



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université

Memorandum 20:43

Date: September 1, 2020

To: Presidents and Administrative Officers
Local, Federated and Provincial Associations

From: David Robinson, Executive Director

Re: **University and College Fall Semester Plans**

CAUT is tracking institutional plans for delivery of courses during the pandemic. We have compiled a [database](#) of more than 110 institutions' back to school plans, including the mode of delivery chosen for the Fall 2020 semester and links to each institutions' health and safety plans.

The re-opening of institutions this fall raises a number of health and safety and academic concerns for staff and students returning to campus.

The [federal government](#) and some provincial governments ([British Columbia](#), [Alberta](#), [Ontario](#) and [Quebec](#)) have issued guidance for post-secondary institutions in their re-opening plans. We have developed a checklist for measuring institutional re-opening plans based on recommendations from CAUT member associations and public health-informed guidance.

Checklist for Assessing Fall Semester Plans

Academic staff associations should review their institution's re-opening plans with an eye to the following:

Decision-making

- The recommendations and guidance of public health authorities inform all decisions about when and how to re-open campus safely.
- Workplace Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSC) and staff and student associations are involved in decision-making around re-opening, risk and hazard assessment and mitigation strategies, and criteria and protocols in the event a student or staff member is diagnosed or suspected of being COVID-19 positive.
- The JHSC has consulted with the appropriate experts and other local or provincial bodies with expertise in hazard assessment and prevention. The JHSC has also consulted with all campus associations and unions on specific concerns or hazards in their work areas or work processes that need to be addressed.

- Timelines for re-opening are flexible to ensure that all known or potential hazards from the shutdown have been identified and addressed.
- Academic matters such as instructional methods and mode of delivery are being decided by the appropriate academic governance body.
- Intellectual property protections in collective agreements have been reviewed and strengthened, if necessary, for asynchronous and on-line course delivery.

Communications

- Staff and student associations and joint occupational health and safety committees are involved in planning clear, concise and practical communication in order for all on-campus to understand and follow appropriate guidance and advice.
- Safety plans for each campus/building are in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, including protocols for access to buildings and facilities.
- Orientation procedures are provided to all staff prior to room usage.

Additional Resources

- New resources have been allocated to ensure timely implementation of public health measures, such as ventilation upgrades, expanded classroom space and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including [appropriate face masks](#).
- Appropriate resources are in place to support the well-being and mental health of students and staff on and off-campus.
- Reasonable accommodation for staff is being provided for those who are high-risk or have family responsibilities that require them to remain off-campus.
- Academic staff, and in particular contract academic staff, are being adequately compensated for additional preparation or instructional time for remote and asynchronous course development.
- Additional caretaking services have been put in place, and contracting out is being avoided to maintain quality and minimize contamination from other sites.

Health & Safety Measures

These are in addition to promotion of personal practices and environmental cleaning/disinfection.

Physical Distancing

- Students and staff remain at least 2 meters apart when gathering in-person.
- Reduced number of students in classrooms or exam halls.
- Outdoor spaces have been adapted to be teaching and learning environments.
- Limited number of individuals on-campus and in classrooms/lecture halls at any given time by staggering classes, alternating in-class days for students.

Use of Face Masks

- Personal protective equipment is available and required when physical distancing may not be possible. [Non-medical masks or cloth face coverings](#) should be made up of a least 2 layers of tightly woven material fabric (such as cotton or linen).
- Regularly consult provincial or municipal face covering requirements as they are updated according to evolving research and recommendations from infectious disease specialists.

Engineering

- Increased ventilation across the campus environment.
- Provide and stock adequate hand-washing/sanitizing facilities on-site for faculty, staff and students and ensure the locations are visible and easily accessed. Sanitizing stations should be placed at each entryway to a building, department, classroom, lab and any other appropriate area where its use is necessary.
- Develop and promote guidance around when faculty, staff and students should wash their hands, including upon arriving on-campus, before and after breaks, after handling cash or other materials, before and after handling common tools and equipment, etc.

Administrative Controls

- Minimized time on campus, if in-person attendance is required.
- Enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfection practices have been put into place in all settings (e.g., lecture halls, classrooms, bathrooms), with emphasis on high-touch surfaces (e.g., door handles, hand railings, chairs, tables, elevator buttons, shared equipment etc.).
- The workplace JHSC and campus associations and unions should ensure that housekeeping staff are provided with appropriate training, PPE and supplies to carry out their duties. All staff must be provided with training, supplies and who is responsible for cleaning what in their work area while carrying out their duties.
- Schedule has been established for access to lab facilities, including keeping the same individual timeslots to minimize number of potential contacts.
- On-campus presence is limited to small classes and experiential/applied learning opportunities.
- Cohorting/use of small groups, including keeping the same individuals in the groups to minimize number of contacts.
- Strict exclusion policies are in place for students/faculty/staff/visitors who are ill, while taking care to support students, faculty and staff in isolation and avoid stigma or discrimination.
- A procedure is in place for isolating students/faculty/staff/visitors who become sick while on campus.
- A safe, secure record/sign-in system of students/faculty/staff/visitors who access a campus building for learning and research activities, has been implemented to facilitate public health investigation of cases and contacts in the event of an exposure at a campus building.
- Protocols are in place for research involving animals, field work, in-person human subject research and Indigenous communities, who are at high risk from the virus and may have distinct public health emergency measures from federal and provincial guidelines.