

COVID-19 Risk Assessment – VET Sector

Managing risks for staff, students and visitors (vaccinated and unvaccinated)

1. Work health and safety considerations

This sample COVID-19 Risk Assessment provides guidance to the VET sector in managing COVID-19 risks in accordance with Work Health and Safety legislation and NSW Public Health Orders, supporting a safe work environment for staff, students and visitors.

In summary, the following factors were considered as part of the COVID-19 Risk Assessment:

1. Control measures changing as outlined in the [NSW COVID-19 Roadmap to Recovery](#) where NSW reaches 70% and 80% fully vaccinated and then changes from 1 December; and the impact for Provider staff, students and visitors
2. Understanding and applying the settings for employees and students to work with 'at risk' populations – refer to the workgroup categories (below)
3. Personal protective equipment and other control measures as appropriate are applied.
4. Compliance with the Public Health Orders and having a COVID-19 Safety Plan

2. Workgroup categories

At risk workgroups have been categorised into four broad exposure categories (based on [Fair Work Ombudsman](#)):

- **Category 1:** where employees are required as part of their duties to interact with people with an increased risk of being infected with coronavirus (for example, employees working in hotel quarantine, border control).
- **Category 2,** where employees and students are required to have close contact with people who are particularly vulnerable to the health impacts of coronavirus (for example, employees working in health care, disability, childcare or aged care).

Within VET this applies to a range of scenarios including but not limited to:

- Students completing placements that support the attainment of qualifications in Health, Disability, Childcare or Aged Care settings.
 - Trainers conducting workplace training in Health, Disability, Childcare or Aged Care settings
 - Assessors conducting work based assessments in Health, Disability, Childcare or Aged Care settings
 - Provider support staff accessing Health, Disability, Childcare or Aged Care settings
- **Category 3:** where there is interaction or likely interaction between employees and other people such as other staff, visitors or other members of the public in the normal course of employment, for example, Provider staff delivering essential frontline services.


Within VET this applies to a range of services including but not limited to:

- Frontline staff delivering services to the general public
 - Staff or students at the Provider site including but not limited to:
 - students
 - trainers
 - assessors
 - support staff
 - student counsellors
 - cleaning / maintenance staff
- **Category 4,** where staff and students have minimal face-to-face interaction as part of their normal employment duties (for example, where they are working or learning from home).

3. Key factors in detail

- Type of interaction being undertaken by staff, students and visitors (for example contact type, duration and if there is contact with vulnerable persons)
- Nature of the work space (for example, the extent to which staff need to work in public facing roles (eg. Front office, trainer, assessor, cleaning), whether physical distancing is possible, whether work is indoors/outdoors, office and classroom elements such as layout and ventilation, and importantly whether the workplace is located in an LGA with higher

restrictions, and with reference to the [NSW Public Health Orders](#) and [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#)

- Current and/or alternative control measures in place such as personal protective equipment (PPE), QR check in, ventilation, mask wearing, and if the control measures sufficiently protect people from exposure to the virus
- Extent of community transmission of COVID-19 in the location where the direction is to be given, including the risk of transmission of the Delta variant among staff, students, visitors or other members of the community
- Effectiveness of vaccines in reducing the risk of transmission or serious illness, including the Delta variant (find out more at the Department of Health: [statement from ATAGI](#) )
- Ability to review individual staff, student and visitor circumstances, including whether they are vaccinated, their duties and the risks associated with their interaction at the site
- Consideration if staff, students and visitors have a legitimate reason for not being vaccinated (for example, a medical reason) including [medical contraindication to COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- Vaccine availability.

Important Note – The COVID-19 Risk Assessment should be reviewed and updated based on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic including the emergence of new variants, information and advice changes.

Likelihood criteria

Likelihood criteria	Description
Very likely	Will probably occur in most circumstances
Likely	Might occur occasionally
Unlikely	Could happen at some time
Very unlikely	May happen only in exceptional circumstances

Consequence criteria

Consequence criteria	Impact
Extreme	Death or permanent injury
High	Long term illness
Medium	Medical attention and several days off work/study
Low	First aid needed

Risk rating matrix

Consequence criteria <i>How serious would it be</i>	Likelihood criteria <i>How likely is it to occur</i>			
	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely
Extreme	1	1	2	3
High	1	2	3	4
Medium	2	3	4	5
Low	3	5	5	6

NB. Inherent Risk Rating (nil controls): Unacceptable (1)

NB. Residual Risk Rating (existing controls):

NB. Target Risk Rating (proposed controls and risk treatments): including **mandatory vaccination** - for industry worksites with mandatory vaccination

Risk Appetite Statement:
Providers are recommended to operate with a **zero appetite** for death or permanent injury or long term illness due to COVID-19.

