**From:** AE Campus Alberta <AE.CampusAlberta@gov.ab.ca>
**Sent:** Thursday, August 27, 2020 2:49 PM
**Subject:** Readiness to accept international students follow-up

*This email is being to sent to all Alberta post-secondary providers who are designated to accept international students*.

Hello,

I am writing to follow-up on my letter of July 20th, 2020, regarding your institution’s readiness to accept international students in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, international students from countries other than the United States, with the exception of those approved for study permits prior to March 18, 2020, are prohibited from entry into Canada. Our post-secondary community has worked tirelessly to implement provincial and federal guidelines to ensure the safety of students, staff and faculty, and our communities. Advanced Education supplied the list of adult learning institutions that indicated their readiness to safely receive new international students to the Public Health Agency of Canada. The response back from the federal authority included additional asks from institutions and the provincial government that will require your attention.

This is an evolving situation which impacts the health and safety of all Canadians. With the potential reopening of borders, significant numbers of international students could begin arriving to Canada at various ports of entry across the country, before travelling onto their final study destinations. The federal government has communicated that in order for new international students to be allowed to enter the county (i.e. those who were approved for study permits after March 18, 2020), it is important that all Canadians have confidence in provincial and institutional approaches in place to receive and support international students.

To support consistency in institutional restart plans, and as a pre-condition to re-opening borders to new international students, the Public Health Agency of Canada has developed additional criteria to validate the readiness and capability of institutions and local health authorities to support international students during their period of mandatory quarantine upon entry and for the duration of their studies. The new federal public health institutional readiness requirements specify that designated learning institutions must:

·         Communicate and provide assistance with quarantine accommodation, transportation to the place of quarantine, and quarantine supports (e.g. food, medical care), for both international students and their co-arriving immediate family members.

·         Routinely monitor quarantining international students and their co-arriving family members for general well-being and compliance, and report any cases and non-compliance to provincial authorities.

·         Provide ongoing support for international students and family members after quarantine ends, including mental, physical, anti-racism and COVID-19 stigma supports.

·         Have robust plans for outbreak management.

Please see the public health institutional readiness requirements that Alberta received from the federal government (Attachment 1), for a full list of institutional obligations.  Note that some requirements in this document have been highlighted; these will be addressed directly by the Government of Alberta and do not require an institutional response.

Alberta’s guidance and protocols for post-secondary institutions are consistent with the Government of Canada’s guidance for post-secondary institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, however the new federal requirements do include additional obligations in some areas other than what is currently required by Alberta’s public health orders and guidance. One requirement is that provinces review and approve individual institution restart plans as they relate to accepting and supporting international students. To this end, Advanced Education is collaborating closely with Alberta Health and has established a process for the collection and approval of individual institution restart plans by provincial and local public health.

To facilitate this review process, I ask all institutions who wish to welcome new international students for the 2020-21 school year to review and fill in the attached template (Attachment 2) to indicate how your institution will fulfill each of the listed federal requirements. If your institution has already developed a plan for receiving and quarantining international students, please use this template to provide a brief summary of how each requirement will be met, and then reference relevant pages or sections of your plan for more detail. If your institution has not developed a separate plan for international students, please provide full details of your plan in the template. In addition to fulfilling the federal requirements, your institution’s plan should adhere to Alberta’s COVID-19 [orders and legislation](https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-orders-and-legislation.aspx), and relevant [COVID-19 relaunch guidance](https://www.alberta.ca/guidance-documents.aspx), including the [Guidance for Post-Secondary Institutions](https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/b321eaf7-be50-46b0-a7e2-8022c850512a/resource/ae10e2a0-49de-4ec2-b441-9d16f2efe185/download/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-post-secondary-institutions.pdf).

When completed, I ask that you submit the following to AE.CampusAlberta@gov.ab.ca

1.       A completed copy of the attached template.

2.       A copy of your institution’s individual restart plan, if you have developed one, which should detail how you will fulfill each of the relevant federal requirements in the annex.

There is no imposed deadline for this submission. Once received, Advanced Education will review each submission for completeness and pass the above documents to Alberta Health who will review against federal criteria. The Government of Alberta will ask the Public Health Agency of Canada to allow new international students into the province to study at schools with approved plans. In addition, the Public Health Agency of Canada has indicated that it will be reviewing a sample of institutional plans to confirm compliance with federal expectations. Please email any specific questions regarding federal expectations to AE.CampusAlberta@gov.ab.ca so that Advanced Education can facilitate answers with the federal government.

Please also note that in addition to the requirements above, the Public Health Agency of Canada has specified ongoing reporting requirements for any institution that is approved to receive new international students. If your institution receives provincial and federal approval to receive new international students, you will be required to notify Advanced Education (AE.CampusAlberta@gov.ab.ca) if the following occurs:

·         Any changes in your plan for receiving international students (please notify Advanced Education in writing as the change is made, and provide a copy of the updated plan with all changes highlighted).

·         Any individual compliance issues with the 14-day quarantine observed at your institution (please notify Advanced Education in writing as soon as reasonably possible after you become aware of the breach).

·         Any other factors or considerations that might lead to your institution being removed from the approved list (please report as soon as possible).

I want to thank you for the ongoing work you’ve been doing to support Alberta’s post-secondary system as we meet the challenge of the pandemic and prepare for the safe return of international students this year and beyond.

Peter Leclaire, Assistant Deputy Minister

Advanced Education

c.c. Graham Statt, Assistant Deputy Minister

       Incident Commander, Emergency Operations Centre – COVID19

       Alberta Health

**Attachments**

1.       Annex to letter – Public Health Institutional Readiness Requirements

2.       Alberta Template for Post Secondary Institutions – Federal Requirements