

UConn Mandatory Workforce COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Frequently Asked Questions

Revised 10/22/21 (Revisions/Additions Highlighted)

On August 18, 2021, UConn implemented a policy requiring all of our workforce to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The full UConn policy and related materials are available on the HR [website](#). The following guidance consists of frequently asked questions regarding the policy, including information on the process, timing, and expectations. If you have additional questions, please contact hr@uconn.edu.

General Questions

1. Why is UConn mandating COVID-19 vaccinations?

UConn is committed to protecting our students, employees, and communities from COVID-19. To this end, and in consideration of guidance released by the state of Connecticut, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and a variety of public health authorities and professional organizations, UConn is mandating vaccination for its workforce. The COVID-19 vaccines that are available are safe and effective, and being vaccinated against COVID-19 is the best way to prevent sickness, infection, subsequent transmission of the virus, and death. With the emergence of the Delta variant, a highly contagious version of COVID-19, we feel strongly that widespread vaccination, now more than ever, is a critical tool in slowing or stopping the pandemic and in protecting our community.

2. I am a UConn Health employee. Am I subject to the UConn policy?

While our policies and procedures are similar with UConn Health, they do vary slightly due to UConn Health's clinical responsibilities. UConn-Health employees who work in UConn Storrs/Regional facilities should follow the policies and procedures established for UConn Health employees regarding required COVID-19 vaccines. For information on the UConn Health policy, please go to [their website](#).

3. Who is included in this UConn mandatory vaccination policy?

The COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Policy applies to currently active or new Workforce Members as defined in the policy *regardless of whether a) they work on-site, b) remotely, c) their state of residence or d) are paid from Regular or Special Payroll*, unless the individual qualifies for a medical or religious exemption or a personal deferral for specific situations as provided by the [policy](#) and [procedures](#):

- All UConn non-union and non-represented employees, including gratis employees
- All members of UCPEA, AAUP – Storrs and GEU (Post Docs)
- All members of State classified unions (NP-2, NP-3, NP-5) – mandatory vaccine reporting and testing only at this time. Additional information can be found on the Human Resources website in the coming days following the Governor's Executive Order.
- Employees on any type of approved University leaves such as FMLA, Military Leave and sabbaticals - deferrals may apply and the Office of Human Resources will communicate individually with these employees.



Contractors and Vendors – application of the Policy is currently under review and other University Offices are addressing implementation and communications.

Graduate Assistants who are members of GEU and student workers will only be subject to the student vaccination policy.

4. I work fully remote; do I need to comply with this policy?

Yes. This policy applies to all of our workforce, regardless of whether they work on-site or remotely. Workforce members working remotely outside of Connecticut remain subject to the policy.

5. Are there any exemptions to this policy?

Yes, and the deadline to apply is September 1, 2021. For more information on exemptions, please review our policy [guidance and procedures](#) or scroll to the Exemptions section of the FAQ.

6. When are the deadlines for vaccination(s)?

All workforce members must receive their first dose of the vaccine (and upload proof of vaccination) no later than September 10, 2021, and any applicable second dose (and upload proof of vaccination) no later than October 15, 2021. Workforce members who receive the single dose vaccine must do so by October 15, 2021. Workforce members will not be considered to have met these deadlines without uploading proof of vaccination.

7. When is the deadline to upload proof of vaccination if I already am fully vaccinated?

September 10, 2021.

8 Where can I schedule a COVID-19 vaccination?

Appointments can be scheduled in a variety of ways, including:

- Via UConn Health at 860-679-5589;
- Via your own medical provider if you are not a UConn Health patient
- Via another provider identified through the [state's vaccination portal](#).

9. Do I have to receive my vaccination via UConn Health?

No. Workforce members are not required to receive vaccination at UConn Health; they can receive the vaccine from any health provider.

10. Which vaccines are being accepted through this policy?

Workforce members will meet the COVID-19 vaccine requirement if they have been vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine that has either been authorized for use in the United States by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or been authorized for use outside of the United States by the World Health Organization (WHO). A workforce member who has received a vaccination for COVID-19 that does not meet the above standards for approval shall be handled on a case-by-case basis.

11. Can I schedule my vaccination appointment during work hours?

Yes.

12. I recently received and accepted an offer of employment at UConn. Does this policy apply to me?

Yes. New hires are required to have at least one dose of an authorized vaccine or have an approved exemption by their first day of employment.

