

MEMBER UPDATE

Required-vaccination policy introduced at Alberta post-secondary institutions

Workers will need proof of vaccination; exemption for medical or other protected grounds

Nine Alberta universities and colleges have updated their COVID-19 pandemic protocols to require all staff, students and visitors to be fully vaccinated in order to attend campuses.

As workers at these post-secondary institutions, you will be required to provide proof of vaccination.

The nine institutions today (Monday, Sept. 13, 2021) announced that rapid testing will no longer be accepted as an alternative to vaccination, except for those who cannot be vaccinated based on medical or other protected grounds outlined in the Alberta Human Rights Act.

These people will be required to follow the self-declaration exemption procedures already in place at their post-secondary institution and will be reasonably accommodated.

The affected universities and colleges are:

- University of Alberta;
- University of Calgary;
- University of Lethbridge;
- MacEwan University;
- Medicine Hat College;
- Mount Royal University;
- NAIT;
- SAIT; and
- NorQuest College.

Many of you may have questions about this policy and how it will affect you. While we don't have all the answers yet, we will be working with your employers.

On Sept. 3, AUPE's Executive issued a statement outlining your union's position on employer-mandated COVID-19 vaccine policies. You can see the full statement at aupe.org.

In that statement, AUPE encourages members to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect themselves, their families, their colleagues and vulnerable members of the public. Not only are vaccines a critical tool for protecting individual Albertans from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but they are also important to prevent the overextension of Alberta's health care services.

For the protection of AUPE members and the general public, AUPE says it will support a policy requiring members to be vaccinated against COVID-19 provided the policy:

- Respects the terms and conditions of applicable collective agreements.
- Complies with human-rights legislation. When an individual is not able to be vaccinated on the basis of a medical condition, or other protected ground under the Alberta Human Rights Act, employers must accommodate the individual to the point of undue hardship.
- Complies with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations.
- Does not impose discipline on members for non-compliance but provides non-disciplinary alternatives to vaccination (work from home or reassignment where possible and leave of absence without pay as a last resort).

We will continue to consult with employers and other unions to ensure we can keep protecting the health and safety of the public, the health and safety of workers and the rights of members.

You can find out how to get proof of your vaccination status here at www.alberta.ca/proof-of-vaccination-faq.aspx.

Please continue to check aupe.org for future updates. If you have questions, contact the Member Resource Centre by calling 1-800-232-7284.