

# Continuity of Education Plan (CEP)

For COVID-19 Emergency



Northern Ontario  
School of Medicine  
École de médecine  
du Nord de l'Ontario  
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## Purpose and Overview

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy learning and working environment. NOSM has an ongoing objective of protecting its learners and employees from injury or occupational disease while working, studying, or visiting within its facilities at all campus locations and affiliated teaching sites.

The purpose of NOSM's Continuity of Education Plan is to outline the planned and established measures for the continuity of teaching and learning in the event of a disruption caused by an emergency or outbreak of COVID-19. These measures are subject to change in accordance with local public health advice and broader provincial public health measures.

NOSM's existing Distributed Community Engaged Learning (DCEL) model that expands its campus across Northern Ontario, has well-positioned the School to quickly adapt from in-person teaching and learning to a virtual platform should an emergency situation occur. NOSM currently has the infrastructure in place to maintain virtual connectivity between its main campuses hosted at Lakehead University and Laurentian University and to its numerous affiliated sites beyond.

The experience of successfully navigating the initial COVID-19 pandemic response has provided NOSM with a more robust framework in enabling a seamless transition to virtual teaching and learning should a COVID-19 emergency situation occur.

NOSM's Continuity of Education Plan, as it relates to its on-campus response, will need to ensure compliance with those of our host universities, at Lakehead University and Laurentian University respectively, and is subject to change to maintain consistency with the host universities policies and responses as required.

## Emergency Response Structure

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related emergencies, NOSM has established the following structure to ensure an effective and rapid response.

### Emergency Response Team

The Emergency Response Team (ERT) provides guidance and approves processes, policies and procedures to ensure that the NOSM community is protected and operates, as appropriate, during the ongoing pandemic. The ERT provides general direction on contingency plans and ensures that appropriate plans are in place to deal with a pandemic or emergency situation as effectively as possible. ERT meetings provide a forum for the discussion of issues that arise during the pandemic and for the determination of appropriate response and/or action.

The ERT membership includes the following positions:

- Dean, President and CEO

- Chief Operating Officer
- Vice Dean Academic
- Special Advisor and Senior Associate Dean
- Associate Dean, Research, Innovation and International Relations
- Director, Planning and Risk
- Director, Human Resources
- Director, Communications and External Relations

### **Crisis Management Team (CMT)**

The CMT is responsible for coordinating efforts and resources of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) in the event of a major disruption to normal operations. This may be done in conjunction with either Lakehead or Laurentian Universities.

The CMT membership includes all members of NOSM's Executive Group, Management Steering Group and Management Group.

### **Return to Campus Committee and Sub-Committee**

The Return to Campus (RTC) Committee and Sub-Committee, in conjunction with NOSM's Joint Health and Safety Committee, meets as needed to provide guidance and is responsible for ensuring the continuity and good management of academic operations and academic studies in the event of a possible disruption to academic operations. The Return to Campus Committee and Sub-Committee reviews and assists with RTC plans, processes and procedures, and will recommend to the ERT and the AOS COVID-19 Team of any policy adjustments or resource requirements and advise them of any issues.

### **Administration and Operational Support COVID-19 Team**

The Administration and Operational Support (AOS) COVID-19 Team meets as needed to review and ensure NOSM's response to COVID-19 (and any related emergencies) is continually in compliance with local public health advice and broader provincial public health measures. Recommendations on any policy or process adjustments that impact the overall pandemic response are recommended to the ERT.

## **Contingency Plans**

NOSM's approach to contingency planning aims to identify the measures available to the School to successfully navigate a COVID-19 outbreak or emergency situation. As interpreted by NOSM's Emergency Response Team and working in collaboration with NOSM's academic program leaders, the appropriate approach given the specific circumstance will be established in accordance with this planning guide as well as local public health advice and broader provincial public health measures.

For each of the following learning environments and/or services, the contingency plans and procedures are outlined in order to minimize a disruption to in-person teaching and learning to the fullest extent possible. Where any of these contingency plans conflict with local public health advice and/or broader provincial public health measures, the latter will prevail.

