

Dear students,

In light of the COVID-19 epidemic situation and newly enforced regulations, we wish to update you on how the University will facilitate the return of educational activities after the summer break. We begin by introducing you to the obligations regarding the possession of a COVID-19 Green Certification. Under Italian Law Degree no. 111 of August 6, 2021, all those who wish to access university facilities must possess a COVID-19 Green Certification\*). We are writing this letter based on two main considerations, your health and your education.

Health concerns are due to the rapid global spread of new variants that can destroy the immune system with relative effectiveness, making the eradication of the virus nearly impossible. Therefore, we must accept and learn to live with this virus and its variants. We must get used to varying levels of reductions and reoccurrences of infection rates, especially when prevention measures are lacking. However, the growing vaccination coverage has drastically reduced the clinical impact of the disease (considering subjects >12 years old and with 67% of the population fully vaccinated). The significant reduction in the number of hospitalizations and deaths is a clear result of the vaccination campaign. Therefore, we must understand both the need to extend vaccination coverage and the importance of maintaining measures to prevent the spread of the infection to vaccinated subjects; this includes limiting exposure to crowded indoor spaces.

The second consideration is of an educational purpose. We spent two years teaching in emergency conditions: complete lock-down periods, limited to remote lessons, and alternating with periods in which only a portion of lessons delivered in-person. This meant that each student still maintained a certain quota of online lessons, away from in-person university life. It was a necessity. We are most grateful to the teachers, the technical-administrative staff, and the students themselves for making the continuity of teaching possible. We are grateful for the level of effectiveness, even under these conditions, thus avoiding a negative impact on students' careers. However, we are well aware that we have sacrificed the essence of university life. Daily interactions between professors and students, and the academic relationships between fellow students both in and outside the classroom. We are setting a goal for ourselves for the next academic year with the full resumption of teaching in person, with the possibility for students to follow all the lessons.

As such, according to the law and in compliance with safety conditions, all students in possession of the COVID-19 Green Certification may access university classrooms without shifts. We also guarantee to those who do not have a COVID-19 Green Certification, or who are unable to reach the university, access to online lessons.

Furthermore, starting September 1 the COVID-19 Green Certification is required to access in-person exam locations, as well as other university facility (classrooms, libraries, laboratories, study rooms, departments, offices, etc.).

Measure to prevent the spread of the virus shall remain active according to the guidelines available on the university website, including but not limited to, the mandatory use of masks

inside university structures, entry and exit flow according to the indicated routes, periodic ventilation of the premises, and availability of sanitizing solutions, etc.

This effort is not only important for you and us it is a necessity. The restart of the country after the dramatic health crisis is due to the level of competence and enthusiasm that your generation has proven, and for this reason, we must restore the fullness of academic and university life. We want to see you all back in Padua. It is an important year, the 800th Anniversary of the foundation of our University, born, as you know, not from an imperial or papal decree, but from the spontaneous will of students and professors to share science and culture. There will be no better way to celebrate our history and our identity than to have all our students back with us on our campus.

We patiently wait for your return,

Rector Rosario Rizzuto

Rector-elect Daniela Mapelli (Vice-Rector for Teaching and Education)

\* In detail, the law decree establishes the following:

- 1) Starting from September 1, 2021, until December 31, 2021 university students must possess and show a valid COVID-19 Green Certification
- 2) Only those who are exempted from the vaccination campaign based on a valid medical certificate issued and defined by the Italian Ministry of Health are excused from possessing and showing a COVID-19 Green Certification
- 3) Verifying COVID-19 Green Certifications will be based on a manner chosen by the university.