

# COMPARING UNIVERSITIES

*Allergic Living* compares the food allergy and celiac practices of 16 universities across Canada.  
by JANET FRENCH

UNIVERSITY	Meal plan mandatory in residence	Dining hall menu ingredients online	Ingredients list available in dining hall	Dining hall staff trained in cross-contamination	Staff on site know ingredients in food	Special diet food offered
Acadia University	Yes (for severe restrictions, can opt-out)	No (menus online, but not ingredients)	Yes (upon request)	Yes, mandatory.	Usually (manager on site will always).	Gluten-free, other options available at other eateries.
Dalhousie University	Yes	No (menus online and in a phone app, but no ingredients)	Yes (upon request)	Yes, but halls are buffet-style; diners may cross-contaminate.	Usually (manager on site will always).	Gluten-free foods.
McGill University	Yes	No	Yes (for some items; other items by request)	Yes, but not mandatory.	Manager or chef on site has ingredient information.	Gluten-free, vegan <sup>2</sup> , vegetarian and kosher options.
McMaster University	Yes	Yes	Yes (upon request)	All full-time staff are trained; some casual staff are trained.	Staff trained to ask cook on duty.	Gluten-free, vegan <sup>2</sup> , vegetarian; East meets West bistro is nut-free.
Memorial University	Yes	Yes (and in a smartphone app)	No	Yes, but not mandatory.	Not necessarily; food should match online menus.	Gluten-free, vegan <sup>2</sup> and vegetarian options.
Mount Allison University	Yes	Yes	Yes (ingredient binder in meal hall)	Yes; also trained in separate stations for allergens, vegetarians.	Yes	Vegan <sup>2</sup> , vegetarian. Special meals for other dietary restrictions.
University of Alberta	Yes	Yes	Yes (upon request)	Yes, mandatory.	Full-time staff know; casuals may not.	Gluten-free, vegan <sup>2</sup> and vegetarian options.
University of British Columbia	Yes	No	Yes	Yes, mandatory; colour-coding to prevent cross-contamination.	Usually (manager on site will always).	Gluten-free, vegan <sup>2</sup> and vegetarian options.
University of Calgary	Mandatory in four residences.	No (meal rotation is online with some allergens noted)	No (but top allergen labels on food)	Yes, mandatory.	Yes, all are trained to know, and double-check if unsure.	Gluten-free, vegan <sup>2</sup> and vegetarian options.
University of Guelph	Yes	No (menus online, but not ingredients)	Yes	Yes, mandatory.	Yes	Gluten-free, vegan <sup>2</sup> , vegetarian and halal options.
University of Manitoba	Mandatory in three of four residences.	No information provided	No information provided	No information provided.	No information provided.	No information provided.
University of Saskatchewan	Yes	No (meal rotation is online with some allergens noted)	Yes (upon request)	Yes, mandatory.	Yes	Gluten-free bread and meat at one deli; gluten-free pasta; vegetarian options.
University of Toronto - Chestnut <sup>1</sup>	Yes	Yes (but not all ingredients listed)	Yes (ingredient binder by cashier)	Yes, mandatory.	Yes; must sign a form saying they know what's in each recipe.	Gluten-free, vegan <sup>2</sup> , vegetarian and halal options.
University of Toronto - New College <sup>1</sup>	Yes	No (menus online, but not ingredients)	Yes (upon request)	Yes, mandatory.	Usually (manager on site will always).	Gluten-free options. Dairy-free milks and vegan <sup>2</sup> food also offered.
University of Waterloo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, mandatory.	Yes	Gluten-free foods, custom meals for food allergies
University of Western Ontario	Mandatory in six of seven residences.	Yes	Yes	Yes, mandatory.	Yes	Gluten-free, nut-free, vegan <sup>2</sup> and vegetarian options.
York University	Yes	No	Yes (upon request)	Yes, mandatory; colour-coding to prevent cross-contamination.	Yes	Gluten-free options. Glendon campus cafe offers nut-free and vegan <sup>2</sup> items.

<sup>1</sup>Each residence at UoFT has its own food policies. Legend: GF: gluten-free TN: Tree nut PN: Peanut

<sup>2</sup>Vegan food is made without dairy and eggs. Confirm with chef for dairy or egg allergy.

