Health Care and Other Services) COVID-19 Vaccination Status Information and Preventive Measures Order.

- A student must report their vaccination status to the HSPnet database and must provide an operator with proof of vaccination, or an exemption, on request from an operator.

- Institutions, students, faculty and staff should adhere to the federal government’s Travel Advice and Advisories when considering studying or working abroad.

On-Campus Health Services / Working with Local Public Health

- Institutions can play a key role by liaising with local public health officials to ensure students, including out-of-province students as well as international students and their families, have the most current information about the availability of vaccines.

- Institutions should work with their local medical health officer within their Regional Health Authority regarding on-campus COVID-19 vaccination clinics.

- Institutions should identify and communicate steps that students, faculty and staff should take if they develop symptoms, including where to access testing.

- Public health authorities are responsible for determining notification processes and requirements for confirmed cases of COVID-19. Institutions may be asked to assist public health authorities in notifying close contacts, assisting in the identification of people who may have been exposed, distribution of materials prepared by the public health authorities, or supporting public notification efforts.
Acknowledgements

The Return-to-Campus Guidelines were developed by experts from the BC post-secondary sector, in partnership with public health experts. Special thanks to members of the Go-forward Guidelines Steering Committee, Panel of Experts, public health partners and reference groups.

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March 8, 2021

Dear Post-Secondary Institution Presidents:

I am writing to you to acknowledge the important leadership the post-secondary sector has shown in BC’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic over the past 12 months, and to support you with the critical goal of resuming safe on-campus teaching, learning and research in September 2021.

Your institutions worked in partnership with the BC Centre for Disease Control, WorkSafeBC, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, and staff in my office to produce and update the “COVID-19 Go-Forward Guidelines for B.C.’s Post-Secondary Sector.” Those Guidelines and your institutional health and safety plans helped the sector to be very successful in mitigating the spread of COVID-19. The quick adaptation to remote learning, while staying open and available for learners, played a major role in the success of B.C.’s pandemic response.

My office and our medical health officers share your concerns about the wellbeing of young adults who are disproportionately affected by the pandemic, including worsening mental health, increased financial instability and diminished future prospects. We also acknowledge this has been a difficult and stressful time for faculty and staff. It is imperative to get back on campus for everyone’s health and well-being.

There are very good reasons to be confident that a return to on-campus instruction in the fall can be undertaken safely and successfully. Current projections of the COVID-19 vaccine supply in BC suggest that all vulnerable and high-risk groups should be immunized this spring, and the majority of the adult population by the summer. Young adults aged 18-24 should receive the vaccine no later than the end of July, but more likely sooner. The timing of immunization should not be a determinant of planning for a return to on-campus activities.

Given the expected timelines for immunization it is essential that we plan for a full return to in-person activities on campus in September 2021, including in-person instruction, with faculty and staff returning to campus sooner. Immunization will support what seems likely to become stable coexistence with COVID-19 as another manageable, seasonal ailment.
New variants of the SARS CoV-2 virus will likely continue to emerge. We will respond to them through monitoring, re-formulation of tests and vaccines, and through other measures as needed depending on the characteristics of the variants. Targeted testing and contact tracing by health authorities will remain key supplements to immunization in rapidly controlling transmission. These activities will be part of normal, ongoing life with COVID-19.

We have also learned over the past year that when we implement effective safety plans, large sectors can operate safely. Reducing the opportunity for infectious contacts will continue to be an important strategy. As such, safety plans will remain important, with updates as required. My team looks forward to working with you to fine-tune plans for the prevention activities we have all become so familiar with: self-administered health checks; facilitating hand cleaning through access to soap and water or encouraging people to use hand sanitizers; use of masks; early detection and rapid testing of potential cases; isolation; and case and contact management.

The experience of the past year can help with a safe return to post-secondary campuses. Above and beyond immunization, infectious contacts in group settings at post-secondary institutions can be reduced through a variety of prevention and exposure control measures. Two-meter physical distancing has been my guidance for uncontrolled group settings. Such distancing is neither practical, nor necessary, in the controlled context of post-secondary instructional settings. I am very confident that the combination of immunization and continued application of the “COVID-19 Go-Forward Guidelines for B.C.’s Post-Secondary Sector” will support the safe and complete resumption of campus teaching, learning, and research.

