

Thursday, 9 December 2021

University mandates COVID-19 vaccinations to support a safer Tasmania

Following a risk assessment and consultation with staff and students, the University of Tasmania will make COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory across all its campuses, facilities and activities.

- From 15 January 2022, anyone coming on to campus will be required to be fully vaccinated or have a medical exemption.

A significant number of staff, students and users of buildings are already required to be vaccinated as a result of Public Health directions. This decision expands the requirement into a consistent approach across the University.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Rufus Black said the University had carefully considered the issue and had chosen to prioritise the health and safety of students, staff and the broader community, as it had done since the emergence of COVID-19 two years ago.

“We want to make our contribution to ensuring Tasmania stays safe,” Professor Black said.

“It is not just about slowing the spread of the virus and reducing the chances of outbreaks taking hold, it’s also about protecting people from the terrible consequences of this disease.

“COVID-19 is a disease that can and does result in death, serious illness, disability and long-term health consequences.

“Vaccines are lifesaving, and they reduce the risk and impact of infection. It is important that those of us who can get vaccinated do so in order to help protect those who cannot and the vulnerable among us.”

Professor Black said mandatory vaccinations would also lower the risk of significant disruptions to in person and critical teaching and research.

“We teach and train health workers, teachers and other critical workers, and carry out vital research at the University of Tasmania. As a face-to-face university, the disruptive impact of a case on campus is dramatically reduced if everyone is vaccinated.

“Mandatory vaccinations help us to be the University people want us to be and that our community needs us to be.”

Director of Safety and Wellbeing Chris Arnold said the decision followed a risk assessment and a survey of staff and on-campus students.

“The message from the University community was clear – our students and our staff want a safe place to study and to work and the overwhelming majority supported mandatory vaccinations,” Mr Arnold said.

Over 2100 staff responded to the survey with 83 percent supporting mandatory vaccinations. Just over 2000 students responded with 76 percent in support.

“Once our borders reopen on 15 December, we know the virus will be present in the community, and vaccinations are a critical additional protection to the measures we already have in place,” Mr Arnold said.

Allowances will be made for those who cannot get vaccinated. The requirements will apply to all University of Tasmania facilities around the country, including the Rozelle campus in Sydney, NSW.

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