13. What if I refuse to get vaccinated and I am not granted an exemption?

HR will refer non-compliant workforce members to Employee Relations to begin progressive discipline. Any workforce member without an approved deferral or exemption (including those with pending deferral/exemption requests) must comply with the University's protective guidelines (including weekly testing and masking) during the period of non-compliance while disciplinary action is pending.

14. As a manager, am I able to ask workforce members about their vaccination status? If not, will HR provide that information to managers?

No, managers are prohibited from asking workforce members about vaccination or exemption and deferral status and HR will not provide managers with that information. Workforce members may disclose their status at their personal discretion. Managers should approve requests by workforce members to be tested during work hours. Managers who are concerned about workforce members taking excessive time to undergo testing may contact Human Resources.

15. If I feel sick after my vaccination, will the University provide me with paid leave? If so, for how long?

Availability of paid time off varies by employee type and union affiliation. In general, employees who are ill should stay home and leave, whether paid or unpaid, will be determined in accordance with applicable collective bargaining contracts or policy.

16. At what point will the University lift its masking mandate?

The University reviews its infection control guidelines regularly, and these are adjusted based on both local transmission and other factors, as well as guidance from CDC and the CT Department of Public Health. Both CDC and DPH currently recommend universal masking for all individuals, regardless of vaccine status, in shared indoor spaces, based on the level of local transmission in CT. The University anticipates that requirements will evolve over time, and we'll keep the UConn community updated with changes.

17. Will the University require vaccine booster shots?

Currently, third doses are being provided to immunocompromised individuals, and the federal government recently recommended that preparations be made for booster doses for the general public in the coming weeks and months. Human Resources is exploring any University response to these evolving issues. More information will be shared, when available.

18. Are Graduate Assistants subject to the Mandatory Workforce COVID-19 Vaccination Policy?

No, Graduate Assistants are subject to the provisions of the student vaccination [policy](#).

Exemptions

19. What types of exemptions or deferrals are allowed?

We are allowing exemptions based on medical or religious reasons as well as personal and medical deferrals. Detailed information on the exemption and deferral processes is contained in our [policy guidance and procedures](#).

20. Am I allowed to opt out of a COVID-19 vaccination without a deferral or medical/religious exemption?

No, all workforce members are mandated to be vaccinated unless they have an approved deferral or medical/religious exemption.

21. What is the deadline to apply for an exemption?

Workforce members must request a medical/religious exemption or deferral no later than **September 1, 2021**. If a workforce member is unable to obtain documents to support their exemption request by the deadline workforce members will be granted up to thirty (30) days after submission to upload additional supporting documentation or as required by our process. More detailed information on this timeline is contained directly on the exemption forms.

22. How do I upload or submit exemption forms and supporting documentation?

Workforce members must upload their exemption request forms via our [COVID-19 Vaccine Registry](#).

23. What if I have a medical condition that prevents me from getting vaccinated?

Workforce members who believe that they have a medical condition that prevents them from receiving or necessitates a delay in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine may request a medical exemption or deferral. Workforce members requesting a medical exemption or a medical deferral must complete and submit Section I of the [Medical Exemption, Medical Deferral, or Personal Deferral Request form](#) by **September 1, 2021**. If a Workforce member is unable to obtain documents to support their exemption request by the deadline the employee will be granted up to thirty (30) days to submit information from their healthcare provider to support their request for an exemption. Detailed instructions on this requirement are located on the Medical Exemption, Medical Deferral, or Personal Deferral Request form.

24. Which medical conditions will be considered for exemption?

Examples of medical conditions that will be considered for exemption include:

- A documented history of severe or immediate-type allergic reaction to any ingredient of **all** currently available COVID-19 vaccine brands. (Vaccine ingredients for each of the vaccine brands is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/eua/index.html>. There must be a documented severe or immediate-type allergic reaction to an ingredient in all currently available vaccines, medical contraindications to all currently available vaccines, or a combination that would not allow an individual to receive any of the currently available vaccines.
- A documented history of severe allergy or immediate-type hypersensitivity reaction to a previous COVID-19 vaccination, and also a separate contraindication to all currently available COVID-19 vaccine brands.

25. What conditions are being considered for a postponement or deferral of COVID-19 vaccination?

A. Examples of medical conditions that may qualify for deferral include:

- Active treatment for a medical condition that is contraindicated with the vaccine.
- Prior positive COVID-19 test within specified time frames
- Scheduled surgery

B. Examples of non-medical conditions include pregnancy (proof required) or breastfeeding (no proof required).

Additional details and timing allowances for these conditions are outlined in the [COVID-19 Vaccination Medical Exemption/Deferral Request Form](#).

