

Update on COVID-19 vaccination for health students



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

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Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

Vaccination against COVID-19 is a crucial part of Australia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This document outlines the position of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) regarding vaccination, how the University is responding, and what students need to do next.

Ahpra position on COVID-19 vaccination

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra), on behalf of all National Boards, has recently issued a statement outlining their position on COVID-19 vaccination for health practitioners and students. The position statement advises, consistent with the codes of conduct that govern Ahpra-regulated professions, that:

- All registered health practitioners and students are **strongly encouraged to have the full COVID-19 vaccination course as scheduled** unless medically contraindicated.
- Registered health practitioners and students are **expected to provide accurate information and advice about COVID-19 vaccination** including in social media and advertising. Any promotion of anti-vaccination statements or health advice which contradicts the best available scientific evidence or seeks to undermine the national immunisation campaign may be in breach of the codes of conduct and subject to investigation and possible regulatory action.
- All practitioners, including students on placement, must **comply with local health service or health department policies, procedures and guidelines relating to COVID-19 vaccination**. This may include policies, procedures and guidelines regarding practitioners or students who conscientiously object to receiving and/or administering the COVID-19 vaccination. The University of Melbourne further expects its students to comply with policies, procedures, guidelines and directions of the University related to COVID-19 vaccination.

We encourage you to read the full statement on the Ahpra website:

ahpra.gov.au/News/2021-03-09-vaccination-statement.aspx

Nursing students should also read the additional statement issued by the Nursing and Midwifery Board:

nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Position-Statements/vaccination.aspx

University response

The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (MDHS) supports the Ahpra position on COVID-19 vaccination, including for health disciplines not regulated by a National Board. Students of **all** health professions are strongly encouraged to have the full COVID-19 vaccination course as scheduled, except where medically contraindicated. We are working closely with our health service partners and the University Health Service to ensure all students have timely access to the vaccine.

Students should ensure they obtain written evidence of their completed course of vaccination and upload this into their Sonia portal. This will enable your school or department to determine your eligibility for placement, according to the policies and requirements of each placement organisation.

The MDHS Student Placements website will be updated regularly with information for students about the COVID-19 vaccine and evidence requirements, plus what to do if you can't be vaccinated:

mdhs.unimelb.edu.au/study/current-students/placements/students/requirements/infection/covid-19

Preparing for vaccination

The Australian Government has committed to making the COVID-19 vaccine available to all persons living in Australia free of charge. Before accessing the vaccine, you will need to ensure your Medicare details are up to date.

If you are not eligible for Medicare (for example, international students and some other visa holders), you are advised to apply for an Individual Healthcare Identifier (IHI). The IHI will enable your COVID-19 vaccination and all future vaccinations in Australia to be accurately recorded. It will also enable you access to an Immunisation History Statement, which can be used as evidence of your vaccination.

Application for an IHI requires the applicant to provide certified copies of their identity documentation and may take some time to process. Students are encouraged to submit their application for an IHI as soon as possible to minimise delays.

Further information is available on the Australian Government website:

health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/learn-about-covid-19-vaccines/what-should-i-do-before-i-get-vaccinated-for-covid-19

Further information

If you have any queries or concerns, speak with your course coordinator or contact the Health Hub via health-hub@unimelb.edu.au or by calling +61 3 8344 5890 (opt. 3)

Other resources are available online:

- [Australian Government Department of Health](#)
- [Victorian Government Department of Health](#)
- [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)
- [National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance](#)
- [Melbourne Vaccine Education Centre](#)