

# Touchstone Institute COVID-19 Vaccine Policy

Revised March 8, 2024

## 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. Vaccination against COVID-19 is the best way to protect ourselves and others 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 has been informed by provincial and municipal public health guidelines.

## Policy

Touchstone Institute has implemented vaccination requirements for all Stakeholders to access our workplace and assessment centre.

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

Click [here](#) for the definition of fully vaccinated in Ontario. We also strongly recommend everyone receive all vaccines/boosters they are eligible for in addition to this minimum requirement.

Examinees registered for in-person exams will be required to be fully vaccinated by their exam date.

Any person making false attestations about being vaccinated may be subject to disciplinary actions including termination or examination ban.

## 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

COVID-19 safety protocols will continue to be implemented at Touchstone Institute's offices and assessment centre, and may include:

- Optional 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

## Masking

Following guidance from Public Health of Canada, the City of Toronto, and other large health employers, such as the University Health Network (UHN), Touchstone Institute will make masking optional for staff, stakeholders, and candidates attending our assessments and programs, effective immediately.

We will continue to closely monitor the situation and adjust our policy if needed.

### Please note:

- If you are testing positive for COVID- 19, please contact Touchstone Institute staff immediately prior to event day
- While masking is now optional, it is still highly recommended for those who:
  - have symptoms of a respiratory virus
  - are caring for someone who is sick, or
  - are a close contact of someone who is sick.
- **Touchstone Institute will continue to follow other stakeholder's masking guidelines when administering their programs, e.g. the, Medical Council of Canada.**

We encourage everyone to review and continue to follow the [Toronto Public Health's Self Screening Tool](#). Although masking is optional, if you are more comfortable wearing a mask, please continue to do so." Touchstone Institute will continue to supply masks for all participants.

## 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

## 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:

Vaccination information will be kept in a secure manner and shared only with staff members who require information for recruitment, staffing and planning purposes

## 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.

## 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:

- **Georgina Ankrah, Manager, Human Resources** (main contact for Touchstone Institute employees, including support staff, standardized clients and examiners)
  - [HR@tsin.ca](mailto:HR@tsin.ca), 416-924-8622 EXT 2296
- **Suzanne Ward, Operations Coordinator** (main contact for Touchstone Institute examinees)
  - [info@tsin.ca](mailto:info@tsin.ca), 416-924-8622