We also believe student housing, dining and other on-campus student services will be able to return to normal or close-to-normal capacities by following revised protocols in the “COVID-19 Go-Forward Guidelines for B.C.’s Post-Secondary Sector.”

Based on what we have learned in the past year, and the important protection that immunization will provide, I, as well as the medical health officers in British Columbia, strongly support the resumption of on-campus activities in September 2021. Public health will also continue to work with post-secondary institutions to determine if measures are needed to keep activities inside and outside the classroom safe in the fall, such as public transportation, socializing outside of class, athletics, and arrival and quarantine of international students.

Thank you, again, for the important role you play in supporting the provincial COVID-19 response, and in helping British Columbians to realize the full experience and benefits of post-secondary education. I look forward to working with you to strengthen the collaboration between public health and post-secondary institutions for a full and safe return to on-campus instruction in September 2021. We all look forward to the rich campus interactions that will make learning and personal development so much more effective and supportive for students, faculty, and staff.
Sincerely,

Bonnie Henry
MD, MPH, FRCPC
Provincial Health Officer

Cc  Honourable Anne Kang, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training
    Shannon Baskerville, Deputy Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training
    Max Blouw, President Research Universities' Council of BC
    Ruth Wittenberg President, BC Association of Institutes and Universities
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    Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health
    Stephen Brown, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
    Chief Medical Health Officers, Regional Health Authorities
    Chief Medical Officer, First Nations Health Authority
    Deputy Provincial Health Officers
BCCDC Return to Campus Public Health Guidance

Return to Campus Public Health Guidance

UPDATED: October 8, 2021

Key Messages

- This document outlines the prevention measures recommended by public health for post-secondary institutions in B.C. to reduce the risk of communicable diseases, including COVID-19, on campus.
- Educational settings are low-risk settings for COVID-19 transmission, particularly in the context of a highly immunized population.
- Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 on campus. Everyone eligible is strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated (i.e., receive two doses) against COVID-19.

Introduction

This document outlines the prevention measures recommended by public health for post-secondary institutions in B.C. to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It aligns with, and is complementary to, the COVID-19 Return-to-Campus Guidelines.

Public health experts in B.C. support the full return to on-campus instruction on September 7th, 2021 for post-secondary institutions, with the effective evidence-informed prevention measures detailed within this guidance document in place.

In B.C., most transmission of COVID-19 occurs in households or at informal social gatherings. In educational and other comparable settings, including those with teaching, learning, research, and student development activities, COVID-19 transmission is uncommon. Young people have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Enabling them to return to closer-to-normal learning, recreational, and social activities is needed for pandemic recovery. While COVID-19 will continue to circulate for many years, in an immunized population like B.C., COVID-19 prevention needs to be balanced with recovery efforts.

The prevention measures detailed in this document have been very effective at preventing COVID-19 in a wide variety of settings across B.C. and will support a successful and safe return to campus. Prior to implementing measures in addition to those outlined below, consult with your local Medical Health Officer to ensure benefit.

Post-secondary institutions are encouraged to transition to these recommended prevention measures over a period of time, recognizing this as an evolving situation with multiple steps necessary to support implementation. Public Health remains committed to supporting the post-secondary sector, including faculty, staff, and students to return to the educational and research activities that are critical to the community and to society.
Vaccination

Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 on campus. Two doses provide effective protection against infection and serious illness from COVID-19, including variants of concern. Vaccines are available to all faculty, students, and staff, including international students and their families.

Post-secondary institutions can work with public health to ensure vaccination opportunities are accessible in the first weeks of the return to campus, as well as promote information on how to get vaccinated. The BC Centre for Disease Control has specific information on getting vaccinated for students arriving in B.C. from within and outside of Canada.

People vaccinated outside of B.C. can upload their COVID-19 vaccination records to www.immunizationrecord.gov.bc.ca. This requires a B.C. Personal Health Number, which can be obtained by contacting Service BC at 1-833-838-2323. Service BC is available seven days a week, 7am to 7pm.

