

The global outbreak of the novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19, is a rapidly changing, fluid situation. Q Academy takes the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff and other community members very seriously. I am providing the following update on our planning and response.

On March 11, the World Health Organization declared that the COVID-19 outbreak can be characterized as a pandemic. However, the Provincial Health Officer in British Columbia has indicated that the public health risk associated with COVID-19 remains low in British Columbia.

At Q College, we continue to follow advice provided by provincial, national and international health authorities and organizations. We are working closely with other post-secondary institutions in British Columbia as well with provincial ministries in regard to the planning and management of the crisis.

Clearly, we as a country (and world) are facing a health crisis. We want you to personally know that you are not alone, and that we at Q Academy are engaging in battling and recovering from this health issue.

The health and safety of our campus community is always my top priority and we are taking the outbreak seriously.

I am writing to provide an important update regarding Q Academy response to COVID-19.

Let me begin with the most important elements:

At this time, the Public Health Agency of Canada has assessed the public health risk associated with the virus as “low for Canada”.

Q Academy business operations and classes would continue as normal until further notice.

Q Academy continues to take direction from the BC Provincial Government as we plan and consider next steps.

1. There are currently no COVID-19 cases reported on the campus.
2. We are currently assessing the situation.
3. The Office of the Provincial Medical Health Officer, BC Centre for Disease Control and Ministry of Health has advised the following:
  - Students, faculty, staff or visitors **who have travelled outside Canada (including the United States) after March 12** should stay home or self-isolate in their residence\*/room alone for 14 days, immediately on their return. They should monitor themselves daily for symptoms (fever, cough, muscle aches, difficulty breathing).

- Students, faculty, staff or visitors **who have been laboratory tested for COVID-19** should stay home or self-isolate in their residence\*/room alone, until their test results are known.
  - Students, faculty, staff or visitors **who have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 by laboratory testing** should stay home or self-isolate in their residence/room alone for 14 days after their last encounter. Individuals should monitor themselves daily for symptoms (fever, cough, muscle aches, difficulty breathing).
  - This does not apply to travellers who have returned to Canada up to or before March 12. (Previous mandated self-isolation requirements for travellers returning from Hubei Province, China, Iran, and Italy remain in effect.)
4. **To be clear, Q Academy will remain open.**
  5. Students wishing to go home, and study remotely can do so.
  6. For the time being, staff and faculty members should continue to report to work as usual. If you have extraordinary circumstances that require accommodation, please speak with your supervisor.
  7. If you are ill, please stay home. Those who develop symptoms during the 14-day monitoring period should immediately self-isolate (stay in a room that is not shared with anyone else) and call their healthcare provider or the provincial health line at 8-1-1 to discuss any need for testing and follow up.
  8. A new toll-free phone line has also been established for Canadians (1 833 784 4397) to answer general questions about COVID-19.
  9. The Office of the Provincial Medical Health Officer, BC Centre for Disease Control and Ministry of Health has also recommended the immediate cancellation or postponement until further notice of all events with more than 250 people in attendance.
  10. All discretionary events on campus currently scheduled until May 1, 2020 are being cancelled, postponed or offered virtually.
  11. The College is working through contingency planning for final exams. More information will be shared in the coming days.
  12. Instructors had been asked to waive the doctor's note requirement for students who are out sick for less than two weeks. Students are advised to stay home and away from others if they're feeling ill.

We will post FAQs and other important information which you find below. I urge you to have a look at them.

## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions:** **Mar. 13, 2020 – 4.00 p.m. PDT**

The following FAQs have been compiled to help students, faculty and staff during the current COVID-19 outbreak.

**How high is the risk of contracting the coronavirus disease, COVID-19 in BC?**

At this time, the BC Centre for Disease Control advises that the risk to British Columbians continues to be low. More information can be found on the [BC Centre for Disease Control website](#).

Within British Columbia, Provincial Medical Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry, the BC Centre for Disease Control, Ministry of Health and Vancouver Coastal Health are leading the coordinated response to COVID-19. UBC continues to take direction from the BC Provincial Government as we plan and consider next steps.

