

# Pre-Arrival Guide for International Students

VCA is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all its students and community by following the guidelines of the Government of Canada and health authorities.

For more information about how VCA is addressing the COVID-19 situation and how it protects the health and safety of our community, please visit our website. This Pre-Arrival Guide for International Students is to provide VCA international students who plan to travel to Canada with important information regarding the current travel restrictions and mandatory quarantine requirements considering COVID-19.

Please review this information carefully for important updates and resources for a safe arrival in Canada. It is the responsibility of VCA international students to understand the federal and provincial laws and regulations before planning to arrive in Canada. Students are recommended to review the government websites regularly for up-to-date information as they are subject to change.

As best practice, international students and their co-arriving immediate family members are required to download the Government of Canada's ArriveCAN application prior to arrival at the border and complete the information required. Travel Restrictions and Quarantine Requirements Before you make plans to travel to Canada, it is important that you understand the travel restrictions and exemptions for international students.

Please refer to the IRCC website for more information regarding travel restrictions and exemptions. It is important to note that Canada border services can use their discretion to determine if your travel is considered discretionary (not essential) or non-discretionary (essential) based on the information you provide. Travelers arriving in Canada are required to self-isolate (quarantine) for 14 days under the Quarantine Act in order to slow the spread of COVID19.

Please visit the IRCC website for information about quarantine requirements.

## **Communication Regarding your Travel Plan**

If you have determined that you are eligible to travel to Canada and have booked your flights, please fill out [this form](#) and email the completed form to [info@vca.ca](mailto:info@vca.ca)

## **Communication of Protocols and Policies**

The Vice President of Administration, Nancy Ruffolo, has already communicated to all staff members and shared with them the required protocols should a student obtain a study visa and plans on arriving in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic.

They have been informed of all cautionary and mandatory measures that are in place and enforceable as well as the consequences of not adhering to established protocols.

Our communication contains links to the [Quarantine Act](#), **use of the ArriveCAN app** as well as the BC Covid-19 App. including all other relevant information pertaining to their arrival. International students will be advised to plan to arrive in Canada with adequate time to fulfill the 14-day quarantine plan before attending any classes in person (if applicable).

This requires advance flight booking and planning with airlines. The student and the Agent will be required to provide written confirmation that they have read and understood all required protocols and will abide by them. This letter will be placed in the students' file.

## **Procedures and Responsibilities**

Things to prepare for the flight (check with airlines for specific guidelines):

- Wear a non-medical mask or face covering
- Wear gloves (if applicable)
- Practice safe social distancing
- Carry hand sanitizer and wash hands frequently

Things to prepare upon arrival in Canada:

- Wear your non-medical mask or face covering until you reach your quarantine location
- Provide basic information using the traveler contact information form on ArriveCAN
- Undergo a health check screening
- Provide quarantine plan
- Show your passport, Port of Entry Introduction letter or study permit, proof of funds, and course registration information.

**Procedures and responsibilities** for airport arrival and transportation for asymptomatic travelers (e.g., wearing a mask, avoiding public transit other than taxi) to the 14-day quarantine facilities.

**Further preparations for students include:**

- Access to supplies such as prescriptions and food
- Students will not have contact with vulnerable individuals or be living in a group or communal setting (except for family members)
- Quarantine accommodation enabling individual physical distancing, and infection-prevention control protocols in place

**Transportation**

Once International students arrive in Victoria, they will have direct transportation arranged from Victoria International Airport to their quarantine location. The Designated Institution Contact (Nancy Ruffolo) will ensure that the student will be picked up and dropped off in a safe and convenient manner. Upon arrival at the airport, the representative will meet the student and ensure all precautionary measures are being taken such as wearing a mask and reinforce the importance of social distancing and other suggested and mandated protocols for safety of everyone.

A comprehensive handout has been made ready to ensure that international students understand and meet the [Quarantine Act](#) requirements.

**Further Pre-Arrival Preparations:**

If the international student does have a family member in British Columbia, they will need to go through a process with our Designated Institution Contact to ensure all aspects of the Go Forward Plan are being met. Consent from the family to take care of the international student must be provided in writing to also ensure the student will not be in contact with vulnerable individuals or be living in a group/communal setting.

If students are requiring accommodation, VCA will make arrangements with hotels to accommodate international students. These hotels will have adequate features for students to quarantine, including kitchenettes and exterior entry to guest rooms.

**Arranging for Meal Delivery**

The quarantine Act dictates that one should not leave their quarantine location to purchase meals, groceries or other necessities. As such, arrangements will be made to deliver meals, groceries, and other necessities as needed so that students do not need to leave their quarantine location. Students will also be provided options for delivery services offered by stores should they choose to do so.

