



# Northern Vermont University

## RESTART PLAN

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# Content Outline

## Introduction

1. **Decrease the Risk of Individuals Infected With Covid-19 from Entering the NVU Campuses through Effective Public Health Prevention**
  - a. NVU Health Pledge
  - b. Quarantine Requirements
  - c. Health Screenings
  - d. Regular Attestation
  - e. Curtail Visitors
  - f. Testing
  - g. Travel
  - h. Academic Calendar
  - i. Campus Events
2. **Decrease Transmission of COVID-19 among Employees and Students Once on Campus through Effective Public Health Measures.**
  - a. Facial Coverings/Masks
  - b. Health Screenings
  - c. Contact Tracing Journal
  - d. Hand Hygiene
  - e. Cleaning and Disinfecting
  - f. Physical Distancing
  - g. Dining Halls
  - h. Classrooms
  - i. Residence Hall Density
  - j. Athletics
  - k. Protect At-Risk Students and Employees
  - l. COVID-19 Trainings for Employees and Students
3. **Quickly Identify Individuals with Covid-19 and Put Containment Procedures in Place to Minimize the Impact on Students, Employees, and Education**
  - a. Health Services
  - b. Isolation/Quarantine Requirements
  - c. Campus Contingency Plans
  - d. Contact Tracing

## **Northern Vermont University COVID-19 Restart A Plan for the Successful Return to our Campuses**

*The faculty and staff at Northern Vermont University have worked to determine the safest possible plan to open the university during the difficult and unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic. NVU developed this restart plan knowing that because COVID-19 is an evolving public health emergency, the university will undoubtedly need to adapt its practices as knowledge about the pandemic and the situation in Vermont, New England, and the nation change. The work embodied in this plan has been developed to ensure the Northern Vermont University Community remains healthy and safe. As it has since COVID-19 arrived in the United States in January, NVU is monitoring the pandemic closely. NVU developed this restart plan with guidance from Governor Scott, Dr. Levine, and other medical and public health experts. NVU is closely following, and often exceeding, the requirements set forth in the state of Vermont's [RESTART PLAN: COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUS LEARNING](#).*

*Northern Vermont University has elected to return to our Johnson and Lyndon campuses for the Fall 2020 Semester. Students began returning the weekend of August 8 and 9 with most students returning to campus August 13 and 14. The first day of classes will be August 18. Classes will be taught through a variety of methods, including face-to-face, hybrid, fully remote, and online.*

*Northern Vermont University developed this restart plan with several goals in mind. Two that are of utmost importance are: 1) providing a safe and healthy return to campus for our students and employees; and 2) developing a plan to ensure the continued health and safety of the communities around us. All employees and students must comply with the protocols as written. Individuals that choose not to comply with these regulations will face disciplinary action.*

*NVU developed this plan to minimize the likelihood of an outbreak of COVID-19 on an NVU campus, and to outline methods to decrease the seriousness of an outbreak if one does occur.*

## 1. Decrease the Risk of Individuals Infected With Covid-19 from Entering the NVU Campuses through Effective Public Health Prevention

### a. NVU Health Pledge

Northern Vermont University has developed and distributed a community-wide [NVU Health Pledge](#) that outlines expectations for behavior and requirements while on NVU campuses whether as a student or employee. The contract discusses requirements for testing and quarantine, wearing a mask, visitor limitations, travel restrictions, and daily temperature and health screenings as well as the responsibility of students and employees to the NVU community.

### b. Quarantine Requirements

Northern Vermont University is taking the Vermont state quarantine requirements seriously. Strict adherence by students is required. If a student is from, or has recently traveled to, a county outside of Vermont that requires quarantine per the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, see [here](#), that student will be required to quarantine for 14 days prior to returning to campus. If a student is unable to do that OR if that student is using public transportation to come to campus, that student will need to move into quarantine housing for at least 7 days (until receiving a negative test result on the second test). Once a second negative test is received, the student may move into fall housing. Quarantine housing requires students to self-isolate and remain in the building where they will receive food delivery from NVU staff.

### c. Health Screenings

All students and employees that come to an NVU campus at any time during the semester will be required to perform daily self-attestation health screenings, including temperature checks, symptom checks, and potential exposure checks. **This self-attestation will be logged via [NorthernVermont.edu/RequiredDailyScreening](https://NorthernVermont.edu/RequiredDailyScreening).** This form allows for a continuous tracking of temperatures throughout the semester.

