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# COVIDSafe workplaces direction

Our workplaces direction is a control measure for managing risks related to COVID-19 at CSIRO's locations and to provide a safe place of work for our people.

*This Direction is open for staff feedback until 2 December. The requirement to be vaccinated to attend a CSIRO site has been decided by CSIRO's Executive Team and COVID-19 Situation Management Team and supported by the CSIRO Board, in the interests of workplace health and safety. While this decision is not subject to change, CSIRO will be considering feedback around the implementation of this Direction. Please send any feedback to CSIRO's [COVID-19 SMT](#).*

## CSIRO - A safe place to work

Our number one priority is the safety of our people and we take seriously any risks to health and safety at our sites. CSIRO has a legal duty to ensure the health and safety of our people and visitors at sites, and where risks to health and safety are identified, eliminate or reduce those risks.

CSIRO has identified that COVID-19 presents a risk to the health and safety of our people and anyone else coming to or working on our sites.

CSIRO is reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 on our sites by implementing a broad range of controls, including:

- requiring vaccination for all people on site, unless a medical exemption applies;
- maintaining physical distances;
- regular sanitation of our work spaces and high traffic areas; and
- ensuring that our people do not come to site if they are feeling unwell.

CSIRO recognises that a person who is vaccinated against COVID-19 is much less likely to both transmit the disease and suffer serious health effects if they catch the virus.

## Information regarding COVID-safe workplaces at CSIRO

Vaccines play an important role in managing infectious diseases and protecting the health of our communities. These therapies are used with other measures such as public health directions, case detection and isolation, personal hygiene and social distancing to control the spread of viruses.

While Australian vaccination rates are accelerating, there remains an ongoing risk to CSIRO's operations and its people, in the event that medium or large scale COVID-19 infections occur as a result of exposure at a site, or that COVID-19 infections impact other essential roles in the business, research infrastructure and platforms, and other services to the Australian community.

CSIRO considers that vaccination against COVID-19 is a critical control measure to minimise risks to health and safety and disruption to essential services to the Australian community, related scientific infrastructure maintenance and regulatory obligations.

The purpose of using vaccination as a control measure for managing risks related to COVID-19 at CSIRO's locations, is to protect individuals against exposure to COVID-19 and to, as far as reasonably practicable:

1. limit transmission of COVID-19;
2. prevent the risk of contraction of COVID-19 to CSIRO workers and the associated risk of serious illness and death for individuals who become infected with COVID-19; and
3. limit disruption to essential services to the Australian community, scientific infrastructure maintenance and regulatory obligations, resulting from a positive case.

### Who is covered by CSIRO's COVIDSafe Workplaces Direction?

This Direction covers CSIRO staff members, and Other Personnel (affiliates, contractors, visitors) and details CSIRO's requirements for vaccination against COVID-19 and disclosure of personal information in relation to vaccination status to CSIRO.

For reliable information on COVID-19 vaccinations, staff members should refer to the Australian Federal, State and Territory Departments of Health websites, and their own Medical Practitioner(s).

All CSIRO staff members and Other Personnel are required to comply with this Direction subject to, in the case of Other Personnel, any applicable contract.

If there are any legal requirements issued by an Australian Federal or State government in relation to the vaccination of certain persons against COVID-19, then those legal requirements apply in addition to this Direction. To the extent that any such legal requirements impose any stricter requirements than this, the legal requirements will prevail.

### When is the vaccination requirement effective from?

CSIRO staff members and Other Personnel are required to be fully vaccinated with a COVID-19 Vaccine as a condition of entry to an CSIRO occupied site from **1 January 2022** (Compliance Date).

### What proof of vaccination is required?

Proof of vaccination through the provision of Vaccination Information must be provided by all persons to whom this Direction applies, before any such person attends a CSIRO occupied site. If this is not provided, it is deemed for the purposes of this Direction that the person is not fully vaccinated.

### Application of an External Mandate?

Where an individual is required by external mandate (e.g. by way of a public health order, direction issued by a State, Territory or Federal health authority, or a requirement of a CSIRO client) (External Mandate) to be vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of entry to a CSIRO occupied site and the date for compliance is earlier than under this Direction, the individual is required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and provide CSIRO with Proof of Vaccination by the date required under the applicable External Mandate.

