

Human Resources Policy

Employee COVID-19 vaccination requirements

Policy Number: B70 (QH-POL-486)

Publication date: September 2021

Purpose: To outline COVID-19 vaccination requirements for existing employees and prospective employees employed to work in the identified high risks groups designated in this policy.

Application: This policy applies to existing and prospective public service employees working for Queensland Health.

Health service employees, working in the department or in a Hospital and Health Service are to refer to HED No. 12/21: Employee COVID-19 vaccination requirements.

This policy does not apply to employees of Queensland Ambulance Service. Instead, Queensland Ambulance Service employees are to refer to their local policy/procedure.

Delegation: The 'delegate' is as listed in the relevant Department of Health Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, or Hospital and Health Services Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, as amended from time to time.

Legislative or other authority:

- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*
- *Human Rights Act 2019*
- *Industrial Relations Act 2016*
- *Information Privacy Act 2009*
- *Public Health Act 2005*
- *Public Records Act 2002*
- *Public Service Act 2008*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- HED No. 12/21: Employee COVID-19 vaccination requirements

Related policy or documents:

- Recruitment and Selection HR Policy B1 (QH-POL-212)

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1 Risk management

The COVID-19 virus has been shown to disproportionately affect healthcare workers and health support staff and poses a significant risk to Queensland Health patients, and the broader community.

In recognition of the risks posed by the virus, as well as workplace health and safety obligations incumbent upon both the organisation and employees, this policy requires public service employees who are identified as being in high risk groups to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Prospective and existing public service employees subject to these requirements have been identified based on the following risk profile:

- They are working in an area with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients or an area that a COVID-19 patient may enter.
- They are coming into direct or indirect contact with people who work in an area with COVID-19 patients or an area that a suspected or actual COVID-19 patient may enter.
- They are unable to observe public health requirements (e.g. physical distancing, working in areas of high population density, rapid donning/doffing of personal protective equipment (PPE) in emergent situations).
- They have the potential to expose patients, clients, other staff or the broader community to the virus (e.g. occupying shared spaces such as lifts, cafeterias, car parks, with people working with suspected or actual COVID-19 patients).

2 Requirement for vaccination

In acknowledgment of the risks posed by the COVID-19 virus to the health and safety of Queensland Health employees, patients and the broader community, clauses 3 and 4 of this Policy require that all existing and prospective employees who are or are to be employed to work in the cohorts as categorised in accordance with Table 1 (below), to be vaccinated as a condition of employment, subject to certain limited exemptions described in clause 5 of this Policy.

It should be noted that Table 1 (below) outlines the requirements for public service employees and is consistent with the requirements for health service employees.

It is anticipated that Group 2 and Group 3 are most relevant to the application for public service employees.

COVID-19 vaccination requirements for public service employees	
Group No.	Employee cohort
Group 1	All public service employees in residential aged care facilities and residential aged care within a multipurpose health service.
Group 2	<p>All public service employees who are employed to work in a hospital or other facility where clinical care or support is provided.</p> <p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • both clinical and non-clinical employees. • hospitals, quarantine facilities, vaccination clinics/hubs, fever clinics, dental clinics,

	<p>outpatient services, prison health services, disability care services, including residential or sub-acute care for people with disability, or any other location where Queensland Health employees provide care or support to patients/clients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> public health officers/teams, emergency operations centre staff including employees working in Hospital Emergency Operation Centres and Retrieval Services Queensland.
Group 3	<p>All other public service employees who are employed in roles that require attendance at a hospital or other facility where clinical care or support is provided.</p> <p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the requirement to attend hospitals, quarantine facilities, vaccination clinics/hubs, fever clinics, dental clinics, outpatient services, prison health services, disability care services, including residential or sub-acute care for people with disability, or any other location where health service employees provide care or support to patients/clients.

Table 1: COVID-19 Vaccination requirements for public service employees

3 Existing employees

Existing employees currently undertaking work or moving into a role undertaking work listed in a cohort of Table 1, must:

- have received at least the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 30 September 2021; and
- have received the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by 31 October 2021.