26. I had COVID-19 infection earlier this year and tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies. I am otherwise healthy and not taking any medications. Why am I required to get a vaccine?

At this time, we do not know how long someone who had COVID-19 is protected from a repeat infection, whether the person tested positive for the COVID-19 antibody or not. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that reinfection is possible, the CDC recommends that individuals who were previously diagnosed with COVID-19 still get the vaccine, regardless of whether their infection caused them to be symptomatic or asymptomatic.

Workforce members may request a deferral of vaccination if they have had a COVID-19 positive test within the last 30 days or if they were treated with Monoclonal Antibody infusion within 90 days of the request.

27. What if I have a sincerely held religious or spiritual belief that prevents me from getting vaccinated?

Workforce members may request an exemption on the basis of a sincerely held religious or closely held spiritual belief, in accordance with the University's [Religious Accommodation Policy](#), that prohibits them from receiving the COVID-19 vaccination by completing the [Religious Exemption Request](#) form.

28. Are there any additional circumstances in which I may qualify for a personal deferral?

Workforce members under very limited circumstances may qualify for a personal deferral. Those qualified workforce members may request a personal deferral by completing and uploading the [Medical Exemption, Medical Deferral, or Personal Deferral Request form](#) by **September 1, 2021**.

Only the following circumstances will be considered for a personal deferral:

- Pregnancy (proof of pregnancy required)
- Breastfeeding for a period of twelve (12) months from the birth of the child
- Currently on block leave and will not return to work until after September 10, 2021. Workforce members on an approved block leave are not required to complete the weekly testing requirements outlined in this policy.

29. If I am approved for an exemption or deferral (as listed above), what if any additional requirements must I comply with?

If a workforce member is approved for an exemption or deferral, the workforce member will be required to comply with the following protective measures:

- Receive a weekly COVID-19 NAAT or PCR test (not rapid antigen).
- Must follow the present travel guidelines for out-of-state travel with HR documentation and obtain a COVID-19 NAAT or PCR (not rapid antigen) test before returning to work following any out-of-state travel that lasts 24 hours or more. Additional testing following travel may be required under the instruction of the COVID-19 Call Center clinicians.
- Be required to wear a mask at ALL times while present at work (except in a private office or other authorized workspace).
- Be required to eat separated from others by not less than 6 feet and mask removal permitted only while actively consuming food.

Updates to these requirements may be made based on evolving state and federal public health guidance.

30. I am currently awaiting a decision on my exemption or deferral request. Do I need to follow these additional requirements?

Any workforce member who is awaiting a decision from the Exemption Committees and in which no decision has been made by September 10, 2021, must also comply with weekly testing and the other additional protective measures mentioned above.

Testing

31. When will mandatory PCR testing begin for unvaccinated workforce members or any individual who has not registered their vaccine status by September 10th?

Weekly testing will begin September 11, 2021 (testing weeks will run Friday – Thursday).

32. I currently have an approved deferral/exemption and am required to be tested weekly. Am I allowed to choose where I receive my test?

No. Workforce members at UConn Storrs/Regionals who must complete mandatory PCR testing must undergo testing at UConn-sponsored testing centers. Workforce members must register for testing by following directions from HR.

33. Can I complete my mandatory weekly testing during work hours?

Yes.

34. Do I have to get the test on the same day every week, or in the same location?

No. Further instructions on scheduling the mandatory weekly tests will follow in subsequent communications.

35. Do I need to get tested even if I am on vacation or on sick leave? (Updated 10/22/21)

You are required to comply with mandatory weekly testing only if you report to work (whether virtually or on-site) at some point during that week. You will not be required to get the weekly test if you are on vacation for the entire testing week (Friday - Thursday); however, workforce members remain subject to testing requirements related to out-of-state travel.

36. PCR testing appointments weren't available– should I schedule an antigen test?

No.

37. Are workforce members responsible for paying for mandated PCR testing?

No, mandatory PCR testing will be paid for by the University and workforce members must register via UConn-provided testing procedures.

38. How long will I be required to complete weekly PCR testing?

For those who have a temporary deferral, these protective restrictions will end as soon as they are fully vaccinated as defined in this policy. Otherwise, there is currently no planned end date to mandatory weekly testing for unvaccinated workforce members at this time. UConn will continue to monitor the current risk level of COVID-19 and continually re-assess requirements to ensure community safety.

39. Will PCR testing will be mandatory for vaccinated workforce members?

Human Resources intends to offer voluntary and random surveillance testing for all vaccinated workforce members on a weekly basis during the fall semester.

