

Healthy Community Plan for University of Victoria Residences

Covid-19 and Residence Living

Revised August 2020

Prepared by Residence Services staff

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Introduction

This plan focuses on the practises and policies put in place for Covid-19 that impact the student experience in residence at the University of Victoria. This plan accompanies, and in some areas overlaps with the *Safe Work Plans* for Residence Services employees.

Residence Services at the University of Victoria provides housing, educational and social support for students all year round, guided by our values of service to others, optimism, trust and collaboration. Student residences are a unique environment on campuses—residences operate and are staffed 24/7, and thus our staff work with the student as a developing individual both inside and outside the classroom. Our focus is on the needs of the community and the student’s role as a responsible and engaged citizen. In any crisis or emergency situation, our responsibility is to the safety of individuals and community. We are acutely aware that our buildings are students’ homes for the time they live in residence, and the staff in Residence Services are committed to developing and maintaining a welcoming, comfortable and safe home for residents.

Students are accommodated primarily in high-density dormitory style buildings with shared common spaces and bathrooms. Living in residence is considered an important part of the first year experience for students and their parents, and Residence Services has a team of close to 200 professional and student staff whose focus is to build community, uphold community standards, and provide educational and personal support to students. Our staff are trained to deal with emergencies, ranging from building to physical and mental health issues, in partnership with other UVic departments such as Campus Security, Student Wellness Centre (Counselling, Health, Multifaith), and the Office of Student Life.

Planning for Fall 2020

It was announced by the University in June 2020 that the majority of classes will be held online in Fall 2020. Despite this announcement, a significant number of students (primarily first year) indicated that they still want accommodation on campus.

Based on our experience in March 2020, and on documentation provided by the BC Ministry of Health, Island Health Authority (IHA), Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA), and the American College Health Association (ACHA), as well as other industry guidelines, our goal is to provide on-campus accommodation that focuses on health and safety for residents and staff first.

We intend to do this by focusing on three overriding themes which will run through this plan:

- Resident and Staff Education
- Hygiene and Cleaning Practises
- Physical Distancing and other protocols

Building choices and room assignments

Fall 2020 Changes to Room Assignments

Physical Distancing

Residence Services will be limiting the number of beds available in residence. This will be done to relieve the density of living spaces and bathrooms loads in order to support and encourage the physical distancing requirements as per the guidance of the BC Ministry of Health, British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), the Provincial Health Officer and in collaboration with Island Health.

In order to accomplish this, we have had to change our “First Year Guarantee” for students directly out of high school to a “First Year Priority” policy. Due to our reduction in inventory, we are unable to guarantee a room for every potential incoming first year student. To maintain this priority, we will run three lotteries in July—one each for first year, upper-year and graduate students. First year students will be assigned rooms based on their lottery numbers. Subsequently, we will assign the remaining rooms to upper-year and graduate students.

Our reduction in inventory will be accomplished in three ways:

- Limiting Cluster Housing occupants to two residents per suite (with two bathrooms)
- Reducing occupancy in dormitory style buildings by assigning residents to every second room
- Changing double rooms to “super singles” with one occupant
- Closing or changing the use of specific dormitory buildings where social distancing is a challenge due to the size and shape of hallways and common areas.

Additional Physical Distancing measures

- Assigning rooms, where possible, so that students are not “face to face” when they enter or exit their private rooms off of hallways
- Strongly recommending and educating about the use of masks and hand disinfecting in all common areas
- Reducing furniture in shared lounges to observe occupancy limits based on room sizes
- Providing signage in all common lounges, lobbies and other shared spaces to indicate occupancy limits
- Providing visual cues such as “dots” and other signs to encourage physical distancing in common areas
- Implementing guest restrictions—no off-campus visitors will be allowed to units or buildings
 - Buildings will be considered a “family unit”—and residents will be encouraged to meet with other “families” outside or in spaces where they can safely distance
- Providing education and coaching about Covid and individual and community expectations to residents through pre-arrival education and ongoing touchpoints

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Current Practises

Residence Services Facilities department has a team of approximately 31 part-time cleaners. Typically, Residence Services housekeeping staff work 12 months of the year, seven days a week. Our typical current cleaning standard is set at APPA Level 2-3 (Educational facilities guidelines).

