

Provisional authorisation for vaccinators and the Provisional Vaccinator Foundation Course

Frequently asked questions

The Provisional Vaccinator Foundation Course (PVFC) supported the development of an expanded immunisation workforce for the MMR campaign, influenza 2020 & 2021 and the COVID 19 vaccine programmes, as part of New Zealand's pandemic response.

Completing the PVFC course, including the assessment and peer review component, will enable you to apply for authorisation to administer influenza and MMR vaccines to adults and children from age 3 years.

All qualified/authorised and provisional vaccinators will need to complete an additional module specifically about COVID vaccines to administer the COVID vaccines.

How long is this course available for?

Registrations for this course are now closed. Those already registered for the course need to have completed the course before 31 December 2021. The last date for sending in completed authorisation applications is 31 March 2022, application received after this date will not be processed.

Who can do this course?

This course is available to the following healthcare professionals (HCPs) with a current annual practising certificate (APC)

| | |
|--|--|
| Registered and Enrolled Nurses | We recommend RNs and ENs working in PHC delivering the range of National Immunisation Schedule vaccinations complete a full vaccinator foundation course and process. |
| Pharmacists | The PVFC will only give a limited scope and for a limited time. If you want to give the full scope of pharmacy vaccines, you should complete a full vaccinator foundation course and process. |
| Health science students | Final year student nurses, midwives, pharmacists and paramedics Fourth year onwards medical students |
| Registered Midwives | Midwives are not required to complete the PVFC as they are prescribers. However, midwives are welcome to complete the PVFC should they choose to. A midwife providing COVID-19 vaccine/s is required to complete the COVID-19 vaccinator education course. |
| Paramedics | |
| Physiotherapists | |
| Occupational Therapists | |
| Medical Radiation Technologists | Registered in these scopes of practice: Medical Imaging Technologists, Radiation Therapists, Nuclear Medicine Technologists, Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists and Sonographers |
| HCPs registered Medical Sciences Council of New Zealand | Registered in these scopes of practice: Medical Laboratory Scientist, Medical Laboratory Technicians, Medical Laboratory Pre-analytical Technicians and Anaesthetic Technicians |
| Dietitians | |
| Speech-language Therapists | |
| Registered Optometrists | |
| Clinical Physiologists | Registered with the Clinical Physiologists Registration Board |

| | |
|--|--|
| Podiatrists | |
| HCPs registered with Dental Council | Registered in the following scopes of practice: Dental Hygienists, Dental Therapists and Oral Health Therapists |

What about retired health professional or those with expired APCs?

We currently have a large active workforce willing and able to work as vaccinators. For those people returning to the workforce, there are a few more checkpoints to go through with their regulatory bodies before they undertake a clinical role.

Health professionals with expired APCs who wish to contribute to the COVID-19 vaccination programme, are advised to register their interest with the Ministry of Health [Hands Up](#) website. Please keep an eye out for updates on your regulatory council's website (eg Nursing Council) for information on interim or COVID-19 practising certificates. They may also wish to consider the COVID-19 Vaccinators – Working Under Supervision course (see below).

Retired health professionals, who intend to gain current registration and employment on the COVID-19 vaccination programme can enrol on the PVFC using your expired APC. Until you have a current APC you will not be able to complete all the requirements to become provisionally authorised.

There are costs associated with becoming a vaccinator, these may be covered by your employer. Although the PVFC is free, there are costs associated with CPR certification and the recommendation to carry indemnity insurance.

What about internationally trained health professionals?

Internationally trained health professionals who do not hold a current NZ APC are not able to gain authorisation.

Internationally trained health professionals may be eligible to undertake the COVID-19 Vaccinators – Working Under Supervision workforce pathway and should register their interest via the Ministry of Health [Hands Up](#) website to be involved in the COVID-19 programme.

COVID-19 Vaccinators – Working Under Supervision course

This course is for those not registered as health professionals with a regulated body, but with healthcare experience in support roles and healthcare professionals whose Annual Practising Certificate (APC) has lapsed for over three years, or healthcare professionals who are not registered in New Zealand. Please see the [IMAC COVID-19 website](#) for more information.

Release of information to DHBs

On DHB request, we will forward contact details of any HCP registered for the PVFC in that DHB region. This is for the specific purpose of supporting planning by the COVID-19 vaccination response leads, and to support course participants' peer assessment and potential involvement in the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

What if I have already done a vaccinator course?

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). You do not need to do the PVFC and will be referred to the most appropriate course for your area of work.

If you are a HCP with a current APC but have let your vaccinator status lapse, and/or are not working in an area that offers vaccination services and wish to support the vaccination programme, we would also recommend that you register for the Ministry of Health [Hands Up](#).

Is the PVFC course free?

Yes, this course is free - please complete the form on the education page at immune.org.nz (we will usually reply to you within 3 days of receiving your application). You will need to create an account on [IMAC Learning](#). Although the PVFC is free, there are costs associated with CPR certification and the recommendation to carry indemnity insurance.

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 video focuses on vaccine administration.

