

# Provisional authorisation for vaccinators and the Provisional Vaccinator Foundation Course

## Frequently asked questions

As part of the New Zealand COVID-19 response, it is essential that all immunisation services continue. This course aims to develop an immunisation workforce to support the MMR campaign, influenza 2021 and the COVID 19 vaccine programme.

For these reasons, a pathway to provisional authorisation for vaccinators has been developed. The Provisional Vaccinator Foundation Course (PVFC) is the educational component of this pathway. To administer any COVID-19 vaccine, all qualified/authorised and provisional vaccinators will need to produce evidence that they have completed the online COVID-19 specific education course.

### Who can do this course?

This course is available to HCP with a current annual practising certificate (APC) eg, Well Child Tamariki Ora nurses, Registered Nurses working in Aged Care, Māori and Pacific health providers, school registered nurses, pharmacists not already vaccinating and enrolled nurses. Health science students such as third year student nurses and fourth year medical students can also complete this course.

Health professionals with expired APCs who wish to contribute to the COVID-19 vaccination programme, are recommended to register their interest with the Ministry of Health surge workforce

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-health-professionals/join-covid-19-surge-workforce>. At this stage we have been advised that a decision on further extension of interim or COVID practising certificates will be dependant the workforce requirements.

We are continuing to work with the Ministry of Health regarding a vaccinator pathway for those health professionals who have not traditionally vaccinated in New Zealand settings, but who have expressed an interest in being part of the COVID-19 vaccination response.

NOTE: if you have completed a Vaccinator Foundation Course (VFC) in the last 5 years, but did not do a clinical assessment, or have let your vaccinator status lapse by not completing the required 2-yearly updates, please contact your local immunisation coordinator to discuss the requirements to renew or achieve vaccinator status (either as a pharmacist or authorised vaccinator).

If you have let your vaccinator status lapse and are not working in area that offers vaccination services, but you have capacity to support a vaccination programme, we would suggest that you register for the Ministry of Health surge workforce, as undertaking completion of CPR and a vaccinator update comes with associated costs to regaining your vaccinator status.

### How long is this course available for?

IMAC are offering this course through to end of April 2021.

### Is the course free?

Yes, this course is free and available online on the IMAC website, [immune.org.nz](https://immune.org.nz). You will need to create an account on [IMAC Learning](#). To access this FREE course, please email [imacetadmin@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:imacetadmin@auckland.ac.nz) for registration instructions (we will reply to you within 2 to 3 working days).

## What does the course cover?

The online component covers information on vaccine preventable diseases, the immune system, the National Immunisation Schedule, vaccine composition and safety, storage of vaccines and informed consent. The live webinar tutorial will focus on vaccine administration. When a COVID-19 vaccine/s become available, an **additional** online course/s will be available for **all vaccinators** to complete.

The peer assessment process is separate to this course and should be arranged with an experienced vaccinator in your workplace.

For those needing to be authorised to administer National Immunisation Schedule vaccines or wanting to be pharmacist vaccinators, you will need to enrol in a full Vaccinator Foundation Course (VFC). Please see the IMAC education flyer for course details, which can be found on the IMAC website [immune.org.nz](http://immune.org.nz).

## What will provisional authorisation cover?

Once the course, assessment and peer review are completed (and you have received your authorisation letter from IMAC) you will have provisional authorisation to administer influenza and MMR vaccines to those aged 3 years and older.

Pharmacists are currently restricted to those 13 years and above for influenza (funded and unfunded) and 16–50 years old for MMR. In the future any COVID-19 vaccine could be added to this authorisation, following completion of a further education module.

The provisional authorisation allows you to vaccinate anywhere in New Zealand. Your provisional authorisation will expire on 30 June 2022. It is recommended that all provisionally authorised vaccinators work as part of a vaccination team, that includes experience authorised or pharmacist vaccinators.

## What are the steps to obtain provisional authorisation?

Request access to the PVFC (email [imacetadmin@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:imacetadmin@auckland.ac.nz) for registration instructions).

1. Complete:
  - a. 4 hours online learning
  - b. 1-hour webinar tutorial
  - c. Online assessment (40 multiple choice questions).
  - d. A peer assessment of your clinical skills (minimum of two patients required).
2. Apply for provisional authorisation (you will need to have an appropriate CPR certification)
3. If not currently certified at CPR, book to complete a CPR course (See [Appendix 4](#) of the Immunisation Handbook for requirements).

