



## Tertiary Provider and International Bulletin

Thursday 18 November 2021

### COVID-19 Update

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Today's bulletin provides information for TEOs to start planning for how to operate in the COVID-19 Protection Framework.

### COVID-19 Alert Levels

#### *Waikato areas Alert Level setting*

Areas of the Waikato region at Alert Level 3, Step 2 (Raglan, Te Kauwhata, Huntly, Ngāruawāhia, Hamilton Waitomo District, including Te Kuiti, Waipa District, Ōtorohanga District, Hamilton City and some surrounding areas) have moved to Alert Level 2, as at 11.59pm Tuesday 16 November.

#### *Auckland Alert Level setting*

The Auckland region continues to remain at Alert Level 3, Step 2. These settings will be reviewed on Monday 22 November.

The rest of New Zealand outside of Auckland remains at Alert Level 2.

On Wednesday 17 November, the Prime Minister announced that the Auckland border will reopen from December 15. People travelling out of Auckland will have to be either fully vaccinated or have a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of departure. This requirement will be in place for the core summer period of December 15, 2021, to January 17, 2022.

The Prime Minister also announced that Cabinet will confirm on November 29 the date that Auckland will move to the Red level in the new traffic light framework. The rest of the country will move to the new framework at the same time as Auckland, and we can expect that regions with low vaccination rates will move to the Red level, and others will move to the Orange level.



## Minor change to detailed guidelines on exams

In our changes to our guidelines relating to exams last week, we omitted to remove one requirement. It is no longer the case that on-site examinations are only allowed **where it has not been possible to deliver teaching online**.

In addition, we have received advice from Public Health on exam invigilators. Where they are fully vaccinated and masked, exam invigilators may invigilate sequential exam sessions that may be over a number of days or weeks. This is an acceptable level of risk in a structured environment where contact tracing is relatively easy. This is a narrow exception to our guidance that TEO staff members stay with the same bubble.

We have changed our online Alert Level 3 guidelines to reflect these changes.

## Preparing for the COVID-19 Protection Framework: Red level

The COVID-19 Protection Framework introduces a new flexible 3-level approach to managing COVID-19 in the community. As we have noted in previous bulletins, under the COVID-19 Protection Framework, tertiary education will be:

- Open at Green
- Open with public health measures in place at Orange
- Open with a vaccination requirement for onsite delivery at Red.

We will provide guidance on how TEOs should prepare for each level next week. Beyond the formal vaccination and capacity limit requirements at Red, it will be up to TEOs to undertake their own risk assessment and decision-making in relation to their campus, in consultation with students and staff.

In the meantime, all TEOs should inform staff and students that they will need to be fully vaccinated to be onsite at Red. TEOs will also need to start making preparations for verifying vaccination information.

We will provide more information on vaccination verification and record-keeping requirements in relation to **staff vaccination** following decisions on MBIE's workplace vaccination framework, and expectations for staff vaccination under the COVID-19 Protection Framework. We note that staff and student vaccination verification processes may be different: My Vaccine Passes that will be used for student vaccination verification (discussed further below) may not be appropriate for staff.

## My Vaccine Pass

My Vaccine Pass is an official record of a person's COVID-19 vaccination status, providing access to places within New Zealand that require proof of vaccination under the new COVID-19 Protection Framework. People are now able to access their My Vaccine Pass.

Once you are fully vaccinated, you can sign up to [My Covid Record](#) to see your vaccination status and request a pass. Your My Vaccine Pass will include your name, date of birth and a QR code. You can save this pass on a digital device, like your phone, or print a physical copy.

If someone has a temporary medical exemption, you can call 0800 222 478 to request a My Vaccine Pass – note you may be asked a few questions to confirm your identity such as your name and date of birth.

A process is being established to record COVID vaccinations administered overseas in the New Zealand Covid Immunisation Register. We can record all 23 vaccines that are approved as per the New Zealand entry requirements. You must apply for this information to be included in your records, this will take up to 14 days and people will need to provide proof of the vaccines and dates administered so they can be entered into the COVID-19 Immunisation Register.

While all 23 vaccines can be recorded, these do not mean that you will be eligible for the My Vaccine Pass. At this stage, from the week of 26 November, there are 8 approved vaccines that can be used as proof of vaccine status when applying for My Vaccine Pass.



They are:

1. Pfizer/BioNTech
2. Janssen (Johnson and Johnson)
3. AstraZeneca (Oxford)
4. AstraZeneca/Covishield (Serum Institute of India)
5. Moderna
6. Sinopharm
7. Sinovac (CoronaVac)
8. Covaxin (Bharat Biotech)

### **When a TEO can't request proof of vaccination onsite at TEOs**

Under the COVID-19 Protection Framework, Ministers have agreed that there are certain settings where denying entry on the basis of vaccination status will be prohibited. Where vaccine requirements are prohibited, a place/service/PCBU<sup>1</sup> cannot limit the kind of service provided to patrons based on their vaccination status (e.g. making unvaccinated customers use the self-checkout counters only).