#### 1. Move-in and Check-in of Students

**Commuting Students.** All commuting students must participate in check-in and COVID-19 testing on August 13 and 14 from 5 p.m.-8 p.m.

Check-in will be a drive-thru format in the Bentley (Johnson campus) and Vail (Lyndon campus) parking lots where students will be tested and receive welcome and health items. Students may not begin in-person classes until testing is complete with a negative result. Testing will take place again on Day 7. Everyone who comes on to campus is required to wear a face covering that

covers the mouth and nose.

Commuters who are moving to the area from a quarantine county will need to quarantine for 14 days before they are permitted to begin classes.

**Residential Students and Check-in.** All students are required to sign up in advance to check-in. Check-in times will be on August 13 and 14 at 8 a.m., 11 a.m., 2 p.m., and 5 p.m. Check-in will be a drive-thru format where students will be tested and receive other welcome and health items; there will be a series of tents set up for this process. Once complete, students will proceed to their residence halls to move in. Check-in will take place in a parking lot on each campus:

On the Johnson Campus, this will be in the Bentley Parking Lot.

On the Lyndon Campus, this will be in the Vail Parking Lot.

**Assistance during check-in:** Each student may have one helper for move-in. This visitor must comply with all Vermont state and NVU quarantine requirements prior to coming on campus. Additional people arriving with a student must remain with the vehicle while on campus. Each person arriving on campus is required to participate in a COVID-19 screening (which includes a temperature check and symptom review) at the check-in tent. Everyone who comes to campus must wear a face covering or mask that covers the mouth and nose. If one is outside and physically distanced, the face covering may be removed as long as 6-ft. distancing is maintained; anyone entering a building must wear a face covering; students may remove their face coverings when they are alone in their own room with the door closed.

**d. Regular Attestation**

- e. Northern Vermont University is using a self-attestation form, [NorthernVermont.edu/RequiredDailyScreening](https://NorthernVermont.edu/RequiredDailyScreening) for a continual tracking of students and employees throughout the semester. All faculty, staff, and students will be required to fill out the form as a self-attestation screening each day.
- f. All students and employees that come to an NVU campus at any time during the semester will be required to perform daily self-attestation health screenings, including temperature checks, symptom checks, and potential exposure checks. This self-attestation will be logged via This form allows for a continuous tracking of temperatures throughout the semester.

**g. Curtail Visitors**

The NVU Health Pledge stipulates that students and employees are agreeing and signing that they will not allow any guests onto campus or into the residence halls. The only people allowed inside a residence hall will be students that reside there and staff that provide services to that building.

The SHAPE Gym on both NVU campuses is closed to the public for the fall semester.

Spectators are not allowed on NVU campuses for any athletics practices, games, or meets.

**h. Testing**

All campus-based NVU students, commuting and residential, will be tested on August 13 and 14 and at day 7 at no cost to the student. All NVU employees will be tested around August 20 and 21. Random testing of students and employees will take place throughout the fall.

Students coming from a high-risk county or area defined by yellow or red on the [ACCD map](#) will be required to quarantine for seven (7) days prior to being tested (see Quarantine Requirements above).

Testing exemptions: Any student who is able to complete all course work remotely and chooses to do so and does not need to come to campus at any point in the semester is exempt from testing. If that situation changes and the student must come to campus, testing will be required.

**i. Travel**

Academic and NVU travel is prohibited unless approved by the president. Additionally, all students and employees must follow ACCD travel guidelines. NVU will further restrict travel as necessary.

**j. Academic Calendar**

Northern Vermont University has modified the academic calendar to decrease the possibility of students leaving campus to return home and then returning to campus. NVU will begin the fall semester on Tuesday, August 18, one week earlier than planned. There will be no fall break. The semester will end early with a return home for Thanksgiving break and remote exams to complete the semester. Students will not return to campus until the spring semester, which starts January 19, 2021. The number of teaching days will not be affected by these changes. NVU has not made decisions about the spring semester at this time.

### **Fall 2020 Calendar**

- Tuesday, August 18: First day of classes
- Monday-Friday, November 23-27: No classes, Thanksgiving break
- Monday-Thursday, November 30-December 3: Remote final examination period

### **k. Campus Events**

Large traditional events will be cancelled or adjusted per state and CDC guidelines. Event organizers will have plans screened by campus and event staff before approval. This review includes the performing arts as well as other events.

