

Touchstone Institute COVID-19 Vaccine Policy

Purpose

Touchstone Institute takes the health and safety of its staff and examinees very seriously. As an assessment centre that works directly with healthcare professionals, it is extremely important to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in our workplace. The COVID-19 global pandemic presents an unprecedented challenge to public health. Emerging variants of the coronavirus are becoming more contagious, with a greater risk of severe illness and hospitalization. Vaccination against COVID-19 is one of the best ways to protect ourselves and others; full vaccination has been shown to be effective in reducing COVID-19 virus transmission and protecting vaccinated individuals from severe consequences of COVID-19 and COVID-19 variants.

This policy applies to all individuals who work with or attend Touchstone Institute programs or events, including but not limited to full time, part time and casual employees, consultants, and examinees (hereinafter referred to as Stakeholders).

This policy aligns with recommendations from the City of Toronto Vaccine Policy Toolkit, the Ontario Human Rights Code's COVID-19 guidelines and provincial/municipal public health guidelines.

Policy

In light of the emerging new variants and evolving public health advice, Touchstone Institute is implementing vaccination requirements for all Stakeholders to access our workplace and assessment centre.

All Stakeholders will be required to be fully vaccinated with a World Health Organization approved COVID-19 vaccine by November 8, 2021. Exceptions will be made to those with a documented exemption, as outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Fully vaccinated is defined as 14 days after receiving a second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or a single dose of a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine series.

Process

Beginning immediately, all Stakeholders will be required to formally attest their COVID-19 vaccination status in order to visit Touchstone Institute's offices and assessment centre.

Staff who are not fully vaccinated will have until Monday November 8, 2021 to receive a full dose of a World Health Organization approved vaccine, with the required 14 day immunity period after the second shot takes place.

Stakeholders attending a Touchstone Institute assessment who are not fully vaccinated prior to November 8, 2021 must conduct a Rapid Antigen COVID-19 Test upon arrival to our

assessment centre. All other Touchstone Institute staff must continue to work remotely until November 8, 2021 and are not permitted to enter the office.

Salaried staff who are not fully vaccinated by November 8, 2021, will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence. Casual staff who are not fully vaccinated by the above date will not be hired to work events on site. Examinees registered for in-person exams will be required to be fully vaccinated by the above date.

Salaried or casual staff who make false attestations about being vaccinated may be subject to disciplinary actions including termination.

Accommodations for Exemptions

Touchstone Institute will consider requests from Stakeholders for exemptions to this policy as per the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#). Requests for such exemptions will follow the process outlined in Touchstone Institute's Accommodation Policy.

Exemption requests should be addressed to the appropriate staff contact as listed below. All exemption requests will be considered with the appropriate medical or written documentation to support the request. Touchstone Institute reserves the right to make the appropriate inquiries when necessary to verify the authenticity of the exemption request.

Ongoing COVID-19 Safety Protocols

All existing COVID-19 safety protocols will continue to be implemented at Touchstone Institute's offices and assessment centre, including but not limited to:

- COVID-19 screening upon arrival
- Mandatory masking for all Stakeholders
- Additional PPE (gloves, gowns, face shields) available upon request
- Physical distancing where possible
- Increased sanitization of frequently touched surfaces
- Improved building ventilation and air circulation

COVID-19 Vaccine Information & Support

Touchstone Institute is committed to providing fact-based information and resources for Stakeholders regarding the Health Canada and World Health Organization approved COVID-19 vaccines.

- [Ontario's Vaccination Program](#) – Information regarding [COVID-19 vaccine safety](#), potential side effects and [how to book an appointment](#).
- [Health Canada's Ask the Experts Video Series](#) – Medical experts answer common questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, including information about testing and trials, vaccine safety and how COVID-19 vaccines work.

- [City of Toronto – COVID-19: About the Vaccines](#) – Information on how COVID-19 vaccines were developed and approved, risks and side effects and effects of vaccines on populations including pregnant women, children and people with health conditions
- [COVID-19 and Ontario’s Human Rights Code](#) – Questions & Answers
- [World Health Organization COVID-19 Mythbusters](#)

Privacy Considerations

Individual vaccination status of employees will be used strictly to mitigate the health-related risks of COVID-19 as outlined in this policy. Stakeholder vaccination information will be protected in accordance with Ontario’s Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

When collecting information about a Stakeholder’s vaccination status:

- All information collected will be kept separate from a Stakeholder’s personnel or examinee file
- Vaccination information (including Stakeholder name and attestation) will be kept in a secure manner and shared only with staff members who require information for recruitment, staffing and planning purposes

Touchstone Institute may share cumulative aggregate numbers with staff and others; specifically, the percentage of vaccinated versus unvaccinated staff, human rights exemptions and/or rapid testing positivity rates.

Duration and Review

COVID 19 is an ongoing concern. The organization may update and revise this policy at any time, without notice.

This policy is in effect until such time as the organization chooses to discontinue it. This policy is effective as of September 10, 2021

Staff Contact

Stakeholders who have questions about this policy, would like to request an accommodation, or would like more information on how to comply should contact:

- **Sara Bull, Senior Manager, Human Resources & Program Support** (main contact for Touchstone Institute employees, including support staff, standardized clients and examiners)
 - S.Bull@tsin.ca, 416-355-5038
- **Suzanne Bambrick, Chief Operating Officer** (main contact for Touchstone Institute examinees)
 - S.Bambrick@tsin.ca, 416-355-5031