



CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN
CAMPUS MENTAL HEALTH



Supporting International Students During the COVID-19 Outbreak

The [Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health \(CICMH\)](#) has put together some information that may be helpful during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please note that this information is subject to change. We recommend that you connect with your campus administration and [Immigration Canada](#) for updated information.

Communication with Students

Consider using multiple platforms and modes of communication (e.g. social media, website, school paper) to reach students. Ensure that information about what your college or university is doing to address the crisis is updated frequently.

Be sure to address the basic needs of students in these communications.

Ask questions like:

- If we close the dining halls, where will students eat?
- If we cancel on-campus employment, how will students make ends meet?
- If we send students home, where will those without homes go?
- If we move to online classes, how will students without computers or internet access engage?

Consider releasing an FAQ list that addresses some primary concerns students may have, including:

Do I need a study permit to take courses that have been moved online due to COVID-19?

If you have left Canada and will be completing your term remotely, you may continue your studies online. You are required to have a valid study permit throughout the duration of your program while you are in Canada. During academic sessions, you would still be required to comply with your study permit conditions.

If I leave Canada, will I be able to return?

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To return to your studies in Canada, you need a valid study permit and a valid Temporary Resident Visa (TRV) or Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA). Stay informed on developments around COVID-19 both in Canada and in your home country.

Immigration Updates

International students may experience the disruption of their immigration and academic status due to the outbreak of the [novel coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#):

- Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has implemented [special immigration measures](#) for certain countries. Therefore, we encourage international students to monitor their website for the most up to date information.
- In order to renew travel documents outside of Canada, we encourage international students to consult their Embassy/Consulate for alternatives. For example, issuance of an alternative travel document instead of a passport, or the remote request of a new passport using an Embassy located outside of Canada.
- International students who are not eligible to [apply for a study permit](#) within Canada may submit their application to the office located in their country of nationality or country they are legally admitted.
- International students who are not able to return home may extend their stay in Canada by [changing their status to visitor](#) or [worker](#).
- International students who are not able to return to Canada for the academic term will be considered on a leave of absence for immigration purposes if they followed institution or faculty's policy. There are impacts on their immigration status in Canada due to a leave of absence.
- International students who are at the end of their studies and are planning to return home or planning to travel abroad in general, should visit the [travel information](#) page of this website for more details.

If students have questions regarding their immigration status, we encourage them to contact an immigration advisor at their campuses International Office by [\(INSERT DEADLINE\)](#).

Alternatively, students may also contact [IRCC directly](#).

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OHIP coverage has been expanded

To ensure that anyone in need of care can receive it, Ontario is waiving the three-month waiting period for Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) coverage. Additionally, the province will cover the cost of COVID-19 services for uninsured people who do not meet the criteria for OHIP coverage. Together, these measures will ensure that no one will be discouraged from seeking screening or treatment for COVID-19 for financial reasons.

<https://news.ontario.ca/mohlhc/en/2020/03/ontario-expands-coverage-for-care.html>

Does UHIP Cover COVID-19 Testing?

Students should do a self-assessment first following the Ontario Ministry of Health guidelines: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-self-assessment>.

Students who need to visit an assessment centre for testing should take a paper copy of their UHIP card and a copy of a claim form with them. The claim form can be found here: https://uhip.ca/Content/Assets/Uploads/en_UHIP_ClaimForm.pdf

Some other questions to address may include updates on examinations and classes, and well as closures of common spaces on campus, if applicable.

Address Internal and External Resources that Students Can Access

This is a difficult time for everyone. Students may be feeling isolated and lonely. This is especially true for students who are away from home and unable to travel. Here are some supports available:

Internal Resources

(ADD CURRENT INTERNAL SUPPORTS AVAILABLE)

External Resources

National Resources:

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- **[Kids Help Phone](#)**: provides 24/7 national support service for young people in Canada. Call 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868.
- **[Crisis Services Canada](#)**: provides 24/7 support to people in Canada. Call 1-800-456-4566 or text 45645.
- **[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)**: provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress. Call 1-800-273-8255.
- **[Naseeha Youth Helpline](#)**: confidential helpline for young Muslims to receive immediate, anonymous, and confidential support. Call 1-866-627-3342 (7 days a week, 12 p.m. – 9 p.m. EST) or text 1-866-627-3342 (Monday to Friday, 12 p.m. – 9 p.m. EST).

