

1 October 2021 3.13pm

All student email from Professor Allan Evans, Acting Vice-Chancellor

Dear Students,

As we complete another successful round of graduations, I have taken the opportunity to thank all UniSA staff for their efforts to minimise the multiple impacts of COVID-19 disruptions on student progress. It hasn't been ideal, and no one would have wished for the situations we have found ourselves, but the fact that students continue to complete their studies and have the ability to walk across the stage in front of family and friends to collect their parchment from the Chancellor is something worth celebrating. Virtual graduations, which have been common interstate and overseas, don't quite hit the mark!

The entire UniSA community has worked extremely hard these past two years to ensure our own safety and I want to thank everyone again for excellent compliance with social distancing and mask use (destined to become just a little more frustrating as the summer months arrive).

While South Australia has, so far, avoided many of the longer-term COVID-19 restrictions that are prevalent interstate, there is no guarantee that our situation will remain trouble-free in the coming months. Until we reach the appropriate vaccination targets, any outbreaks in South Australia may lead to temporary restrictions, including the possibility that staff and students will be unable to attend campus. And when the virus does move through South Australia, as I believe it inevitably will, we will be challenged in much the same way that Victoria and NSW are currently being challenged.

You are no doubt aware that some universities interstate have recently mandated vaccination for people wishing to attend campus – students, staff and visitors. While UniSA has not, at this point, taken such a step, I cannot guarantee that vaccination will not become mandatory, at least for a period of time, for attendance at UniSA campuses.

Indeed, COVID-19 vaccination has been mandated for students who need to attend certain placement sites, particularly health services, as part of their studies. This is no different to the requirements that have been in place for some time around vaccination against other serious diseases. Accordingly, students in certain health programs have been informed that lack of vaccination may impair their progress through their degrees as we may not be able to secure appropriate health placement for their studies. UniSA relies a great deal on our industry partners and I believe it is their prerogative to request students (and UniSA staff) be vaccinated before attending their premises or engaging with their staff, clients and customers.

For your own protection, and for the protection of your colleagues and those who for medical reasons are unable to be vaccinated, I would like to encourage you to make COVID-19 vaccination a priority. This will not only provide you with an immediate health benefit, but it will ensure we can keep any future disruptions to your studies at UniSA to a minimum.

On the University's [COVID-19 website](#) you will also find a range of useful information and resources. Vaccination is our best path to restoration of the lifestyle and activities and events we long for, and together it is a contribution we can all make to shaping our future.

Regards,