Vaccine Registration System

40. How do I report my vaccination status to the University?

Workforce members may report their vaccination status and upload supporting documentation (or seek a deferral or exemption) through an online portal on the HR [website](#).

41. Which types of proof of vaccination is UConn accepting?

Acceptable forms of proof of vaccination include your COVID-19 Vaccination Card or a screenshot of your vaccination record from a medical portal (e.g., MyChart) that includes the dates and type of vaccine. Please ensure that your download or screenshot does not include any additional medical information.

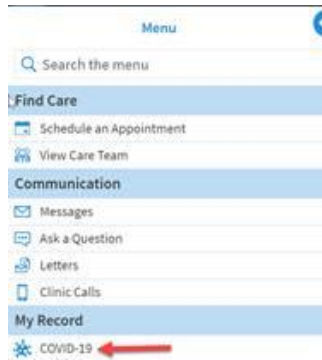
42. Will UConn accept proof of vaccination obtained in another country?

Yes. Though UConn encourages its workforce to receive FDA-approved vaccinations, we will accept proof of vaccinations that have been authorized by the World Health Organization (WHO). International workforce members must present proof of vaccination in the form of a copy of the WHO Certificate of Vaccination (WHO Vaccine Booklet) or documentation to include a statement signed by a healthcare provider/organization authorized to administer the vaccination attesting to the dates and name of

COVID-19 vaccination given. All documentation must be submitted in English or accompanied by a certified translation at the workforce member's expense.

43. I was vaccinated via UConn Health and I lost my vaccination card; how do I get a replacement?

1. Go to: <https://mychart.uconn.edu/>
2. Sign in to your My Chart account
3. Click on Menu on the upper left-hand side
4. Click on COVID 19



5. Click the down arrow



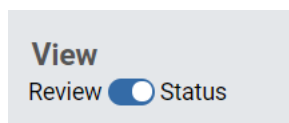
6. Once the Test Results are expanded, take a picture from your phone or use Snipping tool to copy the image

44. I lost my COVID-19 Vaccination Card and wasn't vaccinated via UConn Health. How do I obtain proof of vaccination?

If you have lost your COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card, did not receive your vaccination through MyChart, and are unable to get an additional copy from your provider, you may call the Department of Public Health (DPH) at (860) 509-7929 to request your Official Immunization Certificate from the CT Immunization Information System (CT WiZ) at the Department of Public Health.

45. My vaccine submission was sent back to me – what do I do? (NEW)

In certain circumstances, an employee's vaccine submission may be illegible or have the incorrect documentation. Upon review, HR will "send back" the employee's submission through the online system. Employees will receive a generic email alerting them to the return. Employees should select "View Item" within the email and review the comments at the top of the form. Employees may need to check "Review/Status" on the left-hand of the screen to access their submission information.



46. What are my responsibilities as a contractor or vendor? (NEW)

Contractors and vendors whose primary place of work is in or on property owned or controlled by the state, but not a contractor or employee of an outside vendor who visits properties owned or controlled by the state only to provide one-time or limited-duration repairs, services, or construction must comply with Gov. Ned Lamont's [Executive Order No. 13D](#). If you are unsure as to whether you are subject to the Governor's Executive Order, please contact ubs@uconn.edu.

Contractors and vendors who work on the UConn Health campus may need to comply with additional requirements and should review [UConn Health's website](#) for additional information.

The University of Connecticut may, at any time, require a contractor or vendor to verify compliance with the Executive Order.

47. Are campus visitors required to be vaccinated? (NEW)

At this time, visitors are not required to be vaccinated to be on campus. Visitors are guests to campus for non-routine activities, such as a guest lecturer. All visitors must abide by the University's [visitor guidance](#).

48. How is the University defining volunteers under the policy? (NEW)

The University considers individuals with a gratis appointment to be volunteers under the vaccine policy. Individuals with gratis appointments must provide proof of vaccination – or seek a deferral/exemption – through the online [portal](#).

Other volunteers, including individuals who frequent campus or an off-campus University-sponsored event for a specific purpose on a routine or expected schedule, such as an individual participating in a research study or a patron or supporter of a University department or group (e.g., WHUS), are not subject to the vaccine policy. Instead, such individuals would only need to provide the department they volunteer with their vaccine information (departments should not maintain copies, just a record of review). Departments may decide whether unvaccinated volunteers may continue to come to volunteer for their respective department. All volunteers must abide by the University's [visitor guidance](#).