

# Staff Mandatory Vaccination or Testing Procedure— Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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## About the policy

### Why is Griffith University implementing a Mandatory Vaccination Policy?

Vaccinations are proven to reduce the risk of infection, and by implementing the Mandatory Vaccination Policy and testing regime, the University is taking all reasonable steps to provide a healthy and safe environment for all members of the community.

Getting vaccinated is not just about protecting you but protecting those around you.

### What staff members does this Policy apply to?

For the purposes of this Policy, 'staff' means continuing, fixed-term and casual and sessional staff, including Council and Council Committee members, senior management, executive, academic, professional, visiting, honorary and adjunct, conjoint appointments and volunteers.

### What does it mean for me?

Under the Mandatory Vaccination Policy, all Griffith staff and students are required to submit their vaccination status or medical exemption by 18 February 2022, two weeks prior to the start of Orientation Week for Trimester 1 2022.

If you choose not to disclose your vaccination status or provide a medical exemption, you will be asked to agree to a regime of regular COVID-19 testing.

The COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Procedure provides details on the implementation of the policy and instructions on how to upload vaccination certificates or exemptions are provided on the [COVID-19 vaccination requirements web page](#).

### **What other measures will Griffith University put in place to protect the Griffith community?**

We are working on a range of measures to reduce the risks of community transmission of COVID-19. These include room ventilation, room density requirements, including zoning in lecture theatres and other spaces, and masks in some circumstances.

We continue to be guided by government guidelines and scientific evidence to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our community. Vaccinations will be offered through our health clinics, and we will continue to offer paid leave for all staff, including casuals and sessionals, for vaccinations.

## **Policy implementation, reach and interpretation**

### **How will the COVID-19 testing regime work?**

Staff and students who agree to the testing regime will be expected to undergo Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) at intervals dependent on their work or study pattern.

Staff may be asked for evidence of compliance with this testing regime in a form determined by the Provost. Wherever practical, the University will use automated systems to confidentially record and track evidence of testing.

### **What happens if I choose not to disclose my vaccination status and do not consent to undertake regular COVID-19 testing?**

Staff who are not vaccinated or medically exempt and who refuse to agree to participate in the testing regime can potentially be excluded from campus. This may result in the staff member being unable to fulfil the inherent requirements of their role.

In such circumstances, the staff member may apply to the University to make a case that their circumstances are exceptional and other control measures are available to facilitate the protection of the health and safety of other staff and students. The University will genuinely consider each case and advise the staff or student within a timely manner.

### **Does this policy apply to casual teaching staff?**

Yes, casual teaching staff are required to adhere to the Policy.

### **Does this apply to professors emeriti and adjuncts?**

Yes, the Policy does apply to professors emeriti and adjuncts who need to come to campus.

### **What happens if my role does not require attendance on campus?**

Staff should not assume they can be exempt from the requirements of the Policy by simply working from home. However, students who study wholly online are exempt from the requirements of the Policy.

### **Will this policy apply to visitors, such as research collaborators?**

No. There will be a separate policy covering some types of visitors. The visitor policy would not require compliance, for instance, for a person who walks through University grounds.

### **If I am participating in the testing regime, can I go anywhere on campus?**

While you can come to campus if you are participating in the testing regime, there may be some areas on campus where you are not permitted. These areas are determined under Queensland Health's public health directions and currently include cafes and food outlets on campus.

### **What happens if the Government introduces a vaccine mandate for higher education?**

If the Government introduces a vaccine mandate similar to those imposed in other sectors, it is unlikely there will be an option for unvaccinated staff to undertake rapid testing to allow them to come on to campus. If the Government does not implement a public health order to mandate vaccinations at universities, we will proceed with our approach as planned.

## Vaccination requirements – what to do

### **Where do I submit my vaccination certificate?**

You will be able to submit your materials via the [Griffith Staff Portal](#) under 'Employment > My Staff Page' via the Health and Safety tile. Instructions on how to do this are available on the [Vaccination requirements web page](#). If you have any issues uploading your certificate, please contact the IT Helpdesk – [ithelp@griffith.edu.au](mailto:ithelp@griffith.edu.au) or call x55555/ +61 (0)7 3735 5555.

Why do I need to provide my COVID-19 vaccination certificate? Why can't I just show my "green tick of approval"?

Your vaccination certificate is required to enable the University to verify the vaccination date and vaccination type you have provided (or in the case of those with prior infection, the date of that infection or for those with a medical exemption, dates relating to medical contraindications).

Your vaccination certificate will not be retained by the University once it has been used for this verification purpose, unless it is required by law (for example in areas such as Health that are subject to the Government directive).

Manually sighting staff and students' vaccine 'green tick of approval' is not practical for the significant number of staff and students on campus at any point in time, and there is the risk of error with on-the-spot checks compared to the online automated process implemented by the University.

### **What is a medical contraindication?**

A contraindication is a medical term for a condition or circumstance where a person should not receive a particular treatment or procedure because it may be harmful. There is a very small group of individuals who are medically unable to receive any of the approved COVID-19 vaccinations.