Student residents are expected to keep their private bedrooms and the interior of their Cluster units clean. Our Housekeepers clean common areas only, defined as:

- Shared and Community washrooms (toilets, sinks, showers, mirrors, floors)
- Hallways and building entrances
- Stairwells and elevators
- Lounges on each floor
- Laundry rooms: one per building
- Storage rooms (locker rooms & bike rooms)

Fall 2020 Changes to Cleaning and Hygiene Practises

Over the summer months, Residence Services has examined its cleaning and hygiene practises and has and will be implementing a number of enhancements to be in place on or before students arrive for the Fall 2020 intake. We expect to be enhancing cleaning services in the buildings that will be occupied this fall. Some of these enhancements are necessary outcomes of other operational changes in on-campus living, such as a shift towards a focus on take-out food in the campus cafeteria.

These changes include:

- Additional hours and shifts to ensure twice daily disinfection of high-touch surfaces in common areas including bathrooms, seven days a week.
- The provision of paper towel dispensers in all common and shared bathrooms in residence in order to encourage frequent handwashing. This change means that we will be adding garbage removal duties to our housekeeping shifts.
- The installation, maintenance and upkeep of waste containers in student lounges specifically designed for take-out food containers and waste.

Self- Isolation Facilities and Practices

Background

Residence Services staff consists of teams of professional and student staff who are trained to respond to emergencies and incidents. Our staff are available or on-call 24/7. Residence Services works closely with campus partners such as the Student Wellness Center (Counselling, Health, Multi-faith), Campus Security, Office of Student Life and others in following up to incidents ranging from incidents of violence to health and mental health crises. We have written protocols in place for responding to isolated incidents of infectious diseases, and in all cases we follow the guidance of our on-campus Student Wellness team and health authority protocols. Our experience with infectious diseases in recent history includes isolated cases of mumps, scabies, and other diseases.

Fall 2020 Changes to Self-Isolation Processes

Residence Services will set up and maintain facilities that can accommodate self-isolation for a much greater number of students in the case of a second wave of Covid-19.

There are three categories of students who may require self-isolation:

1. International students requiring a two week self-isolation period when entering the country
2. Students who exhibit Covid-like symptoms during their stay in residence who are then tested and awaiting results
3. Students who test positive for Covid during their stay in residence and need to self-isolate for two weeks while they recover

Due to our limited inventory and lack of private bathrooms, we have determined International students will be required to self-isolate off-campus *before* checking in to residence. We are working with local hotels and International Student Services (ISS) to provide accommodation options and support for students. After their isolation period, international students will have to provide proof of arrival into the country and documentation of their self-isolation accommodation when checking in to residence.

We will accommodate the second and third categories of students listed above in designated buildings on campus. We have set aside individuals buildings, which will not be used for accommodation other than for this purpose. This will allow students to remain on campus if they develop Covid-like symptoms and/or if they test positive.

Privacy Concerns regarding Self-Isolation

Residence Services staff are trained in privacy guidelines and familiar with dealing with health and other issues sensitively and discreetly. Students' temporary accommodation in any of the buildings set up for self-isolation will be handled with discretion, with staff made aware of individual names and personal information only if needed in their roles.

In the case of a positive case of Covid-19 in a residence community, any communication with other residents for self-monitoring or contact tracing purposes will be done by Residence Services with the guidance of the BCCDC, Island Health communicable disease department, UVic Student Wellness Centre, and following UVic privacy policy guidelines.

Residence Services staff who may need access to these spaces or buildings will receive education and training in Covid-19 transmission, the use of PPE and other protocols as described in the Residences Safe Work Plan.

Other university staff will be informed as follows:

- Campus Security, as part of their emergency response role, receive nightly reports of room occupants from Residence Services.
- Food Services supervisors will be informed in order to arrange for meal deliveries to specific rooms and individuals via an on-line ordering system.
- Supervisors from departments such as Facilities Management or University Systems will be made aware of the possible use of these buildings in order to ensure use of PPE and social distancing protocols if and when entry is required.
- UVic's Covid-19 Case Response Team will be informed of cases in residence.

Communication, Education and Training

Background

As noted earlier, student residences are a unique environment on campuses—residences operate and are staffed 24/7, and thus our staff work with students as developing individuals both inside and outside the classroom. Our focus is on the needs of the community and the student's role as a responsible and engaged citizen.

One of the challenges we face in engaging students in specific behaviours is that they come to UVic from across Canada and around the world. This means that cultural norms represented in BC, for example, may not be as prevalent elsewhere. A good example of this is in regards to recycling practises, which differ across Canada and are difficult to enforce in residence. We expect there may be similar challenges in approaching education about Covid-19. Thus, our focus will be on consistency and repetition of simple messages.