Grocery delivery services include:

- Real Canadian Superstore
- Save-on-Foods
- Safeway
- T & T

Supermarket Meal delivery services:

- Door Dash
- Uber Eats
- Skip the Dishes

### **Support during quarantine:**

VCA has created a logbook for monitoring students in quarantine. One of our administrative staff members will also be checking in daily to ensure students are getting everything they need so they do not have to venture out to stores, etc. Additionally, VCA will ensure students have the technology and tools to stay connected through regular zoom calls to reduce the possibility of fear, anxiety or boredom.

Students will also be made aware of rules around the [Quarantine Act](#) and consequences of failure to adhere via this website.

### **Integration into Community and Culture:**

Our commitment to our community, staff, and students is primary and the process of care for all international students will continue to be upheld in perpetuity. All students have access to ongoing support from our instructors and admin staff.

### **Personal and Academic Support:**

Led by our Vice President of Administration, our staff are well-equipped to assist students with a multitude of challenges they may face in their lives, including those that may arise from their home life, personal relationships, in the classroom and more importantly now during the pandemic. In-person or virtual meetings, students can access staff to discuss issues and seek advice and guidance for help in developing coping strategies, or for referrals to professional services within the community.

### **Tutoring:**

All students are entitled to free tutoring and one on one coaching as well as career preparation and job search assistance. Since VCA is offering all programs in an online delivery methodology, students will remain connected on a daily basis during online class hours. In addition, students are encouraged to create group chats over social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Discord, Facebook, etc.

### **Physical, Social and Mental wellbeing:**

VCA understands that everyone associated with the school has an important role to play in mitigating any social barriers associated with international students, which might influence their continued compliance with infection control measures.

In accordance with the recommendations of the World Health Organization COVID-19 Stigma

Guide, the College is committed to being intentional and thoughtful when communicating on social media and other platforms, to consistently show supportive behaviors, and to using simple, accurate language to share the most up-to-date information, purposefully and regularly about how to prevent infection. Further, we are committed to addressing any instances, either overt or accidental, where anyone associated with the school or community uses terminology, which feeds stigma, undermines empathy, or has the potential to foster the creation of any barrier, which might influence compliance with infection control protocols and measures. VCA will use the information on [this site](#) to ensure we follow and capture guidelines and recommendations.

Additionally, students will have access to following organizations if needed:

[Foundry](#) is part of a province-wide network of integrated health and social service centers for young people ages 12-24. Foundry provides a one-stop-shop for young people to access mental health care, substance use services, primary care, social services and youth and family peer support. Foundry also offers many online services, and a one-on-one FaceTime counseling service for those who are unable to attend the office in person. Foundry also has easy-to-find pages on their website which direct youth to free apps they can use to support their mental health.

[BounceBack](#) provides free access to online, video, phone calls, and skills-building programs. Seniors, adults, and youth who are experiencing low mood, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress, or worry, can receive care from this online resource.

[Here2Talk](#) is an app that was made for domestic and international students.

Anyone can call 310-6789 toll-free from anywhere in B.C. to access emotional support, information, and resources specific to mental health and substance use issues. This phone service is available 24 hours a day. The mental health services and links will be provided to international students during their orientation, so they are aware of what is available to them.

### **Medical coverage:**

All BC residents, including international students, who reside in Canada for more than six months are required to have medical coverage through the publicly funded BC Medical Services Plan (MSP). MSP provides basic medical benefits including doctor/clinic visits and emergency services.

The International student manager and team will work with international students to help them to apply for MSP immediately upon arrival in BC by offering to help the student complete the online application form from the MSP website. There is a three-month waiting period for all new residents to BC. During this waiting period, international students will be required to have private medical insurance and the College will provide assistance.

### **Information about COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, and care:**

Common symptoms for COVID-19 include fever, chills, cough, and shortness of breath, fatigue, and loss of sense of smell or taste. If an international student discloses that they are exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms, however mild, they will be directed to continue to avoid contact with others and encouraged to seek an immediate COVID-19 test by calling 8-1-1 to secure a testing appointment.

They will be directed to self-isolate and avoid leaving their accommodation or residence, except to seek medical intervention and transportation will be arranged. Follow up will be made by the College and monitored to ensure the student's safety and compliance as well as assist authorities with contact tracing requirements.

**ArriveCAN Application for Daily Symptom Reporting will be utilized.** The International Student Manager is committed to utilizing relevant aspects of the ArriveCAN application to encourage and assist international students to provide the Government of Canada with voluntary updates on their quarantine compliance and to report on the development of any symptoms during the 14 days after arriving in Canada.

If you have any question or concern about the safety on campus or about the Pre-Arrival Plan, please contact the College by email or by phone:

Phone: 250-598-5422 or Email: [info@vca.ca](mailto:info@vca.ca) or Campus director: [nancyruffolo@vca.ca](mailto:nancyruffolo@vca.ca)