

Monday 13th December 2021

Dear Student

COVID-19 VACCINATION STATUS AND CONTINUATION ON YOUR COURSE.

As you may be aware, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has recently announced that all NHS workers in England will by law need to have completed an approved course of vaccinations against Covid-19 before they can be deployed in roles that involve face to face contact with patients/service users. The DHSC's policy reason for this is that non-vaccinated people working in a health or social care setting would pose a risk to patients, as well as to themselves. These laws will come into effect, subject to Parliamentary approval, on 1 April 2022, and are expected to remain in place indefinitely, and probably for many years. It has been confirmed that this mandate also applies to all healthcare students undertaking a placement.

In light of the above, from 1 April 2022 at the latest, your placement provider(s) will be required by law to confirm that you have completed your approved course of Covid-19 vaccinations. However, in practice we are already finding it very difficult to arrange placements for students who have not completed their Covid-19 vaccinations, or at least given a firm commitment to do so.

Because of this requirement we have been collecting data on our student Covid-19 vaccine uptake rate, so we know that many of you have already been vaccinated against Covid-19. We appreciate though that for some, deciding whether or not to have the Covid-19 vaccination is a difficult decision. If this applies to you there are a number of resources that can help you make a decision which can be accessed via your programme Moodle site?

We are writing to you now because we want to give you early notice of these changes, and to help you to decide what to do next as soon as possible. We respect each student's decision, though we do need to make it clear that, **if ultimately you decide (or have already decided that) you do not wish to be vaccinated against Covid-19, we will need to make arrangements for you to leave your current course.** This is because it would not be possible for you to achieve the mandatory learning outcomes of your course without undertaking clinical placements, and access to these placements is reliant on you being vaccinated.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

If you are fully vaccinated or have had part of the Covid-19 vaccination course and not already done so, please download the NHS App. The App gives you access to your vaccine record and will be required by your placement provider as evidence of vaccination. We recommend that you do this at your earliest convenience, to confirm that the App shows your accurate vaccination record. Correcting any errors in your records may take time to resolve. Where relevant, please complete your vaccine

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course and receive your booster dose. Failure to do so will mean that your placement provider will not allow you to attend placement.

If you are not vaccinated and wish to continue with your course, please attend your nearest vaccination centre **as soon as possible**. To be fully vaccinated by the DHSC's statutory deadline of 1 April 2022, you will need to have received your first dose of the vaccine by no later than 3 February 2022.

If you are medically exempt from the vaccine we will discuss and review this on an individual basis with support from occupational health. Please contact your programme leader as soon as possible to minimise the risk of disruption to your studies. We are aware that placement providers intend to take a robust approach to their decisions about medical exemptions.

If you are not vaccinated and do not intend having a Covid-19 vaccination, please let us know as soon as possible. We will work with you to secure an alternative course at the University of Greenwich or discuss your other options (transferring your credits to study with another institution or withdrawing from your current course). We appreciate that choosing not to be vaccinated and having to leave your course is an enormous decision and we will do all we can to support you through this.

If you have any queries about this email, please make contact with your programme leader or personal tutor or contact the University wellbeing services.

We wish to reassure you that we are absolutely committed to support you in meeting the latest changes in law and government guidelines and thereby enable you to successfully complete your studies on your chosen course or, if needed, an alternative.

Best wishes



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