

International students and vaccine recognition Q&A

I have received a non-MHRA jab overseas do I need a top-up in the UK and why?

All authorised vaccines are available free of charge across the UK, regardless of nationality, residency or immigration status and are available from thousands of vaccine centres, GP practices and pharmacies.

Recipients of a vaccination which is not recognised by the UK authorities should contact their GP or a clinician at a vaccination centre to discuss whether further vaccination is appropriate.

Public Health England have issued [guidance](#) for clinicians who need to decide whether to provide further vaccination to individuals vaccinated outside the UK.

If a person has received a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine overseas that is also available in the UK, they should receive the same vaccine for their second dose, provided they meet UK eligibility criteria

If the vaccine they received for their first dose is not available in the UK, the most similar alternative should be offered.

Is getting a top-up/mixing vaccines from overseas safe?

Recipients of a vaccination outside the UK, should contact a GP or a clinician at a vaccination centre to discuss whether further vaccination is appropriate. Clinicians will only advise additional vaccination where this is safe.

If I get a top-up will I be recognised as fully vaccinated and can I apply for vaccine certification

Current clinical guidance advises that individuals should not seek to receive a further course of vaccination on top of their vaccines unless explicitly advised. The primary purpose of receiving a vaccination is to ensure individuals are provided with health protection against COVID-19.

For travel certification purposes, the NHS Covid Pass will only show 2 vaccine doses - the first and last vaccine dose an individual has received. Mixed doses, including of MHRA vaccines, currently do not qualify for relaxed health measures at the UK border.

How can I be recognised as vaccine certified? When will be recognised as vaccine certified?

Currently only people fully vaccinated under the UK government vaccination programme can be certified using the NHS Covid Pass. The NHS COVID Pass is

available to those who are resident in England with an NHS number. GP registration is required to access the Covid Pass via the NHS App.

An individual is fully vaccinated 14 days after completing a full course of an MHRA-authorized vaccine, whether that requires two doses or one dose (according to the MHRA authorised schedule). The day you have your final dose does not count as one of the 14 days.

What can I do if I am vaccine certified?

Voluntary certification is currently in operation in England to help limit the risk of transmission in their venues and events as the country reopens. This is a choice for organisations and is at their discretion. Individuals may be required to demonstrate proof of their Covid-19 status upon arrival to these venues. It is down to businesses which forms of proof they accept.

Considering the latest data on the state of the epidemic, the Government will not introduce mandatory vaccine-only certification in September. It would, however, be part of the Government's Plan B if the data suggests action is required to prevent unsustainable pressure on the NHS.

There are some essential settings where certification should not be used. These include essential services and public transport.

If I have had my vaccination overseas do I need to quarantine on arrival?

For students arriving before 4am on 04 October 2021, they should continue to follow the [relevant travel guidance](#).

Rules if you're fully vaccinated from 4am on 04 October 2021

From 4am on 04 October, if you're coming to England from a non-red list country and have been fully vaccinated with a vaccine approved by the bodies listed in this guide you do not have to quarantine on arrival.

Approved vaccines

From 4am Monday 4 October, a student will be considered fully vaccinated if they can demonstrate that they have completed a full course of vaccination at least 14 days prior to arrival, under or with one of the following:

- an [approved vaccination program in the UK, Europe, US or UK vaccine programme overseas](#)
- a full course of the Oxford/AstraZeneca, Pfizer BioNTech, Moderna or Janssen vaccines from a relevant public health body in a **number of countries** for the latest list please see **this link**
- a formally approved COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial in the US, Canada and Australia and have a proof of participation (digital or paper-based) from a public health body

Rules if you are not fully vaccinated

As of 4am on 04 October 2021, if you're coming to England from non-red list country and are not fully vaccinated with an authorised vaccine you must:

- quarantine on arrival at home or in the place you're staying
- take a day 2 test after you arrive in England – on or before day 2
- take a day 8 test after you arrive in England – on or after day 8

The day you arrive is day 0. If your day 2 test is positive you do not have to take the day 8 test.

How long to quarantine for?

Passengers that have been fully vaccinated with vaccines authorised by the EMA/Swissmedic in European countries (EU Member States, European Free Trade Association countries and the European microstate countries of Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City) and the FDA in the US have been able to travel to England without quarantine, or a day 8 test.

From 4 October, this list will be extended to the inbound vaccination policy for 17 new countries including Japan, Singapore and Canada, following the success of an existing pilot taking place in the US and Europe. This full list can be found [here](#) and will be reviewed regularly.

For other travellers, it does not matter how long you're visiting England you must quarantine at home or in the place you're staying for:

- 10 full days
- for the duration of your trip if it's less than 10 days

If I have had my vaccination overseas do I have to self-isolate if I am a close contact of someone who has tested COVID positive?

Currently only those vaccinated in the UK are exempt from self-isolation if in close contact with someone who has tested COVID positive.

Are vaccines safe?

Vaccines are now safer than ever before. Any vaccine must first go through the usual rigorous testing and development process and meet strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness before it can be deployed.

Millions of people have had a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine and the safety of the vaccines continues to be monitored. Reports of serious side effects are very rare.

Common side effects

Like all medicines, the COVID-19 vaccines can cause side effects, but not everyone gets them. Most side effects are mild and should not last longer than a week, such as:

- a sore arm from the injection
- feeling tired
- a headache
- feeling achy
- feeling or being sick

The MHRA is the UK's independent regulator. Its role is to ensure medicines, devices and vaccines work effectively and are safe for use.

We have some of the highest safety standards in the world and the MHRA is globally recognised for requiring high standards for quality, safety and medicines regulation.

There are extensive checks and balances required by law at every stage of the development of a vaccine. The data looked at includes all the results from laboratory studies, clinical trials, manufacturing and quality controls and testing of the product. The public should be very confident that all tests were completed to the very highest standards.

The MHRA makes sure the vaccines meet strict international standards for safety, quality and effectiveness. Once a vaccine is approved, it's closely monitored to continue to make sure it is safe and effective.

Are vaccines delivered in the UK safe?

All vaccines used in the UK must be approved by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Its role is to ensure medicines, devices and vaccines work effectively and are safe for use.

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Each COVID-19 vaccine candidate is assessed by teams of scientists and clinicians on a case by case basis and is only authorised once it has met robust standards of effectiveness, safety and quality set by the medicines regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

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MHRA approved COVID-19 vaccines have been tested on thousands of people in the UK and around the world, including:

- people from different ethnic backgrounds
- people aged between 18 and 84
- children and young people aged between 12 and 17
- people with different health conditions

Who can I ask if I have questions about the vaccine?

If international students have further questions regarding vaccines, they should consult the COVID-19 vaccination FAQs for students in Higher Education Institutions which has been published by NHS England and provides a range of important information. Students can also read about being an international student in England during the pandemic.

Students should be directed to nhs.uk/covid-vaccination for more information about the Covid-19 vaccine. Students should be directed to www.gov.uk for information on COVID restrictions.

Why should I get a vaccine?

Anyone who catches COVID-19 can become seriously ill and may also suffer long-term effects of the disease (long COVID). The COVID-19 vaccines are the best way to protect yourself and others.

Research has shown the vaccines help:

- reduce your risk of getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19
- reduce your risk of catching or spreading COVID-19
- protect against COVID-19 variants

There is a chance you might still get or spread COVID-19 even if you have a vaccine, so it's important to follow advice about how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19.

97.9% of the population in the United Kingdom are now showing antibodies to COVID-19, from both infection and/or vaccination, compared to 18.9% that have antibodies from infection alone.