

Re: Weekly COVID-19 related update from the Director

November 25, 2020

Dear Students,

This is the fourth weekly update related to your studies at the Ingram School of Nursing (ISoN) in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This is part of our continuing efforts to provide clarity and transparency in decision-making by ISoN leadership, together with our rationale for the decisions made. These updates can also be found on our website [here](#).

As planned, this week's Town Hall will take place today, Wednesday, November 25th from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. EST via [Zoom](#). I take this opportunity to remind you that I am hosting these weekly Town Halls, open to all ISoN students, through to December 22nd. If you were unable to attend last week's Town Hall, you may access the recording of it [here](#) with the passcode: Q^1XnG@N.

Since my last message sent to you on [November 17th](#), I held a virtual Town Hall (November 18th) during which time I received your questions directly and via your student leaders. Various meetings, updates, and new information from the Provost's office, inform this week's update. I will cover four issues this week: (1) Travel-related decision making; (2) COVID *dos-and-don'ts* for the holiday period (3) Winter semester start-dates; and (4) Applying worked hours towards course credits for BNI students

I. TRAVEL-RELATED DECISION MAKING

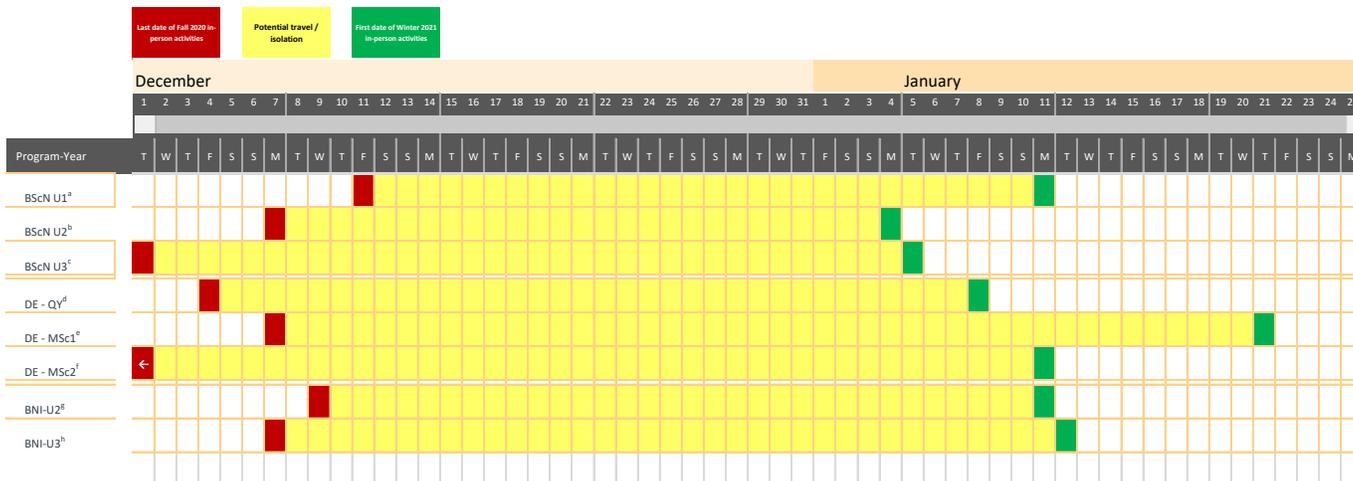
At the November 18th Town Hall, I discussed how travel-related decisions must ultimately be made by individual students, as neither ISoN nor McGill University can make one global decision on travel that will work for everyone. The responsibility is in the hands of each student to make their travel plans based on public health directives aimed at protecting society. We can, however, provide students with **sources of information each student needs to review to make informed decisions, as follows.**

In ALL cases:

(A) GANTT Chart, “Holiday Travel/Isolation Window by Program and Year”

Holiday Travel / Isolation Window by Program and Year *

* Travel / isolation dates could include required remote activities



- a. End/Start dates: Lab 11-Dec-20 to 11-Jan-21; Clinical 28-Nov-20 to 25-Jan-21.
- b. End/Start dates: Lab 7-Dec-20 to 4-Jan-21; Clinical 7-Dec-20 to 11-Jan-21.
- c. End/Start dates: Lab start date of winter 2021 is 6-Jan-21; Clinical 1-Dec-20 to 5-Jan-21.
- d. End/Start dates: Lab 4-Dec-20 to 13-Jan-21; Clinical 5-Dec-20 to 8-Jan-21.
- e. End/Start dates: No lab courses; Clinical 7-Dec-20 to 21-Jan-21.
- f. End/Start dates: No Lab courses; Clinical 9-Nov-20 to 11-Jan-21.
- g. End/Start dates: Lab 9-Dec-20 to 11-Jan-21; No Clinical.
- h. End/Start dates: No Lab; Clinical 7-Dec-20 to 12-Jan-21.

v: Nov. 25, 2020

(B) [“Recommandations intérimaires concernant les stages en santé en contexte de pandémie de la COVID-19”](#)

(C) [English version](#) of the algorithm included in (B) (optional).

