

# Attending university and college

Nova Scotia welcomes thousands of post-secondary students every year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public health officials and post-secondary institutions are working closely to keep students, staff, and residents of surrounding communities safe.

To prevent the spread of this virus in our communities, there are rules for post-secondary students arriving in the province from anywhere except Prince Edward Island. These rules are the law in Nova Scotia as part of the [public health order under the Health Protection Act](#).

## ENTERING NOVA SCOTIA FOR POST-SECONDARY STUDIES

### **Are students from anywhere except Prince Edward Island allowed to attend university or college in Nova Scotia?**

Yes. Most universities in the province and NSCC are offering only or mainly online courses. Some are offering in-person courses or components of courses, such as labs. Institutions with mainly online learning will still have some facilities open, such as residences (at lower capacity) and libraries.

### **Are there specific requirements for international students?**

Yes. All post-secondary students entering Nova Scotia from anywhere except Prince Edward Island must complete the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in](#). Make sure you save the email with the submission ID that you receive after you complete the form.

International students must also use the federal government's ArriveCAN app to provide their information to the Public Health Agency of Canada. Students can [download the ArriveCAN app](#) or call 1-833-641-0343.

Some institutions require students to submit a self-isolation plan. Please check with your institution on how to prepare your plan, where to send it, and whether there is anything else you need to submit.

### **Do students have to self-isolate when they arrive in Nova Scotia?**

Any student coming to Nova Scotia from anywhere except Prince Edward Island must self-isolate for 14 days. Students who live in Prince Edward Island do not have to self-isolate unless they have travelled outside the region within 14 days before coming to Nova Scotia. Please review more specific information and requirements for [international post-secondary students](#).

### **Do students need to get tested for COVID-19?**

Students who enter Nova Scotia from anywhere except Prince Edward Island should get 1 COVID-19 test on day 6, 7 or 8 of their self-isolation (see more below).

### **Do post-secondary staff need to self-isolate and be tested?**

Any staff who have been outside Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island need to self-isolate for 14 days when they return to Nova Scotia. They do not need to be tested.

### **What should a student do if they have symptoms?**

You should do the online [COVID-19 self-assessment](#). If you can't do it online, you can contact 811.

### **What happens if there is a case of COVID-19 at post-secondary institutions?**

Public Health will take the same approach with post-secondary institutions as they do with other cases. They will direct the person to self-isolate. They will follow up and test close contacts of the person who is sick. Depending on the circumstances of the case, they will direct and work with the institution on any additional steps that must be taken, including communicating about the case to the community.

### **What if students have more questions?**

If students have additional questions about these public health requirements, they should contact their institution.

## TESTING

### **Is there testing for post-secondary students from anywhere except Prince Edward Island?**

All students entering Nova Scotia from anywhere except Prince Edward Island should get 1 COVID-19 test on day 6, 7 or 8 of your self-isolation. Please book your appointment up to 3 days in advance by completing the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#). If you need help with transportation to/from your testing appointment, please call 1-844-996-0694.

### **Is testing mandatory?**

While testing is voluntary, we expect students to help protect their households and communities by getting tested.

### **Does a negative test result mean a student can stop self-isolation?**

No, students must complete the full 14 days of self-isolation, even if they have a negative test result.

### **Can students get their test anytime?**

Students with no symptoms can get book an appointment to get tested on day 6, 7 or 8 of their self-isolation. Nobody will be turned away on another date but testing on one of these days is best.

### **Why does the testing have to be on day 6, 7 or 8?**

A negative result from a test done on day 6, 7 or 8 of self-isolation means you are likely not infectious to others at the time of the test. This timing is late enough to increase the chances of detecting the virus if the student was exposed while away, and still early enough to prevent them from spreading the virus to household contacts who may be self-isolating with them.

### **Does a negative test done on day 6, 7 or 8 guarantee the student does not have COVID-19?**

No. It means you are likely not infectious to others at the time of the test. That is why students must continue their self-isolation. But it does give a level of assurance to students, their roommates and their communities that they are not likely carrying and transmitting the virus unknowingly.

### **Will this testing ensure we catch all positive cases among students?**

While we expect students to get tested to help protect others, it is voluntary testing. Also, it is just one test during their 14-day self-isolation. We cannot expect to identify every case through this testing. However, it increases our chances of identifying cases early, before they have time to spread.

### **If a student gets a negative test result before returning to Nova Scotia, can they skip the test on day 6, 7 or 8?**

Students should be tested in Nova Scotia because, even if you get tested before arriving, that test may have been too early in the virus's incubation period to detect it or you could still become infected during travel. Getting a negative result from a test done on day 6, 7 or 8 is a good indicator that the student likely does not have COVID-19.

### **Where should a student get tested? Can they go to a pop-up or drop-in site?**

Students should not go to a pop-up or drop-in site for this test. They must be tested at a primary assessment centre, but they should not go to one of these centres without an [appointment](#).

Once this initial period of self-isolation and testing is over for most students, there may be pop-up sites on or near campus where students can get asymptomatic testing again.

### **Is a student allowed to break self-isolation to go to a testing site?**

Yes, they can break their self-isolation just to get tested. They should wear a non-medical mask when going between their vehicle and the site and stay 2 metres/6 feet apart from others.

### **Can students take public transportation to a testing site?**

Students should not take public transportation to get tested. You can use your own vehicle if you have one. If you need help with transportation to/from your testing appointment, please call 1-844-996-0694.