### What medical exemptions exist?

CSIRO staff members or Other Personnel who are unable to be vaccinated due to a temporary or permanent Medical Reason (in line with ATAGI Clinical Guidelines) must seek an exemption by providing CSIRO with evidence of your medical exemption from an authorised Medical Practitioner and in accordance with the requirements of your relevant State or Territory.

## Are there any other exemptions available?

If a person to whom this Direction applies performs a role considered essential by CSIRO for its continued operations and is not fully vaccinated, CSIRO may (by decision of a CSIRO Executive) permit the person to attend a CSIRO occupied site subject to the individual complying with any additional control measures imposed by CSIRO which may include, but may not be limited to, rapid antigen testing, enhanced COVID-19 safe measures and/ or attendance on site at specified times.

Only in exceptional circumstances, other exemptions may be granted by a CSIRO Executive on a temporary basis.

Examples of additional control measures that CSIRO may impose include (but are not limited to):

1. attendance at a CSIRO site on a specific date and/or a specified time;
2. a requirement to obtain a PCR or rapid antigen test in order to attend the workplace;
3. mask wearing, hygiene and social distancing requirements in the workplace;
4. a requirement not to interact face to face with other persons.

A request for an exemption should be discussed and agreed with your line manager, before being considered by the CSIRO Executive.

## When am I required to disclose my vaccination information?

Persons to whom this Direction applies are required to provide their Vaccination Information to CSIRO, before attending a CSIRO occupied site.

The purpose of this requirement is to enable CSIRO to:

1. ensure that staff members and Other Personnel who are attending CSIRO Sites are vaccinated;
2. assist with actions taken (including contact tracing) in the event of a positive case of COVID-19;
3. ensure that staff members who are attending site are provided with adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and to determine any other safety equipment or materials appropriate for use; and
4. determine CSIRO's continuing COVIDSafe operations.

## What if I need to come on site but do not wish to be vaccinated?

CSIRO staff members and Other Personnel must comply with the requirements under this Direction including as to vaccination with a COVID-19 vaccine and the provision of satisfactory Vaccination Information.

CSIRO staff members and Other Personnel who are unable to comply with the requirements of the Direction because of Medical Reasons should refer to *'What medical exemptions exist?'*

CSIRO staff members who do not comply with the requirements of this Direction may:

- Continue to work from home, if that remains an option;
- Elect to apply for a period of available (accrued and untaken) leave; and/or
- Apply for leave without pay however these will be considered for periods of up to four (4) months with longer periods considered in exceptional circumstances only;

Other Personnel who do not comply with the requirements of the Direction (except those staff members who have a valid exemption) may be refused access to CSIRO occupied sites.

## What options are there if I need some flexibility to comply with this?

Consistent with ensuring our people are supported as much as possible to get vaccinated, staff members will not be required to take leave, including reasonable travel time, to receive a COVID-19 vaccination.

Our [Coronavirus leave provisions](#) also outline the leave options that continue to be available during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, some individuals may need flexibility and additional time to consider and work through their options when it comes to vaccination. Where it is practical, individuals may consider continuing to work from home. Other leave options may also be applied for including paid and unpaid leave. Periods of leave without pay will be considered for up to 4 months with longer periods considered in exceptional circumstances.

Other Personnel should speak with their employer, educational institution and/or contact in CSIRO if they require flexibility or support in meeting the requirements of this Direction.

### What information is being collected by CSIRO?

CSIRO staff members and Other Personnel will be required to provide relevant Vaccination Information in accordance with this Direction.

In most circumstances, CSIRO will not be storing vaccination certificates or any other official documentation. Proof of vaccination will occur for most staff members and Other Personnel through the self-declaration process with line managers sighting their Proof of Vaccination either in person or over video call.

Copies of vaccination certificates will be collected from a certain class of staff members, who have been assessed as particularly high risk due to the nature of their role and have been directed to be vaccinated. Staff will be informed about approved forms of vaccination certificates, including redaction of information CSIRO does not intend to collect.

CSIRO will retain a copy of this Vaccination Information.

Proof of vaccination status should be provided in two steps:

1. self-declaration via CSIRO's Staff Central SAP system;
2. an approved form of proof of vaccination status exemption to be sighted by a staff member's line manager or, for staff members directed to be vaccinated they must provide a copy of either:
  - o COVID-19 digital Apple Wallet or Google Pay certificate;
  - o Certificate of immunisation (including COVID- 19 digital certificate) (in an appropriately redacted form);
  - o Immunisation history statement obtained from the Australian Immunisation Register (in an appropriately redacted form) or;

Medical exemption information should be provided in two steps:

1. self-declaration via CSIRO's Staff Central SAP system;
2. staff members must provide a copy of their medical exemption from an authorised medical practitioner and in accordance with the requirements of your relevant State or Territory to the case management team for review.