## **2. Decrease Transmission of COVID-19 among Employees and Students Once on Campus through Effective Public Health Measures.**

### **a. Facial Coverings/Masks**

Wearing of masks is required inside, except in one's own office or residence hall room with the door closed if the room or office is not shared and without others present. Outdoors, with 6-foot distancing, individuals may be mask free.

Any visitors (including vendors/deliveries) will be required to wear facial coverings when in the presence of others. Masks must be worn covering the nose and mouth.

NVU is providing all employees and students will cloth masks at the start of the academic year.

In addition to the required facial coverings, Northern Vermont University has installed plexi "sneeze guards" in areas where student interaction is inevitable and physical distancing may not be feasible, including such areas as front desks, admissions, and student services.

Additionally, face shields have been purchased for employees in higher-risk settings with the intent that they be worn with cloth face coverings and never alone. Efficacy of protective qualities of face shields is tied to the use of shields and face coverings at the same time.

### **b. Health Screenings**

- i.** All health screening will occur through **a self-attestation form**, [NorthernVermont.edu/RequiredDailyScreening](https://NorthernVermont.edu/RequiredDailyScreening). See details in Health Screenings in section 1 above. NVU administrators will be notified if an individual is not compliant with this requirement.

**c. Contact Tracing Journal**

The entire Northern Vermont University community has been encouraged to maintain a contact tracing journal of all close contacts.

**d. Hand Hygiene**

NVU understands that good hygiene practices, including hand hygiene, is key to mitigating the spread of COVID-19. With this in mind, the NVU facilities team has worked to ensure that hand sanitizer is available in classrooms, hallways, offices, and restrooms. All restrooms are stocked with soap for easy handwashing.

Employees and students are expected to wash hands frequently and thoroughly, washing with soap and water (hot or cold) for twenty seconds. In the absence of water, the use of hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol is encouraged. Members of the NVU Community should wash their hands:

- When they touch their face, nose, or mouth
- Before and after eating
- Before and after putting on their mask/face covering
- After opening a door
- After using the restroom
- At other intervals as determined necessary

Additionally, the university has taken steps to place signs in restrooms reminding community members to wash their hands frequently and educating on the proper method to use for effective handwashing.

**e. Cleaning and Disinfecting**

NVU has put significant thought and effort into ensuring thorough cleaning and disinfecting on NVU campuses.

**Common areas**

Custodial staff will clean, sanitize, and disinfect all facilities once each weekday and disinfect these areas on weekends. Additionally, disinfectant product will be available in all classrooms so faculty and students can clean the space as desired.

**Staff and faculty areas**

Faculty and staff will be responsible for the cleaning and disinfecting of their own office space. Work orders may be submitted for additional cleaning services.

**Residence halls**



Custodial staff will clean, sanitize, and disinfect all facilities once each weekday and disinfect these areas on weekends. Disinfectant will be provided in all restrooms for residents to use as desired.

**High-touch areas** will be serviced on a more frequent basis when possible. When requested by a work order, additional cleaning supplies and PPE will be provided in these high-touch areas.

**NVU vehicle fleet:** All vehicles will be cleaned after each use; occupancy is limited to three people in minivans (including the driver) and four people in larger vehicles (including the driver).

**Ventilation and Air Flow:** All HVAC systems have been serviced to ensure maximum air quality, including disabling occupancy sensors to ensure more air exchange.

**f. Physical Distancing**

While on NVU campuses, all faculty, staff, students, and visitors must maintain proper physical distancing of six (6) feet or more. While individuals are responsible for ensuring their own distancing, NVU has taken steps to facilitate this requirement. The following steps have been implemented:

- Faculty, staff, and students are all required to sign the NVU Health Pledge, which commits to keeping a minimum physical distance of at least 6 ft. when possible.
- Physical distancing reminders will be posted throughout our campuses.
- Floor placards will be installed in places where lines will form (i.e. postal office). Physical barriers have been installed in areas that require proximate face-to-face communication.

Additionally,

- Every student will reside in a single room during the fall semester.
- Furniture has been removed or rearranged to decrease the possibility of groups congregating in one area.
- Tents have been placed on the campuses to encourage outside meetings and socializing. The tents may be reserved through the EMS system.
- Signage has been placed throughout campus reminding all individuals of the required distancing while on campus.

**g. Dining Halls**

NVU and Sodexo will control the number of customers that enter the dining halls to avoid overcrowding as required by state, local, and client guidelines.

