

Dalhousie Health and Safety Overview | Fall 2021

Last updated: June 8, 2021

Our top priority this fall is the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff and community.

Dalhousie's plans for the fall have been developed in full consultation with Nova Scotia Public Health and the provincial government. Our framework also aligns with Nova Scotia's re-opening plan which, based on vaccination targets, anticipates a wide re-opening later this summer and population immunity achieved by early September.

Even with widespread vaccination, COVID will be part of our lives — though, we hope, in a much more limited manner. That's why Dalhousie's approach is focused on providing multiple layers of protection — layers that, combined with province-led vaccination, will help protect our Dal community and allow us to return to in-person activities. It's a plan that builds on what we've learned through our highly successful approach to on-campus work and learning this past year: that it's the combined impact of all these layers, rather any one of them individually, that will keep our community safe.

The following is our current outlook of what we think the fall will look like on campus and the layers of protection that may be in place. Some of these layers may be modified or no longer necessary by the time we reach September; others may last into the fall and beyond. Our plan will continue to evolve based on the latest public and occupational health guidance for COVID-19 in Nova Scotia.

Please note that some of these layers of protection (such as masks and distancing) will likely be stricter for any faculty/staff or students working or studying on-campus ahead of September.

MASKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Masks will likely remain recommended in common areas or areas where there is a significant density of people (indoor gatherings, arts events, students in classrooms, etc.).
PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND BARRIERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We expect some level of distancing to remain in effect, but less than has been required through most of the pandemic (striving for 1 metre separation where practical).• Where required, barriers will be used to help direct people and avoid congestion in gathering areas.• Physical plexiglass barriers may be required at some service and reception counters.
COVID-19 SELF-SCREENING (DALSAFE APP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students, faculty and staff will be asked to self-screen daily for COVID symptoms before coming to campus — just like you would at certain stores or services like a gym or hair salon.• This will be done through the DalSAFE mobile app — a quick, easy and secure way to answer screening questions about symptoms, if you've travelled, etc. (The app is not used for contact tracing.)
ON-CAMPUS ASYMPTOMATIC TESTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dalhousie has launched an on-campus rapid testing clinic in Halifax as a pilot program this summer.• Tests are available to faculty, staff and students by appointment on Tuesdays and Thursdays through the summer in the Collaborative Health Education Building.• Testing will continue in the fall in a new location TBD. Plans are also in early development for a testing location in Truro for the fall.
VACCINATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dalhousie is strongly encouraging, promoting and helping make vaccination accessible to everyone in our community. While we will not require vaccination to be on campus, helping Nova Scotia reach its vaccination targets is an important part of our collective re-opening.• Nova Scotia has confirmed that students who are not fully vaccinated prior to arriving in Nova Scotia will be able to get vaccinated free-of-charge once they arrive.

AREA VENTILATION ASSESSMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dal's Facilities and EH&S teams have reviewed ventilation in every learning space (600+), with remedial activity taking place over the summer as warranted (53 learning spaces). This includes alterations to some ventilation systems and, in other cases, installing wall-mounted Hepa Filtered Air Cleaners to help clean and recycle existing air in tandem with operable windows (if possible). • Over 165 individual Return to Research requests have been assessed for adequate ventilation with remedial action taken where necessary. • Based on the building ventilation information derived from the assessment of the research and learning spaces, detailed specific guidance will be developed for office and general spaces and will be provided to unit leaders to assist with their return plans. • The majority of Dalhousie buildings have mechanical ventilation systems that will be operated in a manner that maximizes the use of outdoor fresh air and the rate of indoor air exchange. • High efficiency air filters will be employed widely on systems that are designed to recirculate air within a building and will be inspected and replaced on a regular schedule.
CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROGRAMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning and disinfection will continue this fall at the high standard of cleaning that existed pre-pandemic. • Continued encouragement of hand-washing hygiene, including available hand sanitizer.
TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on Nova Scotia's reopening plan, we expect restrictions for all travelers coming from within Canada (including self-isolation/quarantine requirements) will be lifted well ahead of September. Nova Scotia may require travelers to provide some proof of vaccination to travel without self-isolation/quarantine requirements (to be determined). • Expected requirements for international travel are less certain, but international students have been allowed to travel to Nova Scotia for their studies throughout the pandemic. We will provide international students with support, guidance and timely updates on what will be required for September.
GATHERING RULES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on Nova Scotia's phased reopening plan, we expect any gathering limits that may remain by September will have minimal impact on normal Dalhousie activities this fall.
CONTACT TRACING INFORMATION GATHERING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors to campus (outside of faculty, staff and students) may be required to provide contact tracing information at certain campus locations and services.
EMPLOYEE ACCOMMODATION AND REMOTE WORKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dalhousie has a very robust accommodation program that has been key in compassionately responding to individuals requiring assistance dealing with this pandemic — this will continue this fall. • Human Resources has new guidelines for flexible working arrangements to support leaders, supervisors, and employees in considering and/or managing flexible working arrangements.
TRAINING, SIGNAGE, POLICES AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will maintain and enhance training, signage, policies, and safety protocols with respect to COVID-19.
WASTEWATER TESTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on Dal research led by Dr. Graham Gagnon, residence wastewater will be tested to detect potential infections in our residence community, allowing us to quickly encourage testing and reduce any potential for spread.