In order to provide support and education for students in residence, our organization has developed and maintains the following structures:

- Our Residence Life and Education team work directly with students to provide active and passive programming, uphold and maintain the community standards embedded in our residence contract, connect with individuals one-on-one, and respond to emergencies and crises.
- Programs that provide support for students socially, educationally and personally. As part of their duties, our student and/or professional staff create customized programs in their communities. These range from study groups, to social activities, to educational opportunities

that focus on specific themes. As an example, a summer program this year focused on debunking some of the myths that had emerged about Covid-19 (i.e.: that people between 18 and 25 were immune).

- A student conduct system, supported by the Res Life and Education team, rooted in practises of education, open communication, confidentiality, respect, and inclusion. Our conduct system is a key component in conveying the behavioural expectations of our community, as well as our practices for maintaining a positive environment for everyone living and working in residence. Grounded in principles of procedural fairness and industry best practices, our model is responsive to individual and circumstances. We provide opportunities for students to engage with staff and participate in processes to resolve concerns.

Typically, residents are expected to become familiar with our residence culture and their rights and responsibilities through a few core communication vehicles which are revised and updated annually: The residence contract, which every residents is required to review and sign before moving into residence; the Community Living Handbook, which gives an overview of life in residence including information about our conduct system; and the Residence Services web page, which has sections for future and current residents, as well as for parents and guardians.

Fall 2020 Communication and Education about Covid-19

Residence Services has identified seven key topics aimed at incoming residents related to the prevention of Covid-19. We are planning (and have already begun) to communicate these topics through a number of communication channels and methods.

In addition, we have revised our residence contract and Community Living Handbook to specifically address compliance with Provincial Health orders, as well as to clarify restrictions on gathering sizes in residence.

The topics we intend to focus communication on are:

- **An individual's responsibilities as a resident:** These are simple, key messages that we hope to communicate through multiple channels.
 - The importance of and how to wash your hands
 - Social distancing
 - Coughing/sneezing into one's elbow
 - Wearing a mask when you can't maintain adequate distance (as per Health Authority) in all common areas of buildings, including hallways and lounges
 - Stay in your room and call for assistance if you aren't feeling well
 - What to do if you are feeling sick (and what will happen next)
- **Social Distancing:** What it looks like in residence, including occupancy limits:
 - In our buildings (numbers and layouts of beds)
 - In residence hallways and lounges
 - In dormitory bathrooms
 - In elevators

- In our front office
- In laundry rooms, bike and storage rooms
- **Socializing in residence during Covid times**
 - Size of gatherings (as per Health Authority)
 - Guest restrictions for off-campus guests
 - Restrictions on guests from other residences
- **Self-isolation and self-monitoring**
 - What does self-monitoring mean?
 - What do I need to do as an International student coming into the country?
 - What do I do if I have symptoms of Covid-19?
 - What does Covid testing look like and where can I be tested?
 - What will happen if I test positive?
- **Cleaning and sanitizing: Uvic responsibilities**
 - Staff cleaning schedules and processes
 - Bathrooms and high touch points
 - Food and other waste removal
- **Cleaning and disinfecting: Resident responsibilities**
 - In shared and common bathrooms
 - In lounges and hallways
 - In private rooms
 - Safely dealing with garbage and waste
- **Laundry room use**
 - Social distancing and occupancy limits
 - Rules for safe use of equipment and the space
- **Move-in Day**
 - Social distancing
 - Guidelines for families and move-in teams
 - Waste removal

Channels for Communication

Residence Services has already or will be using the following channels to communicate to incoming residents:

1. **Emails to applicants:** This communication is already underway, with weekly emails on various topics going to all applicants. We will be focusing one email in July specifically on individual responsibilities in regards to Covid-19, with follow-up messaging in later weeks. We also intend to use our email auto-responses to reinforce particular messages.

