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.

> **IMPORTANT**
>
> **Victorians are strongly encouraged to work and study from home if they can.**
>
> **Any learning and training activity that is occurring should, where possible, be delivered remotely until otherwise advised.**
>
> **Third dose vaccinations are strongly recommended for anyone aged 18 and over who had their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine >3 months ago.**

Can staff members and students attend training providers' premises?

Whilst conducting work and/or study from home is strongly encouraged, in line with the Open Premises Order, training providers in Victoria may deliver training and assessment in person on site if staff and students meet the requirements outlined below.

Students

Students may only attend a training organisation to participate in learning and assessment if they can verify they are:

- fully vaccinated; or
- under the age of 18 or medically exempt from vaccination; or
- undertaking secondary school subjects; or

- required to participate in hands-on, skills-based learning/assessments which cannot be conducted remotely.

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.

To the extent possible, all training providers should continue to ensure that students who are unable to attend onsite have access to digital and remote learning classrooms and materials to enable learning from home.

Staff members

In line with the [COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination (General Workers) Order](#), all higher education workers (paid or voluntary) must provide evidence to their employer that they are fully vaccinated or have a valid medical exemption to work onsite.

Other requirements

All staff, students and other site visitors must continue to check-in each visit using the [QR code system](#).

Should training providers choose to impose tighter restrictions, they must seek independent legal advice.

Are training provider staff classified as a critical worker and exempt from some self-isolation requirements?

No, training provider staff do not fall under the classification of a critical worker for the purposes of [self-isolation exemptions](#), unless their training provider is also a school.

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 will soon be provided with RATs for this purpose.

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 have a RAT or PCR test if showing COVID-19 symptoms or if they are a household contact of a positive case.

Do we have to retain a copy of a person's vaccination status?

Where a training provider is required to collect, record and hold vaccination information of a staff member or student attending the site, 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).

Training providers may wish to use this [COVID-19 Vaccination Status Register (Workers) template](#) to record the information.

Staff

Training providers must collect, record and hold vaccination information of all staff in line with the [Mandatory Vaccination (General Workers) Order](#).

Students

Training providers may implement a system (for example, as part of enrolment) where a student can provide evidence once only that they are fully vaccinated (or exempt) to the operator, who is then required to retain a record of vaccination information in line with the [Open Premises Order](#).

Alternatively, students may show evidence they are fully vaccinated each time they enter the site.

Other patrons

All other visitors and patrons attending onsite will need to show evidence they are fully vaccinated (or exempt) each time they enter the premises.

How can someone show evidence of vaccination or exemption?

Evidence of a person's vaccination can include:

- their COVID-19 digital certificate which shows proof of their COVID-19 vaccinations that they can add to a digital wallet
- their immunisation history statement which lists their COVID-19 vaccinations and all other vaccinations
- a foreign vaccination certificate if a person was vaccinated in another country
- an Australian Immunisation Register immunisation medical exemption form that is completed and signed by a medical practitioner.

Those who produced a medical certificate or signed letter from a GP as evidence prior to 12 November 2021 will need to reverify their exemption using the Australian Immunisation Register immunisation medical exemption form

For more information on proof of vaccinations, visit: Services Australia

Further general information can be found by visiting: Information for workers required to be vaccinated.

To support your organisation communicate the requirement to verify vaccination status, many signs and posters are available here.

Are face masks required for training and/or assessment?

Face masks must be worn indoors by all persons including training provider staff and students.

The only exception to wearing a mask indoors is when visibility of a person's mouth is essential to communicate with those who are deaf or hard of hearing, or to assist with enunciation. Further, a mask may be removed if it creates a risk to health and safety.

Face masks are not required outdoors, however we recommend wearing a mask if you can't physically distance, or if you are with people who may be vulnerable to COVID-19.

Are there density limits in place?

There are no density limits in place for training providers, however social distancing must occur where practical.

In line with the latest Open Premises Orders, hospitality venues (including training providers operating as training restaurant) must adhere to a density quotient of 1 person per 2 square meters.

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; 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 should 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.

If these persons confirm they were in the same indoor space at the time of the diagnosed person, the training provider should advise these contacts to adhere to the [testing requirements for closes contacts and exposed persons](#), including:

- complete a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test if they have symptoms, and isolate until they receive a negative result; or
- if they don't have symptoms:
  - use a [rapid antigen (RA) test](#) for 5 days; or
  - if an [RA test](#) is unavailable, monitor for symptoms and seek a PCR test if symptoms emerge.

A person with a positive result obtained via an RA 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 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 must self-quarantine for 7 days following exposure.

Close contacts are not permitted to return onsite until their self-quarantine period concludes.

All other contacts

Other contacts who:
- were exposed to a diagnosed person onsite; and
- is not residing at the same premises as a diagnosed person who is self-isolating;

  and
  - have symptoms,

must undertake an RA/PCR test and self-quarantine until they are notified of a negative result.

  or
  - do not have symptoms,

may resume onsite attendance at a training provider, however it is strongly recommended that a workplace/education contact undertakes an RA test for 5 days before attending onsite each day.

It is at the training provider's discretion to verify the result negative tests of contacts and permit attendance onsite thereafter.

A student had COVID-19 and is not yet fully vaccinated. Can they attend the site?

There is no requirement to delay vaccination following recovery from the COVID-19 infection.

Students who have been diagnosed with COVID-19, but are not fully vaccinated, are eligible for a time-limited medical exemption issued by a relevant medical practitioner and registered through the Australian Immunisation Register. This time-limit should cover sufficient time to access vaccination and book their vaccine appointment accordingly. This would ensure that these individuals are not disadvantaged in attending onsite.

What record keeping must occur?

In accordance with the [Workplace Order](#), an employer must keep a record of all persons who attend the premises, including:

- the person's first and surname;
- a contact phone number;
- date and time at which the person attended the premises; and
- the area(s) of the premises which the person attended.

QR Codes

[QR Codes](#) represent a specific physical site. Training providers with multiple buildings may find benefit in having a different QR code for each building. Assuring check-in via a QR Code is the responsibility of the operator of the site or organiser of the venue.

For example, when visiting a construction apprentice at their workplace, training provider staff and students must each check-in using the QR Code for that specific workplace (e.g. the construction site).

However, if your organisation is hiring a venue to facilitate training, your organisation is responsible for assuring check-in at that venue.

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/victorias-roadmap
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/information-workers-required-be-vaccinated
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/rapid-antigen-self-tests
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/worker-vaccination-requirements
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/confirmed-case-workplace
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/qr-codes-and-digital-record-keeping-contact-tracing
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/mental-health-hygiene-and-wellbeing-tafe
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/tafe-training-providers-apprentices-and-trainees
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/education-and-training-sector-guidance#frequently-asked-questions
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/2022-01/Testing-requirements-for-contacts-and-exposed-persons-7-January-2022.docx
https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/health-service-planning-covid-19
https://www.passports.gov.au/guidance-foreign-vaccination-certificates
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:
apprenticeships.victoria@education.vic.gov.au