

COVID-19 Protocols

Employee Return to Campus Safely Plan Fall 2020/Winter 2021



November 25, 2020

Employee Return to Campus Safety Plan, Fall 2020/Winter 2021

As restrictions ease in most Canadian provinces, Acadia University and other Nova Scotia Universities and businesses are 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 using a phased approach to returning employees to campus. The phases (described later) are triggered less by time than by the degree of success in implementing changes within a large, complex organization.

Before describing the phases, 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. All students, faculty, and staff are 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, a list of local companies specializing in transporting quarantined (self-isolated) individuals can be provided at this time.

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.

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 following 14 days. 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

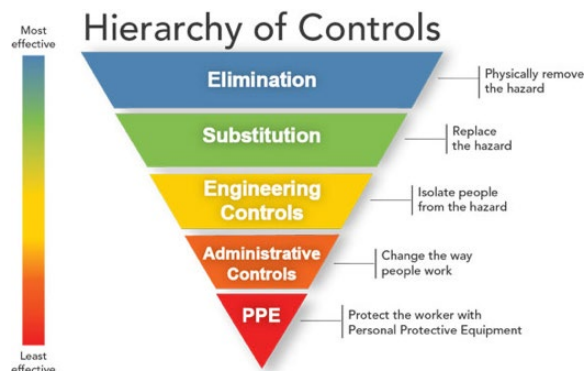
students, staff and faculty who may need to isolate and attend a COVID-19 test centre. The employee will be allowed back on campus once they have isolated for 14 days, have no symptoms, and are approved to come back to campus by Public Health. Acadia University will make every effort to respect the privacy 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, exits, offices and common areas used for work, and employees using equipment (such as photocopiers, projectors or telephones) or touching surfaces such as door knobs or window handles) 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 clean common office spaces and common areas daily and will clean high contact areas (door knobs, washrooms) with increased frequency. Facilities Management maintain documents with the date, time and employee who cleaned the facility.

3. Maintain Physical Distance (MPD) of 2 metres (6 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. This is also true where we erect barriers between workers. Office space is a pre-constructed physical protective barrier. Employees who share office space will have the space reviewed by their supervisor with the assistance of Facilities Management and/or Occupational Health and Safety to see if the physical distancing can be maintained or if another type of engineered control can be used. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, employees may be moved from one space to another or require another type of administrative control or possibly the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

4. When MPD is not possible, wear a non-medical mask (NMM): Proximity work is work where MPD cannot be maintained, and two or more workers may be required to be within 2 metres of each other to complete a task (moving equipment, etc.). Employees are required to get pre-approval for this work through their supervisor. The supervisor will assess whether or not the work is essential and will determine the safe work procedure. Acadia's Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator can assist with the creation of procedures to ensure safe work.

Where MPD is not possible or ensured only for short durations, Acadia requires the use of NMM. 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 non-medical 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 masks to employees for use at work. 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 will continue to use electronic forms of communication (MS Teams, phones, etc.) as the primary method. Once allowed, planned meetings of colleagues where electronic communication is not possible will 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 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.

Application and Orientation

To ensure the safety of all employees, Acadia will assess which faculty and staff are to return to campus at each stage. For each person required to return, the supervisor will complete the application form in Appendix B. The Office of Safety and Security through the Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator can assist supervisors in assessing workspaces. **This requirement supersedes any previous approval.** The main purpose of the application is to ensure the proper safeguards are in place, and the employee is aware of the rules for working on campus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Applications will be reviewed by the appropriate Vice-President.

Employees receiving approval to return to campus will be sent a link to the Campus Reopening Framework document. Employees will acknowledge understanding and agreement to comply with all COVID-19 protocols and procedures, as referenced in the document. A WHMIS module will be added for employees who require this training.

Researchers who are seeking to resume activities in Acadia labs and research facilities or seeking to conduct fieldwork will apply using the *Protocol and Process Guide for Return to Research* and the accompanying *Return to Research* application form. Researchers and their teams will be required to follow all University COVID-19 rules and procedures, as referred to in this document.

In recognition that Custodians, Safety and Security Officers, tradespersons and contractors have been working throughout the pandemic and that numerous safety protocols have been implemented for them, they are exempt from the application requirement. They will be required to comply with other stated rules, and it will be up to the supervisors of those groups to ensure employees are aware of the new procedures.

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.

Phased Return

As stated earlier, the phases described below are less about specific timelines and more about success within the phase. Activities in each phase may change as new information becomes available, particularly if the Nova Scotia Government guidelines and regulations change.

Even as the Nova Scotia Government is starting 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. Other campus facilities and services will remain closed at

this time until further guidance is given by the province. 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.

PHASE 1: Restricted Access for Essential Work

Phase 1 is planned to begin on July 2, 2020. A goal of this phase would be to return people to campus who need access for essential work but not to exceed 25-30% of employees. The application and orientation processes are set out in the Application and Orientation section at the end of this document.

Note: during this phase, to ensure building capacity is not exceeded, all employees must receive authorization to be on campus during normal hours of operations. Employees may continue to temporarily access building for short periods after hours to retrieve materials from their offices, but must not work from campus without authorization.

PHASE 2: Increased Access

Continues with rules of Phase 1 but increases the number of employees. The President's Executive Council (PEC) will decide when to move to Phase 2 based on the success in Phase 1 and will incorporate any changes to the Nova Scotia Public Health recommendations or rules (e.g., gathering sizes). This phase will allow for up to 50–60% of employees to return to campus. The application and orientation processes, as set out in the Application and Orientation above, apply.

PHASE 3: Ramp Up

Most staff returned, and the preparation for students and in-person programming. Employees will have training on new COVID-19 work procedures. Phases 2 and 3 can blend. This will include physical changes to service delivery locations as required to meet Public Health guidelines. All changes will be performed after a workplace hazard assessment has been done. The Office of Safety and Security through the Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator can assist managers with these assessments. Staff traffic flow within respective buildings will be reviewed, and directional signage put in place as needed. Gradual reopening to the general public will be considered during this phase.

PHASE 4: Fall Term

Students return to campus. In-person class and select student programming. This Phase has numerous steps from strategic to tactical, and preparations are continuing through the 2020/2021 Planning Task Force. Refer to the *Campus Reopening Framework* document for further details on Phase 4.

PHASE 5: 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.

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

While not specifically mentioned within each phase, a significant amount of signage will be displayed on campus. 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

Acadia University will supply each returning employee with two cloth masks. Employees who have been approved to return to campus will obtain masks at Safety and Security.



Appendix B: Access to Campus Application Form



Access to Campus Application

To ensure the safety of all employees, Acadia will determine which faculty and staff are to return to campus at each stage. For each person required to return, the supervisor will complete this application form.

Name of Employee: _____ (TYPE NAME) Date: _____

Department: _____ (TYPE NAME)

Building: _____ (TYPE NAME) Office / Room / Lab Number (etc.): _____

Does the current work location allow physical distancing to be maintained?.

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Briefly describe the workstation as it relates to physical distancing (2-metre separation from others).

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If the workspace does not currently enable 2-metre physical distancing, what would have to change?

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What schedule will the employee follow when they will be in their office?

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Please explain why the work can not be performed remotely.

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Forward completed form to Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator, Greg Deveau

For Administration Only
Hazard assessment performed:
Approval Date: