

Further message on vaccination / regular testing

Friday, May 28, 2021, 16:28PM

Dear Members of the University,

Since our announcement on vaccination and regular testing for the fall semester, some follow-on questions have arisen. Our sole motivation for these procedures is the restoration of the collaborative environment best suited to realize our academic mission in a responsible manner. Like many universities worldwide, we believe that encouraging vaccination along with regular testing is the most effective means to do so safely.

These measures are necessary even though the number of local Covid-19 cases is currently small:

1. The pandemic remains unpredictable and we continue to witness quickly developing trends in many parts of the world, including places that have controlled Covid-19 well in the past;
2. Hong Kong's international character increases the risk of new outbreaks associated with the reopening of borders;
3. HKUST will resume on-campus teaching and research collaboration in September. Consequently, there will be a high concentration of people in hostels, canteens, classrooms, libraries and laboratories; and
4. The University has a responsibility to provide members with a safe and healthy environment for work and study.

For all the above reasons we encourage all members of the University to be vaccinated, or be required to undergo testing every two weeks. This scientifically-valid approach is appropriate, reasonable and legally sound while balancing our respect for personal choice along with our responsibilities for public health.

We would like to provide additional information on implementation of this policy:

- Two rounds of on-campus vaccination will be arranged for the convenience of all University members – including staff families, domestic helpers and regular service contractors on the campus. Both BioNTech and Sinovac vaccines will be given in the first round scheduled on 23 June (1st dose BioNTech) and 24 June (1st dose Sinovac), and 21 July (2nd dose BioNTech) and 22 July (2nd dose Sinovac). Booking details will be announced separately. Special arrangements will be made for students who arrive in Hong Kong after that.
- All members are encouraged to arrange their vaccination using the on-campus service or Community Vaccination Centers and to have their 2nd dose on or before 1 August to allow time for sufficient levels of antibodies to develop before the Fall term starts.
- Vaccines may have side effects of different levels of severity. Those with health concerns are encouraged to seek medical advice at our campus clinic or with their own medical doctors. Anyone who feels unwell after vaccination is entitled to sick leave according to normal policy.
- For members who have medical proof that they are not suited for vaccination, the university will subsidize their testing. Others who choose not to be vaccinated for various reasons will have to undergo the two-weekly testing at their own expense.
- Students who choose to undergo regular testing but have financial difficulties can apply the [COVID-19 Student Hardship Relief Fund](#). Staff in Band 1 and 2 are also eligible for financial subsidies. Details will be announced in due course.

- An online reporting mechanism will be in place by mid-August for members to self-report their vaccination status or test records, which can be either reports of laboratory PCR tests or rapid COVID test kits. Specific details of the reporting requirements will be provided in due course. The Campus Medical Clinic will help manage submitted vaccination and testing records, all to be handled in accordance with the privacy law requirements.
- Non-complying members will receive reminders, followed by warning. If non-compliance persists, disciplinary actions will be taken.
- Arrangements will be made with contractor companies for vaccination or regular testing of on-campus contractors. Occasional visitors to the campus will not need to comply with the vaccination or testing requirement.

Additional information is available at <https://covid19info.ust.hk/>. The [FAQ](#) on vaccination will be regularly updated to cover the latest details. Those with further questions can send their enquiries to safety@ust.hk.

The pandemic has brought hardship and challenges to everyone. In order to resume our normal campus activities, we need to take responsible steps as announced. We sincerely hope that our members can all work together to address the public health challenges.

With warm regards,

Mark HODGSON, Vice-President for Administration and Business
T C PONG, Vice-President for Administration and Business (Designate)
Samuel YU, Director of Health, Safety and Environment