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

For those wanting to administer National Immunisation Schedule vaccines or wanting to be pharmacist vaccinators, you should enrol in a full Vaccinator Foundation Course (VFC). Please see the IMAC education flyer on our website (immune.org.nz) for course details (go to 'Health professional', 'Education' and see under the 'Registration and payment' subheading).

How long will the online learning take?

The duration of this course will depend on your background knowledge and learning style. Parts of the online course are optional (as indicated). You should allocate a minimum of 4 hours, although those with less familiarity around vaccination and/or of online learning tools should be prepared to take longer if necessary. Outside of the course, note that the Immunisation Handbook and clinical advice is always available via our website and the 0800 line.

What will provisional authorisation cover?

Once you have met all the necessary criteria and 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 vaccinating those 13 years and above for influenza (funded and unfunded) and those aged 16–50 years for MMR.

The provisional authorisation allows you to vaccinate anywhere in New Zealand. It is recommended that all provisionally authorised vaccinators work as part of a vaccination team, that includes experienced authorised or pharmacist vaccinators.

To administer COVID-19 vaccines, all vaccinators need to complete the appropriate COVID-19 vaccination education module. A copy of your certificate from the COVID-19 Vaccinator Education Course should be sent in with your provisional authorisation.

What are the steps to obtain provisional authorisation?

1. Completion of:
 - a. ~5 hours online learning
 - b. Online assessment (40 multiple choice questions).
 - c. 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 local Medical Officer of Health?

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

Can health students become provisional authorised vaccinators?

Final year Nursing, Midwifery, Pharmacy and Paramedic Students, and 4th 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.

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 2 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) 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?

If you do not currently work in an area that offers vaccination services and you have tried to access a peer assessment through local providers without success, please contact the IMAC COVID-19 contact for your region (see below). Once there are sufficient numbers in your area, they may be able to arrange for you to attend an immunisation clinic to be assessed or hold a simulated assessment.

For some course participants, 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.

| IMAC COVID-19 Contact | |
|---|--|
| For Auckland area register your interest here | |
| Olivia Haslam – Midland region | olivia.haslam@auckland.ac.nz |
| Melanie Miller – Central region | melanie.miller@auckland.ac.nz |
| Sue Rogers – South Island | sue.rogers@auckland.ac.nz |

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. For your peer assessment you are able to administer vaccines other than Influenza or MMR, provided they are covered by the standing order or prescription you are working under and that you have sufficient knowledge about the vaccine to gain informed consent. 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 authorisation letter will advise you of the expiry date, which will be two years from the date of authorisation. It is not possible to extend or review your provisional authorisation. To continue vaccinating after your provisional authorisation has expired, you will need to complete the educational and additional requirements to become either an authorised or pharmacist vaccinator. See Bridging Course information on next page.

How do I apply for my provisional authorisation?

You need to complete the online course, online assessment, and peer assessment. Complete the [Provisional Authorisation application form](#) and email to vaccinatorauthorisations@health.govt.nz along with the necessary documentation including your completed peer assessment form. Once approved, the Ministry will email you a letter of authorisation. **The last date for sending in completed authorisation applications is 31 March 2022, application received after this date will not be processed.**

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) under 'Regional advisors and local coordinators'. It is recommended that all provisionally authorised vaccinators work as part of a vaccination team, that includes experienced authorised or pharmacist vaccinators.

Do I need a CPR certificate?

You need an appropriate CPR certificate to apply for provisional authorisation. If you do not hold a current CPR certificate, you need to enrol and complete an appropriate CPR course as soon as practically possible. Currently appropriate CPR certificates that are less than 12 months expired are being accepted.

Appendix 4 of the Immunisation Handbook outlines the requirements of CPR courses for vaccinators. A range of providers offer courses (eg, internet search CPR courses for vaccinators). Check with the course provider that the course they are offering includes the following:

- infant, child and adult CPR, including mouth-to-mouth, mouth-to-mask and the management of choking
- administration of IM adrenaline for treatment of anaphylaxis
- use of an automated external defibrillator
- one- and two-person bag valve mask ventilation and mouth-to-mask technique.

It is the vaccinator's responsibility to ensure that these core components are covered. Employers may require a higher level of CPR and more frequent updates than is necessary as a vaccinator. You can obtain your CPR certificate before or after completing your online assessment but need the CPR certification before submitting your authorisation application.

If you hold a CPR qualification that did not cover all the required topics, especially recognition and management of anaphylaxis IMAC has 'top up' training available for vaccinators please see the [Education](#) page on the IMAC website for more information. This is only available for those health professionals working in geographical area who are at COVID Alert Level 3 and 4, or where access to appropriate training is challenging such as in large rural areas This is an interim allowance and vaccinators are expected to complete in-person training as soon as possible.

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 need to complete a full VFC and meet the requirements of an authorised vaccinator or pharmacist vaccinator to administer other vaccines.

When will a bridging course be available?

We are working with the Ministry of Health around the requirements and process for a course that will allow provisionally authorised vaccinators to progress to become authorised vaccinators. The bridging course will be available to support vaccinators who will provide National Immunisation Schedule vaccines to those under 6 years of age, with a particular focus on equity. Once more information is available, we will add it to the Education page on our website. The bridging course is likely to be available from end of February 2022 and will have a targeted roll out.

The Provisional Authorisation pathway