## Do I have to be authorised by a Medical Officer of Health?

No, instead of Medical Officer of Health sign-off, provisional vaccinators are being authorised nationally by the Director of Public Health. Once you have completed all the requirements and sent through your application for authorisation, IMAC will review the details and send you an authorisation letter.

## Can health students and paramedics become provisional authorised vaccinators?

Final year Nursing Students, 4<sup>th</sup> year Pharmacy Students and 4<sup>th</sup> Year and onwards medical students are eligible to apply for provisional authorisation following completion of the course and peer assessment. Health students who hold provisional authorisation are only able to vaccinate when working as part of team that includes registered health professionals who are either authorised or pharmacist vaccinators.

Students applying for provisional authorisation will need to send in a copy of their student ID and transcript as evidence of their enrolment in their course of study.

For paramedics, once the Paramedic Council has a registration process in place and paramedics complete this process, they will be able to apply for authorisation. Until then paramedics can administer vaccines under standing orders.

### **Who can provide my peer assessment?**

A currently authorised and experienced vaccinator or pharmacist vaccinator who is willing to assess you in your workplace can provide a peer assessment. An experienced vaccinator is someone who has been vaccinating for at least two years. They will observe your vaccinations of at least two patients and fill in a peer-review form. The form is available on the IMAC website, [immune.org.nz](http://immune.org.nz) on the Written Resources page under 'Standards'. They are also available through the online tutorial materials.

### **What if I don't have access to an experienced vaccinator to do my peer assessment?**

Contact your local immunisation coordinator to discuss this. If you do not currently work in an area that offers vaccination services, it may not be possible to complete the assessment until you are working within/alongside a vaccination service or as part of a COVID-19 vaccination programme. There is not a time limit for when you must complete your clinical assessment.

### **Do I need a standing order or prescription for my peer assessment?**

Yes, you will need a standing order or prescription to give the vaccines as part of your peer assessment. Once you have obtained your provisional authorisation, the standing order and prescription requirement is no longer needed for the administration of MMR or influenza vaccines. However, if you are administering other vaccines you will require standing orders or prescriptions for these vaccines.

### **How long does the provisional authorisation last for?**

Your provisional authorisation will expire on 30 June 2022.

To continue vaccinating after your provisional authorisation has expired, you will need to complete a specific IMAC bridging course, complete a clinical assessment by an immunisation coordinator and apply for authorisation from the Medical Officer of Health, or let PSNZ know if you are a pharmacist.

### **How do I apply for my provisional authorisation?**

You need to complete the online course, online assessment and peer assessment. Then complete the Provisional Authorisation application form email this application form, along with requested documentation **and** your completed peer assessment form to the IMAC Education Office PVFC registrations ([imacreg@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:imacreg@auckland.ac.nz)) to receive your provisional authorisation. Once approved, the office will email you a letter of authorisation.

You must send a copy of your peer assessment and letter of authorisation to your local immunisation coordinator. Your local immunisation coordinator's details are found on the IMAC website [immune.org.nz](http://immune.org.nz) under 'Regional advisors and local coordinators'. It is recommended that all provisionally authorised vaccinators work as part of a vaccination team, that includes experience authorised or pharmacist vaccinators.

### **Do I need a CPR certificate?**

You will need an appropriate CPR certificate to apply for provisional authorisation. If you do not hold a current CPR certificate, you will need to enrol and complete an appropriate CPR course as soon as practically possible.

Refer to Appendix 4 of the [Immunisation Handbook](#) for the requirements of CPR courses for vaccinators. Not having a CPR certificate will not prevent you from completing the course or online assessment.

### **Do pharmacists need to apply for provisional authorisation following the course?**

Yes. As they have not completed the full requirements to be a pharmacist vaccinator, they are required to be authorised to give influenza and MMR vaccine. If a pharmacist wants to give the full scope of pharmacy vaccines, they will have to complete a full Vaccinator Foundation Course (VFC) and process.

### **What happens if my job changes and I want to administer other vaccines?**

You will need to complete a full VFC and meet the requirements of an authorised vaccinator or pharmacist vaccinator to administer other vaccines. If after June 2022 you wish to continue vaccinating, there will be a VFC specifically designed for you to become a fully authorised vaccinator or pharmacist vaccinator. This course will be available from November 2021 until the end of 2023.

## The Provisional Authorisation pathway

