



Kia ora

I hope you were able to take a break over the long weekend, despite the murky weather.

This afternoon the Prime Minister confirmed that vaccination will be mandated for any workplaces that require a vaccine certificate for entry, including hospitality, events, gyms and 'close contact' businesses such as hairdressers and barbers. The Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety, Michael Wood, also announced that the Government intends a change in the law to allow employers to follow a simplified risk assessment process when deciding whether to adopt vaccine mandates for their workplaces.

Although the announcement today did not refer specifically to tertiary education providers, the Government's guidance on the new Covid-19 Protection Framework (the 'traffic light' system) does state clearly the following for the 'Red' level: *Tertiary education - vaccines required for onsite delivery, with capacity based on 1m distancing.*

We are expecting further guidance from the relevant Ministries and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) on how this will apply to tertiary education providers, and I will provide an update as the information comes to hand.

The University's position

Today's announcement on the proposed law change supports the University's preferred position on the issue of mandated vaccines. In my message of 18 October I advised that we were assessing the option of requiring staff, students and visitors to be fully vaccinated as a condition of coming onto our campuses or participating in face-to-face University-managed activities.

Given the direction from the Government today, I can confirm that this is the approach the University intends to take. A final decision will be made by the University Executive Committee (UEC) this Friday, 29 October, once we have additional feedback, to that which we have already received, from staff and student representative groups this week (see below).

As I acknowledged in my previous email, this is a complex issue, however our number one priority throughout the pandemic has been to protect the health, safety and well-being of our University community. We know from the many responses we received to the consultation on the draft vaccine policy in September, and from numerous enquiries and comments since then, that this approach is also the preferred option for many of you. At the point we are able to return to a degree of normal on-campus activity for staff and students, we will need to ensure that people feel safe and protected on our campuses.

Although we have already completed a detailed risk assessment, there will be many details still to work through, including situations where requiring a vaccine certificate is not possible or appropriate. For example, we recognise that some members of our University community may not be able to be vaccinated for medical reasons, and this will be taken into account.

Opportunity for input

The direction the University is proposing affects us all, so we are seeking your input on the proposal.

We are holding discussions this week with stakeholders across the University, including the unions and the Student Consultative Group (which comprises representatives from AUSA, PGSA, NTM and other student representative groups).

Individual students can send comments to vaccination@auckland.ac.nz by 11.00am on Friday 29 October 2021.

Thank you for your involvement in this important discussion. We will provide a further update next week.

Kia kaha

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Vice-Chancellor

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