## In-Classroom Learning

### Undergraduate Medical Education (UME)

Currently, UME is planning to deliver all Phase 1 sessions synchronously, in person. However, given the current pandemic, the following options are available in the event an emergency or outbreak situation occurs.

Session	Current On Campus 2021-22 plan	Entire class with virtual delivery	Single individuals* with virtual delivery
CBL, TOS	On campus in small group rooms	Small groups to meet via Google Meet; to be set up by P1 Schedulers as needed;	For small groups individuals can phone in to the meeting room; phone number of meeting room to be distributed by P1 Schedulers; or students can make their own arrangements within the group
TOSC, MiPS	In lecture halls and small group rooms, as required	WebEx with breakout rooms, as required	WebEx link for large group sessions; if small groups needed phone number of meeting room to be provided; or students can make their own arrangements within the group
SCS	On campus in clinical group rooms, as before the pandemic	Google Meet to be set up by SCS Coordinators as needed for history sessions; physical exam sessions: no SP and no exam will take place; videos of physical exam skills may be used; any physical exam sessions missed due to lockdown will be re-scheduled	students can make their own arrangements within the group in consultation with the SCS tutor, Theme 5 co-chair and Manager of Program Delivery
WGS, MCS	Students to attend on campus; faculty have 2 options for delivery: a) in person, or b) remotely connect to lecture halls via WebEx. Recorded sessions only to be made available for accommodations purposes	Students to attend virtually via WebEx. Faculty presenters have 3 options: a) in person, b) remote delivery or, c) use of pre-recorded session and take-up session to be delivered during regularly scheduled session in timetable. It is up to faculty member to keep within time limits	Students can attend virtually or can have access to the recording.
LAB	Students to be divided into 2 groups per campus. Lab lecture to be delivered via WebEx. Lab activity session: Each group will have 1.5 hours in the lab to complete activities	Lab lectures: recorded sessions to be provided; Anatomy, pathology, diagnostic labs: online delivery via WebEx; Clinical skills labs: suspended and rescheduled until after lockdown	Students are responsible for making up the missed content, either through the lab during Independent Study periods, arranging to attend virtually with another classmate, etc. Labs to be open during regular office hours.

Session	Current On Campus 2021-22 plan	Entire class to adapt with virtual delivery	Single individuals* with virtual delivery
CLS	Placements: students to attend in person; on-campus sessions: students to attend in person	Placements: dependent on public health guidelines, but full lockdown will mean cancelation of placements. Consideration to be made for some virtual placements. On-campus sessions: Large group via WebEx, small group via Google Meet	Placements: to be made up by the student in consultation with the facilitator; on-campus sessions: students are responsible to make their own arrangements
Faculty Orientation Session (FOS)	In person with small group facilitators (CBL, TOS, SCS & CRAS)	To be delivered via Google Meet	N/A
P1SA	In person in usual lecture halls. Students to provide own device for ExamSoft.	Remote delivery with invigilation via Exam Monitor	Remote delivery with invigilation via Exam Monitor
Accommodated P1SA	Accommodated students to go to separate room as required; invigilation via Exam Monitor	Remote delivery with invigilation via Exam Monitor	Remote delivery with invigilation via Exam Monitor
BRE	In person in usual lecture halls. Students to use NOSM provided iPads for ExamSoft.	Remote delivery with invigilation via Exam Monitor	Remote delivery with invigilation via Exam Monitor
Accommodated BRE	Accommodated students to go to separate room as required; invigilation via Exam Monitor	Remote delivery with invigilation via Exam Monitor	Remote delivery with invigilation via Exam Monitor
OSCE	In person on campus delivery	Virtual delivery via WebEx	Virtual delivery via WebEx
CRAS	In person in small group rooms	Virtual delivery via Google Meet	One-on-one virtual delivery via Google Meet
106 ICE placement	Students to attend placements in person	Virtual placement with additional assignment	Alternative Learning Plan to be developed as needed
108/110 ICE placements	Students to attend placements in person	Consideration of in person placement or variation of virtual	Alternative Learning Plan to be developed as needed

\*Students who cannot attend in-classroom learning due to COVID symptoms will need to apply for an accommodation using the established accommodations process.