### **How do students get their results?**

We encourage everyone to opt for getting results via email if the result is negative. If the result is positive, public health will call you to manage your case.

### **Is there a cost to students to get tested? What about international students?**

No.

### **Do you need a provincial health card for the testing?**

If you have one, bring it. Nobody will be turned away if they don't have one. Also bring your student card if you have one.

### **Will testing be available for international students before they go home if their home country requires proof of a negative test?**

PRAXES can provide testing for this purpose. There is a fee. Learn more at: <https://praxes.ca/covidtest/>.

## **SELF-ISOLATION**

### **What does self-isolation mean?**

Self-isolation means you go straight to the place in Nova Scotia where you plan to complete your self-isolation period and you stay there for 14 days. You cannot have visitors. You must have food and essentials delivered. If you're in a house, you can go outside but you cannot leave the property. If you're in an apartment, you cannot leave the apartment – you can go on a private balcony if there is one. If you're in a residence room, you must follow your institution's rules. If you share accommodations with other people, you must self-isolate from them. Learn more about [self isolation](#).

### **When exactly does your self-isolation end?**

The day you enter Nova Scotia is considered day 1 and you must self-isolate up to and including the 14th day. For example, if arrive in Nova Scotia on January 4, your self-isolation period is up to and including January 17, and you are free to leave the place where you were isolating on January 18.

### **When do students need to arrive in order to complete self-isolation before classes start?**

The start date may be different at each institution so check with yours about when classes start. Ideally, you should arrive with time to complete your self-isolation and then attend to any necessities such as buying textbooks before classes begin.

### **Can students do their self-isolation in residence?**

Most universities are providing options for self-isolation in residence. They have specific move in dates for students who need to self-isolate in residence. Please contact your university or check their website for more information.

### **Do students have to self-isolate after holidays and spring break?**

Students returning to Nova Scotia from anywhere except Prince Edward Island for the winter term have to self-isolate for 14 days. While public health measures could evolve before the spring break, the self-isolation requirement will likely still be in effect at that time.

### **How will you monitor that students are doing their self-isolation?**

The onus is on students to do a daily check through the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in](#). They will receive a daily email with questions that they must answer. A student's institution will be notified of non-compliance and will take reasonable steps to help students comply.

### **Can you be fined for not self-isolating?**

There are penalties in the Health Protection Act. For a first offence, there is a \$1,000 fine. If you are found guilty of a second or subsequent offence, you could be fined up to \$10,000 or sentenced to imprisonment for up to one year, or both.

### **Can you be disciplined or expelled by your post-secondary institution for not-self-isolating?**

You should ask your institution about their expectations for their students and what happens if those expectations are not met.

### **Can parents drop off students in their residence or at their apartment or other accommodations for the school year?**

Yes, parents can drop off their students to the place where they will self-isolate for 14 days. This may be the same place where they will live for the school year, or a different place.

If you are dropping off a student on campus, please follow the university's rules for this process.

Other than while doing the brief drop off, parents (or anyone else) coming from anywhere except Prince Edward Island to accompany a student must self-isolate while in Nova Scotia. This means you do not go shopping, do not get groceries etc, do not go to restaurants, do not visit/explore the community, etc.

You can leave the province anytime (ie, you do not need to stay here for 14 days). When returning home, you should make as few stops in Nova Scotia as possible. You must self-isolate as much as you can, stay 2 metres/6 feet away from others, and wear a mask in indoor public places. Please review more specific information and requirements for [international post-secondary students](#).

## **INSTITUTION PLANS**

### **What safety protocols are in place?**

All institutions developed their campus re-opening plans in accordance with the latest public health directives and safety protocols. Plans were reviewed by Labour and Advanced Education using a framework that was reviewed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. All prevention plans have been approved. Institutions accepting international students are required to meet specific requirements as determined by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the federal government.

### **Why isn't there just one plan? Why does every institution need to have a separate plan?**

We asked each institution to develop their own institution specific campus re-opening plan to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Their plans are tailored to address their unique circumstances, but they are all based on the same public health principles.

### **How are the plans being communicated? Where do I find my institution's plan?**

Each institution is responsible for communicating their plans to students and parents, their staff, and their surrounding communities, as well as keeping them up-to-date with the latest information. All of their plans are posted on their websites.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH RULES IN NOVA SCOTIA**

### **What other public health requirements do students have to meet in Nova Scotia?**

Everyone has to play their part to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Students have a responsibility to protect each other, the staff at their institutions, and the communities where they live.

In Nova Scotia, there are public health rules that are law in the [public health order under the Health Protection Act](#).

Students should familiarize themselves with the public health rules and direction in advance. For example:

- Everyone must stay 2 metres/6 feet apart unless they are in the same household or a close social group of up to 10 people
- Masks must be worn on public transportation:
  - o municipal transit buses and ferries
  - o school buses
  - o motor coaches (except those that provide charters or tours)
  - o community transit vehicles
  - o private taxis and shuttles
- Masks must be worn in most indoor public places – on campus, that means public areas such as the library, student union building or common areas of a faculty building, but not classrooms, labs, offices or residences – [learn more about masks](#).

Please visit our [website](#) to learn more. We also encourage you to follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

### **Where can students ask questions?**

If you have questions, please contact [PostSecondary@novascotia.ca](mailto:PostSecondary@novascotia.ca).