

BRANDON UNIVERSITY COVID-19**Fall 2021 Student FAQ**

Q: Why are we going back to in-person instruction in the Fall?

A: Brandon University is focused on providing quality educational experiences in a safe environment. We also pride ourselves on being an in-person university with open access and a range of services in place to reduce barriers and enhance the student experience. There are real and significant educational benefits to in-person teaching and learning and some of our programs, in fact, require in-person, applied learning or hands-on practice. At this point, we are limiting class sizes, requiring mask use and physical distancing, and enhancing both sanitization and ventilation. Taken together, these provide multiple layers of health protection. You should also get fully vaccinated. Our Covid protection measures may change as conditions evolve and as we learn more about the virus and its variants. It is important that you keep connected and watch your BU email inbox for updates.

Q: What safety protocols are in place?

A: Brandon University has established five key behaviours to keep our community safe. They are: Wear a mask; Stay physically distant; Wash your hands; Sanitize surfaces; and Stay home if you are sick. We have also enhanced cleaning and sanitization protocols, limited access to campus and class sizes, enhanced air ventilation, and as of Oct. 31 will be requiring full vaccination.

Q: Will I be able to move freely across campus or will card access continue to be required?

A: The entire campus will be locked after Oct. 31 and you will require your BU Student ID card as well as approved access in order to enter. Approved access is granted to those who have supplied proof of full vaccination, or have an approved exemption. Apply for a Student ID card online through the [Student ID Centre](#).

Q: Will the University require people to be vaccinated?

A: Proof of full vaccination against Covid-19, or an approved exemption, will be required to attend the Brandon University campus after Oct. 31, 2021. [The Vaccination Policy](#) lays out the requirements, processes, and scope of the full campus vaccination requirement. There is [a path to seek exemptions](#) for the very small number of people who cannot be vaccinated.

Under provincial regulations, some students may need to be vaccinated, or may need to opt for regular testing, to participate in required practicums. Provincial regulations may also require full vaccination to access particular areas of campus, or services, for example the HLC and Food Services.

All members of our community are encouraged to get fully vaccinated as soon as they can. The vaccines are safe and effective, and are the fastest way to get to a post-pandemic future where things are back to normal.

Fully vaccinated students can enter to win significant prizes at [BrandonU.ca/Winning-Shot](#)

Q: What is the University doing to encourage people to get vaccinated?

A: Check out our [Winning Shot](#) campaign and sign-up for the chance to win a share of more than \$10,000 in BU prizes.

Brandon University is also hosting vaccine clinics on campus. The next vaccine clinics are scheduled for Oct. 5–6 in Harvest Hall. See the BU Events Calendar for details.

Q: Do I need to get a copy of my student card?

A: Yes. Your student card will ensure you have access to buildings and labs. It also serves as your Library and Harvest Hall meal card (if applicable). The card will also prove you are a BU student and may provide additional savings at local establishments.

You can order your Student ID card online at the Student ID Centre webpage:

<https://www.brandonu.ca/ancillary/student-id-centre/>

Q: I require a COVID-19 related accommodation. How do I go about doing that?

A: Students requiring accommodation due to COVID-19 or due to having a medical condition that is impacted by COVID-19, must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow the outlined accommodation process. Information on this process is available on the [SAS website](#) and communicated as soon as it is available. This process is similar to the existing process for requesting accommodations, and faculty may be consulted on specific reasonable accommodations for their course. For information on the existing process, the [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policy](#) and [Procedures](#) documents can be reviewed. Contact the [Student Accessibility Coordinator](#) for more information.

Accommodations related to vaccination require an exemption from the Vaccination Policy. See [BrandonU.ca/Covid-19/Vaccination-Policy](#) for more information

Q: If I am required to quarantine, self-isolate, or is absent due to illness for an extended period of time, what supports/expectations will be in place?

A: You will be required to submit a COVID-19 related Accommodation Request form to Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow the stated process. More information is available on the [SAS website](#).

Q: Will Student Services continue to be available?

A: Yes. All of Student Services will be available. Remote options will continue to be available during the 2021-22 academic year regardless of in-person protocols.

