



Press Release
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COVID-19 Vaccination not a Requirement for Face-to-face Classes - CHED

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) on Monday announced that students and higher education institutions (HEI) personnel, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status, can now participate in face-to-face classes.

“We’re allowing vaccinated and unvaccinated students, employees and faculty members to now go to face-to-face classes or report back to work. That is the revised policy as of today,” said CHED Chairman Popoy De Vera in a virtual press conference.

CHED issued the Guidelines on the Implementation of Face-to-face Classes in Higher Education in December 2021.

“So much has changed over the past seven months as we continue to ensure the safe reopening of classes. Our decision making is always data-driven, based on science and the advice of experts. Given the high vaccination coverage in the higher education sector, changes in the characteristics and behavior of the virus, classification of the country as low-risk, and benchmarking of policies with other countries it is now time to change the 2021 policy,” De Vera said.

He added that additional health and safety measures, such as use of health declaration form and body temperature check, will now be left to the discretion of the HEIs.

“It is important that we look into more recent events and understand the need to constantly evolve and update our guidelines for face-to-face classes in higher education,” De Vera said.

This policy change is supported by the Department of Health (DOH), represented by Dr. Razel Nikka M. Hao, and distinguished health experts including Dr. Joselito F. Villaruz of West Visayas State University; Dr. Michael L. Tee of University of the Philippines Manila; PGH Director Dr. Gerardo Gap D. Legaspi, Dr. Regina P. Berba, and Dr. Ralph Elvi Villalobos of University of the Philippines - Philippine General Hospital (UP PGH); Dr. Rontgene M. Solante, Dr. Anna Ong-Lim, and Dr. Benjamin Co, Infectious Diseases Specialists.

These medical professionals provided clarifications on the considerations during the online press conference.

“Currently, most areas in the country are in Alert Level 1 and our case classification remains to be at low-risk. A deeper look in the disaggregation of COVID-19 cases tells us that the 18-25 age group has remained constant and low. Lastly, with our benchmarking, we have seen that other countries such as Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand and Singapore have already removed vaccination mandates in higher education,” Hao said.

“Existing research shows that the proportion for severity of cases and fatality rate remains to be low with the Omicron variant, the predominant variant in the country. We can also observe the importance of being vaccinated and that the unvaccinated has more chances to experience hospitalization and severe cases,” Villalobos added.

As HEIs continue to reopen campuses for face-to-face classes, CHED Chairman De Vera reminds the higher education community to continue to adhere to strategies proven to help stop the spread of COVID-19, including: (1) Minimum Public Health Standards (MPHS) - “Mask, Hugas, Iwas”, (2) Continuous Development of COVID-19 Response Protocols and Healthy Learning Institutions, (3) Information Campaign on the Benefits of COVID-19 Vaccines and, (4) Participation in the DOH PinasLakas Campaign on Booster Shots.

The Commission will meet with public and private HEIs to discuss the details of the policy change and will inform the IATF, through the DOH of its decision this week.



J. PROSPERO E. DE VERA III, DPA

Chairman

Commission on Higher Education