Sample COVID-19 Risk Assessment

Description	Business Actions (Current controls)	Residual Risk Rating	Proposed controls or risk treatments	Target Risk Rating
Actions Providers could put in place to keep their staff, students and visitors safe and prevent exposure to COVID-19 (which could result in serious illness and/ or death)				
Exposure and type of work				
Exposure workgroup categories – Category 2, 3 and 4 where combination WFH and face to face attendance	Staff cohort working onsite, from home, in an office and/ or combination of all		Return to VET is to be based on advice from NSW Health and implementing a COVID-Safe Plan. Staff, students are encouraged to be vaccinated. COVID-Safe Operations in place and followed, including all current controls that are to be followed in line with current NSW Public Health Order	
Workgroup Category 1 Those working with increased risk of being infected.	N/A			
Workgroup category 2 Contact with vulnerable persons and at risk of potential COVID-19 exposure (industries with mandated vaccinations include: Health, Childcare, Disability, Aged Care. Construction for Greater Sydney only.	For training, assessment or placement, students and staff must be double vaccinated Follow Public Health Orders Comply with site's COVID-19 Safety Plan		Controls As Above – to be in place	

Sample COVID-19 Risk Assessment

Description	Business Actions (Current controls)	Residual Risk Rating	Proposed controls or risk treatments	Target Risk Rating
Workgroup category 3 Interaction between employees and the general public	Policies to manage and support vaccinated and unvaccinated staff, students, visitors to the site Follow Public Health Orders Comply with COVID-19 Safety Plan		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Workgroup category 4	Individuals must comply with Public Health Orders and the organisations COVID-19 Safety Plan		Controls as Above – to be in place	
Nature of the work environment				
Worksite has COVID-Safe Plan in place	COVID-Safe Plan in place		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Worksite has QR Check in codes at entry and exit points and manual check in for those unable to utilise QR Code	In place for all sites with adequate QR code posters to facilitate timely sign in and avoid overcrowding/ delays at entry points		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Working in office/ training rooms/ outdoors/ vehicle or other	Staff cohort working at site, from home or combination of both		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Work location - in a COVID-19 hotspot or LGA of concern as per NSW Public Health Orders and restrictions?	Contingent on date and NSW Health determination that office and/ or worksite within a LGA of concern		Controls As Above – to be in place	

Sample COVID-19 Risk Assessment

Description	Business Actions (Current controls)	Residual Risk Rating	Proposed controls or risk treatments	Target Risk Rating
Work area – square metres per person consideration has been implemented	Desks and workstations are minimum 1.5m apart	High	Controls As Above – to be in place	Low
If hot desks are utilised staff adhere to daily office seating limits	Staff threshold numbers in office are managed and monitored		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Consider physical, distance or other controls to protect persons at physical interaction points such as counters or service desks and common break out areas to maintain physical distancing eg. Designated line and queue spots; seating allocation clear to maintain physical distance (eg. COVID-19 'Sit Here' sticker)	In place at frontline desks eg. Administration Front office seating managed to minimum 1.5m spacing between persons utilising facilities Maximum capacity signage Manage breakout areas with 1.5 m spacing (standing dots, seats), QR check in		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Ensure staff maintain minimum of 1.5 metres physical distancing at all times (including meal breaks)	Workstations and desks are minimum 1.5m apart Common areas eg. Kitchens managed to minimum 1.5m spacing Meeting rooms have maximum number of staff allowed for COVID-Safe Operations clearly marked on posters on entry to each room		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Air quality and ventilation are considered and reviewed	Mechanical ventilation in place; annual inspections		Controls As Above – to be in place	

Sample COVID-19 Risk Assessment

Description	Business Actions (Current controls)	Residual Risk Rating	Proposed controls or risk treatments	Target Risk Rating
	<p>Avoid use of recirculated air in HVAC systems and increase the outside air intake</p> <p>If ceiling fans are used then the fan blades are to be directed to ceiling or floor that is not into people's faces</p> <p>Limit oscillation and turbulence of fans</p> <p>Exhaust fans are operational if in place</p> <p>Ventilation controls with automated settings that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy are disabled if possible</p>			
Cleaning and disinfecting in accordance with guidance from the NSW Health and other authorities such as SafeWork NSW , SafeWork Australia	<p>Hand sanitiser available in all classrooms, at all work stations and in priority locations eg. Kitchens, meeting rooms, bathrooms</p> <p>COVID-Safe Posters placed in prominent positions on all floors, entry and exit points</p>		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Infection control procedures adopted in the workplace	<p>Hand sanitiser available in all classrooms, at all work stations and in priority locations eg. Kitchens, meeting rooms, bathrooms</p> <p>COVID-Safe Posters placed in prominent positions on all floors, entry and exit points</p>		Controls As Above – to be in place	

