

Correspondent Name
Correspondent Address (or just email)

Confirmation of Jurisdictional and Institutional Readiness to Ensure Health and Safety of International Students

Dear Correspondent Name:

We are writing to you to confirm the Government of Canada's interest in working collaboratively to safely welcome international students to designated learning institutions.

Currently, international students from countries other than the United States, with the exception of those with valid study permits or those approved for study permits prior to March 18, 2020, are prohibited from entry into Canada, under the *Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada (Prohibition on Entry from any Country other than the United States)* Order.

However, we are confident that all levels of government in Canada recognize the importance of the international education sector to learning institutions and communities across Canada. International students enrich the learning experience of others, and they contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of campus and community life. We are mindful as well of the significant and important economic contribution to learning institutions, surrounding communities, and to the Canadian research and innovation agenda itself made by international students. The Government of Canada is keen to ensure that a quality Canadian educational experience is possible, even as important public health restrictions remain in place.

While the Government of Canada has responsibility for monitoring compliance with and enforcement of the *Quarantine Act* and its emergency orders, we also respect the responsibilities that your jurisdiction has over education, public health, and for occupational health and safety in educational institution settings. We recognize that your jurisdiction has phased plans for business resumption in place and is actively managing operations in the face of the continuing pandemic context.

These plans will also necessarily include the learning institutions in your jurisdiction that you have designated to host international students. While the specificity of individual institutional or school division/board plans may vary, it is the provincial/territorial role to assess, monitor, oversee, and ensure compliance on such plans against provincial and territorial orders and requirements. The need for robust planning and protocols also pertains to international students' initial arrival in Canada (including transportation from the point of entry into Canada and quarantine), as well as on an ongoing basis to ensure that public health measures such as physical distancing are observed and that rapid public health action is taken in the event of an outbreak at an institution.

We note that in addition to the consequences and fines under the *Quarantine Act*, international students and their dependents, as temporary residents or foreign nationals authorized entry, may face consequences under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA), such as being deemed inadmissible and subject to removal, for any non-compliance with quarantine requirements under the *Quarantine Act*.

The Government of Canada is adopting a whole of Government approach to managing the arrival of this cohort of students, including the introduction of new tools and the use of existing tools, such as the ArriveCan App, the use of which we will strongly encourage to international students, to allow us to better communicate with travellers prior to their travel.

Before we can consider opening our borders to new international students and their immediate family members (as per IRPA, immediate family is defined as spouse/common-law partners, dependent children, parents/step-parents, and guardians) we must collectively commit to and adopt a coordinated, clear, and well-communicated approach to support the health and safety of students and the Canadian public.

In this context, the Government of Canada will be issuing guidance for international students, a draft of which you will find attached to this letter. This guidance is aligned with other federal public health guidance related to COVID-19 and may be revised as the situation evolves. For the students themselves, it makes clear that, as travellers to Canada, they must quarantine (if asymptomatic) or isolate (if symptomatic) for 14 days upon arrival in Canada and must wear a non-medical mask or face covering during travel. Several sections pertain to roles that provinces/territories and learning institutions have in this area, as well as ongoing compliance, monitoring, and enforcement, as appropriate, of public health orders and public health guidance in their own jurisdictions.

Given provincial jurisdiction in education, public health, and for workplaces, we would request that you notify us in writing, in consultation with your Chief Public/Medical Health Officer or with relevant authorities responsible for public health in your jurisdiction, to confirm readiness of your jurisdiction to host a new cohort of international students, and their family members, no later than July 24, 2020. This sought confirmation includes:

- a list of the institutions in your jurisdiction that can be considered to have been approved, in accordance with public health requirements and business resumption plans (and compliant with the federal guidance document), for operation and for hosting students;
- that there are protocols and mechanisms in place to implement and monitor the mandatory federal 14-day quarantine by the host learning organization and ensuring that students have:
 - appropriate transportation to the premises;
 - a suitable place of quarantine:
 - with access to supplies such as prescriptions, food, and other necessary support;
 - where students will not have contact with vulnerable individuals; and,
 - with quarantine accommodation enabling individual physical, distancing with infection-prevention control protocols in place
 - information on physical and mental health supports, and other supports available to international students.

(Note: as per the guidance document, after an officer from the Canada Border Services Agency or Public Health Agency of Canada has assessed an individual traveller's plan for quarantine, follow-up with individual travellers will be conducted as required.)

- your jurisdiction's responsibility and readiness to ensure compliance with any requirements of provincial and local public health authorities, addressing capacity to implement, monitor, and enforce provincial public health orders, including health and outbreak protocols;
- a robust risk mitigation plan with capacity to test, trace, and isolate COVID-19 and prevent its spread;
- active outreach and communications with learning institutions and respective communities on expectations, roles, and responsibilities, including that they have plans to support quarantine, physical distancing, and outbreaks in and beyond the 14-day quarantine period; and,
- a commitment for collaboration and information sharing between relevant Provincial, Territorial, and Federal government departments to monitor and manage COVID-19-related risks throughout the academic stay of international students in Canada.

The pandemic has brought considerable uncertainty for international students, as it has for Canadians in general, about the conditions, rules, and constraints that will be in place across Canada as well as in other countries (home countries for international students). Until the threat has receded, we will collectively need to continue managing through uncertainty. For international students, this could mean facing new restrictions or public health measures after their arrival in Canada and may mean that conditions internationally and in home countries may affect their ability to enter or depart Canada on the timeframes they might otherwise expect. Given the ever-changing epidemiological nature of this pandemic worldwide, we will also need to continue to reassess approaches.

Throughout their stay in Canada, your jurisdiction is responsible for monitoring and enforcing provincial public health rules and guidelines on an active basis to ensure the health and safety of students and Canadians, through active outreach with municipalities, learning institutions, and other organizations in your province and territory.

Given our collective interest in the well-being and safety of all individuals, including international students living in our communities, and having Canada continue to be an attractive study destination for international students, we are additionally of the view that business resumption plans should incorporate strategies that protect international students from discrimination and harassment, and that provinces, territories, and learning institutions perform ongoing monitoring to ensure safe and welcoming places free of any biases or racism that may be associated with COVID-19.

We understand that federal officials have been working in close collaboration with your officials, as well as educational institutions, and trust that this will continue in order to ensure that international students can be safely welcomed into our communities. We expect that continued collaboration will feature regular reports your jurisdictions will share with the Government of Canada to provide updates on how institutions are performing against federal, provincial, and territorial public health requirements, as implementation progresses, so that we may collectively make adjustments as required.

Yours sincerely,

The Honourable Marco E.L. Mendicino, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

The Honourable Patty Hajdu P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health

Attachments

c.c. The Honourable Mary Ng, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion
Minister of International Trade

Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for Health

Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for Immigration