Ontario Resources:

- **[Good2Talk](#)**: Ontario's 24/7 helpline for postsecondary students. Call 1-866-925-5454 or text GOOD2TALKON to 686868.
- **[ConnexOntario](#)**: provides 24/7 free and confidential health services information for people experiencing problems with alcohol and drugs, mental illness and/or gambling. Call 1-866-531-2600 or chat online.
- **[BounceBack](#)**: free skill-building program managed by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). It is designed to help adults and youth 15+ manage low mood, mild to moderate depression and anxiety, stress or worry. Delivered over the phone with a coach and through online videos, you will get access to tools that will support you on your path to mental wellness. Go to <https://bouncebackontario.ca/> to submit an online referral, or access the online videos at <https://bouncebackvideo.ca/>.
- **[Big White Wall](#)**: An online peer to peer support community.

International Resources (*please note that we cannot guarantee the quality of these lines*):

- **[Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone](#)**: Good2Talk and Kids Help Phone's text line is also available in the United States and the UK, with different contact numbers (741741 in the United States, 85258 in the UK, and 686868 in Canada). More information can be found here: <https://www.crisistextline.org/>.



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- **[Child Helpline International](#)**: Kids Help Phone is also a member of this network of helplines for children and youth in more than 140 countries. The full list of child helplines around the world can be found on their website: <https://www.childhelplineinternational.org/>.
- **[iCall India](#)**: free counselling helpline run by trained and qualified counsellors. Call 022-25521111 or visit <http://icallhelpline.org/telephone-counseling/>.
- **[Fil santé Jeunes France](#)**: Répond à vos questions, tous les jours, de 9h à 23h. 0 800 235 236, un numéro d'appel anonyme et gratuit. On peut aussi contacter le fil santé [par chat](#) (Source: <https://www.etudiant.gouv.fr/cid96660/une-question-sur-votre-sante-besoin-d-aide.html>).
- **[Nightline Paris](#)**: Nightline est un service d'écoute, de soutien et d'information géré par des étudiants bénévoles, confidentiel, gratuit, sans jugement (Source: <https://www.etudiant.gouv.fr/cid96660/une-question-sur-votre-sante-besoin-d-aide.html>).
- List of suicide hotlines across the world: <https://www.opencounseling.com/suicide-hotlines>

Housing and Food Security

Housing and food security may be an immediate concern for students, particularly if residences are closed.

Before closing dining halls, proactively communicate with students about their alternative options. The main message they need to hear is that they will have access to food.

- If possible, prepare meals that they can retrieve and take home, or deliver it to them. Some institutions are employing resident hall assistants or dining hall works to deliver.
- Communicate with your campus food provider to identify food that can be recovered and distributed so that it is not wasted.

Set up an easy, confidential way for students to communicate with a counsellor and identify alternative housing arrangements.

- Students experiencing homelessness may find that where they have been staying is no longer an option if someone in that household is sick or if there is pressure from the household to conserve resources.



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You can also share information with students on how to reduce their utility bills and apply for emergency funding if they need it.

A list of Ontario food banks can be found here:

<https://feedontario.ca/need-help/find-a-food-bank/>

Other Resources

Share where students can get direct updates on the situation:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>

How other campuses are supporting International Students:

- York University: <https://yorkinternational.yorku.ca/faqs-for-international-students/>
- The University of Toronto: <https://thevarsity.ca/2020/03/17/u-of-t-offers-emergency-grant-for-students-affected-by-covid-19/>
- Mohawk College: <https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/covid-19-coronavirus/information-for-international-students-about-covid-19-coronavirus>