TERTIARY EDUCATION SETTINGS CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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This fact sheet is for all Victorian tertiary education providers, including Learn Locals, TAFEs, registered training organisations and universities (collectively "training providers").

The information in this document is current as of the date of publication. Tertiary education providers should familiarise themselves with the latest information at www.coronavirus.com.au to ensure the most accurate advice.

This fact sheet sets out the minimum requirements training providers must undertake in accordance with relevant Pandemic Orders. Should training providers choose to impose tighter restrictions, they should seek independent legal advice.

Do staff members and students need to be vaccinated to attend a training providers' premises?

Staff members

In line with the Pandemic (Workplace) Order, all higher education workers (paid or voluntary) must provide evidence to their employer that they are fully vaccinated (minimum two doses) or have a valid medical exemption to work onsite.

A copy of the evidence does not need to be held by the operator. Instead, the training provider must keep a record of having sighted the appropriate evidence.

A record should include:

- the name of the worker or individual accessing the site;
- their vaccination status;
- their vaccine appointment booking (if relevant);
- who sighted the evidence;
- the date the evidence was sighted; and

the type of evidence sighted (e.g. COVID-19 vaccine digital certificate).

Whilst training provider staff are not are currently required to have a third-dose or booster vaccine, it is strongly encouraged where safe to do so.

Students

Students and other visitors are not required to be vaccinated to attend a training provider's premises.

Students, trainees and apprentices who are attending workplaces on site for hands-on, practical learning must follow the vaccination requirements relating to their job or workplace, which may include the requirement of a booster vaccination. Please refer to the worker vaccination requirements for more information.

Checking in via a QR code system is not required for any persons attending onsite. This includes for hospitality venues such as cafes and restaurants that are on campus.

Do staff and students need to have a COVID-19 test to attend onsite?

It is strongly recommended that Non-school Senior Secondary Providers (NSSPs) encourage their senior secondary staff and students to conduct a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) twice weekly and have a negative RAT result before attending onsite. NSSPs have been provided with RATs for this purpose. This recommendation remains in place for the first four weeks of Term 2.

Staff and students that are not involved in senior secondary subjects are not obligated to be tested in order to attend onsite, however must stay at home and complete a RAT or PCR test if showing COVID-19 symptoms.

Are face masks required for training and/or assessment?

Face masks are not required to be worn by students or staff, unless it is a requirement of a workplace they are attending for hands-on, practical learning (for example, a healthcare setting).

For more information, see: When to wear a face mask.

Our facility will be used as an election polling site – does everyone attending need to be vaccinated?

As noted in the Pandemic (Workplace) Order, vaccination requirements do not apply to voters attending an election polling site for the purposes of voting.

Are there density limits in place?

There are no density limits in place for training providers, however it is recommended that social distancing occurs where practical.

What happens if there is a positive case of COVID-19 onsite?

An employee who tests positive with COVID-19 must:
- notify the training provider of their positive diagnosis, if they were onsite in the preceding 48 hours; and
- not resume onsite attendance for any reason until the conclusion of their required self-isolation period of 7 days.

If you are advised that a person with COVID-19 attended an indoor space of your premises during their infectious period, you must take reasonable steps to notify relevant employees, students, or other patrons that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 if they were onsite at the time of the diagnosed person.

A person with a positive result obtained via an Rapid Antigen Test is not required to undergo an additional PCR test, but must report their result online or via calling 1800 675 398 and adhere to quarantine requirements.

Refer to this link for more information and advice relating to COVID-19 cases in the workplace.

Refer to this checklist for a simple guide on action required by anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, or by any contacts of a person diagnosed with COVID-19.

When can a close contact resume attendance onsite?

There are different types of contacts and different rules apply.

Household or household-like contacts (Close contacts)
A close contact is someone who:
- lives with a person with a case of COVID-19; or

- has spent more than four hours with them in a house, accommodation, or care facility; or
- was present at an outbreak as declared by the Chief Health Officer or other authorised person.

A close contact must notify their worksite of their status.

Close contacts do not have to quarantine during this 7-day period if they:
- test negative using a rapid antigen test on 5 days of the 7-day period (with tests spaced at least 24 hours apart)
- wear a mask indoors when outside their home
- do not visit hospitals or care facilities
- notify their employer or education facility

All other contacts

All other contacts who have COVID-19 symptoms must use a RAT or undertake a PCR test and self-isolate until they receive a negative result.

For anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of knowingly being exposed, it is strongly recommended that they undertake an RAT or PCR test and stay at home until they no longer experience any symptoms.

Other contacts who do not have symptoms may return onsite but should monitor for symptoms and test/isolate if symptoms develop.

What are the requirements of a COVIDSafe Plan?

A COVIDSafe Plan for your workplace must demonstrate:
- your actions to help prevent the introduction of COVID-19 to your workplace

- the type of face mask or personal protective equipment (PPE) required for your workforce
- how you will prepare for, and respond to, a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in your workplace
- how you will meet all the requirements set out by the Victorian Government, noting some organisations must meet industry-specific requirements.

Whilst density quotients are currently not in place, your organisation may wish to consider the appropriateness of occupancy levels for smaller areas such as tea rooms.

COVIDSafe Plans should be reviewed regularly to ensure alignment with current public health advice. An organisation must have a COVIDSafe Plan in place for each worksite.

USEFUL LINKS

https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/how-we-live
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/how-we-work-current-restrictions
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/book-your-vaccine-appointment
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/face-masks-when-wear-face-mask
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/rapid-antigen-tests
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/worker-vaccination-requirements
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/case-workplace
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covidsafe-operational-guidance-higher-education-and-skills
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/signs-posters-and-templates
https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/getting-help-during-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-vaccinations/what-types-proof-there-are/covid-19-digital-certificate-proof
https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/getting-help-during-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-vaccinations/what-types-proof-there-are/immunisation-history-statement-proof
https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register
https://www.health.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-04/Testing%20Requirements%20Policy%20-%2022%20April%202022.docx
https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/health-service-planning-covid-19
https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/aboutus/Pages/covid-19info.aspx
https://www.asqa.gov.au/covid-19
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/Pages/coronavirus-advice-tafe.aspx
https://www.business.vic.gov.au/business-information/covid-19-business-information

For further enquiries or support relating to apprenticeships, please email:
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