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UNIVERSITY	Custom meals available	Other dining hall amenities for allergies	Documents required to get accommodations	Housing options available to allergic, celiac students
Acadia University	Yes	Special e-mail list for those with allergies; most vending machines peanut-free; warning signs for cross-contamination potential.	Doctor's note required for single room.	Single rooms; all dorm-style residences have a shared kitchen and several kitchenettes.
Dalhousie University	No	GF French fry station; GF toaster; GF bread stored in separate fridge; dairy-free milk available; peanut butter only in individual packs.	Note from doctor is required.	Suite-style residence, single dorm room, or roommates with similar allergies.
McGill University	Yes	Two of five dining halls have nut-free kitchens; all halls have dairy-free milk; students can special-order packaged products.	No doctor's note needed.	Apartment-style residence with kitchen.
McMaster University	Yes	Allergic students invited to meet chef, tour kitchens; binder of student allergy sheets posted in kitchen.	Special Accommodation form signed by a doctor, and supporting documents.	With Special Accommodation form, whatever style of residence a doctor says is necessary.
Memorial University	Yes	Dedicated microwave and toaster for students with dietary restrictions.	Doctor's note required for apartment.	Apartment-style residence; roommates with similar allergies matched.
Mount Allison University	Yes	Dining hall free of TN and PN; one employee per building trained in auto-injector use; dedicated fridges with soy milk, GF items	Doctor's note required for single room.	Private room (doctor's note required); allergic students matched if requested.
University of Alberta	Yes	Lister Hall has marketplace-style stations and customized meals; dining hall committee collects feedback from students.	Must contact university before applying to get apartment-style placement; no doctor's note needed.	Apartment-style residence; or residences with a shared kitchen.
University of British Columbia	No	None mentioned.	Doctor's note required for suite-style residence.	Suite-style residence with a kitchen.
University of Calgary	Yes	Dining hall plans to set up a gluten-free station in 2013 in response to high demand.	No note required.	Suite-style residence (upper-year students); residences with kitchenettes or full communal kitchens.
University of Guelph	Yes	None mentioned.	No documents needed for meal hall accommodations.	No information provided.
University of Manitoba	No information provided.	No information provided	No note required.	Most dorm rooms are single rooms, so obtaining a single room is not typically an issue.
University of Saskatchewan	Yes	Some nut-free, egg-free or gluten-free prepackaged foods available; soy milk in dining hall; meal plan committee open to student input.	No doctor's note needed.	Roommates with similar allergies matched; or private room.
University of Toronto - Chestnut <sup>1</sup>	Yes; made-to-order stations only	No TN or PN in kitchen; nut-free ice cream; gluten-free bread and cereal station.	For single room, support letter required from UofT Accessibility Services.	Roommates with similar allergies matched; single room with support letter from Accessibility Services.
University of Toronto - New College <sup>1</sup>	Yes; made-to-order stations only	Kitchen free of PN and TN; baked goods from outside the kitchen may contain nuts and are labeled; dairy-free milk available.	No information provided.	No information provided.
University of Waterloo	Yes	None mentioned.	AccessAbility application form, plus doctor's letter.	Suite-style residence with a kitchen (AccessAbility Services registration required); roommates with similar allergies.
University of Western Ontario	Yes	Student emergency response teams carry auto-injectors; chefs and supervisors trained on auto-injector; labeled GF toasters.	Special Needs Accommodation request form; needs health-care worker signature.	Roommates with similar allergies.
York University	Yes	Pre-packaged nut-free food is offered in dining halls; some meals made-to-order on the spot.	No note required on main campus; note required on Glendon campus.	Suite-style residences; suitemates with similar allergies.

<sup>1</sup>Each residence at UofT has its own food policies. Legend: GF: gluten-free TN: Tree nut PN: Peanut

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UNIVERSITY	Microwaves and fridges allowed in dorm room	Food allowed in lecture halls	Recent anaphylactic reactions
Acadia University	No/Yes (shared microwaves)	Yes	Yes, one; student recovered fully.
Dalhousie University	Yes/Yes	Yes	No known reactions.
McGill University	Yes/Yes	Yes	None in four years.
McMaster University	No/Yes	Yes	None in past year.
Memorial University	No/Yes	No	No known reactions.
Mount Allison University	Yes/Yes	Yes	None in a decade.
University of Alberta	Yes/Yes	Yes	None in the past year.
University of British Columbia	Yes/Yes	No (but students may ignore rules)	None they know of.
University of Calgary	No/Yes	Yes	No information provided.
University of Guelph	Yes/Yes	No information provided.	No known reactions.
University of Manitoba	Yes/Yes	No information provided	No information provided.
University of Saskatchewan	Yes/Yes	Yes, but up to each professor.	No known reactions.
University of Toronto - Chestnut <sup>1</sup>	No/Yes (shared microwaves)	Yes	One; student recovered fully.
University of Toronto - New College <sup>1</sup>	No information provided.	Yes	No information provided.
University of Waterloo	No/Yes	Yes	No known reactions.
University of Western Ontario	Yes/Yes	Yes	Yes
York University	No/Yes (shared microwaves)	Yes	No known reactions.

<sup>1</sup>Each residence at UoT has its own food policies. Legend: GF: gluten-free TN: Tree nut PN: Peanut