

Coronavirus Update

Friday, 29 April 2022

Dear colleagues,

Governments in Victoria and Queensland have dropped the majority of the COVID-19 restrictions in place in recent weeks, meaning greater freedom as we move around our campuses and communities.

The most significant changes and what they mean for life on campus are outlined below, as well as in the attached FAQ document prepared by Human Resources and Risk, Health and Safety. Covered below:

- Changes to face mask rules and QR codes
- TCG guidance on close/household contact isolation requirements
- Changes to student vaccination requirements.

Face masks and QR codes

The requirement to wear a face mask in most indoor settings has been removed. Face masks are now only required on public transport and in sensitive settings such as hospitals and care facilities – this includes on-campus medical centres. However, staff and students may continue to wear a face mask as a personal preference in areas where you are not required to do so.

In some settings, you may still be required to wear face masks or other forms of respiratory protection for health and safety reasons – examples include Nursing practicals and some science and TAFE environments. If you are working at a hospital or care facility, you will still be required to wear a mask.

You are no longer required to scan QR codes on any Federation campuses.

Close contact (household contact) isolation

You are considered a close/household contact if you have spent more than four hours in a household setting with someone who has COVID-19.

While the government has reduced the close contact isolation requirements, it is the **recommendation of the COVID-19 Transition Control Group that wherever possible, close contacts (staff and students) do not come onto campus for the 7-day isolation period**, to help reduce the risk of COVID spreading on campus.

Please do the following:

1. Contact your manager to discuss whether you can work from home (for all or part of your 7-day isolation period) or take COVID-19 isolation leave if you are unable to work as you are caring for others who have COVID-19 or are isolating with you (such as children). Your manager should confirm the decision with the relevant Executive Dean or Director.
2. Call our COVID hotline on **(03) 5122 6300** to advise that you are in close contact isolation. Leave a message if you call outside business hours. Let the trained hotline staff know the arrangement you have made with your manager.
3. If you choose to work from home but this becomes unmanageable during your isolation period, please contact your manager to discuss taking isolation leave.

Your Executive Dean and/or Director must provide approval before a staff member who is a close contact can attend campus and must only do so where there are few other options and/or limited chance of exposing others to COVID-19 risk.

Students must also have approval from their institute or TAFE – please see the attached FAQ for details.

If this approval is provided, then in compliance with the government pandemic orders, the close contact must do the following:

- Must test negative using a rapid antigen test on 5 days of the 7-day period (with tests spaced at least 24 hours apart). They must test negative each day before coming to work
- Must wear a mask indoors when outside their home
- Must not visit hospitals or care facilities.

For full details of the updated close contacts requirements, please visit:

- <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-contacts> or
- <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/stay-informed/exposed-to-covid/close-contacts>

If you are social or workplace contact – you have spent four hours or less with someone who has COVID-19, and you develop symptoms, you must use a rapid antigen test or seek a PCR test. You may also wish to use daily rapid tests over 5 days from exposure.

If you test positive for COVID-19

Please let us know immediately if you are confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19 by calling our hotline on **(03) 5122 6300**. Leave a message if you call outside business hours.

If you have tested positive on a rapid antigen test, you must also report this via [coronavirus.vic.gov.au](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au) or via [covid19.qld.gov.au](https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au).

Vaccination requirements

For students, there is no longer a requirement for students in Victoria or Queensland to be vaccinated to attend campus.

However, in instances where students going on placement are required to be vaccinated, the Work Integrated Learning team will ensure compliance.

For Victorian staff, if you are not at least double vaccinated and do not qualify for an exemption from being vaccinated, you are not able to work on campus. The university will work with individuals to understand their concerns regarding vaccination.

Some staff members (and students on placements) are also required to have received a third vaccination dose (booster). Detailed advice can be found in the FAQ document.

Providing a healthy and safe campus environment

It's important to remember that while life returns to normal, a number of COVID safety measures continue. We still strongly encourage staff to use hand sanitiser, physically distance where possible, clean up themselves after using shared spaces, open windows where possible, and hold meetings online on MS Teams.

These simple measures can help contribute to all of us staying safe and protect those in the community who may be more vulnerable to COVID-19.

Stay safe and stay well,

On behalf of the COVID-19 Transition Control Group