For travel within Quebec:

Only the **documents (A), (B), and (C) above**

For travel within Canada:

Documents (A), (B), and (C) above

+ latest directives from the local, provincial, etc. authorities of destination

Travel outside Canada:

Documents (A), (B), and (C)

+ latest directives from the local, provincial, etc. authorities of destination

+ latest Canadian ([Public Health Agency of Canada](#); [McGill's directives for international students](#)) and destination country directives

Again at the November 18th Town Hall, requests for switching clinical 'blocks' in the Winter semester to accommodate international travelers (due to their requirement to self-isolate for 2 weeks upon return to Canada) was raised. No switching of clinical or lab dates for international students in any clinical programs is envisioned by ISON either because: the program-year cohort is already scheduled to begin their in-person activities later in the semester; their courses are not in blocks but rather, are integrated throughout the semester; or the program cohort is based in Quebec (e.g., BNI students).

II. COVID DOS-AND-DON'TS FOR THE HOLIDAY PERIOD

A question brought forward at the November 18th Town Hall was, 'Given all the information sent to students over the last several weeks and months, what are the *key* take-home messages regarding what should or should not be done by ISON students over the upcoming holiday break?'

In order to frame the answer to that question, it will be useful for you to keep what current science tells us about COVID-19 in mind at all times. That is, the most important transmission route of the virus is **aerosol** (it can travel more than 2 meters), it is **easily transmitted** (including when asymptomatic), and it **can be deadly**. Armed with this knowledge, and assuming that you do not want to: infect your family or friends 'at home'; infect your colleagues, patients, or hospital staff when you return; and that you need to decrease your stress levels, suggested **KEY DOs** include:

- (1) **Self-isolate** as per relevant public health directives.
- (2) When in a closed space with others not in your household:
 - a. **Wear a mask** at all times.
 - b. Remove your mask *only* to eat or drink, and **replace your mask ASAP after eating/drinking**.
 - c. **Distance yourself from others by a minimum of 2 meters** even *with* a mask.
- (3) **Wash your hands** frequently.
- (4) **Participate in stress-reducing activities** – optimally outside physical activity with family and friends. Different forms of online gaming have been found to be helpful in decreasing stress. Examples of other activities include: group movie events with apps like [Scener](#), book clubs, group/individual yoga or cooking classes, any other remote activities you might imagine!

III. CHANGING WINTER SEMESTER START-DATES

A student petition to McGill to delay the Winter semester start date was brought to my attention by your representatives. McGill is entertaining this possibility and a motion is to be brought to the Senate this week on this issue. As Deputy Provost Fabrice Lebeau mentioned as a possibility in his November 20th message to the University, the professional schools of the FMHS, including ISoN, will be unable to change Winter semester start dates due to accreditation and clinical requirements described in detail in my previous updates to you.

IV. APPLYING WORKED HOURS TOWARDS COURSE CREDITS FOR BNI STUDENTS

As was previously shared with you, we received a directive from the Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur (MES) that as of November 2nd, the worked hours of BNI students across the province were to be applied toward course credits during the current Fall semester. Since receiving this directive, several discussions have taken place with the MES, the MSSS, the Directors of Nursing of the clinical areas, and the leaders of schools and faculties of nursing across Quebec.

Yesterday I received acknowledgement that the MES now understands that uniformity across all universities in Quebec in applying this scenario is not possible given the extensive variation in the needs and possibilities of the clinical and educational institutions. For these reasons, MES has decided to allow for less stringent application of this scenario. Instead, each university and its respective clinical partners must find a system that works for them in order to reach the objective of supporting the healthcare system during the pandemic, without compromising students' academic success. This is excellent news for ISoN since this responds to our stated priorities of protecting your health and safety and optimizing your academic success. The flexibility MES now allows is the approach we had already taken in working with our main clinical partners – to negotiate with them what would work best for each student and group of students, both for them and for you. There will therefore be no across-the-board changes to BNI clinical placements at this time.

I'd like to remind you of the resources available to you by McGill, via the [WELL Office](#) and the [Student Wellness Hub](#), as well as the [keep.meSAFE](#) app.

Please do not hesitate to share any concerns or questions you may have with your elected NUS and NGSAs representatives, or feel free to send your feedback to me directly through my assistant, Irina Cazac, at directoradmin.nursing@mcgill.ca. If you do not see answers to your questions in the weekly updates, please bring up your questions in the Town Halls.

Best regards and stay safe,





McGill

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