

Coronavirus Update

Tuesday, 1 March 2022

Dear colleagues,

As the academic year begins, it's exciting to see many more staff and students returning to campus, joining their peers in TAFE who have already returned.

We would like to say welcome back to campus and share with you FAQs in relation to student vaccination and an updated Human Resources FAQs based on new face mask rules. We understand that with the return of staff to campus there is increased interest in how we are keeping our university community safe.

Face mask rules – in the office and in clinical settings

In Victoria, face mask rules have changed. In the office, you are no longer required to wear a face mask in most indoor settings, but wearing a mask remains recommended where you cannot physically distance. You must always carry your mask when leaving home.

Masks may continue to be worn by staff and students as a personal preference in areas where they are not required. Staff and students are advised to bring their own masks to campus except where PPE is provided in approved clinical or lab settings.

You must continue to wear face masks indoors in the following settings:

- Workers in retail and hospitality
- Workers and visitors in hospitals, care facilities, public areas in a healthcare setting
- Workers and visitors in childcare and primary schools.

See [coronavirus.vic.gov.au](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au) for more information on when to wear a face mask.

In Queensland, face mask will no longer be required indoors from Friday 4 March but until that time, you must wear a mask indoors. This includes indoor workplaces; however, you may remove your mask when sitting or standing at a workstation where you can maintain physical distance from others.

See covid19.qld.gov.au for more information on when masks are required.

Additional requirements in clinical labs and specialist settings on campus

In addition to the requirements set out under public health orders, the University has made the following decisions:

- continue to encourage staff and students to wear masks in the classroom environment, particularly when physical distancing cannot be maintained
- masks will continue to be required in clinical settings, laboratories, workshops, and other environments as reflected in local COVID Safe Plans.

If you are in a clinical, lab, or other specialist settings, you must wear a mask that is of the appropriate standard for the work being done.

The University encourages and supports the wearing of masks outdoors even if this is not required under the current Public Health Orders.

Scanning QR codes

While check in requirements have been removed in most settings, Universities, TAFEs, training and adult education providers must continue to undertake QR code check-ins of staff, students and visitors in line with the requirements prescribed in the [Open Premises Order](#).

QR code signage remains in place at these venues and paper records are available if the QR code does not work for you. All our QR codes come from the [Service Victoria app](#) and [Check In Qld app](#).

Increased ventilation measures across our campuses

Our Property and Infrastructure team (formerly Facilities Services) has conducted a comprehensive review of ventilation across our campuses and works are underway at the moment to improve ventilation, via technical interventions to mechanical and building automation systems. We have taken immediate steps to maximise ventilation and provide alternative solutions where necessary, further work will be undertaken to ensure we can maintain an acceptable level of thermal comfort over the coming weeks. Further details can be found in the Message from the Director, Property and Infrastructure sent to all staff yesterday.

Managing student vaccination

We are required by the Victorian Government to confirm the vaccination status of all students who access our Victorian campuses. Student Experience and Administration Services are currently coordinating this work to ensure we record whether our students are fully vaccinated, have a valid exemption or are unvaccinated.

Returning students who do not submit their vaccination status will have their access to learning resources including Moodle, buildings and libraries cancelled on 4 March. Commencing students will also not be able to collect their Student ID card until they have submitted their vaccination status.

The processes involved in managing student vaccination is explained in the FAQs (attached) to help staff understand the measures we are taking to keep our campuses safe.

Staff vaccination

Currently, if you have had at least two doses of an approved COVID vaccine or if you hold a valid exemption, you are able to work on campus after you've lodged evidence in ESS. Some university employees working in selected industries (e.g. childcare and healthcare) are required to have received a third dose by set deadlines.

Further detailed information can be found in the [Human Resources FAQ](#).

How we manage positive cases on campus

If you test positive for COVID-19, you must tell us so we can advise others who may have been in touch with you. Your personal details will remain confidential.

Staff and students must call **Federation's COVID hotline on (03) 5122 6300** (8:30am to 5:00pm) or after hours, call our emergency phone number 1800 333 732.

The government definition of a close contact has changed and our processes have changed to reflect this. The process that occurs once a report is made, is the following:

- A CARE report is generated in the Risk, Health and Safety system, to ensure that individuals' medical information remains confidential and is only shared to assist in following up with affected staff or students
- Trained COVID-19 hotline staff from HR review with the staff member or student a checklist to identify any times they were on campus when they may have been infectious
- We let relevant Dean/s or Director/s know that a staff member or student was onsite when they may have been infectious, so the Dean, teacher or Director can contact any staff or students and advise them to monitor for symptoms
- Provide additional cleaning of spaces – but a deep clean is no longer required – and notify Department of Health and Human Services where required.

Providing a healthy and safe campus environment

It's important to remember that while some staff may not have been on campus and seen our COVID safety measures for two years – they haven't gone away:

- the installation of hand sanitiser stations at prominent places
- physical distancing markers in common areas
- increased cleaning schedules for all campuses, including regular cleaning of all high-touch surfaces in common areas, including door handles, light switches, stair rails, tabletops in food and retail spaces, flat surfaces and lift buttons
- teaching spaces and common areas supplied with hand sanitiser and alcohol wipes to allow staff and students to wipe down lecterns, IT, AV equipment and benches etc. before and after they use these
- ventilation works underway and air-conditioning systems in all buildings cleaned, filters replaced and the fresh air intake for systems have been increased

- wherever possible, meetings will continue to be held in virtual environments such as via MS Teams.

The safety of our staff and students is always paramount and we are confident we can safely work on campus and give our students the experience they so desperately need.

Our staff are a vital part of the overall campus experience our students expect at university and TAFE. Therefore, we encourage staff to participate in our safe return to campus to enliven and invigorate our campuses and our communities.

Stay safe and stay well.

On behalf of the COVID-19 Transition Control Group

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