The collection notice in relation to the collection of Vaccination Information is available at [COVID-19 vaccination status privacy statement](#).

CSIRO will collect and store Vaccination Information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). Vaccination Information will be stored securely and destroyed or deidentified when no longer required. Access to this information will be limited to the People Insights Team and a limited number of CSIRO's SAP Services Technical Support Team.

Any employee who provides false, fraudulent or misleading information regarding their vaccination status, including fabricated or doctored Vaccination Information, will be considered to have engaged in a breach of this Direction and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Any Other Personnel who provide false, fraudulent or misleading information regarding their vaccination status, including fabricated or doctored Vaccination Information, will be considered to have engaged in a breach of this Direction and potential outcomes of this may include but are not limited to informing their employer or educational institution, suspending their access to CSIRO occupied sites on a temporary or ongoing basis and taking other available action.

### What are our responsibilities as individuals?

Responsibilities of CSIRO staff members and Other Personnel

1. comply with the obligations under this Direction and related policies ;
2. be vaccinated with a COVID-19 Vaccine if attending CSIRO occupied sites and provide Vaccination Information on or before the dates set out in this Direction;
3. notify their line manager or Business Unit leader if they wish to seek an exemption from complying with the Direction and follow the process outlined in this Direction.

### What are our responsibilities as leaders?

1. ensure staff members are aware of the requirements under this Direction
2. model, acknowledge and encourage compliance with this Direction;
3. consider both staff members' and the business' needs when applying this Direction;
4. seek help and advice from People Central or your People Partner team as required to ensure this Direction is applied appropriately.

### Glossary of key terms relevant to the Direction

CSIRO staff members and Other Personnel are required to be fully vaccinated with a COVID-19 Vaccine as a condition of entry to an CSIRO Site from 1 January 2021 (Compliance Date).

"**COVID-19**" means infection and/or disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

"**COVID-19 Vaccine**" means a vaccine against COVID-19 that has been registered and approved (including provisionally approved) by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

"**CSIRO Executive**" means a member of the CSIRO Executive Team.

"**CSIRO occupied site**" means a site owned, leased or occupied by CSIRO staff members and Other Personnel.

"**External Mandate**" means public health order, direction issued by a state or federal health authority, or a requirement of a CSIRO client.

"**Medical Reason**" means a legitimate medical reason why a person is unable to obtain a dose of a COVID-19 vaccination, being a medical contraindication or acute medical illness including a condition that increases the risk of an individual suffering a serious vaccine-related medical adverse event. Medical contraindications to COVID-19 vaccines, or applicable acute medical illnesses, may be temporary or permanent and are outlined in formal clinical advice from the Australian Department of Health to vaccine providers based on advice from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).

"**Medical Practitioner**" means a general practice registrar, a public health physician, a general physician, an infectious disease physician, a clinical immunologist, a gynaecologist, an obstetrician or a general practitioner recognised by Medicare. Examples of persons who are not Medical Practitioners for the purposes of this Direction include pharmacists, physiotherapists, chiropractors, psychologists and naturopaths.

"**Vaccination Information**" means:

1. COVID-19 digital Apple Wallet or Google Pay certificate
2. Certificate of immunisation in appropriately redacted form (including COVID-19 digital certificate (noting this is only available once an individual is fully vaccinated);
3. Immunisation history statement obtained from the Australian Immunisation Register (in an appropriately redacted form).

Note that the CSIRO will not require staff to provide other forms of vaccination information, including information relating to bookings to obtain a COVID-19 Vaccine, type of vaccination provided or Individual Healthcare Identifier (IHI).

"**Other Personnel**" means, in relation to CSIRO occupied sites, affiliates, contractors and their employees, sub-contractors and their employees, tenants and their employees and visitors, users, students, CSIRO visitors, as well as other workers.

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## In this section

[FAQs: COVIDSafe workplaces direction](#)

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### Contact

COVID-19 Response Team

✉ [covid-19response@csiro.au](mailto:covid-19response@csiro.au)

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