Postsecondary Education Health Measures Framework for Reopening

June 12, 2020

Ministry of Colleges and Universities

Ontario

Overview

Following emergency measures designed to stop the spread of COVID-19, the Government of Ontario, is moving forward with a gradual and measured reopening of Ontario's economy, as outlined in *A Framework for Reopening our Province*.

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) has developed this Postsecondary Education Health Measures Framework for Reopening to guide the gradual reopening of the sector, starting with a Summer 2020 Pilot. The Chief Medical Officer of Health is supportive of the pilot project.

This document sets out the details of the Summer 2020 Pilot, which is a first step to the PSE sector reopening, as well as guidance about health and safety measures.

Summer 2020 Pilot

In July 2020, Ontario's postsecondary institutions, including publicly-assisted colleges and universities, Indigenous Institutes, private career colleges, and other institutions may reopen their campuses during the summer for priority in-person education and training on a pilot basis.

This pilot approach is intended to support students who, as a result of COVID-19 emergency response measures, were unable to complete their programs and graduate. The goal of pilot is to ensure these students are able to graduate and be job ready.

Summer 2020 Pilot Participation Criteria:

Participation in the Summer 2020 Pilot is voluntary for all PSE institutions in Ontario. The decision to participate in the pilot rests solely with institutions.

MCU will work with institutions throughout the pilot to gather and understand relevant information about the success and outcomes of the institution's participation and to understand the scalability for future terms.

Those institutions that wish to participate should note the following criteria:

1. Institutions are asked to share their pilot plans with MCU. Institutions are responsible for implementing their pilot programs in accordance with the criteria set out in this guide.

2. Plans should include details such as:

    a. The specific programs and/or components of programs that will be offered;

    b. The number of students the pilot will be offered to;

    c. What, if any, impact that pilot will have on residences, including the number of students that will utilize residences; and

    d. What, if any changes there will be to the availability of on-campus food services.

3. Institutions may only reopen for the purpose of providing in-person teaching and instruction for students that are enrolled in the institution and would be eligible to graduate if they complete components of their program that can only be delivered through in-person teaching and instruction. This includes programs that support essential front-line, high labour market demand areas. For example, nursing, personal support work, engineering, trades, childcare, research and other critical professions.

4. In cases where summer pilot students require off-campus/clinical placements in addition to the on-campus training and education, institutions should work with placement partners to arrange these opportunities where emergency measures allow, and it is safe to do so.

5. Institutions may not, under this pilot, provide in-person instruction for programs that can otherwise be completed virtually.

6. Students accessing training with the support of the Second Career program should be directed to notify their ministry representative regarding their resumption of training.

7. The pilot is intended to be small in scale; allowing a small number of students per campus to attend.

8. If pilot program students require accommodation on campus (i.e., in residence), institutions may provide these services.

9. Institutions are encouraged to engage with their local municipalities and for Indigenous Institutes, their First Nations communities on their reopening plans, including impacts on public transit, prior to reopening.

10. The Ministry of Health (MOH) and local public health units (PHUs) are not in a position to review specific institutional plans. Institutions should continue to work with their local public health authorities and make plans in accordance with local public health advice, frameworks and guidance.

11. Institutions are responsible for notifying students, faculty and staff of their plans to participate in the pilot program.

12. Institutions are responsible for addressing complaints from students, faculty and staff in the event that public health advice is not followed.

13. Given that the trajectory of the COVID-19 outbreak remains uncertain, the pilot program may be cancelled at any time. Ontario would seek and consider any advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and public health officials prior to making any decision to cancel.

Health and Safety Measures to be Considered

Institutions planning to participate in the pilot should inform their local public health officials and the institution's joint health and safety committees.

In reopening, institutions are required to comply with all legislation, including the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The following resources may be of use to institutions as they make reopening plans:

- [COVID-19 (coronavirus) and Workplace Health and Safety](#)

- [Resources to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)

- [COVID-19: Stop the spread](#)

- [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#)

- [COVID-19 Assessment Centres](#)

- [Ontario COVID-19 Data Tool](#)

- [Hierarchy of Controls](#)

- [Public Services Health & Safety Association](#)

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, faculty and staff, institutions should assess their campuses and implement appropriate COVID-19 protection and response measures.

All institutions participating in the pilot must operate in compliance with provincial emergency measures in place and advice, recommendations or instructions from public health officials.

Examples of some of these types of measures could include (but are not limited to):

Enhanced Screening

- Posting signage of screening notices at entry points advising students, faculty, staff, and other visitors not to enter if they or someone they have been in contact with has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have symptoms such as fever, cough, or respiratory illness.

- Requiring all students, faculty and staff to complete a health screening prior to every instance of entry onto campus consistent with [screening guidance from the Ministry of Health](#) for other facilities (e.g., long-term care and retirement homes).

On-Campus Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols

- Ensuring adequate access to soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub and posting reminders for all students, faculty and staff to wash their hands often.

- Increasing the frequency and extensiveness of cleaning and disinfecting activities and ensuring high touch areas and equipment are frequently disinfected.

- Establishing cleaning protocols for the safe use of tools, equipment, and other shared items used in teaching settings.

Space Considerations and Physical Distancing Protocols

- Informing students, faculty and staff of physical distancing requirements, posting notices throughout buildings to keep students, faculty and staff advised of these requirements and implementing measures to support physical distancing requirements.

- Staggering arrival times to facilitate physical distancing upon entry and the start of day for faculty, staff and learners.

- Employing peer-to-peer monitors, whether by a) employment, b) voluntary service, or c) for academic credit who will have oversight responsibility to ensure compliance with physical distancing and other public health measures.

Protective Measures

- Encouraging students to use face coverings (i.e., non-medical masks) to protect others around them when physical distancing is challenging or not possible.

- If physical distance and separation cannot be maintained, faculty and staff may require personal protective equipment (PPE) consisting of surgical/procedure mask and eye protection (e.g., goggles or face shields).

- Employers must ensure that workers are instructed and trained on the use, care and limitations of the PPE that they use.

- Medical masks and respirators (such as N95s) should be reserved for work where they are required for occupational health and safety. If N95s are required, institutions are to ensure that proper fit testing has occurred prior to the use of these masks.

Emergency Preparedness and Planning

- Going forward, MCU will continue to work with publicly-assisted institutions to ensure that they have emergency preparedness plans in place that include risk assessment and implementation of controls, which are updated on a consistent basis and that those plans are shared regularly with MCU.