

Policy 129
COVID-19 Vaccination

Adoption

Date :
September 8, 2021

Instance of approval:
Administration Committee

Responsible Services:

Office of the Provost and Vice-
President Academic Affairs

Office of the Vice-President,
Finance and Administration

1. CONTEXT

1.1 The University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic since its outset has been governed by the following guiding principles:

- Health and safety, including the mental health and well-being of all members of the uOttawa community remains our top priority
- Continuity of academic, research, and administrative activities
- Agility, flexibility, and iterative planning
- Institutional principles and local solutions
- Care and concern for our whole community

1.2 In the weeks leading to the beginning of the Fall 2021 term, the prevalence of the virus that causes COVID-19 and its variants has increased transmissibility and continues to pose potential health and safety risks within Ottawa and globally.

1.3 In keeping with the guiding principles set out above and the University's priority to take proactive measures to safeguard the health and safety of its students, faculty, staff and members of its community, the University made certain decisions based on consultations, advice, recommendations of public health officials, related to COVID-19 vaccination.

- a) In July 2021, the University announced its decisions that the COVID-19 vaccination would be mandatory for all students living in a University student residence and for student-athletes with permitted exemptions based on medical or other

grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code and that they must provide proof of vaccination.

- b) On August 10, 2021, the University announced its decisions that the COVID-19 vaccination would be mandatory for all students, faculty, staff and visitors returning to or visiting campus as of September 7, 2021, with permitted exemptions based on medical or other protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code. Such individuals would be required to have received a first dose by September 7, 2021, a second dose by October 15, 2021 and to attest to their vaccination status.
 - c) On August 26, 2021, following recommendations issued by the Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health to Ontario universities and colleges, the University announced its decision that all students, faculty, staff and visitors must provide proof of vaccination status by September 7, 2021.
- 1.4 On August 30, 2021, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health issued Instructions requiring universities to establish and implement a COVID-19 vaccination policy requiring its employees, staff, contractors, volunteers, and students who attend campus to provide proof of full vaccination against COVID- 19. On August 31, 2021, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities issued its Postsecondary Education Health Measures Framework for Fall 2021 and included a copy of the OCMOH Instructions.
- 1.5 Legislation and the advice, recommendations and instructions issued by public health and government officials and other applicable laws related to COVID-19 vaccination impacting the University and its activities continue to evolve and change.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 The purposes of this Policy are to:

- a) establish further policy statements and general principles for the implementation of existing University decisions and future University decisions related to COVID-19 vaccination;
- b) support the University's commitment to maintain a safe and healthy work, living and learning environment;
- c) comply with the advice, recommendations and instructions related to COVID-19 vaccination from public health and government officials; and
- d) comply with the University's obligations under applicable laws, including without limitation, its obligations under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to*

COVID-19) Act, 2020 and its obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to maintain a safe work environment.

3. INTERPRETATION

- 3.1 This Policy is to be read in conjunction with applicable law, the advice, recommendations and instructions from public health or government officials, University policies and/or procedures, or University collective agreements.
- 3.2 Definitions of certain words and expressions used in this Policy are set out in Appendix A below.
- 3.3 This Policy is subject to change from time to time in accordance with Section 7 of this Policy.

4. APPLICATION

- 4.1 This Policy applies to all members of the University community (as defined in Appendix A of this Policy).

5. POLICY STATEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 By September 7, 2021, students, faculty and staff must attest to their vaccination status and submit proof of vaccination whether they intend to attend at a University facility or not. Those members of the University community that are contractors, suppliers or other entities engaged by the University to provide services or goods or entities renting or occupying a University facility or other visitors must attest to their vaccination status and submit proof of vaccination by September 7, 2021, if they intend to be at a University facility.
- 5.2 By October 15, 2021, members of the University community who wish to access a University facility or participate in a University activity (each as defined in Appendix A of this Policy) must have received the full series of a COVID-19 vaccine with the rare exception of those individuals who cannot be vaccinated due to a permitted exemption (as defined in Appendix A of this Policy).
- 5.3 All external agencies, third-party service providers, and independent contractors, who do business with the University will be informed of the existence of this Policy and of the University's expectation that these external entities will govern themselves to respect this Policy while doing business with the University.
- 5.4 Once the University considers the individual to be fully vaccinated and confirms that the individual is permitted to attend in-person at a University facility or participate in-person at a University activity, the individual must follow all health and safety measures in effect

(for example, completing an online COVID-19 daily health check-in form before attending in person at a University facility).