Sample COVID-19 Risk Assessment

Description	Business Actions (Current controls)	Residual Risk Rating	Proposed controls or risk treatments	Target Risk Rating
Frequently touched surfaces including counters, handrails, door handles, phones, keyboards and facilities are regularly cleaned	Common area and meeting room surfaces are cleaned regularly by cleaning staff Recommended that cleaning staff are vaccinated Staff working using hot desks are responsible for cleaning their workstation at arrival and at finish of day		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Staff are requested to only touch items they are required to use	Staff utilising own individual technology devices including laptops, keyboards, mouse		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Plexi glass screen is installed at counters eg. concierge desks, front offices; customers are kept back from counters	In place at front offices and places where customers interact with Provider staff Distancing 'dots' and 'stand behind this line' used to reinforce physical distancing		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Payments are only accepted via tap and go	In place where applicable		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Alcohol based hand sanitiser is provided at all workstations and on entry to the premise	In place		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Posters on hand washing are prominent in office locations and hand washing facilities are available in the bathrooms.	In place		Controls As Above – to be in place	

Sample COVID-19 Risk Assessment

Description	Business Actions (Current controls)	Residual Risk Rating	Proposed controls or risk treatments	Target Risk Rating
Infection Control Fact Sheets are provided to staff who utilise fleet cars (if applicable)	In place		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Employees have been briefed on symptoms of COVID-19 and have been told to stay home and get tested if they feel unwell even with the mildest of symptoms	NSW Health and Federal Health advice on COVID-19 symptoms and what to do in the event staff feel unwell provided to all staff and students, and made available to staff, students and visitors to the site		Controls As Above – to be in place	
If a staff member or student becomes unwell at work, a process is in place to isolate them and arrange for them to be sent home to receive medical attention as per your First Aid Plan	NSW Health and Federal Health advice on COVID-19 symptoms and what to do in the event staff feel unwell provided to all staff, students, and visitors		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Employees do not have contact with delivery drivers; all paperwork is completed electronically	In place		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Soap and water for hand washing and paper towel or air dryer for hand drying is available in bathrooms, break rooms, back of house with instructional signs on hand washing	In place		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Alcohol based hand sanitiser is available in all staff areas including training rooms, bathrooms, break rooms, loading dock and	In place		Controls As Above – to be in place	

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Description	Business Actions (Current controls)	Residual Risk Rating	Proposed controls or risk treatments	Target Risk Rating
vehicles and signs are displayed on appropriate use				
Alternatives are considered for staff meetings eg. Virtual meeting rooms (eg. Teams/ Zoom), teleconferences; information shared digitally	In place		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Alternatives for students unable to attend face-to-face training	Providers must offer alternative learning methodologies (online, virtual) to students who are not vaccinated and cannot attend face to face training		Controls As Above – to be in place	
Break times are staggered to minimise the number of staff using break rooms at any one time	In place		Controls As Above – to be in place	
<u>Shared vehicles</u> are cleaned between swapping drivers	In place		Controls As Above – to be in place	
<i>(note any further/other controls in place here)</i>			Controls As Above – to be in place	
			Controls As Above – to be in place	
Additional control measures				
Staff, students, visitors and customers wearing face masks			Controls As Above – to be in place	

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Description	Business Actions (Current controls)	Residual Risk Rating	Proposed controls or risk treatments	Target Risk Rating
Rapid antigen testing availability	Providers could consider implementing Rapid antigen testing as a further control to manage COVID-19 break outs	Red	Controls As Above – to be in place	Yellow
Evidence of staff, visitors and customers vaccinated	Available currently via the Medicare application and/ or through MyGov Pending integration with Customer Service NSW QR Code application	Red	Controls As Above – to be in place	Yellow
Additional considerations depending on context				
Border Communities to follow travel restrictions as per LGA requirements	Provider staff, students and visitors who reside and/ or learning in border communities are required to ensure they fulfil LGA requirements for permits and exemptions. More information can be found here	Red	Controls As Above – to be in place	Yellow
Training Providers who co-locate with Schools	Staff and are required to be double vaccinated in line with the Public Health Order for Education, if there are shared spaces such as canteens, break out areas, libraries etc... The provider is required to check vaccination status of staff and visitors to the site in line with the Public Health Order for Education	Red	Controls As Above – to be in place	Yellow
		Red		Yellow

