International post-secondary students

Is Nova Scotia allowing international students enrolled at a Nova Scotia post-secondary institution to travel to Nova Scotia?

Yes. On November 3 2020, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada published a list of post-secondary institutions that can welcome international students. Nova Scotia institutions, such as universities and language schools, are on that list.

Can students come now for the fall term?

No. Students can only come in enough time to isolate before a term they are enrolled for. They cannot come now for the fall term.

Do international students have to complete any forms or paperwork before arriving in Nova Scotia?

Yes. All international students entering Nova Scotia must apply to enter by completing the Nova Scotia Safe Check-in. They must apply each time they wish to come to the province. They cannot enter the province until they receive approval.

Students should apply about a week before they intend to travel. It will take up to 3 business days for their application to be reviewed. If they are approved, they will receive an approval letter via email. They must show this approval letter to border officials, along with documentation proving that they are post-secondary students coming to study in Nova Scotia.

They must also complete a daily digital check-in during their 14-day quarantine period. Once they have completed 14 days of quarantine in Canada, they can unsubscribe from the daily check-in emails.
Also, international students will need to use the federal government’s ArriveCAN app. It is mandatory for travellers entering Canada to use the app to provide their information to the Public Health Agency of Canada. People can download the ArriveCAN app or call 1-833-641-0343.

As post-secondary institutions are required to provide or arrange quarantine accommodations for international students (and co-arriving family members), student should reach out to their institution to ensure arrangements are finalized before travel. Please check with the institution as they may require additional paperwork from the student.

Do international students need to quarantine (self-isolate) for 14 days when they arrive?

All international students are required to quarantine for 14 days and get tested under the federal Quarantine Act. They must spend at least 3 days in Canada in quarantine at their point of entry into the country and get a negative test result before they can travel to Nova Scotia. Once they arrive in Nova Scotia, they must complete the rest of their 14-day quarantine. Once they have completed a total of 14 days of quarantine in Canada and have received their second negative test result, they can leave quarantine.

How will you ensure international students complete the full 14-day quarantine? Will they be provided with accommodations, meals and other supports?

The post-secondary institutions that are receiving international students have oversight responsibility for them during their 14-day quarantine, whether on or off-campus. This includes arranging quarantine accommodations, ensuring students have suitable transportation from the airport, and providing meals and other supports during their quarantine period.
Why are international students required to complete their mandatory 14-day quarantine in a location approved by their institutions?

As outlined in the International Student Institutional Readiness: Public Health Requirements document, Nova Scotia post-secondary institutions approved to accept international students are required to provide international students with the necessary supports and oversight during their federally mandated 14-day quarantine period including arranging or providing quarantine accommodations. In most cases, this will mean accommodation in a hotel or residence facility.

We ask all international students to contact their institution prior to making any travel plans so that they can understand what the arranged quarantine accommodations are so that students may make an informed decision on whether travel to Canada at this time is appropriate for them.

Do international students need to get tested?

In addition to a test at point of entry into Canada, international students are required by the federal government to take a self-test on day 8 of their quarantine. They must receive a negative test result before they are allowed to leave quarantine. See more information about federal testing requirements.

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What happens if an international student begins to experience COVID-19 symptoms during their 14-day quarantine in Nova Scotia?

International students are asked to self-monitor during their quarantine. Anyone who develops symptoms should complete the online COVID-19 self-assessment to book a COVID-19 test. Anyone who can’t do the assessment online can call 811.

Post-secondary institutions that are receiving international students have plans in place to support any student who receives a positive diagnosis of COVID-19.

Do international students have to pay for asymptomatic testing in Nova Scotia?

No. However, if the student requires a test for essential travel, for example, to fulfill a requirement by their home country in order to travel home, then the student would need to obtain a test from PRAXES which has a fee. Please refer to the PRAXES website for more details: https://praxes.ca/covidtest/.

Why are we allowing international students to arrive in Canada when the positive COVID-19 cases in many countries are increasing? Won’t that increase the risk in Nova Scotia?

Canada’s borders are a federal responsibility. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada started allowing international students with the proper documentation and quarantine plans to enter Canada on October 20, 2020.

Nova Scotia’s post-secondary institutions are working with international students to ensure they understand the federal and local public health directives when they arrive in Nova Scotia, including the 14-day quarantine period. Further, they will be monitoring and supporting international students to ensure they successfully complete their quarantine period.

Nova Scotia was very successful in welcoming over 3,500 post-secondary students from outside the Atlantic bubble this past September. Institutions will be following the same protocols to welcome international students safely back to Nova Scotia.
What happens if an international student does not comply with the federal mandatory quarantine?

If students choose to break their mandatory quarantine or isolation, resulting in the death or serious bodily harm to another person, they could face a fine of up to $1,000,000, imprisonment of up to 3 years or both.

The Contraventions Act gives police (including the RCMP, provincial and local police) more power to enforce the Quarantine Act. They can issue tickets to people who don’t comply with the act or the emergency orders. Fines range from $275 to $1,000.

Why do international students need to quarantine in hotels?

For the health and safety of both international students and Nova Scotians, post-secondary students arriving from outside Canada must self-isolate for 14 days.

To satisfy federal government expectations and to ensure international students are fully supported, post-secondary institutions have oversight responsibility for their international students during their 14-day quarantine period, whether it’s on or off-campus.

Many institutions in Nova Scotia who are welcoming international students have decided to have them quarantine in hotels or in residence because it enables the institutions to better meet their oversight obligations.

We are committed to working with post-secondary institutions, communities, and student groups to ensure international students continue to feel safe and welcomed in our province.

Can international students get vaccinated?

International students in Nova Scotia can get vaccinated free of charge. When they can get vaccinated depends on the provincial rollout plan which is based on age.

If an international 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. The international 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. Doses are given 16 weeks apart.
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 additional piece of supporting documentation. Required supporting documentation includes:

- 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