



Canadian Association of University Teachers  
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université

## Memorandum 20:26

**Date:** May 13, 2020

**To:** Presidents and Administrative Officers  
Local, Federated and Provincial Associations

**From:** David Robinson, Executive Director

**Re:** **CAUT Guidelines for Re-opening Canada's Universities and Colleges**

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As the federal and provincial governments consider easing the emergency restrictions put in place to limit the spread of COVID-19, colleges and universities across the country are developing plans for their operations in the fall. The options being considered raise *logistical* questions about how far campuses can re-open and how courses will be delivered; *health and safety* considerations about how to best protect all members of the campus community; and *academic* concerns about how best to ensure our institutions can continue to fulfil their core mission of teaching and research under the circumstances. It is crucial that academic staff associations and academic governance bodies be actively involved in all discussions about planning for the 2020-21 academic year. To assist in these discussions, CAUT is providing the following guidelines for member associations. As with all of CAUT's advice and resources related to COVID-19, we will update these guidelines as necessary as more information becomes available.

### CAUT Guidelines for Re-opening Canada's Universities and Colleges

- The recommendations and guidance of public health authorities should inform all decisions about when and how to re-open campuses safely. The health and safety of students and staff should be the primary consideration.
- The workplace Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) and academic staff associations must be involved in decision-making around re-opening. The JHSC is responsible for identifying workplace hazards and making recommendations for prevention and mitigation. The administration, academic staff association, other campus unions, and the JHSC must work closely on a comprehensive workplace safety plan until the risks from exposure to COVID-19 are contained, and the workplace and community can resume normal activities.
- The JHSC and the academic staff association should consider a range of possible ways to reduce the risk posed by COVID-19, including:

- Establishing recommended physical distancing protocols in classrooms, residences, libraries, and other spaces on campus;
  - Enhancing sanitation protocols and enacting measures to properly train and protect staff who conduct the cleaning;
  - Identifying appropriate and effective Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be used by students and staff;
  - Establishing criteria and protocols in the event a student or staff member is diagnosed as or suspected of being COVID-19 positive; and
  - Ensuring appropriate resources are in place to support the well-being and mental health of students and staff.
- Institutions should provide reasonable accommodation for staff who are at high risk or have family responsibilities that require them to remain off-campus. As much as possible, institutions should permit these staff to continue teleworking.
  - Consistent with principles of [collegial governance](#), the appropriate academic governance body should be responsible for all decisions about class cancellations, modifications, or the temporary continuation of remote teaching or blended instruction. As the [CAUT Policy Statement on Distance \(including Online\) Education](#) notes: "Academic staff, through collegial processes, should determine the method of course delivery and workload allocation."
  - Institutions should negotiate any changes to instructional methods and mode of delivery with the academic staff association. The principle of [academic freedom](#) as well as specific collective agreement language provide academic staff with the right to select course materials, determine the pedagogical approach, and choose methods and modes of instruction and assessment within their assigned courses, subject to institutional policies as developed by relevant academic governance bodies.
  - In the event that in-class instruction is not possible, institutions and academic staff associations should ensure that academic freedom is not compromised in a remote teaching environment. Explicit protections should be in place to prevent data sharing, surveillance, and recording of on-line classes. Additionally, academic staff who create distance courses should retain their intellectual property rights relating to the content of those courses.
  - Academic staff, and in particular contract academic staff, should be properly compensated for additional preparation or instructional time that may be required as a result of a continuation of temporary remote teaching. In all cases, academic staff should be provided with sufficient time and resources to further develop skills in remote teaching.
  - All plans for the fall academic year should fully consider equity implications. Lower-income students and those in rural and remote regions may have inadequate or no access to computers or Internet connections to participate in on-line learning. Students and academic staff with disabilities may require specific accommodations. Institutions should provide support structures and programs for all students and staff who are experiencing increased hardship.