Q: Will I be required to conduct a daily self-assessment?

A: All members of the University community (including students, staff, and faculty) are expected to monitor yourself daily for symptoms and complete the [COVID-19 Screening Tool](#) prior to arriving on campus. If you should experience symptoms while on campus, you should return home and follow public health guidelines in place at the time, which may include consultation with Health Links / Info-Santé at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257.

Q: Will the Library be open?



A: The Library will continue to offer workstations and study spots at a minimum. Virtual reference and other services will remain available. As health orders evolve, the Library will be able to expand its services and will keep the campus community apprised through email notices and its website.

Q: I have both in-person and on-line classes. Will there be spaces on campus for me to attend classes remotely?

A: Yes. Rooms will be designated in each building for student use. Rooms will be available for silent work as well as moderate discussion (e.g. conversation/participation). We encourage you to use headphones when sharing spaces with others. Harvest Hall is also being converted into a student space for the Fall Term. Library workstations and study spots will remain available by appointment.

Q: Can I ask a professor or student in my class if they have been vaccinated?

A: No one is required to disclose their personal health information to you.

Q: How will vaccine participation rates affect the plans for Fall term?

A: The University is taking a conservative approach to the Fall term when considered in relation to the Province's September vaccine participation projections. The in-person class limit of 25 students will remain in effect, regardless of whether vaccine participation rates exceed or fall short of the projections, unless Public Health orders should require a reduction.

Q: What happens if the vaccines aren't effective against emerging variants?

A: Public Health advises that two doses offers significant protection against variants of concern and, so long as there is no true vaccine escape (i.e. the vaccine is no longer acceptably effective to protect against the virus or a new variant of the virus), there will be some vaccine coverage to protect against severe outcomes. It is important to note that prevention of contracting COVID is not the only measure of vaccine efficacy; the vaccines are also proving to be extraordinarily effective at preventing symptomatic expression, hospitalization, and mortality.

Q: What happens if students, or others, refuse to adhere to safety protocols?

A: Always choose curiosity before judgement and be kind and patient with others. Engage in a discussion with the individual to ensure awareness of safety protocols and expectations. If behaviour continues to repeat, please refer to the process outlined in the [Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#) which was revised in September 2020 to address COVID-related offenses.

Q: What happens if a student or member of the campus community is exhibiting symptoms?

A: All members of the University community (including students, staff, and faculty) are expected to monitor yourself daily for symptoms and complete the [COVID-19 Screening Tool](#) prior to arriving on campus. If you should experience symptoms while on campus, you should return home and follow public health guidelines in place at the time, which may include consultation with Health Links / Info-Santé at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257.

Q: Will masks be required while on campus?

A: The University currently has a mask mandate in effect and masks are required upon entry to any Brandon University building and in common areas (e.g., hallways, washrooms, elevators, communal kitchens, etc.). It is recommended that you wear a three-layer mask. It is anticipated

that the mask mandate will remain in effect throughout the Fall term; however, any changes to this mandate will be in consideration of Public Health guidelines and will be communicated to all members of the University community.

Q: What about those who cannot, for legitimate reasons, wear a mask?

A: [Mask protocol](#) has been established and remains in effect. Students who are unable to wear a mask should contact the [Student Accessibility Services Office](#) to discuss options and/or communication needs.

Q: If I forget to wear my mask to campus, will I be able to get access to one on campus?

A: We understand that this will happen from time to time. A limited supply of masks are available at Harvest Hall, and in the John E. Robbins Library. The BUSU Office and Campus Security will be equipped with a supply for distribution as well.

Q: Who will be responsible for sanitizing desks and tables?

A: We have adopted a clean-in/clean-out protocol for in-person activities which proved to be effective in the 2020/2021 academic year. Everyone is expected to sanitize their hands upon entrance and exiting of the classroom and students must disinfect their work spaces and equipment at time of arrival and prior to leaving the classroom. Physical Plant will ensure adequate supplies exist for each class and they will continue to be responsible for cleaning and sanitizing common classroom surfaces like desks, tables, and doors.