2. **Website:** In working with University Media and Communications, we have added a specific section on Covid-19 FAQs to our website. This has and will be updated as we know more about our operations and as provincial health requirements change.
3. **Signage:** The University has provided standardized signage and templates for use to promote social distancing and define rules such as occupancy limits. This standardized signage will be used in all of our lounges, bathrooms and common spaces in all of our residence buildings. We are developing other signs for use within our buildings to address the uniqueness of our environment as well as the developmental stage of our residents. These signs will focus on topics such as how to hand wash, how to disinfect, and how to do laundry safely.
4. **Digital signage:** Residence Services plans to develop key messages to promote social distancing and other healthy practises throughout the academic year. This will be displayed on the digital signage in our lobby.
5. **Social Media:** Residence Services is working with Media and Communications to develop a video that will be available in July on various social media channels, as well as on our website. One of the key messages of the video will be on our commitment to the development of healthy and safe communities in residence.
6. **Res Life “word of mouth” and programming:** Our student staff use neighbourhood and community meetings and programming to educate and inform students once they are living in residence. Student staff will receive training and education on keeping communities safe, and how to intervene when they see bad practises.
7. **Healthy Community Brochure:** Residence Services is developing a brochure that will focus on the key messages to inform and educate residents on their role in creating and maintaining healthy communities. The brochure will be available and distributed digitally pre and post move-in. The messages in this brochure will guide all other forms of communication in order to ensure consistency.

Residence Life and Education Staff Responsibilities

Background

The Residence Life and Education professional team develops and manages community well-being in residence. Our staff team consists of experts in education and assessment, student conduct, and student support. Our professional staff come into their positions with backgrounds in education, community development, student affairs, counseling and social work. Their roles and practise are based on student development theory, which refers to a body of scholarship that seeks to understand and explain the processes of how students learn, grow, and develop in post-secondary education. Thus, the educational component of our roles is of paramount importance in all of our practises and policies.

Our student staff teams live and work in our buildings between August and April each year, supervised and guided by the professional staff. Most of the student staff are in Community Leaders roles (CLs), with Senior Community Leaders (SCLs), Residence Education Community Leaders (RECLs) who lead

specialized Living-Learning Communities in residence, and Program Resource Centre Advisors (PRCAs). Our student staff's duties focus in two areas: programming, and "in-nights", when they are expected to do rounds of assigned buildings after-hours. Their in-nights are focused on connecting with students in their communities, but also in writing "Incident Reports" to record breaches of our residence community standards.

During May to August, we also employ student Summer Community Assistants (SCAs) who focus on peer check-ins and programming events. They were able to pilot virtual programming and safe, in-person, small group programs for the limited number of students remaining in residence.

Fall 2020 Changes to Residence Life and Education

Due to our reduction in available beds for Fall 2020, we will employ less student staff than usual. We will, however, retain or improve the resident/staff ratio in all of our buildings. Due to social distancing requirements, however, the nature and structure of the student staff's interaction with students in their communities will change. The first change will occur in August, when staff traditionally come to campus two to four weeks early for intensive training. Although student staff will be returning to campus this August, much of this training will occur on-line, with opportunities for small group activities when necessary for educational or team development purposes. There will also be a strong focus on education and training in relation to Covid-19 in order to dispel myths and provide good foundations of knowledge about health and safety. We will be partnering with our on-campus medical staff in order to provide good, practical knowledge.

In regards to programming during the academic semester, we will expect student staff to continue to create and implement passive (informational) and active (participatory) programming. These programs will be different, however, and may involve some or all of the following:

- Passive programming on Covid-19-related topics in order to develop knowledge and encourage safe practises within our communities. Topics will include social distancing; cleaning and disinfecting, etc.
- Phone one-on-one peer check-ins with every community member. A peer check-in model has been in place for a few years at UVic, and during the summer of 2020 the phone pilot was particularly successful. We are also looking at possible in-person check-ins if we are able to arrange for locations where we can maintain social distancing and privacy.
- A shift to smaller outdoor group activities such as hiking, net games and bocce, where social distancing can be maintained.

The student conduct portion of our staff roles is a significant one, and is a focus of both our professional and student staff teams. In March and April 2020, our Residence Life team quickly adjusted the expectations for tasks such as in-night rounds, in order to alleviate concerns and fear amongst our staff.

In Fall 2020, we will be implementing specific guidelines and practises, including:

- Mandatory wearing of non-medical masks during in-night rounds (to model good practises for residents). We will be supplying our staff with washable masks.
- Mandatory social distancing practises, with guidelines on how to approach groups, how to approach residents' rooms, etc. (Guidelines in development in *Safe Work* plan)
- Training on how to assist students who may show symptoms of Covid-19 or other flu-like diseases, with clearly outlined processes for both residents and staff (in development)

- Reduced physical rounds and promoting student staff in-room and virtual availability for residents.

