

Employee Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is UC sharing a proposed policy? When will a final policy be ready?

Starting in April, the University began engaging its community in a discussion about the details of a proposed COVID-19 vaccination policy. The consultation process indicated strong support for moving forward with a COVID-19 vaccination requirement now. UC is working on the policy details and expects that a final policy will be ready in mid-July, ahead of the start of the fall 2021 academic term. To maintain campus safety, the COVID-19 vaccination requirement will apply not only to faculty, academic appointees and staff, but also to students, postdoctoral researchers, trainees and all persons as a condition of physical access to UC facilities or in-person UC programs.

2. Does the proposed policy require vaccination for all employees or only those who work on-site?

The requirement to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination (or to submit a request for exception on medical, disability or religious grounds, or a deferral based on pregnancy) will take effect for faculty, academic appointees and staff as a condition of their in-person access to UC locations or programs two weeks prior to the first day of instruction in the fall of 2021 academic term (or, for locations not on academic calendars, two weeks prior to September 1, 2021). Even if the employee's job does not ordinarily require them to work on-site, they would still need to provide proof of full vaccination (or submit a request for exception or deferral) before attending mandated staff meetings or trainings in person.

3. What are the consequences of non-compliance for employees?

We have seen strong interest in receiving a COVID-19 vaccine from people across California and the nation. We believe this demand will continue and most people will make the decision to be vaccinated against a virus that can cause serious disease and has killed more than 600,000 people in the United States alone. Faculty, academic appointees and staff who choose not to be immunized and who do not receive an approved medical exemption, disability or religious belief exception, or deferral based on pregnancy will not meet UC's health and safety condition for physical access to UC facilities or in-person attendance at UC programs or events.

4. How will these consequences be enforced?

UC campuses and locations have systems in place for promoting and enforcing compliance with health and safety policies. Details relevant to promoting and enforcing compliance with the final policy will be communicated by each campus or location to its faculty, academic appointees, staff, and labor representatives.

5. What does ‘fully vaccinated’ mean; does it refer to one or two shots depending on vaccine? Does it include a period of time after the dose for an immune response?

UC will require faculty, academic appointees and staff to show proof that they have received a full dosage of a vaccine (‘fully vaccinated’), which is either one or two shots depending on the type and manufacturer. Faculty, academic appointees and staff will be required to be fully vaccinated at least two weeks before the first day of fall 2021 instruction at their campus (or two weeks before September 1 for non-academic locations). The COVID-19 vaccines in use, like most vaccines, take time to stimulate an antibody response that creates resistance to illness. Physical distancing, mask-wearing and frequent hand-washing and cleaning are expected to continue to be a part of campus life.

6. When will the proposed policy go into effect for employees?

The final policy will take effect immediately upon issuance, with the campus-specific deadline to submit of proof of vaccination—or request for an allowable exception (on medical, disability, or religious grounds) or deferral (based on pregnancy)—to be two weeks prior to the first day of instruction at the student’s campus. For locations that do not operate on an academic calendar, the deadline for such submittals will be two weeks prior to September 1, 2021. UC has been strongly encouraging students, faculty, academic appointees and staff to obtain a vaccination as soon as they are eligible.

7. Are medical exemptions or disability or religious accommodations allowed?

Yes. Medical exemptions and disability or religious belief accommodation requests will be considered, but if approved, will result in alternative safety precautions such as increased surveillance testing. Deferrals during pregnancy will also be permitted. More information will be included in the final policy. Model forms will be published with the final policy for adaptation or as-is use by each location. Employees should use the form adopted by their campus or location.

8. Does the requirement apply to postdocs on the same basis?

Yes, requirements apply to postdoctoral researchers and trainees.

9. Who will maintain the documentation?

Faculty, academic appointees and staff will be advised on the process for providing vaccination information after the policy is finalized.

10. How will exemption or exception requests be documented, and by whom?

Much of the infrastructure for reviewing compliance with health policies is already in place to support the University’s overall immunization policy. However, each campus is working through the details of the systems for faculty, academic appointees and staff who request allowable exceptions (on medical, disability, or religious grounds) or deferral (based on pregnancy). Model forms will be published with the final policy for adaptation or as-is use by each location.