### **Are any Q Academy students, faculty or staff reported to be confirmed cases?**

We are currently not aware of any cases amongst our students, faculty and staff, both within BC or abroad. In the event of a confirmed case, information would be provided to the public by the relevant health agency, according to their protocols.

### **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

Information on the prevention, transmission, symptoms, and treatment of COVID-19 can be found at the Government of Canada website [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#).

### **What precautions can I take to stay healthy and prevent the spread of infections?**

The advice from health agencies is:

- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds using soap and water.
- If a sink is not available, 60-90% alcohol-based hand rubs (hand sanitizer) can be used to clean hands if they are not visibly soiled. If they are visibly soiled, you can use an alcohol-based disposable hand wipe to remove the dirt and then use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Do not touch your eyes/nose/mouth with unwashed hands.
- When you sneeze or cough, cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow, and then wash your hands.
- Stay home when you are ill to avoid spreading the illness to others.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick with an infection.
- If you are ill, have symptoms of flu like a fever or cough, you should stay home.

### **What is Q Academy doing to minimise the risk of infection to students, faculty and staff?**

To lower the risk from our campus environment:

- Routine cleaning is scheduled daily and follows industry cleaning standards laid out by the Association for Higher Education Facilities Officers (APPA), which are a blended approach designed to manage risk. Our cleaning standards comply with APPA's best practices.
- We have posted information to remind people of how to reduce the spread of infections and continue to monitor and refill our current hand sanitizer stations located in the main entrances.

- We are encouraging all campus users to follow the best practices in self-care being shared by the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) and [Vancouver Coastal Health](#).
- We have placed hand sanitizers and sanitizing wipes in all the classrooms and in the pantry area.

### **What should I do if I have travelled outside Canada (including the United States) after March 12?**

Any students returning from outside Canada after March 12 are advised to contact their instructor.

Faculty and staff are required to answer the following questions (while the self-isolation after travel outside of Canada is in place). If the answer is yes, you must bring this to the attention of your manager or supervisor. It will mean that you must self-isolate for the 14 days immediately following your return to Canada.

- Are you and/or anyone in your household currently travelling outside of Canada and returning after March 12, 2020?
- Have you or anyone in your household come into contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?
- Do you have plans to travel outside of Canada in the foreseeable future?

### **What should I do if one of my students or colleagues shows symptoms of COVID-19?**

Anyone who is concerned they, or someone they have been exposed to, may be experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should contact their health-care provider or call public health at 8-1-1. For more information and the latest updates, visit <http://www.bccdc.ca>

### **Will staff be permitted to work from home?**

You must have a discussion with the Campus Director if you need to work from home during this outbreak.

### **What about events and large gatherings?**

As of March 12, 2020, the Office of the Provincial Medical Health Officer, BC Centre for Disease Control and Ministry of Health has recommended the immediate cancellation or postponement until further notice of all events with more than 250 people in attendance.

At this time, planning for the 2020 Commencement Ceremony continues as normal, though we are considering alternatives should that be required.

Classes will continue as normal.

### **What is the best way to ensure I get support while on Q Academy related travel, if it's required?**

No matter where you are planning to travel, you are advised to consult [travel.gc.ca](http://travel.gc.ca), which is the Government of Canada's official source of destination-specific travel information. It

provides important advice to help travellers make informed decisions and travel safely while abroad.

Travellers with Canadian citizenship are advised to register their travel with the Canadian government here <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration>.

**Is Q Academy distributing masks for people to wear to prevent the spread of infection on our campuses?**

The college is not distributing masks. Some members of our community may opt to wear masks, and we fully support their right to do so. We ask the community to be respectful of students, faculty and staff who choose to wear masks.

If you have questions or concerns that are not currently addressed here, please contact [info@gacademy.ca](mailto:info@gacademy.ca)

We are closely monitoring and reviewing the changing situation to ensure we quickly put new procedures in place and have the answer to respond to questions and concerns from our staff, faculty and students.

Finally, I want to thank everyone for your patience and understanding. We're in uncharted territory. We know these decisions will cause some disruption, and we apologize for that. The steps above are being taken out of an abundance of caution and in an effort to reduce risk.

To All Q Academy staff, faculty and students: Thank you. Your care for this community is extraordinary.

Rachael McPherson

Campus Director/SEA