To reduce capacity and configure clear directional paths, seating configurations have been changed. Current dining capacities are 117 people seated indoors on the Johnson Campus and 100 people seated indoors on the Lyndon Campus.

A one-way customer entrance and exit has been configured to maximize social distance spacing. Signage, floor markings, and stanchions will facilitate traffic flow and reinforce social distancing, particularly in the most crowded areas, such as at serving counters and cash registers.

A well-marked travel pattern will allow customers to move efficiently from the Welcome Station to selected food stations. Uniformed staff at the stations will wear and use appropriate PPE. Staff will frequently sanitize serving stations to ensure safety and instill confidence.

To ensure safety for staff and guests, no personal refillable containers will be allowed in the dining room. Reusable dishware and utensils, if available, will be stored behind the service area and distributed by the attendant in a sanitary fashion.

#### **h. Classrooms**

Classrooms have been rearranged to ensure that all students maintain a minimum of six feet of separation. Additionally, at least ten feet will separate the instructor/faculty and students.

Please see above for disinfecting practices in classroom areas.

#### **i. Residence Halls**

**Housing arrangements:** Students who do not feel comfortable returning to campus or who have all remote classes will be permitted to request an exemption from their contract/housing requirement for the fall semester.

#### **j. Athletics**

NVU's athletic conference, the North Atlantic Conference, announced in August that NAC competition for 2020 fall sports is cancelled due to health and safety concerns stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. There will be no scheduled fall sport NAC competitions or championships.

NVU is committed to exploring meaningful athletic experiences for NVU athletes. As health and safety conditions allow, teams may be allowed to participate in conditioning, strength training, and sport-related practice opportunities. Under the NAC guidelines, conference members may consider alternate competitions for their sport programs, dependent on CDC, state, local, and

university health guidelines. NVU will explore setting up competitions between the Johnson and Lyndon campuses and other colleges as the fall semester gets underway.

### **SHAPE Facilities**

**NVU SHAPE facilities** will be open to NVU students and employees only. Opening will be phased in with phase one at 25% capacity and spacing of 200 sq. feet per person and phase two at 75% capacity and spacing of 50 sq. feet per person. All Locker Rooms will be closed. Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development Gym Opening Guidelines will be closely followed for occupancy of SHAPE. Signups will be required prior to arrival or check-in. Athletic equipment may not be rented. Pickup games are not allowed. Reopening to the public will be reevaluated periodically throughout the fall semester. No group reservations will be allowed.

#### **k. Residence Hall Density**

All NVU students who live on the Johnson or Lyndon campuses will be given single rooms.

#### **l. Protect At-risk Employees and Students**

The health and safety of the NVU Community is of foremost importance. NVU is taking every precaution to protect the vulnerable members of our community. Employees with a pre-existing condition that may place them at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 or developing severe illness in the event of contracting the virus may go through the official ADA request for reasonable accommodation process to request working or teaching remotely. NVU faculty have prepared to teach their courses in the full range of teaching modalities—in-person, hybrid, and remote. If a student is at-risk, that student may request to take their courses through a hybrid or remote mode.

#### **m. COVID-19 Trainings for Employees and Students**

All employees were required to complete the training issued by VOSHA prior to their return on campus. The training that was issued can be found at <https://labor.vermont.gov/document/protecting-safety-and-health-workers-vosha>

Additionally, stay-healthy and other webinars are being offered. Students and employees participated in Covid-19 safety education provided by Copley Hospital.

### **3.) Quickly Identify Individuals with Covid-19 and Put Containment Procedures in Place to Minimize the Impact on Students, Employees, and Education**

#### **a. Adequate Health Services**

NVU has partnered with the Broad Institute to ensure testing for all students and employees. Additionally, NVU has an adequate supply of sanitizer, masks, thermometers, and PPE. Students will also have access to telehealth medical services and counseling programs.

#### **b. Isolation Procedures**

Any students with positive tests will be immediately isolated in specific isolation housing with ongoing virtual medical, dining, and residential life support. Commuter students will have access to virtual medical and counseling support.

#### **c. Campus Contingency Plans**

Northern Vermont University is prepared to move completely to remote instruction if required due to an outbreak(s) or at the request of the state of Vermont. Faculty have been preparing for all scenarios.

#### **d. Contact Tracing**

In the event of a positive case, Northern Vermont University will work closely with the Vermont Department of Health to assist the VT-DOH in conducting contact tracing. Attendance will be taken in classrooms and student identification cards will be used to time and date stamp entry into residence halls and dining halls.