11. How can employees get vaccines? Will UC offer vaccinations?

UC has been strongly encouraging faculty, academic appointees and staff to look for opportunities near their homes to be vaccinated, such as at your local pharmacy. You may also seek a vaccination appointment online at myturn.ca.gov or by calling 1-833-422-4255 Monday through Friday from 8 am to 8 pm or Saturday and Sunday from 8 am to 5 pm. You may also consult with your location's Occupational Health office for instructions.

12. Will non-exempt employees and hourly academic appointees receive paid time off to receive the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) vaccine?

Yes, non-exempt employees and hourly academic appointees may take up to four hours of paid time to obtain each dose of the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) vaccine. Employees and appointees must provide advance notice to their supervisor. If an employee or appointee needs more time for this purpose, they may request Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) (Reason 3(d)) for the additional time. Berkeley Lab employees should contact Berkeley Lab HR for assistance.

13. What if I experience flu-like symptoms as a result of the vaccine? Does that mean I cannot work as scheduled?

Please contact your supervisor or local human resources office for assistance.

14. If one or more vaccines receive final FDA approval, will a vaccine that is under emergency use authorization and not final FDA approval satisfy the requirement?

Yes, all COVID-19 vaccines offered under an emergency use authorization (EUA) or full approval by the FDA, expected in the coming months, will satisfy the vaccination requirement.

15. Will the University accept internationally approved vaccines even if not authorized or approved in the United States?

Yes, if the vaccine is authorized by the [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int/) (WHO).

The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a process for assessing and listing unlicensed vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics during a public health emergencies. Through that process, a number of vaccines not available in the United States have received Emergency Use Listing (EUL). A document summarizing the status of a wide range of [international vaccines approved by the WHO can be seen here](#). The University will, consistent with CDC and CDPH guidance, accept proof of vaccination with any international vaccine that has been authorized for emergency use by WHO through the EUL process. People who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination series with one of these vaccines *do not need* additional doses with an FDA-licensed or -authorized COVID-19 vaccine, at least initially (but may be subject to subsequent booster requirements). Those who are partially vaccinated or vaccinated with a vaccine not licensed or authorized by FDA and not authorized by WHO will be required to receive an FDA-licensed or -authorized vaccine no less than 28 days after their last international vaccination. In the interim, they will be subject to special safety measures, like quarantine, frequent asymptomatic testing, and more extensive masking requirements.

16. I was vaccinated in in a country, where the government increased the time between first and second vaccines longer than US labeling. Do I have to be revaccinated?

No. If you have proof of completing a series of any FDA-licensed or FDA- or WHO-authorized vaccine consistent with your country's implementation, you will be considered to have complied with the vaccine mandate.

17. I cannot come back to campus 3-4 weeks before school starts, and I can't access any vaccine in my country. Will I be allowed on campus?

Yes. You will be allowed on campus but will be referred to a vaccine site to get vaccinated immediately, unless you qualify for a University-approved exemption or exception. Until you are fully vaccinated, you will be subject to special safety measures, like quarantine, frequent asymptomatic testing, and more extensive masking requirements.

18. Is the COVID-19 vaccination requirement a permanent change to the University's immunization policy that will continue the requirement in future years?

Vaccination remains the most effective way to bring this pandemic to an end and to prevent a resurgence of the pandemic in local and campus communities. The final policy for the COVID-19 vaccination requirement will be a permanent update to the University's policies.

19. Does this requirement apply to visiting scholars and visiting students?

Yes. One of the main purposes of the vaccine mandate is to reduce the risks of being on campus, and it applies to all students, faculty, other academic appointees, and staff living, learning, or working on premises at any UC location or participating in University programs, like Education Abroad. The requirement is not premised on whether a person is a paid employee, but rather whether they are a student, member of the faculty, other academic appointee or staff entering a UC facility or participating in person in a University program. Accordingly, the requirement does apply to visiting scholars and visiting students.

20. Will this requirement apply to union-represented employees?

Yes, in accordance with any applicable collective-bargaining requirements.