



**Saint Mary's
University**

COVID-19 and Vaccination Requirements Policy

Policy Number:	12-004
Approving Authority:	Board of Governors
Approved:	August 18, 2021, amended August 27, 2021
Responsible Office:	President

Introduction

As we ready for the Fall 2021 Term, it is important for every member of our university community to recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic is still a threat to health and safety. While we are fortunate to be able to experience an increasing amount of in-person academic and social activities, we must be vigilant to prevent the virus and its variants from gaining new ground. Therefore, we are introducing this Policy to enhance our already robust pandemic response measures.

Dr. Robert Strang, the Nova Scotia Medical Officer of Health has approved the Post-Secondary Education Post Pandemic Guidance for Fall 2021 (the “Return to Campus Framework” or “Framework”). Through the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents, and with the advice and support of risk management experts within our sector, all Nova Scotia universities have endorsed the Framework. This Policy respects the Framework, and adds additional measures developed to protect the university community and in the best interests of maintaining an open and accessible campus.

All students, staff, and faculty must comply with all Nova Scotia Public Health requirements and this Policy. Compliance with this Policy is mandatory. Failure to comply may invoke disciplinary action. For students, refer to the university’s Code of Student Conduct. Faculty and staff will be expected to comply or face disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

MASKING AND SAFETY BEHAVIOURS

- When on campus, all students, staff, and faculty must comply with masking, physical distancing, and sanitation protocols in accordance with university announcements from time to time.
- For Fall 2021 and until further notice, masks are required in all common areas and in shared indoor spaces including classrooms, except where social distancing of at least one metre can be maintained. Faculty have the authority to ask students to mask if distancing cannot be maintained, and students refusing to follow a faculty request to mask are in violation of this Policy and the Code of Student Conduct.
- Any exceptions to masking requirements will be communicated. As well, when other safety concerns (such as laboratory requirements) make mask wearing a concern, this requirement may be waived with approval from the Return to Campus Advisory Team.

- Our masking protocol exceeds the Framework, but we believe it is a wise precaution. Faculty and staff may request that students leave a classroom if they are not complying with the mask protocol. A failure to follow the directive of a faculty or staff member is a violation of this Policy.
- All students, staff, and faculty, and visitors to campus must complete the on-campus check in procedure (as is currently the case) and effective September 1, 2021, must complete a **mandatory self-disclosure of vaccination status. (See below)**

VACCINATIONS

- **Effective October 15, 2021, all students, staff, and faculty are required to be fully vaccinated.** You will be required to provide proof of vaccination status and the University will begin collecting this proof no later than September 3, 2021. If you are not fully vaccinated as of the date of this Policy, **you will be required to be fully vaccinated by October 15, 2021**, or you must apply for and have been granted an exemption (see below). If you are not fully vaccinated, you will be directed to on-campus and local pharmacy clinics so that you can be fully vaccinated by October 15, 2021.
- If you are not fully vaccinated or refuse to provide proof of vaccination, to access campus you will be required to undergo COVID testing twice per week at on-campus facilities. If you have not been granted an exemption from the vaccination requirement, the University has the right to prohibit you from being on campus.
- Students entering the province must abide by provincial vaccination, self-isolation, and quarantine rules, dependent on their departure point and vaccine status. It is the student's responsibility to comply with provincial law, and a breach of provincial requirements constitutes a breach of this Policy.
- A residence student subject to any provincial self-isolation or quarantine requirement must disclose the requirements to residence staff, so that residence staff can ensure the student is accommodated in accordance with provincial and university requirements. Residence staff will provide information and instructions directly to these students.
- As a member of the Saint Mary's community, we expect you to respect public policy and the need to protect the health and safety of everyone who values the opportunity to continue working and learning on campus. **We will be successful if all members of our community are fully vaccinated by October 15, 2021.**
- To support you and demonstrate our commitment to a safe work and learning environment, we are implementing the following measures:
 - Beginning on September 1, 2021, we will report vaccination statistics for Saint Mary's, and we will regularly update information. The best public health defence against COVID-19 is vaccination, in combination with the continued use of masking, physical distancing, ventilation and reduced density on campus.
 - It is mandatory for all those accessing campus to continue to check in using the online Campus Check Inform. The form has been modified and on check in, you will be asked to disclose your vaccination status. If you choose not to disclose, you may not be able to access all programs and services on campus, where vaccination status must be disclosed to be eligible.

The university will ensure compliance with all applicable privacy legislation with respect to the collection and protection of health information. More information about the disclosure of vaccination status can be found www.smu.ca/vaccinationdisclosure.

TESTING AND VACCINATION CLINICS

As of September 1, 2021, all members of our Saint Mary's community will have:

- access to on-campus asymptomatic rapid testing, up to two tests per week for all students, faculty, and staff. Details of the location of these testing sites will be announced shortly.
- access to on-campus vaccination clinics. Employees may take staff time to attend these clinics and receive their vaccine. In addition, the university will publish information on local pharmacy-based clinics with availability for vaccination. Appointments are not always required. Walk-up clinics are available, and vaccines are easily accessible.
- The university will begin reporting daily vaccination status for the university community in aggregate. For example, "XX% of people who were on campus yesterday were fully vaccinated".

EXEMPTIONS

We understand that there may be legitimate reasons for some individuals to be not vaccinated, including medical reasons. If a person cannot be vaccinated and is therefore otherwise in violation of this Policy, or unable to access a service or program or perform their regular duties, the University will consider accommodations on a case-by-case basis. We expect these situations to be the exception and stress that we all have a responsibility to take all reasonable measures to ensure communal health and safety.

- Staff or faculty requiring accommodation should submit an accommodation request to Human Resources at hr@smu.ca. Persons submitting a request may be asked for and are required to provide substantiation for the request. However, the initial request should indicate only that an accommodation is requested and the basis for the accommodation i.e., medical. The initial request should not provide ANY medical information (including any diagnosis). If/When medical information is required HR will request it directly from the employee. No medical information should be sent anywhere other than directly to HR.
- Students requiring accommodation should submit an accommodation request to: student.services@smu.ca. Students submitting a request may be asked for and are required to provide substantiation for the request. However, the initial request should indicate only that an accommodation is requested and the basis for the accommodation i.e., medical. The initial request should not provide ANY medical information (including any diagnosis). If/When medical information is required the University will request it directly from the student. No medical information should be sent anywhere other than directly to student.services@smu.ca.
- Accommodations, if granted, will be subject to conditions requiring regular COVID testing as noted above.

CONCLUSION

- This Policy is the University's long-term plan to manage life with the risk of COVID-19 and its variants. It is very clear that COVID-19 will be with us for the foreseeable future, and we will take necessary precautions and actions to ensure continuity of operations within this context. We need to acknowledge the excellent science that informs our decisions, that has produced the effective vaccine regimens to which we now have access, and that now informs our response to COVID-19 and its variants. All components of this Policy and adherence to its requirements must be in place for this to be effective.
- Any questions with respect to this Policy may be directed to the Associate Vice President External Affairs, Margaret Murphy at margaret.murphy@smu.ca.