## **Masters of Medical Studies (MMS)**

The MMS uses an asynchronous model to deliver the course material, the courses are available online. Students can complete this program remotely with a flexible schedule. There is no in person requirement for this program.

## **Examinations**

### **Electronic examination platform**

Traditional examinations (multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions) can be conducted securely via Exemplify.

Remote proctoring is available for high stakes exams, allowing faculty to examine cases of suspected academic dishonesty.

## **Clinical Placements**

The Community Relations Unit has a process in place to ensure the continuity of scheduled clinical placements in the event of a COVID-19 emergency. As soon as Public Health officials deem that there is a threat of infection in NOSM's catchment area, the following procedural guideline will promptly come into effect:

### **Scheduling**

When the cancellation of applications and placements is required, the order of cancellations will be based on priority, as deemed appropriate by NOSM, especially the UME and PGME portfolios, and as determined by Public Health.

Placements may be cancelled mid-rotation and Learners may be redistributed within NOSM's catchment area at the discretion of either the host school, home school or placement community.

### **Preceptor, Community Notifications**

NOSM Coordinators are required to provide preceptors and/or communities with prompt notification and additional communication related to the cancellation and/or change to scheduled placements. The NOSM website will be updated periodically with the most current information relating to the pandemic and affected operations.

### **Mass Cancellations**

All cancellations will be completed via the "pull" on a weekly basis during the height of the pandemic.

### **Continuity of Scheduled Rotations**

Learners, who are permitted to continue with placements by their respective programs, must follow all Public Health measures and guidelines.

NOSM or certain communities may implement additional safety restrictions or requirements, which exceed that of Public Health. Such requirements will be community-specific and Learners must adhere to all established precautions.

For any questions related to the continuity of scheduled rotations, please contact [scheduling@nosm.ca](mailto:scheduling@nosm.ca).

## Housing

NOSM provides safe, comfortable housing to learners requiring it during placement. NOSM recognizes that securing accommodations during placements on behalf of our learners can help to support them in their endeavours.

NOSM Housing may identify the need to implement a pandemic protocol in the event of an emergency to restrict its shared accommodations model to a single learner per housing unit allocation. This protocol change will help to ensure learner safety and address the safety restrictions and self-isolation measures imposed by our communities as the pandemic persists.

NOSM always attempts to allocate through single occupancy housing whenever possible, although this cannot be guaranteed. Learners will be placed separately within available units and once all of the units are occupied, NOSM will proceed with multiple occupancy.

If there is a Public Health mandate for single occupancy due to a pandemic, alternative housing options may be considered before proceeding with multiple occupancy, such as implementing an enhanced Housing Reimbursement program that utilizes Airbnb to support guests in high capacity areas and/or utilizing rentals, hotels and other alternative housing as needed.

Within NOSM Housing, NOSM will maintain one vacant unit, which will serve as a designated isolation unit and used in the event that a Learner comes into contact with COVID-19 and needs to immediately self-isolate.

The Community Relations Unit will increase janitorial standards and PPE requirements in accordance with Public Health guidelines to ensure the appropriate disinfection of units between Learner occupancy.

Housing guests who may have been exposed or have been in contact with a suspected case must contact the Community Relations Unit emergency telephone number immediately at 705-507-7473. The emergency contact will notify the appropriate parties (e.g. NOSM program and community contacts).

The NOSM Community Relations Unit will continue to monitor the evolution of the pandemic and determine if alternative housing arrangements are necessary for the overall safety of the learners. In some communities, which still have isolation restrictions, or in the event that a learner may have vaccinations complexities, we ask that the learner communicate directly with their program contact at the first available opportunity to discuss potential alternative solutions.