### **I live in New South Wales, but the University documentation refers only to Queensland Health. What should I do?**

Normally, the process for New South Wales and Queensland are similar. Use the correct process for the State in which you reside.

### **I've recently had COVID-19, do I still need my vaccinations?**

The [procedure](#) has recently been updated to accommodate for recent infections. Staff and students who have tested positive for COVID-19 will need to provide proof of PCR/RAT confirmed infection of COVID-19 to be granted a temporary extension of four (4) weeks delay to their vaccination schedule. This time period is based on advice from Queensland Health. After that period, vaccination schedules will need to be resumed.

### **Will the University add boosters to fully vaccinated requirements?**

At the moment, our definition of fully vaccinated requires just two doses. There is strong medical evidence to support the benefit of boosters, so the University may add this requirement in the future. For now, boosters are recommended but not required.

## Testing and Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs)

### **If I can't get hold of Rapid Antigen Tests, what should I do?**

When you opt to participate in the testing regime, you should do everything reasonable and practicable to ensure you can conduct the testing. This will include ordering reasonable stocks in advance. At present, we realise stocks are limited. It is anticipated that availability will improve in the coming weeks. If stocks do not improve shortly prior to the Policy coming into effect, we will issue further advice.

### **The Policy indicates that medically exempt staff will be provided with Rapid Antigen Tests. Where do they access these?**

We are yet to finalise plans for collection, but our plan is that staff can confidentially collect them from a centralised location. We are working with our Health Centres to see if they are able to provide this service.

### **What do I do if I made an error, or submitted the incorrect document?**

Contact the [IT Service Centre](#) who will be able to help you update your record.

### **How is compliance with the testing regime monitored?**

Staff may be asked for evidence of compliance with this testing regime in a form determined by the Provost. Evidence of compliance will generally be requested in the form of photographic evidence of the most recent test performed to be returned 24 hours after the request for evidence was made. As such, staff or students will only need to retain one image at any given time unless otherwise requested. Wherever practical, the University will use automated systems to confidentially record and track evidence of testing.

## Failure to comply

### **What happens if I choose not to disclose my vaccination status and do not consent to undertake regular COVID-19 testing?**

Staff who are not vaccinated or medically exempt and who refuse to agree to participate in the testing regime can potentially be excluded from campus. This may result in the staff member being unable to fulfil the inherent requirements of their role.

In such circumstances, the staff member may apply to the University to make a case that their circumstances are exceptional and other control measures are available to facilitate the protection of the health and safety of other staff and students. The University will genuinely consider each case and advise the staff or student within a timely manner.

## For Managers and Supervisors

### **What should I do if a staff member refuses to comply with the Policy?**

After you have explained the policy options to the staff member, if they are still not prepared to comply you should refer the issue to your HR business partner, as you would with any issue where a staff member refuses to comply with a University policy.

### **How will I know my staff have completed what is required?**

We will initially send out reminders centrally. Later in the process we may need to request your help. We will inform you of any staff who have not completed the requirements.

### **How will you manage staff who just want to work from home rather than comply with this policy?**

Staff should not assume they can be exempt from the requirements of the Policy by simply working from home. After you have explained the policy options to the staff member, if they are still not prepared to comply you should refer the issue to your HR business partner, as you would with any issue where a staff member refuses to comply with a University policy.

### **How will exceptional circumstances be managed?**

We have included the [exceptional circumstances](#) option as there may be some situations we have not yet considered. Staff seeking exemptions will need to provide an explanation of why they cannot comply and how they will mitigate risk to others. Given the Policy offers an option of Rapid Antigen Testing, we envisage successful cases for exceptional circumstances will be rare. If the review team identify a case which has merit and the approval of such a case could have an impact on the workload of others, we will consult the Head of Element prior to granting any exemption.

### **Do I need to check my staff's vaccination status, or compliance with the testing regime?**

No, this will be managed centrally.

### **What will happen if we make a new staff appointment – do they need to be vaccinated?**

Yes, this will be made clear in all job advertisements and offers of appointment, with the appointment subject to confirmation of vaccination status during the onboarding process.

### **What happens if I or another staff member have reason to believe someone is refusing/failing to comply with the policy?**

You may report your concerns, along with any evidence you may have, to [Your Call](#). The University will endeavour to investigate your report in line with standard procedures but may not, for confidentiality reasons, be able to provide you with details of the outcomes of the investigation.

### **If staff are participating in the testing regime and work from home on certain days, do they need to take a test?**

Typically, staff will conduct two tests per week. Staff should ensure they have conducted a test within 72 hours prior to their attendance on campus and prioritise this timing for those days when they work on campus.

### **Some of my staff are demanding to know who is not vaccinated, can I tell them this?**

No, this is classified as sensitive health information and therefore it is important that you maintain the individual's privacy. If staff are asking for other staff to reveal this information, please remind them to respect each other's [privacy](#).