Some experiential learning placements (including practicum and co-op placements) may require students to be vaccinated in line with practices for other employees. This includes health sciences students working in certain health care settings by Order of the Provincial Health Officer.

Testing and Contact Tracing

COVID-19 Testing: Testing is available to any student, faculty or staff in BC. Share guidance on when to get tested with the campus community. Testing locations are available on Regional Health Authority websites. Routine asymptomatic testing of unimmunized students has been proposed to further reduce the likelihood of transmission on campus. The benefit of this intervention diminishes as immunization rate increases. Based on a review of literature, local modeling, the benefit of routine asymptomatic screening of unimmunized students and staff is limited when immunization coverage is 80% and vanishingly small at 90%. If you are considering using point-of-care tests for asymptomatic screening of unvaccinated students, faculty and staff, consult your local Medical Health Officer prior to implementation to ensure appropriate guidelines are followed.

Contact Tracing: Public health follows up on every person who tests positive for COVID-19. This process is called contact tracing. Contact tracing helps to identify and manage close contacts, who may be at increased risk for COVID-19.

Public health will work with institutions to manage cases and clusters of COVID-19, as required. Work with public health to determine what protocols should be in place to manage COVID-19 cases on campus. This may include providing the name and contact information of identified students, faculty and staff upon request of public health.

As part of contact tracing, close contacts are notified by public health and informed of what subsequent actions they should take (e.g., monitor for symptoms, self-isolate, seek testing, etc.) as they may be at increased risk for COVID-19. Public health will also facilitate general notifications more broadly within the campus community or post the information to Regional Health Authority websites when necessary for contact tracing or outbreak management, in line
with notification practices for other community and workplace settings. General notifications are typically provided to those who are at greater risk for communicable disease and need to take subsequent actions beyond continuing to follow general public health recommendations.

**Administrator Role:** Post-secondary Institutions are not responsible for contact tracing, and should not provide notifications to faculty, staff or students about potential or confirmed communicable diseases cases (including COVID-19) unless requested to do so by the local Medical Health Officer.

Should faculty, staff or students disclose that they have tested positive for COVID-19 or bring forward concerns related to unconfirmed cases on campus, administrators may consider the following key messages if they determine the need to address their campus community:

- We continue to prioritize the safety and wellbeing of our students, faculty and staff. Effective prevention measures are in place across campus to prevent COVID-19 from spreading.
- Educational settings are low-risk settings for COVID-19 transmission, particularly in the context of a highly immunized population.
- Public health authorities are responsible for determining notification processes and requirements for confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- In most situations, local public health will directly notify close contacts who may be at increased risk. See BCCDC for more information on close contacts.
- Since COVID-19 transmission is uncommon in educational settings, in most cases, public health notifications to the campus community will not be required.
- Please do not notify faculty, staff or students about potential or confirmed communicable disease cases (including COVID-19) unless requested to do so by the local Medical Health Officer.
- In the interim, continue to do your daily health checks and follow all of the prevention measures in the communicable disease prevention plan.
- Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**Provincial Health Officer Orders**

Post-secondary institutions must follow applicable Provincial Health Officer Orders. Full details on Orders are available from the [Provincial Health Officer](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/governments/health/en/). Current Orders applicable to post-secondary institutions include:

**Post-secondary Institution Housing COVID-19 Preventive Measures:** Those living in on-campus housing must provide proof of vaccination, indicating they have received all recommended doses or combination of World Health Organization approved vaccines at least seven days previously, to their post-secondary institution by September 23, 2021. After this date, those who are unvaccinated are required to wear a face covering (mask) in any area of housing other than their room.

**Gatherings & Events Order:** Certain types of gatherings and events in B.C., including those on post-secondary campuses are restricted. This includes non-educational (i.e., non-essential or discretionary) activities, including graduation ceremonies, parties, recitals, and concerts. Current size limits are 50 people or 50% of a venue’s capacity indoors.
(whichever is greater) or 5,000 people or 50% of a venue’s capacity outdoors (whichever is greater). For example, if an indoor venue has a normal seated capacity of 600 people, 300 people can attend.

