

# 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 outside Nova Scotia. 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

### Can students attend university or college in Nova Scotia?

Post-secondary students can enter Nova Scotia at any time. Students coming from Canadian provinces and territories outside Nova Scotia must complete the [Nova Scotia Safe Check-in form](#). Their isolation requirements are based on vaccination status and testing. International students do not complete this form. They follow federal requirements.

### Are there specific requirements for international students?

This document is primarily for students who come from other Canadian provinces and territories. International students entering Canada are under the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada. They do not complete the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in or follow Nova Scotia's rules for domestic travelers.

Students coming to Nova Scotia from outside Canada should visit the [Government of Canada website](#) before they travel and make sure their institution is approved to accept international students. Please review more specific information and requirements for [international post-secondary students](#).

International students must 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 or staff have to self-isolate when they arrive in Nova Scotia?**

Domestic students follow the same rules as most other travelers. People coming from Canadian provinces and territories outside Nova Scotia have isolation requirements based on vaccination status and testing:

- People who are fully vaccinated do not have to self-isolate but testing is still recommended.
- People who are not fully vaccinated must self-isolate for at least 7 days and cannot leave isolation until they get 2 negative tests results.

Fully vaccinated means you had two doses of a World Health Organization approved vaccine (or 1 dose of Janssen) at least 14 days before arriving in Nova Scotia. The tests must be standard PCR lab tests. They cannot be rapid tests. They must be done in Nova Scotia, not in advance of arrival. Tests should be on day 1 or 2 and on day 6 or 7.

There are different requirements for [international travelers](#).

For more information, please email [postsecondary@novascotia.ca](mailto:postsecondary@novascotia.ca).

### **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 if those contacts are not fully vaccinated. 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 or email [postsecondary@novascotia.ca](mailto:postsecondary@novascotia.ca).

## **TESTING**

### **Is testing mandatory?**

Testing is only needed if you are not fully vaccinated and you want to end your isolation earlier than 14 days. Otherwise, testing is recommended after travel but not mandatory.

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

Anyone who is in self-isolation cannot go to a pop-up testing site. If they need or want to get tested during their self-isolation, can get a take-home version of the standard PCR lab test if they arrive via the airport or [book an appointment](#) for an asymptomatic test at a primary assessment centre.

Fully vaccinated students are not required to isolate but are recommended to get tested twice within their first 14 days in Nova Scotia. In addition to getting a test at the airport or a primary assessment centre, they can go to a pop-up testing site as long as they have no symptoms.

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

Students 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?**

You can only get your results via email if you have a Nova Scotia health card. Everyone else will get a phone call or text. 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?**

There is no cost for this testing.

### **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](#) or [Switch Health](#) can provide testing for this purpose. There is a fee. Learn more on their websites.

### **What should a student do if they develop symptoms before or after their asymptomatic test?**

The student should immediately self-isolate completely (no contact with others in their household) and complete the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) to book a test. If they cannot complete the assessment online, they can call 811.

## **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 the duration of your isolation. You cannot have visitors. You must have food and essentials delivered. 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 but you can have a shared bathroom as long as it is cleaned between uses.

If you came from within Canada, you can only go within walking or running distance of your home for a maximum of 1 hour per day (not multiple outings totalling 1 hour). You need to stay 2 metres/6 feet away from others and you can't visit other buildings, stores, outdoor fitness classes, etc. If you're in an apartment building, condo building or hotel, you must wear a non-medical mask in common areas if you leave the property for outdoor exercise. Learn more about [self isolation](#).

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

As outlined above, if you are not fully vaccinated, you need to isolate for at least 7 days and get 2 negative test results to stop isolating after 7 days. The day you arrive in Nova Scotia is day 1. If you do not receive your second negative test result by day 7, you must continue isolating until you receive it.

### **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 any required 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.

### **Will students have to self-isolate when they return during the school year?**

Each time students go outside Nova Scotia and then return to Nova Scotia, their isolation requirements are based on the vaccination status and testing, unless they are making a quick trip to another Atlantic province following the [Atlantic Canada travel protocol](#).

### **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?**

People can follow the [Atlantic Canada travel protocol](#) if they need to travel between Nova Scotia and another Atlantic province to do a quick drop off/pick up of a student.

People from provinces and territories outside Nova Scotia can enter the province for any reason and must isolate based on their vaccination status and testing. If they have not been fully vaccinated as outlined above, they must isolate except for the quick drop off or pick up. If the drop off/pick up is on campus, follow the institutions rules for the process. If they choose to stay in Nova Scotia longer, they must continue to isolate according to their vaccination status and testing.

## **VACCINATION**

### **Can students get vaccinated in Nova Scotia?**

Students who are in Nova Scotia can get vaccinated free of charge. You must complete any required isolation or quarantine before you can get vaccinated in Nova Scotia.

If a student does not have a Nova Scotia health card (MSI), they will NOT be able to book a vaccine appointment online. They must book their appointment by phone by calling toll-free 1-833-797-7772 (this phone number is only accessible within Canada). The student will need to confirm at the time of booking that they will be in Nova Scotia long enough to receive both the first and second dose.

If you're not a permanent resident of Nova Scotia, when you arrive at your appointment you need to provide government-issued identification from your home province, territory or country and one of the following pieces of supporting documentation:

- utility bill that shows the address of where you're staying in Nova Scotia
- long stay invoice for your accommodation in Nova Scotia (for example, Airbnb)
- letter from an occupant of the residence where you're staying in Nova Scotia confirming your stay
- proof of work in Nova Scotia (for example, letter from employer or pay stub)

- work permit (showing location by province or territory and your name and date of birth)
- student ID card
- letter showing proof you're attending a school in Nova Scotia
- letter of acceptance from a designated learning institution in Nova Scotia
- port of entry letter of introduction that shows you were approved for a study permit
- letter from a faith-based institution, healthcare provider or other registered organization or agency confirming that you're living in Nova Scotia

## POST-SECONDARY 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.

### 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, restrictions are gradually easing through the [reopening plan](#). Even when most restrictions are lifted, everyone still needs to live safely with COVID-19. This means continuing to take personal protective measures such as washing hands frequently, staying home when you're sick, and wearing a mask when you're around other people in indoor public places.

Currently, there are still 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. Please visit our [website](#) to learn more. We also encourage you to follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Be aware that, sometimes, [additional restrictions are in place in certain areas](#).

**Where can students ask questions?**

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