Q: Why are we sanitizing? I thought COVID was spread by air.

A: Our understanding of COVID continues to evolve. Sanitization of hands and surfaces is effective against a wide range of bacteria and viruses, and can help prevent or reduce many illnesses, which is essential at a time of strain on our healthcare system.

Q: What will be the expectations around hallway movement, distancing, and student congestion?

A: Campus has been suited with directional signage which is intended to assist with the flow of people throughout common spaces and additional signage (e.g., suggested elevator and room capacities, distancing reminders, etc.) is now in place. Incidental close proximity to a person in a public area is not considered to be a concern.

Q: Is there a plan to increase cleaning and limit occupancy in washrooms?

A: Physical Plant has implemented green cleaning methodology, which includes maintenance of logs, and has altered staff schedules to ensure there are Building Service Workers onsite and available Monday – Friday 6 AM – 9 PM and Saturday – Sunday 6 AM – 6 PM. BSWs will continue to prioritize increased cleaning of common/shared spaces such as washrooms (three times per day) and high-touch surfaces such as handrails, door handles, etc. Signage has been posted to prevent congestion.

Q: What are the current ventilation standards and process?

A: Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are meeting American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Condition Engineers (ASHRAE) requirements. Air flow is sufficient to turn over the air a minimum of four times per hour. All air is freshly filtered before being reintroduced into any space. HVAC systems will be inspected and monitored to ensure they are performing optimally, frequency of air filter replacement throughout fall and winter

terms will be increased, and the rate of air exchange (i.e. total airflow in occupied spaces) will be increased.

Q: How are classroom capacities being determined?

A: The maximum allowable capacity with current physical distancing of 2m was calculated by taking the overall square footage divided by 42.25 (6.5' x 6.5'). Physical Plant staff took laser measurements of all classrooms, labs and conference rooms to ensure accuracy. Capacity limits may change should Public Health orders change (e.g., reducing or increasing the required physical distance).

Q: What factors were considered in setting the maximum in-person classroom occupancy of 25 students?

A: A number of factors were considered and robust discussion occurred with the Deans of each Faculty/School. Factors included historic course registrations (throughout the faculties and years of each degree program), classroom availability and size, current and projected public health orders and limits on indoor gathering sizes. It was also informed by experience gained throughout the 2020/21 academic year which saw over 1,400 students participating in some degree of in-person instruction (25 students was the limit we followed throughout the 2020/21 academic year).

It is important to note that capacity limits may change should Public Health orders change (e.g., reducing or increasing the required physical distance). It is also important to recognize that physical space configuration is but one of a suite of safety measures that can be taken by the University, including air exchange, room capacities, mask mandates, sanitization, in addition to safety measures that individuals can take, including hand-washing, mask wearing, physical distancing, and, most crucially, vaccinations.

Q: What is the University's role in contact tracing efforts?

A: If a confirmed case is deemed to have been on campus during their infectious period, Public Health officials may seek the assistance of the University in their contact tracing efforts. Using either the course registration information (in the case of a student) or employee information, the University will support contact tracing efforts by identifying those who may have been in prolonged contact with the confirmed case. Public Health will liaise directly with the infected individual and those who are deemed to be close contacts and will not disclose any identifying information to the University. The University will coordinate on-campus sanitization efforts as appropriate. Any changes to this process will be in consideration of Public Health guidelines.

Q: Will an entire class have to quarantine if a positive case should occur?

A: Public Health will identify those who need to quarantine. At this time, public health guidelines indicate that those who are two weeks beyond their second dose, will be required to self-monitor for symptoms and but will not be required to quarantine unless they are symptomatic. Those who do not have two doses of the vaccine will be guided accordingly.

Q: What is the communication protocol if a positive case is identified on campus?

A: In the event a positive case is identified on campus, communication notifying those who may be impacted will be done following the lead of local and provincial health officials. As has been the case throughout this past year, confidentiality of personal information will be maintained in accordance with The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and The

Personal Health Information Act (PHIA). Any health-related information provided will be used to maintain a safe work and learning environment.

Q: Will Food Services be operating on campus this fall?