Ministers have agreed that some settings are prohibited from requiring proof of vaccination (either via My Vaccine Pass (previously referred to as COVID-19 Vaccination Certificates) or other tool) as condition of entry, use or access. Several of these settings will be relevant to tertiary providers. For completeness, we have listed them all below:

#### *Education*

- All licensed early childhood education services and registered schools (i.e. all primary and secondary schools, including private providers) for all children, students and their parents, whānau or caregivers
- All school hostels
- All school transport services, for all students
- All OSCAR programmes
- **For secondary students at tertiary education organisations to access their learning**

#### *Public Transport*

Note that access to public transport is necessary to ensure access to life-preserving services:

- All public transport (buses, trains, ferries, taxis/ubers, rental vehicles etc), apart from air travel, is prohibited from vaccination requirements
  - All air travel includes small commercial operators (e.g. Sounds Air, Air Chathams)

#### *Housing*

Use of vaccination requirements to restrict access to housing is prohibited for all housing and housing support services funded directly by, or under contract to, the following state sector agencies:

- Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities
- Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
- Ara Poutama Aotearoa – Department of Corrections; and
- Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children

In addition to the above, Ministers agree to introduce a prohibition on vaccine requirements for premises used to provide emergency housing.

#### *Other life-preserving services*

- All supermarkets, dairies, pharmacies and petrol stations will be prohibited from requiring proof of vaccination from customers as a condition of entry/access

#### *Health and disability services*

- The use of vaccination requirements will be prohibited for all people accessing essential health and disability services. Examples of these include (but are not limited to):

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<sup>1</sup> Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking – as defined in the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.



- Primary care services
- Specialist clinics
- Laboratories and imaging services
- Public and private hospitals
- Maternity care
- Hospice services
- Oral healthcare services
- Mental Health care services
- Ambulances and emergency care
- Aged residential care services

These decisions will be reflected in an Order. Where relevant, they will form an exception to the Red level vaccination requirements and any additional vaccination requirements that TEOs may seek to impose onsite. We will provide more guidance on how TEOs can safely implement the secondary-tertiary student prohibition from vaccination requirements, in particular, in our guidance.

### Student vaccination verification

My Vaccine Pass will be the only permitted way of verifying students' vaccination status under the COVID-19 Protection Framework (as noted above, it may not be appropriate for staff, and we will provide more detail on vaccination verification for staff once MBIE has finalised its guidance for workplaces).

People will be able to store their My Vaccine Pass on their personal phone, or print it out. The Ministry of Health is building a free Verifier app that anyone will be able to access and use to verify a My Vaccine Pass. The verifier allows a person to check the My Vaccine Pass is valid and relates to the person presenting it.

We have previously had concerns about the workability and practicality of the My Vaccine Pass for TEOs, especially for larger tertiary providers. Some providers have asked whether it may be possible to verify staff and student vaccination status through data-matching student information with the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Immunisation Record. At this stage, this is not possible.

Instead, providers will need to integrate vaccination verification processes into their student software systems using the My Vaccine Pass technical specifications. This would allow students to upload their My Vaccine Pass QR codes for digital verification. Alternatively, TEOs will be able to use the Ministry of Health's Verifier App to scan students' My Vaccine Passes in-person.

To facilitate digital verification, the Ministry of Health has recently made the technical specification and other documentation on its GitHub repository to facilitate this [here](#). A demonstration of a similar use case is available from MATTR [here](#).

Following verification, storing the My Vaccine Pass itself will be prohibited. However, at this stage we understand that vaccination verification information (i.e. whether vaccination has been verified or the date) may be stored as part of students' records, consistent with the Privacy Act 2020 obligations around the collection, storage, and use. It is important that TEOs explain why the information is being collected, what it will be used for (i.e. to comply with the relevant requirement), and importantly, what are the consequences if they do not provide the information. Ministers are expected to make final decisions on My Vaccine Pass soon, and we will update you on any implications that these may have for the tertiary sector as soon as we can.

TEOs that may have begun collecting information from students on their vaccination status already will also need to verify students' vaccination status via My Vaccine Passes once this is available. **We recommend that all TEOs start working now to consider how best to verify My Vaccine Passes.** We also recommend that they inform students how they can access the MyCovidRecord platform. This information is available [here](#).



### **Email address for all tertiary COVID-19 related queries**

A central mailbox has been set-up for all tertiary queries to the Ministry of Education that are related to COVID-19 - [COVID19.Tertiary@education.govt.nz](mailto:COVID19.Tertiary@education.govt.nz). We have introduced this email address to ensure there is a central point of contact that we can monitor. All future bulletins will be sent from this email address also.

We will continue to meet with the sector regularly.

### **Things change quickly so stay up to date by following the links below:**

- For health advice, please refer to the Ministry of Health's [website](#)
- Please continue to check the [Ministry of Health's locations of interest page](#) to find out if you might have been exposed to COVID-19
- For cross-agency information about COVID-19, including what support is available, health advice, and travel restrictions visit the All-of-Government [website](#)
- For resources in Te Reo Māori, visit [here](#)
- For information to support Pacific communities, visit Ministry for Pacific Peoples [Facebook](#) page
- For resources in [sign language and easy read formats](#)
- To keep updated on travel restrictions and visa information visit Immigration NZ's [website](#)
- Advice for international students in NZ can be found [here](#)
- For additional advice for tertiary providers/whare wānanga visit the Ministry of Education [website](#).

