

Ontario Unveils a Plan to Reopen Postsecondary Education

Phased Approach Prioritizes the Health and Safety of Students and Staff

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TORONTO — The Ontario government has developed a plan for the gradual and safe resumption of in-person instruction at postsecondary institutions across the province for the summer term. The plan was developed in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Starting in July 2020, limited in-person education and training may restart for students who were not able to graduate due to COVID-19 closures. This first phase will allow institutions to reopen to provide in-person instruction to students in essential, frontline, and high labour market demand areas, such as nursing, personal support workers, engineering, and other critical professions. Thousands of students across the province could benefit from this summer's reopening.

In September, all students will have the opportunity to attend postsecondary education through virtual learning, in-class instruction, or hybrid formats.

"Whether it's donating PPE, researching a vaccine or treatment, or helping with contact tracing, our students, researchers and postsecondary community in Ontario have stepped up in a big way to support our frontline health care workers in response to COVID-19," said Premier Doug Ford. "Now, we have to have their backs and make sure our students can keep learning, in class or virtually, and become the next generation of frontline heroes, innovators and community builders."

The limited summer reopening will help individual institutions prepare for the fall term by ensuring proper health and safety protocols are in place. The province is developing a framework to be released to the sector in the coming days, which will provide guidance on the summer reopening and on health and safety measures.

Publicly assisted colleges and universities, Indigenous Institutes, private career colleges and other postsecondary education institutions may participate in this voluntary reopening. Institutions that choose to participate will be responsible for establishing their own plans for this limited reopening in accordance with public health advice and any ministry guidance.

"It's critical that we allow students to complete their studies and graduate so they can join the workforce in high-demand, frontline roles and help put the province back on the path to

prosperity," said Ross Romano, Minister of Colleges and Universities. "I will continue to collaborate with the postsecondary sector to determine how best to move forward on reopening our campuses in the fall and beyond in a way that is responsible and safe for our students and staff."

In order to maintain Ontario's position as a global leader in higher education and research, the government will also begin working on a digital and academic modernization framework this summer. Through this exercise, it will look at unlocking the potential of virtual learning, adapting postsecondary education and training to meet the needs of a rapidly changing job market and economy, increasing the accountability of postsecondary education, developing the necessary physical and digital infrastructure, and fully realizing the value of research, innovation, and intellectual property licensing in the domestic and global marketplace.

QUOTES

" We're pleased the government continues to demonstrate such strong support for colleges and to ensuring students complete their programs, particularly in areas where there is a clear demand for more graduates. Throughout Ontario, faculty and staff have found creative and effective ways to continue delivering high-quality programs. We're excited to be collaborating with the government on further measures to modernize post-secondary education, including creating more opportunities for people who need to retrain for new careers during Ontario's economic recovery."

- Linda Franklin

President and CEO, Colleges Ontario

" The health and safety of our students, faculty and staff remains a top priority for Ontario's universities. Our institutions will continue to work diligently to provide the safest options for summer and fall enrolment that both align with public health regulations and ensure students continue to receive a high quality education and an enriching university experience that ensures they graduate with the adaptable skills required to help retool and reimagine industries, stimulate economic growth and rebuild Ontario."

- David Lindsay

President & CEO, Council of Ontario Universities

QUICK FACTS

- In 2018-19, more than 800,000 students enrolled in Ontario's colleges, universities, Indigenous Institutes and private career colleges located in every region of the province.

- Led by the work of the Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee, and in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and health experts, the government is planning a measured and phased approach outlined in [A Framework for Reopening our Province](#).

LEARN MORE

- Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19 or to take a self assessment.
- Read more about the province's [Ontario Together initiative](#).

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