A: Food Services operations will be in our Down Under space this fall, leaving Harvest Hall available as a study space for students.

Q: How will the University provide access to drinking water on campus?

A: While the drinking fountains are currently closed, Physical Plant is in the process of transitioning the infrastructure to bottle fill stations to ensure individuals can access free drinking water while on campus.

Q: Is there a plan in place to support the arrival, quarantine, and vaccination of international students?

A: Yes, there is a plan and it is compliant with federal travel guidelines. If an international student has received two doses of a Health Canada approved vaccine in their home country (and are 14 days beyond their second dose), they will not be required to quarantine upon arrival. If they have only received one approved dose in their home country, they will be required to quarantine for two weeks but will then be eligible to receive their second dose in Manitoba. If they need to be vaccinated or do not have an approved vaccine, they will be eligible to receive both doses in Manitoba and the first appointment can be booked for after their two-week quarantine period. Those who have been vaccinated with a vaccine not approved by Health Canada may choose not to be re-vaccinated but will be required to quarantine as per the federal travel guidelines. Supports are in place to secure a quarantine location and access necessities for the two-week period immediately after arrival. Regular check-ins will also occur to ensure compliance with the federal travel guidelines.

Q: I am uncomfortable with the thought of being on campus and fear for my safety. What supports are available?

A: First, you should know that you are not alone. The pandemic has had a major effect on our lives and is resulting in fatigue and feelings of anxiety, stress, panic, and depression. Adapting practices to cope with stress in a healthy way will help. Students encouraged to:

- book an appointment with a Personal Counsellor by calling 204-727-9737.
- access other relevant supports such as those provided by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the [Canadian Mental Health Association](#), and the Government of Canada's [Wellness Together Canada](#).
- <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/bewell/virtualtherapy.html>
- The University has a subscription to Therapy Assistance Online that includes 150 short videos on 50 common topics related to mental health, wellness and substance use issues. <https://www.brandonu.ca/personal-counselling/tao/>
- LiveChat is available to help you navigate answers to your questions.

Q: Is there a central site for communicating information regarding the pandemic response and plans on the website?

A: Yes, there is a [link available](#) on the Brandon University home page that redirects you to our central communication site.

Q: Who is involved in the decision-making process on matters related to the pandemic?



A: While the President has overall responsibility for the supervision over and direction of the operation of the University, he has regularly consulted with and sought the advice of members of the President's Administrative Council (PAC) who in turn have been engaging with Department Chairs and members of their respective units. In addition, the University has regularly and actively engaged with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration, and, by extension, the Office of the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer (including Drs. Brent Roussin, and Jazz Atwal), the Vaccine Task Force Leader, Dr. Joss Reimer, and other members of Public Health.

PAC is a group of 18 individuals and, in addition to the President, includes the two Vice-Presidents, the five Academic Deans, the Dean of Students, University Registrar, Chief Information Officer, Chief Human Resources Officer, and Directors of Advancement, Business Operations, Communications, Financial & Registration Services, Indigenous Peoples Centre, and Physical Plant. This is a group of dedicated individuals who bring a diverse set of expertise, experience, and opinion to each and every discussion but above all else, they are human. They have experienced loss, feelings of anxiety and isolation, disruption in their homes as a result of shifts to remote learning for school-age children and daycare closures, and a great deal of uncertainty like many of you have but they remain committed to serving the best interests of the University, our students, and the communities we serve.

Q: What are the scientific grounds on which decisions are being made?

A: Brandon University continues to follow the advice of [Manitoba Health](#) and [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) to meet the ever-evolving needs of current COVID understanding. These guidelines are, on the whole, balanced and based on science and we are compelled to follow them.

Q: I have another question, who should I ask?

A: That depends on the question! Many student questions related to classes, coursework or other learning, may be first directed to your professor or instructor, as the answers may be unique to the situation of that particular class. Your professor can also help you direct broader questions to the Dean of your Faculty/School. Some questions, around accommodations, student services, or the like, can best be answered by the Dean of Students, Katie Gross. Contact her at GrossK@BrandonU.ca.