- 5.5 Individuals who are unvaccinated, who do not have a permitted exemption (as defined in Appendix A of this Policy) or who do not provide proof of vaccination status in accordance with this Policy are not permitted to attend in-person at a University facility or participate in-person in a University activity.
- 5.6 All individuals who are unvaccinated due to a permitted exemption (as defined in Appendix A of this Policy) or who are awaiting the University's response to their request for an exemption or who are awaiting their second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine and to be considered fully vaccinated are required to adhere to additional health and safety measures, up to and including submitting to a regular and frequent rapid antigen testing for COVID-19.
 - a) Rapid antigen testing as an exception to being fully vaccinated must be limited only to the individuals described above. Those individuals who are awaiting their second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine must receive their second dose by a fixed, specified date.
 - b) Individuals who are required to undergo rapid testing must do so at intervals to be determined by the University and demonstrate a negative result and provide proof of a negative test result of a rapid antigen test administered prior to attending in-person at a University facility or University activity.
- 5.7 An exemption from the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirements under this Policy is limited to medical, religious/creed or other protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code and the individual making a request for an exemption must provide sufficient supporting information/documentation in order for the University to assess the request. Requests for exemption for medical or religious/creed reasons must be supported as follows:
 - a) Medical: Individuals should provide written proof of a medical reason from a primary care physician or nurse practitioner that includes whether the reason is permanent or time limited. Public health officials have noted and provided guidance that medical grounds to be exempted from vaccination is rare.
 - b) Religion/Creed: Most religious organizations do not teach or profess a belief precluding vaccination. For a religious/creed exemption, individuals should be required to explain in writing why they are unable to be vaccinated due to their religion/creed. They should provide background on the religious belief/creed and connect the religious belief/creed to the reason they are requesting an exemption. The University may require additional information or documentation such as support from a witness/religious leader.

- 5.8 Before considering any discipline or sanctions for those members of the University community failing to comply with this Policy, a careful assessment, on a case-by-case basis, must be undertaken and advice sought, as applicable to the circumstances. The University may establish processes as are necessary to undertake such careful assessment. The appropriate response will depend on the nature of the situation, its impact, the person's relationship to the University and in the case of employees, on the terms of employment or relevant collective agreement.
- 5.9 Vaccination status and supporting documentation is to be collected, stored, and used in a manner that complies with the University policies and/procedures and with applicable privacy law laws. The personal information submitted to the University through COVID-19 vaccination declaration online tool will be used for purposes of and those consistent with: ensuring the health, safety and security on campus; enabling continuity of learning and work of the University community when an exposure occurs; institutional planning and statistics; and following up with and investigating instances of non-compliance with University's mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirement and policy. This information will only be kept as long as required to meet the stated purposes. Other than those University employees tasked with implementing this Policy, members of the University community should not ask or require one another to disclose their vaccination status or their reasons for not being fully vaccinated, nor should they engage in any reprisal against one another.
- 5.10 In accordance with the instructions provided by the Chief Medical Officer on August 30, 2021, the University will collect, maintain and disclose the following statistics (non-identifiable information):
- a) the number of individuals that provided proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19;
 - b) the number of individuals that provided a documented medical reason for not being fully vaccinated against COVID-19;
 - c) the number of individuals that completed any educational session approved by the University about the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination.
- 5.11 The University will continue to work with local public health officials to facilitate COVID-19 vaccinations and rapid antigen testing and will provide or make available to members of the University community information about COVID-19 vaccines.

6. REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 The Provost and Vice-President Academic Affairs and the Vice-President, Finance and Administration are responsible for the periodic review of this Policy, as necessary and for its implementation.
- 6.2 The Provost and Vice-President Academic Affairs or the Vice-President, Finance and Administration or their respective delegate will lead, oversee and approve the establishment of any procedures, instructions, directives in relation to the implementation of this Policy. The University will post on its website such procedures, instructions, directives, information and any other relevant details as needed in relation to the implementation of this Policy.

7. AMENDMENTS

- 7.1 The Provost and Vice-President Academic Affairs or the Vice-President, Finance and Administration is responsible for recommending to the Administration Committee any amendments to this Policy or the abolishment of this Policy.
- 7.2 Notwithstanding Section 7.1 of this Policy, the Secretary-General may amend this Policy without the need to submit such amendment to the Administration Committee for approval if such amendment to this Policy is required to,
- a) Update or correct the name or title of a position, unit, law, regulation, policy, authority; or
 - b) Correct punctuation, grammar, typographical errors, revisions to format and other technical revisions, where appropriate, if the correction does not change the meaning of a provision; or
 - c) Make consequential amendments to conform with or arising from another University by-law, resolution, policy or to conform with the advice, recommendations and instructions related to COVID-19 vaccination from public health or government officials or with applicable law.

APPENDIX A – DEFINITIONS

“Applicable law”: Any present and future law, statute, regulation, by-law, treaty, judgment, decree or order of a relevant court of law having the force of law, and all present and future official directives, rules, consents, approvals, authorizations, guidelines, orders and policies of any governmental authority.

“Fully vaccinated”: For the purposes of this Policy, an individual is fully vaccinated 14 days after receiving their second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or their first dose of a one-

dose COVID-19 vaccine approved by the Government of Canada or the World Health Organization. Given the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, if the applicable public health authorities announce a different meaning of “fully vaccinated” or similar expression, that definition will take precedence.

“Permitted exemption”: means an exemption to the vaccination requirements in this Policy that is based on (a) proven medical, religious/creed or other protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code and is approved by the University; or (b) eligibility to receive a COVID-19 vaccine as determined by public health or government officials.

“University community” means all individuals who have a relationship with or to the University, including but not limited to, the following:

- a) students refers to an individual who fits within the student categories and status of students as set out in Academic Regulation I-1 and in Academic Regulation II-3 or refers to an individual who,
 - i) has accepted a University offer of admission into a University course or program of study but has yet to enroll in classes; or
 - ii) is enrolled in a non-degree diploma or certificate program (whether for credit or not); or
 - iii) is registered at another university but is attending at the University on a letter of permission from the University or on a student exchange program; or
 - iv) is a learner or trainee in postgraduate education, such as University medical residents or a post-doctoral fellows or fellows;
- b) employees of the University, including all unionized and non-unionized academic and support staff as well as those whose salary is paid through sources other than the University’s operating funds, such as grants, research grants and external funding;
- c) clinicians and physicians with an academic appointment; adjunct, visiting and emeritus professors; post-doctoral or clinical fellows;
- d) contractors, consultants, suppliers or other entities engaged by the University to provide services or goods when at a University facility or while acting in a capacity defined by their relationship to the University or entities renting or occupying a University facility;
- e) members of the Board of Governors, of the Senate and any of their respective committees, as well as members of any advisory committee formed to help the University achieve its goals;

- f) employees of both unionized and non-unionized employee and student groups when at a University facility or while acting in a capacity defined by their relationship to the University;
- g) visitors, including visiting students and volunteers or persons who serve on advisory or other committees.

“University activity” means a class, lecture, tutorial, lab, placement, field trip, internship, residency, course, program, project, service, function, event or other activity related to the University or under the auspices of the University.

“University facility” means land, building, physical structure owned, rented or otherwise under the control of the University.

“University policies and/or procedures” refers collectively to the University’s [academic regulations, administrative policies, procedures](#) (and those that are faculty or service specific), by-laws, resolutions, rules, directives, guidelines, instructions, as may be amended by the University from time to time.