

COVID-19 Protocols

Employee Return to Campus Safely Plan Fall 2021/Winter 2022



August 25, 2021

Employee Return to Campus Safety Plan, Fall 2021/Winter 2022

As the Government of Nova Scotia moves through the various re-opening phases and approaches Phase 5 Acadia University is following their guidance and looking to transition back to normal or “new normal” operations. The Government of Nova Scotia launched a new website Preparing to Reopen Nova Scotia and is instructing employers to formulate plans to bring workers back safely. Employers and employees are required to ensure work is performed safely. With COVID-19, this means several changes to work practices. The plan below outlines the changes that Acadia University considers reasonable, practical, and achievable. These changes must be followed by all campus employees (and contractors) for their safety and the well-being of our community.

Acadia will be monitoring the Government of Nova Scotia guidelines, with considerations for the various challenges that arise within a large, complex organization.

It is important to explain the changes to workplace practice necessary to work safely and in compliance with the provincial public health guidelines. Facilities management has conducted building audits for all campus facilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented event in the modern history of Acadia University. The virus has and will continue to cause changes throughout the organization. **This plan is dynamic and will be reviewed as new information becomes available to ensure the safety and well-being of our employees and the Acadia community.**

The Directives

For employees to be on campus, they must follow these six directives, which will be expanded upon below.

- 1. Be Healthy**
- 2. Be Diligent with Hygiene Practices**
- 3. Maintain Physical Distance (MPD)**
- 4. When MPD is not possible, wear a non-medical mask (NMM) and continue to follow COVID-19 Interim Mask Policy**
- 5. Limit interactions with others**
- 6. Practice respect for self and others**

1. Be Healthy: Anyone coming to campus should be healthy and asymptomatic, meaning that you show none of the symptoms associated with possible infection by COVID-19. Public Health provides criteria for when people should be tested for COVID-19, and is recommending routine testing as a way of identifying cases promptly. Acadia, in collaboration with the Government of Nova Scotia has implemented a voluntary Rapid Testing Clinic on campus, that will be available to all faculty, staff, and students at Acadia. All students, faculty, and staff are also asked to perform a daily self-assessment based on the <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/symptoms-and-testing/>. Follow <https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/en> online if you feel you have symptoms related to COVID-19, and follow the instructions you are given. If the Internet is unavailable, you can still call 811 to be assessed by a nurse. Information for the public has been posted online at <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>. If you are told to isolate by 811 and have a COVID-19 test performed, stay in your room and call Safety and Security to activate your resources and meal delivery. If transportation is required to the test site, call 1-844-996-0694 and book your COVID-19 test and transportation at the same time.

All faculty, staff, and students that attend Acadia are expected to have their COVID-19 vaccination, unless they are unable to receive the vaccine for health reasons. This is an important strategy to protect not only yourself, but others around you. A highly vaccinated campus means that restrictions may be further eased, and a new normal will be available quicker.

The severity of COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild to severe, and in some cases, can lead to death. Current information suggests most people don't experience severe illness or need to be hospitalized, but signs of any of the above symptoms are immediate cause for concern. **Regardless of whether you are fully vaccinated or not, if you have any of the above symptoms, please stay home. Notify your supervisor and follow the directions noted above related to experiencing symptoms. If you develop any of the symptoms while at work, immediately wash your hands, ensure you are wearing a mask, and notify your supervisor.**

Depending upon your symptoms and how you are feeling, you can initially work from home if you can do so, and this should be discussed with your supervisor.

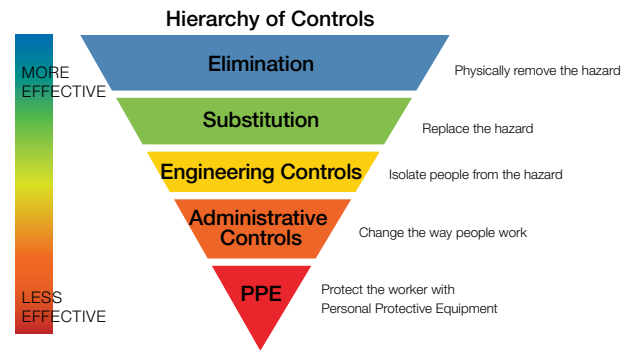
In the event of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis the employee will be notified by Public Health and instructions on how to proceed will be provided at that time. As the employee, you need to contact your immediate supervisor and depending on your symptoms, arrange to work from home for the duration of your illness. If you are feeling ill and need to be replaced, you can discuss this option at that point. Public Health will initiate a program for contact tracing and Acadia University will assist in this regard in whatever way possible. This contact tracing process will be led by Public Health and may identify additional students, staff and faculty who may need to isolate and attend a COVID-19 test centre. The employee will be allowed back on campus once they have isolated for 14 days, have no symptoms and have been approved to come back to campus by Public Health. Acadia University will make every effort to respect the privacy and confidentiality of any employee in isolation.

2. Be Diligent with Hygiene Practices: Employees must wash and/or sanitize their hands frequently. Hand sanitizer will be available in entrances, offices, common areas used for work, such as equipment areas (photocopiers, projectors, telephones), or touching surfaces (door knobs, window handles) and employees will be required to sanitize their hands prior to use and after completing work in a common area. Employees are reminded not to touch their faces and must continue to exercise proper respiratory etiquette.

