

September 2, 2021

Dear Edward,

We are writing to acknowledge receipt of your recent open letter concerning the University's mandatory proof of vaccination policy.

The University of Waterloo respects the freedom of our community to express their opinions. The academic freedom of our community members to express their views is essential to the scholarly mission of the University. However, academic freedom comes with [responsibilities](#). There will always be legitimate points of scholarly debate that are best addressed in academic fora with peers.

Our institution's response to the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be based on the best available advice from public health officials and is intended to meet our obligations to protect that health and safety of our community.

There is now overwhelming evidence that vaccines are safe and that [they will protect individuals from the worst of COVID-19](#). Ensuring high rates of vaccination remains the most important way we can protect public health during the pandemic and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Our approach is based on direction from Government of Ontario and the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health have made it a requirement of Ontario law that we implement a proof of vaccination policy. Individuals can ask for an accommodation on medical or protected human rights grounds.

Getting back to in person experiences as soon as possible is crucial for our youth who have borne the brunt of the effects of the pandemic. That's why we have planned for a fall term that creates an expanded in-person experience for all, while putting measures in place to protect and promote safety. These include:

- Mandatory proof of vaccination policy
- Rapid antigen screening program
- New wastewater testing in some residences
- Health Services COVID-19 Vaccination and testing centre
- Capacity limits in classrooms
- Physical health and safety protocols including masking and enhanced cleaning
- Updated signs and visual aids
- Improved ventilation and filtration

We urge you all to engage with academic colleagues in the scholarly community who have been examining the overwhelming evidence regarding the safety and effectiveness of the COVID vaccines.

Sincerely,



Vivek Goel, CM
President and Vice-Chancellor



James W.E. Rush
Vice-President, Academic & Provost