In cases where housing alternatives are required for unique circumstances, the Community Relations Unit will work with the Program Coordinators to find alternative arrangements on a case-by-case basis.

Where isolation restrictions are required (as dictated by Public Health) in certain northern Ontario communities, Programs are to connect with the Community Relations Unit (email [jleduc@nosm.ca](mailto:jleduc@nosm.ca) and cc: [housing@nosm.ca](mailto:housing@nosm.ca)) to discuss other housing/funding possibilities.

For any questions related to NOSM's Housing contingency plan, please contact [housing@nosm.ca](mailto:housing@nosm.ca).

## Library Resources

The Health Sciences Library is equipped to provide virtual or modified services in the event of an emergency, outbreak or closure.

- Online resources (e-books, e-journals, databases, mobile device resources)
- [Book a seat](#)
- Scan to Patron Service: While access to the library space is limited, users can request specific readings from the library's print collection for individual use.
- Curbside pickup, return and shipping service for library materials
- Curbside pickup and return for equipment booking
- E-reserves
- Electronic inter-library loans
- Search assistance: literature searches, systematic reviews, meta-analyses
- Virtual support is available through [askthelibrary@nosm.ca](mailto:askthelibrary@nosm.ca), chat service AskUs! and consultations via WebEx.

The Health Sciences Library updates the NOSM Community on any changes to Library services as they occur through the [NOSM Library webpage](#) and social media feeds.

## Research Laboratories

In order to facilitate a controlled resumption of research activities following an emergency closure, a "Request for Resumption of Research" procedure has been created. Researchers must submit their request for resumption of services to the NOSM Research & Graduate Studies Office. Contingency plans must be considered and proposed as part of the application process.

Closure of laboratory spaces can re-occur quickly in the event of a provincial directive or if requested by the local Public Health agencies, Lakehead or Laurentian universities or NOSM administration. In the event of an emergency, NOSM Lab

Coordinators will work with the individual research groups to enact their rapid shutdown plans per their approved resumption application.

The research laboratory users are notified of any changes to operational protocols by the Research Lab Coordinators and via the [Research Matters](#) newsletter.

All researchers in any of NOSM's laboratories must follow NOSM directives. That includes students and employees of Lakehead University and Laurentian University, as well as volunteers.

Further information is available at the following links:

- [NOSM's Response to COVID-19 – Information for Researchers](#)
- [NOSM's Research Intranet](#).

The NOSM Research Labs must follow the applicable university's protocols in relation to COVID-19 Emergency Planning and Response. Please see Lakehead and Laurentian University links for updated research information:

- For Lakehead University details, please visit [lakeheadu.ca](http://lakeheadu.ca).
- For Laurentian University details, please see [laurentian.ca](http://laurentian.ca).

For any questions related to the continuity of research activities in accordance with this plan, please contact [research@nosm.ca](mailto:research@nosm.ca)

## Support Services

NOSM has categorized its administrative support services as “essential” or “non-essential” based on the requirement for critical in-person service delivery.

Essential staff may be required to continue to work on campus, in full or in part, during an emergency or outbreak, limited to only the minimum required to maintain our essential services and infrastructure. Non-essential staff will be required to work virtually in a work-from-home setting.

Staff involved in providing the following support services may be deemed to be “essential” to NOSM's continued operations throughout an emergency situation:

- Clinical learning
- Facilities and building maintenance
- Information technology infrastructure
- Laboratory research
- Health Sciences Library

Individuals who are required to maintain a campus presence, must do so in accordance with local public health and broader provincial public health guidelines as set out in [NOSM's COVID-19 Safety Plan](#).

