

Coronavirus Update

Friday, 21 January 2022

Dear colleagues,

The Victorian Government has now published pandemic orders that relate to reduced isolation requirements for certain categories of workers. Detailed information is below.

Be patient, be kind

The COVID-19 Transition Control Group would like to take a moment to thank everyone who is working to support other staff who may be on unexpected leave due to being a close contact or COVID positive themselves.

We know that the pandemic is now personally affecting many people in the community so thank you to everyone who is helping their co-workers get through this time.

If you are accessing services on campus or dealing with others, please be patient and be kind, they may be carrying a heavier workload than normal to support their teams.

Reduced close contact isolation requirements – detailed advice

The COVID-19 Transition Control Group (TCG) has now reviewed the pandemic orders in relation to reduced close contact isolation requirements and can provide the following initial advice.

- **Reduced isolation for close contacts does not apply to adult education and training, research or general cleaning staff.** While the Federal Government announced that these categories were allowed, the state governments in Victoria and Queensland have not adopted these arrangements.
- Reduced isolation for close contacts can be applied for healthcare workers; early childhood, primary and secondary teachers; and limited emergency maintenance.

However, the TCG is continuing to assess whether this is practical to put in place in the few university workplaces where it applies and is awaiting further advice from the Department of Education and Training on a number of issues before considering this further.

Directors will also need to speak to the staff members working in these areas to see what their views are on reduced isolation for close contacts, for themselves and their colleagues. Many of these workers have been unable to work from home throughout the pandemic and we respect that they have showed up for the university and our students even in challenging circumstances.

- The reduced isolation does not apply to our students while on placement or while involved in Work Integrated Learning. If a student is employed directly by an employer, that would be a matter for the student and employer to work through separately.

In addition, the laws require that the university and employee must work closely to make reduced isolation possible or practical, with the following required:

- Both the employer and employee must consent to the employee leaving isolation early to work (please note, they can only leave isolation early to work, not for any social or personal activities)
- Must undertake daily COVID-19 rapid antigen testing and return a negative result prior to commencing work at the work premises for 5 days after the person has been defined as a close contact
- Must wear a surgical face mask (or P2/N95 mask if possible) at all times, indoors, outdoors and in transit to and from work.
- Healthcare workers must wear a P2/N95 respirator mask while working
- The employee cannot enter any shared facilities or amenities wherever practical (such as kitchens or meeting rooms)
- Must not carpool with other staff and avoid public transport wherever possible

The TCG is still assessing this and will provide further advice once clarification has been obtained from DET on a number of matters and relevant Directors will speak to staff that may be directly impacted, about their views.

Reminder: Please complete the Facilities workspace survey

Please remember to **complete the [short Facilities Services survey](#) by Friday 28 February**, to help the university understand the workspace requirements across all of our buildings, before the full return to campus at the start of semester one.

We understand that some Deans and Directors are working with their teams on space issues and desk allocations to make sure all staff can be accommodated. Completing the survey will help Facilities to work with your teams.

Reminder: Third-dose vaccine mandates

Staff and students working or undertaking university and TAFE practicals and work integrated learning in the following settings must provide evidence of their third vaccine dose (booster) by the following deadlines:

- **Healthcare workers** – if fully vaccinated on or before 12 September 2021, the deadline is **12 February**. If fully vaccinated after 12 September 2021, the deadline

is **29 March 2022**.

- **Residential aged care facility workers** – if fully vaccinated on or before 12 September 2021, the deadline is **12 February**. If fully vaccinated after 12 September 2021, the deadline is **1 March 2022**.
- In **corrections, disability work, emergency services, food distribution, meat and seafood processing and hotel quarantine** – if fully vaccinated on or before 12 September 2021, the deadline is **12 February**. If fully vaccinated after 12 September 2021, the deadline is **12 March 2022**.

It is the responsibility of Deans and Directors to assess the application of the third dose mandate to their staff and students and to ensure compliance.

Please lodge your updated vaccination certificate following the same processes previously followed, but select “Booster Vaccination Registry”. Here are [instructions for staff](#) and for [students](#)

Find more information at [Worker vaccination requirements | Coronavirus Victoria](#)

Do I need to get a booster if I do not work in these industries?

The government has indicated it may extend the booster mandate to other industries, so we strongly encourage all staff to get their COVID-19 booster vaccination as soon as eligible.

You can now get your booster from three months after your second dose. [Book your booster here.](#)

What are the current restrictions for our campuses?

The only restrictions that currently apply to Federation University and TAFE campuses are:

- Adult education and workplaces are open. We are not moving to online learning
- Masks must be worn indoors
- Density limit of one person per 2 square metres in hospitality venues
- All staff must be vaccinated or have a valid exemption to attend campus. Vaccination evidence must be submitted via Employee Self Service
- All students must be vaccinated or have a valid exemption to attend campus from January 24. Vaccination evidence must be submitted via our [Staying COVIDsafe page](#)
- If you test positive to COVID-19, you 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 so we can put in place contact tracing, cleaning and isolation measures
- If you feel unwell – don’t come to campus. If you have COVID-19 symptoms get tested and self-isolate in line with government advice

- QR code scanning is mandatory at all universities and TAFEs

Stay safe and stay well.

On behalf of the COVID-19 Transition Control Group

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