
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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B.C.'s colleges prepare for a full and safe return to campus

VICTORIA, B.C. – Colleges in British Columbia are aligned with public health guidance as they prepare for a full return to on-campus learning in September. Over the last 18 months, colleges have followed public health recommendations to ensure a safe study and work environment, ensuring access to programs and courses.

A return to in-person learning in September is important for students, especially since young adults aged 18 to 29 were among those hardest hit by the pandemic and related response measures.

The introduction this week of mandatory masks in all indoor common spaces on campus, including classrooms, and the roll-out of the proof of vaccination program for on-campus housing, restaurants and bars and non-educational activities, support a full and safe return to campus.

Colleges have shown they can operate safely in a pandemic as they have been delivering approximately 30 per cent to 40 per cent of courses and programs face-to-face over the past year. Colleges will continue to monitor the evolving COVID-19 situation and be adaptable to best practices as directed by public health authorities.

Public health experts in British Columbia fully support return to full on-campus instruction on Sept. 7, 2021, for post-secondary institutions. 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.

“Structured environments like classrooms were low risk settings for COVID-19 transmission even before vaccination. With the added protection of vaccination, the return to full in class instruction is not only possible, but imperative” says Dr. Reka Gustafson, PHSA Vice President, Public Health and Wellness and Deputy Provincial Health Officer. “The approach that the colleges in British Columbia are taking is proportionate and in line with the recommendations of the Provincial Health Officer, and I am grateful to the colleges of British Columbia for continuing to support the education and well-being of their students.”

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In British Columbia, colleges operate differently from universities, as they are considered agents of government under the [College and Institute Act](#), and have determined they must follow the direction of the Provincial Health Officer.

As colleges prepare for a full return to on-campus learning, it is important to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of staff and faculty, as well as the ministry and our public health partners, in helping us all safely come together once again.

Vaccination is the best line of defence against COVID-19. Colleges in B.C. strongly encourage all students, faculty and staff who are eligible, and able, to be vaccinated. Students, faculty and staff who require a first or second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine can [book an appointment in advance](#) or simply walk into any [COVID-19 immunization clinic](#). Second doses will be given 28 days or more after the first dose. For those that do not currently have a Provincial Health Number (PHN), please call 1-833-838-2323 (seven days a week, 7 am to 7 pm) for assistance before attending a clinic. Translators are available.

Anyone who received their COVID-19 vaccines in another province or country [should submit their vaccination record](#) as soon as possible. This is particularly important for international students as additional vaccination may be recommended. There are three easy steps to submitting a vaccination record and determining vaccination needs:

1. Register online at getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca or by phone at 1-833-838-2323.
2. Submit official vaccination record at immunizationrecord.gov.bc.ca
3. Be notified about COVID-19 vaccination needs.

Quick Facts:

- B.C. Colleges is an association that represents 10 of the public post-secondary colleges across the province.
- Colleges in B.C. have campuses and learning centres in more than 60 communities throughout B.C.

Learn More:

B.C. Colleges – <http://www.bccolleges.ca>

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