An existing employee must provide their line manager or upload into the designated system:

- evidence of vaccination confirming that the employee has received at least the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by no later than 7 days after receiving the vaccine.
- evidence of vaccination confirming that the employee has received the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by no later than 7 days after receiving the vaccine.

An existing employee must maintain vaccine protection. Therefore, an existing employee is required to receive the prescribed subsequent dose/s of a COVID-19 vaccination (i.e. booster), as may be approved by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI), within any recommended timeframe following the second dose. Evidence of vaccination, confirming the employee has received prescribed subsequent dose/s of the vaccine, is to be provided to their line manager or other designated person within 7 days of receiving the vaccination.

An existing employee who is required to have received a first or second dose of a COVID-19 dose at an earlier date under a Chief Health Officer public health direction must be vaccinated by the dates specified in the public health direction.

The requirements of this clause 3 do not apply to existing employees who have been granted an exemption under clause 5 of this Policy.

4 Prospective/new employees

When offering a position to a prospective employee, the relevant advertising and engagement documentation must clearly state that engagement is subject to the person fully satisfying the COVID-19 vaccination requirements. Evidence of satisfying the vaccination requirements must be provided as part of the recruitment and on-boarding process to satisfy this requirement.

5 Exemptions

Where an existing employee is unable to be vaccinated they are required to complete an exemption application form.

Exemptions will be considered in the following circumstances:

- Where an existing employee has a recognised medical contraindication;
- Where an existing employee has a genuinely held religious belief;
- Where another exceptional circumstance exists.

If an existing employee is granted an exemption, they do not have to comply with clause 3 or 4 of this Policy for the duration of that exemption.

6 Transitional arrangements

From 1 October 2021 until 31 October 2021, transitional arrangements will apply consistent with the Staff Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements Implementation Phase Guide.

7 Reporting and record keeping

In accordance with clause 3 of this Policy evidence of COVID-19 vaccination must be provided to the employee's line manager or the person nominated in locally developed processes.

A record will be kept of all COVID-19 vaccinations reported by an existing or prospective employee (for employees and prospective employees covered by this policy).

The record must be stored in a secure database that is accessible to authorised persons only and maintained in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009* and the *Public Records Act 2002*.

Documentary evidence of exemptions and supporting information must be kept for all existing or prospective employees.

De-identified information about employee vaccination rates will be reported in accordance with relevant state or federal government requirements.

Definitions:

COVID-19 vaccine	Means a vaccine approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for use in Australia or endorsed by WHO-COVAX where the employee was vaccinated overseas.
Evidence of vaccination	A copy of the employee's immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register .

	Where a person has been vaccinated overseas, a record of this must be provided.
Hospital and Health Service (HHS)	A statutory body established under the <i>Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011</i> responsible for the provision of public sector health services for a geographical area, which includes one or more health facilities.
Queensland Health (the Department)	Queensland Health (the Department) includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Division • Clinical Excellence Queensland • Corporate Services Division • COVID-19 Supply Chain Surety Division • Healthcare Purchasing and System Performance Division • Chief Health Officer and Prevention Division • Office of the Director-General • eHealth Queensland.
Residential aged care facility	Means a facility, including a <i>Queensland Health residential aged care facility</i> , at which accommodation, and personal care or nursing care or both, are provided to a person in respect of whom a residential care subsidy or a flexible care subsidy is payable under the <i>Aged Care Act 1997</i> of the Commonwealth, or funding is provided under the <i>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program</i> .

History:

September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy re-issued to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – update the COVID-19 vaccination requirements for health service employees table to remove the State Health Emergency Coordination Centre from Group 2 and provide clarity for Group 3; – included circumstances for exemptions; – include transitional arrangements.
September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developed to require Queensland Health public service employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to undertake work in a hospital or other facility where clinical care or support is provided or who are employed in roles that require attendance at a hospital or other facility where clinical care or support is provided to patients/clients.