Gathering & Events (Section D) /Food and Liquor Serving Premises (Section B) Orders - Proof of Vaccination: Everyone on campus aged 12 and older (born in 2009 or earlier) needs to provide proof of vaccination via the BC Vaccine Card to access some non-essential or discretionary services, businesses, and events on campus as of September 13, 2021. Examples of non-essential or discretionary services include, but are not limited to:

- Indoor ticketed concerts, theatre, dance, symphony and sporting events (with more than 50 participants)
- Indoor and outdoor dining at restaurants, pubs and bars (on-campus cafeterias are excluded)
- Indoor adult sports activities and group exercise
- Indoor organized gatherings like conferences, conventions and workshops (with more than 50 participants)
- Indoor organized group recreational classes and activities like pottery and art (with more than 50 participants)

Both Orders are currently in place until January 31, 2022 and are subject to extension.

Face Coverings (COVID-19) Order – Indoor Public Spaces: Masks must be worn in all indoor public spaces in B.C., including post-secondary spaces by anyone aged 12 and older, including students, faculty, staff and visitors. This includes, but is not limited to:

- in all public indoor public spaces of post secondary institutions
  - This includes lecture theatres, classrooms, teaching laboratories, and other indoor instructional settings
  - Instructors and other presenters do not need to wear a mask when behind a barrier or two metres away from students while teaching in indoor public spaces
- in common areas of buildings open to the public, including in on-campus housing and office buildings (e.g., lobbies, hallways, bathrooms)
- in common areas of sport and fitness centres when not engaged in physical activity
- in coffee shops and restaurants, pubs and bars when not seated at a table

Masks are not required for workspaces such as office areas, research labs or shared offices that do not serve the public, or for meetings and seminars in small meeting rooms. Masks are also not required if a person is behind a barrier that separates them from other people, like a divider, cubicle, or in a room by themselves. Exemptions, including for those unable to wear a face covering, are detailed in the Order.

Regional Recommendations & Orders: Medical Health Officers can place local public health Orders or recommendations for additional prevention measures beyond this guidance for post-secondary institutions within their regional health authority. These are placed at their own discretion, based on their authority under provincial legislation. These may be put in place during times of increased community transmission of COVID-19, and within communities with low vaccination uptake. They are based on local epidemiology and are proportional to risk.
Environmental Measures

**Ventilation:** Continue to ensure that all mechanical heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated and maintained in accordance with WorkSafe BC requirements and ASHRAE Standards for indoor air quality, and that they are working properly. Open windows when the weather permits if it doesn’t impact the functioning of the ventilation systems.

**Cleaning & Disinfection:** Clean and disinfect educational spaces, public spaces and high touch areas daily. Environmental cleaning is not required between classes.

Administrative Measures

- Physical distancing (consistently maintaining 2 metres between people) is no longer recommended in indoor public spaces by public health or required by WorkSafe BC. People on campus can be encouraged to spread out within available space and to consider and respect others’ personal space (the distance from which a person feels comfortable being next to another person).
- Limiting the number of people within indoor public spaces is no longer recommended by public health or required by WorkSafe BC. People can be encouraged to spread out within the available space and normal room occupancy limits should not be exceeded (where applicable).
- Post-secondary institutions are not required to manage the flow of pedestrian traffic within buildings or confined areas, or post occupancy limits for spaces such as elevators or washrooms.

Personal Measures

**Stay Home When Sick:** Ensure students, faculty and staff are aware they should not participate in any activities (educational or otherwise) if they are sick.

**Get Tested When Recommended:** Encourage students faculty and staff to use the BC Self-Assessment Tool app, the BCCDC When to Get Tested Resource, or call 8-1-1 to determine if they should get tested for COVID-19 if they’re sick.

Institutions should identify and make available safe and appropriate housing for students living on campus who are required to self-isolate or quarantine, if recommended by public health.

**Hand Hygiene:** Enable regular opportunities for hand hygiene, including placing hand sanitizer stations at the entrances/exits to public indoor spaces.
Guidelines produced by
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