Physical Plant custodians will disinfect common office spaces and common areas daily and will clean high contact areas (door knobs, washrooms) with increased frequency. Disinfectant will be provided for private office spaces, classrooms, and mask-free study spaces on campus. Faculty, staff, and students are expected to disinfect their space before and after use. Facilities Management maintain documents with the date, time and employee who cleaned the facility.

3. Maintain Physical Distance (MPD) of approximately 1 metre (3 feet) from others: The main way to prevent the spread of the virus is to limit close exposure to others. Employees with their own office space will be able to MPD in their office.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health gives the hierarchy of controls as:



By maintaining physical distance, we are following a form of Engineering Controls.

4. When MPD is not possible, wear a non-medical mask (NNM): Proximity work is work where MPD cannot be maintained, and two or more workers may be required to be within 1 metre of each other to complete a task (moving equipment, etc.).

Where MPD is not possible or ensured only for short durations, Acadia requires the use of masks. For employees and contractors, this is while you are on campus until you are in your workspace where a mask is not required. The University requires all visitors to the campus to wear masks while on the campus grounds. This form of administrative control is not considered PPE; it is a preventive tool to protect those around the wearer by helping to capture the wearer's droplets. Acadia will provide disposable masks to employees for use at work if they have increased risk factors to acquiring severe COVID-19. Employees who already have and use cloth masks when in public may continue to wear their own while at work. Appendix A, at the end of this procedure, outlines the process for receiving and care of the masks as well as some other information on mask use.

Non-medical masks (NMM) are to be worn when maintaining physical distancing (MPD) is not ensured.

5. Elimination of unnecessary movement: For the foreseeable future, Acadia will restrict access to facilities to employees directly working in a building. The lone exception to this will be supervisors who have direct reports in more than one building. Employees may continue to use electronic forms of communication

(MS Teams, phones, etc., but as we transition to the full campus experience, we can move forward with face-to-face meetings being the normal, once again.) These meetings will be required to follow the public health limit on gatherings which are updated and can be found at the following website: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/restrictions-and-guidance/#gatherings>. Participants will only meet in a room where physical distancing can be maintained and may require participants to wear masks.

6. Respect and care for yourself, your colleagues and, your community: We have all been impacted by COVID-19 and want University operations to return to productive norms. To enable this to happen quicker, Acadia is expecting all faculty, staff, and students to be vaccinated as soon as possible, unless there is a medical reason not to receive it. Please refer to Acadia's Vaccination Policy at <https://www2.acadiau.ca/files/files/COVID-19/2021/2021-07-22%20Vaccination%20Policy%20and%20Approach.pdf>. To get back to an energized, populated campus, we need to look out for each other and make the adjustments noted above. We all have personal accountability to follow these rules. Employees are encouraged to document any concerns they have about workplace safety by following the attached link. <https://survey-system.acadiau.ca/index.php/828966?lang=en>

Employees are to use this tool and not attempt to resolve issues related to non-compliance personally.

Researchers

Researchers who are seeking changes to existing research protocols, or to begin research activities in Acadia labs and research facilities or seeking to conduct fieldwork will be required to apply using the *Operational Plan for Research During COVID-19*. Researchers and their teams will be required to follow all University COVID-19 rules and procedures, as referred to in this document.

Compliance with rules and procedures noted in these documents will be necessary to ensure the safety of all employees and the campus community.

Non-compliance may result in access to campus being denied and/or other disciplinary measures.

Return to Campus

Even as the Nova Scotia Government is continuing the process of reopening, the reality is that some of the campus services have been ongoing. The print shop and the post office are operating with COVID-19 protections in place, the campus bookstore is doing online business, and we have been supporting students still living in residence. This plan does not discuss the details of reopening plans nor the timelines for decisions regarding commercial operations. Individual operators will be responsible for supplying a reopening plan to the Director, Safety and Security that is compliant with all provincial health guidelines. The plans will be reviewed by the Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator, and the Coordinator, Procurement and Risk Management. Any required adjustments will be communicated and incorporated into the plans before the operators being permitted to reopen. The reopening of other facilities will be decided upon by the President's Executive Council (PEC) while keeping the health and safety of employees at the forefront.

Current Plan: Fall Term

Students return to campus. In-person classes and student programming. This term has numerous steps from strategic to tactical, and will continue to be reassessed through our Planning Task Force. Refer to the *Campus Reopening Framework* document for further details.

Return to (the New) Normal Operations

When the Government of Canada announces the safe return to (new) normal activities with the pandemic being considered over. Acadia will continue to assess the current situation related to COVID-19 and campus and will be adjusting restrictions accordingly.

Testing and Tracing Protocols

Testing protocols have been developed by Nova Scotia Public Health. Contact tracing protocols will be implemented when a positive COVID-19 test is present with Acadia employees or students. Nova Scotia Public Health will take the lead, in collaboration with Safety and Security and the Occupational Health Nurse (specific to COVID-19) on campus.

Signage and Visual Indicators

The health check notices will be posted at all entrances to all buildings and on entryway doors to all building levels. A listing of all the COVID-19 rules will be posted in numerous locations on campus.

Mental Health

We understand each person will have had a different experience and reaction to the pandemic and physical distancing and isolation measures. We are committed to a safe and healthy workplace for all employees, and we will do our utmost to provide resources to employees who are experiencing anxiety or fear. Further details are provided on the HR website.

Appendix A: Cloth Masks

Employees who have been approved to return to campus will be required to wear masks in all common areas and follow Acadia University's *Interim Mask Policy*.