## Related Policies and Protocols

### COVID-19 Safety Plan

All organizations in Ontario are required to have and post a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#). In accordance with this requirement, this document describes the measures that NOSM is taking to reduce the transmission risk of COVID-19 on campus and to keep the members of the NOSM community safe. These measures detail how NOSM is:

- Protecting our community from exposure to COVID-19
- Screening for COVID-19
- Controlling the risk of transmission
- Protecting the NOSM Community from a potential case, or suspected exposure
- Managing Risks
- Ensuring success

### Return to Campus Plan

[NOSM's Return to Campus Plan](#) is aligned with the advice of public health authorities, Government directives and is consistent with our peer organizations.

### Health and Safety Policy

The purpose of [NOSM's Health and Safety policy](#) is to demonstrate NOSM's commitment to workplace health and safety, and to comply with the requirements of the Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA).

### COVID-19 Housing Reimbursement

In order to enhance the safety of our learners through the winter months of the pandemic, NOSM had introduced changes to its current housing practices to account for COVID-19 concerns.

[See the COVID-19 Housing Reimbursement information](#)

### Non-Medical Masks and Face Coverings Policy

NOSM requires the use of non-medical face masks/coverings to be worn within NOSM's indoor facilities, as mandated by the Provincial Government and the Ontario Public Health authorities.

[See NOSM's Non-Medical Masks and Face Coverings Policy](#)

## Additional Resources

### NOSM's COVID-19 Website

NOSM maintains the "[NOSM's Response to COVID-19](#)" website as a centralized space to communicate all COVID-19 related information to its students, staff, faculty and other stakeholders.

### Emergency Contacts

#### **Campus Security is available 24/7/365**

Laurentian University: 705-673-6562

Lakehead University: 807-343-8911

For afterhours Emergency Contacts, please visit [NOSM's Response to COVID-19](#).

### Information Technology Support

#### **Online learning environment**

Our unique distributed medical education model requires for our curriculum to be hosted on an online learning management system (Moodle) for self-paced study.

Assessment and evaluation data is housed in Elentra (formerly Entrada) and is supported by a mobile app.

#### **Remote lectures**

NOSM uses WebEx desktop conferencing to hold virtual classes.

- Students and lecturers can join via computer audio or telephone at no cost using any internet connected computer tablet, or phone.
- WebEx includes audience polling, chat, whiteboarding, and other interactive tools.

All lectures are recorded and can be posted online for later review.

#### **Technical support availability**

Users can submit a service request to our IT team via our website, by phone, or email. Helpdesk staff provide technical support remotely in case of a stay-at-home order by using telephone or remote support tools like Jabber, WebEx, or BeyondTrust. Equipment replacement is performed by appointment only or by directly shipping equipment to the user's home.

#### **Contact Information**

1-800-461-8777,1,7

[helpdesk@nosm.ca](mailto:helpdesk@nosm.ca)

[www.nosm.ca/it](http://www.nosm.ca/it)

## Other remote work software tools

- All NOSM staff/faculty/learners/partners are provided with a [nosm.ca](mailto:nosm.ca) email account that is hosted on Google Mail.
- Office desk telephones are emulated using Cisco Jabber software ("softphone") so workers and faculty can take or make calls and retrieve voicemails conveniently.
- Google and Microsoft Teams is used for person-to-person chat.
- WebEx is used for web meetings.
- OneDrive, Google Drive, and our file server are used to securely store files.
- VPN software is required to access sensitive data stored on file servers, or to access our financial system.

## Self-serve technical support resources

The IT team hosts a Remote Work Toolkit mini-site on SharePoint (our intranet) for internal users to access software downloads and user guides for software that enables remote work.

## Mental Health Resources

The Employee and Family Assistance Program is available to all employees, students, and residents across NOSM's wider campus of Northern Ontario. Immediate support is available 24/7/365 at 1-844-880-9142 or online at [workhealthlife.com](http://workhealthlife.com).

Additional mental health resources can be found on [NOSM's website](#).

## Lakehead/Laurentian University Resources

[Lakehead University – COVID-19 Resources](#)

[Laurentian University – COVID-19 Resources](#)

## Inquiries and Concerns

Any inquiries or concerns related to this document can be directed to Human Resources at [hr@nosm.ca](mailto:hr@nosm.ca).