Move-in Day

Background

Official Move-in Day for the student residences at UVic occurs on the Sunday of the long weekend before classes start. There are usually a couple hundred students who move in earlier (early to late August), including our student staff, some international students, and other students who may be coming to campus for early orientation programs. There are always a few more who move in after the move-in day. Typically, move-in starts at 8 am and the majority of students will be both checked and moved in over a three to four hour time period.

Fall 2020 Changes to Move-in Day

The focus for move-in day this year will be on ensuring social distancing requirements are met, in particular during the check-in and move-in process. There will be no move-in day fair. There will be four information tables spaced out in Parking Lot 2.

The following processes will be in place:

- Communications will go out before arrival reminding students and families of social distancing requirements. Communications will include specific instructions for move-in day, outlining process, parking, social distancing and mask requirements. Communications will stress that there are no opportunities for group gatherings, and that students are asked to check-in (as outlined below), drive with their move-in teams to designated parking lots for unloading and moving in belongings. Once move-in is complete, parents/friends who are assisting with move-in will be asked to leave campus.
- Students and families will be strongly encouraged to wear masks during the day. All staff will be wearing masks. All line-ups (exterior and interior) will be marked with six foot intervals to ensure social distancing between groups.
- Before arrival, incoming residents will be required to sign up for a specific move-in time during the day.
 - Each 90 minute timeslot will be limited to ensure adequate time and space for move-in for each student. Students will be assigned a half hour arrival time slot within the 90 minutes.
 - 1 to 200 students will move in early (or later).
 - Approximately 600 students will moving in to 19 different buildings, in five different timeslots between 8 am and 3:30 pm on move-in day.
- Students will be restricted to bringing only two family members or friends to assist in their move-in.
- International students have received special communications prior to arrival outlining the university's expectations on self-isolation. International students will be asked to show proof of

entry date into the country, and to describe their *completed* self-isolation plan before they are allowed to check-in to residence. Residence Services staff will be assisted by staff from International Student Services.

- Check-in processes:
 - Check in begins with arrival into Parking Lot 2 at designated time. Parking Lot 2 is a drop off zone. Other members of the move-in team will be asked to park in other on-campus lots to wait for their student.
 - Students will first be asked to line up outside McKinnon Gym (encircling the gym).
 - Volunteer move-in staff will be communicating directions on social distancing and move-in requirements.
 - Doors to the gym will be controlled by residence staff with counters (at entrance and exits) to ensure compliance with occupancy limits (50 maximum). Hand sanitizers and disinfecting wipes will be available at all entrances and on each table during the screening and check-in process.
 - Students will visit a screening station outside the gym to answer Covid Screening document. Once screened, they will be asked to confirm the names of their move-in team members to assist in contact tracing, if necessary.
 - Residence Services, International Student Services and Student Wellness Centre staff will be available to address any issues that emerge at the screening table.
 - Students will visit a second station to receive a 10 minute introductory briefing by residence staff. Floor decals will indicate locations to stand during the presentation to respect social distancing requirements.
 - Once screened, and after attending the briefing, students will be directed to leave the gym to enter the CARSA gym. The line-up to enter the CARSA gym/basketball court will circle on the upper level above the court. Entrances and exits will be monitored and tracked by staff to ensure occupancy limits (50) are not exceeded.
 - Socially distanced lines will be set up at each neighbourhood table (5) within the check-in space on the court floor. Floors will be marked with decals/tape and signage will direct traffic within the gym.
 - All check-in tables will be equipped with plexi screens, hand sanitizer and extra masks.
 - Students will check in and receive their keys, then exit the building to rejoin their move-in team.
 - Move-in teams will be directed to Parking Lot 5 and Parking Lot 1 for vehicle unloading and move-in to the residence buildings.
- Disinfected moving carts will be available for use by families at stations in Parking Lot 1 and 5. Carts will be disinfected by staff between each use.
- Within buildings, elevators will be restricted to one move-in team at a time. Higher occupancy buildings will have designated up and down staircases to facilitate traffic flow and limit pinch points.
- Students and check-in teams will be reminded about social distancing protocols through posters and student staff verbal communication. Move-in teams will be directed to stay away from each other, to wait for other teams on stairs, etc.
- Residence Services housekeeping staff will perform extra disinfecting of hard surfaces in the buildings multiple times during the day.