Vaccination

Questions:
Contact vaccine@cornell.edu

Disability/Medical & Religious Exemptions

The university has Procedures for Faculty and Staff to Request a Disability/Medical and/or Religious Exemption from the COVID-19 Vaccination/Booster Requirement. Under these Procedures, employees must complete and submit the online Exemption Request Form with supporting documentation. Disability/Medical exemption requests must include the Medical Certification For Exemption From the COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement.

Deadlines:

Employees should submit their requests in a timely fashion and allow at least five (5) working days for a response, taking into account the vaccine and booster schedule and the relevant deadlines. Employees who have received an offer letter and who would like to request an exemption request prior to their start date may submit the request as part of their post-offer process.

Questions:
Contact equity@cornell.edu

Cornell COVID-19 Vaccine and Booster Compliance Program - Overview

The university requires all employees, regardless of role and work location, to have an FDA- or WHO- authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccine and booster as part of comprehensive vaccination against this virus. To meet the requirements, faculty and staff must upload proof of vaccination and booster to the Daily Check or have obtained a university-approved disability/medical or religious exemption from the mandate, by the dates outlined below.

Booster requirement

- All employees must have received a booster or university-approved exemption by January 31, 2022, or within 30 days
New hires

- Effective January 1, 2022, all new Cornell hires must meet the vaccine requirement before they start work and comply with the booster requirement within 30 days of the start of their employment or within 30 days of eligibility. Failure to demonstrate compliance with this requirement prior to the first day of work may result in the delay of employment with Cornell and may result in the offer of employment being rescinded.

The vaccine and booster requirements apply to all Cornell faculty and staff members as well as temporary and casual employees, including those who work fully or partially from a remote location.

Booster Eligibility

Currently, individuals are eligible for a booster shot five months after they have received their second vaccine dose (Moderna and Pfizer) and two months after they have received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Based on vaccination information submitted thus far by members of our community, almost all of our campus community is currently eligible to receive a booster. Please visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html to learn more about your eligibility to receive a booster.

Vaccination/Booster Clinics

Vaccination is free to all. The CDC offers a tool to search for vaccination sites near you. Local health departments and local pharmacies also provide information on vaccination sites, including the Tompkins County Health Department website. Employees in New York state may take up to four hours off from work with pay, to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

Proof of Vaccination/Booster

After each dose, employees must enter that information in Cornell’s vaccine registry via the Daily Check portal.

Cornell Vaccine and Booster Compliance Program FAQs

Vaccination Requirement

Q.1. What are the timelines to meet the vaccination requirement deadline?

Employees hired prior to Dec. 31, 2021

- Vaccine requirement deadline: Fully vaccinated (two weeks after your final dose) or university-approved exemption on or before January 18, 2022
- Booster requirement deadline: Shot received or university-approved exemption on or before January 31, 2022, if you are currently eligible for the booster; or, 30 days after you become eligible whichever comes later (see booster eligibility below)

New hires

- Effective January 1, 2022, all new Cornell hires must meet the vaccine requirement before they start work. Failure to demonstrate compliance with this requirement prior to the first day of work will result in the delay of employment with Cornell and may result in the offer of employment being rescinded.

Individuals are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving their final dose schedule of an FDA- or WHO-authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccine.
Q.2. I am working remotely; does the vaccine requirement apply to me?

Yes. The vaccine requirement applies to all Cornell employees who are working partially- or fully- remote, in any location, and regardless of whether they are in a casual, temporary, regular full-time, or part-time status, unless they receive a medical/disability or religious exemption. This requirement covers employees who work for Cornell in states other than New York.

Q.3. How do I request a disability/medical and/or a religious exemption to the vaccine requirement?

Follow the Procedures for Faculty and Staff to Request a Disability/Medical and/or Religious Exemption from the COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement to complete and submit the required form(s) which are linked in the Procedures by the deadline stated in the Procedures.

Q.4. Can I use a recent antibody test to prove my vaccination status?

No. An antibody test cannot be used to meet the requirement.

Q.5. I had a prior COVID-19 infection, is this allowable for compliance or exemption with the vaccination requirement?

No. Prior COVID-19 infection is not sufficient to meet the requirement.

Booster Requirement

Q.6. Why is Cornell requiring a COVID-19 booster?

The Omicron variant spreads readily, even among vaccinated individuals, and booster vaccinations markedly increase immunity directed against the variant. In order to best protect our community, Cornell will require all students and employees to have a COVID-19 vaccine and booster as part of comprehensive vaccination against this virus. The booster requirement must be met by January 31, or 30 days after you become eligible for a vaccine booster (that is, five months after the 2nd shot for Moderna and Pfizer, or two months after the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine). Proof of booster must be uploaded to the Daily Check.

Q.7. I am working remotely; does the booster requirement apply to me?

Yes, the booster requirement applies to all Cornell employees who are working partially- or fully- remote, in any location, and regardless of whether they are in a casual, temporary, regular full-time, or part-time status, unless they receive a medical/disability or religious exemption.

Anyone who is eligible for a booster and has not met the requirement by Jan. 31 will be out of compliance and required to test twice a week by PCR at one of Cornell’s surveillance sites. This testing requirement will not be in place for staff who are fully remote or for those who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days. Required testing will end once an individual has come into compliance. Those who continue to fail to meet the booster requirement may face appropriate employment action.

Q.8. I will not be eligible to receive a booster by January 31, 2022. How do I comply with the booster requirement?

You have 30 days after you become eligible to receive your vaccine booster and upload proof to the Daily Check. Individuals become eligible to receive the booster 5 months after the 2nd shot for Pfizer or Moderna or 2 months after the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

For example, if you become eligible to receive the booster on February 1, you have until March 3 to upload proof of a booster to the Daily Check.
Q.9. What are the consequences if I am not in compliance with the booster mandate by January 31, 2022 (or the date that applies to me)?

Anyone who is eligible for a booster and has not met the requirement by Jan. 31 will be out of compliance and required to test twice a week by PCR at one of Cornell’s surveillance sites. This testing requirement will not be in place for staff who are fully remote or for those who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days. Required testing will end once an individual has come into compliance. Those who continue to fail to meet the booster requirement may face appropriate employment action.

Q.10. I don’t plan to receive a booster, but I will be requesting an exemption. What happens if the university has not concluded its review of my exemption request by Jan. 31?

Anyone who is eligible for a booster and has not met the requirement by Jan. 31 will be out of compliance and required to test twice a week by PCR at one of Cornell’s surveillance sites until the exemption process is completed.

Q.11. I was previously approved for a disability/medical and/or religious exemption from the vaccination mandate. Do I need to request a separate exemption from the booster requirement?

No. If you were previously approved for a disability/medical or religious exemption related to the vaccination mandate, you do not need to request a separate exemption from the requirement to receive a booster.

Q.12. I was previously approved for a temporary disability/medical exemption from the vaccination mandate. Do I need to request a separate exemption from the booster requirement?

Your approved exemption is temporary and therefore upon the expiration of the temporary exemption, you will need to comply with the vaccination and booster requirements.

Q.13. I did not apply for an exemption from the vaccination mandate; however, I want to apply for a disability/medical or religious exemption from the booster requirement. Can I do so?

Yes. Follow the Procedures for Faculty and Staff to Request a Disability/Medical and/or Religious Exemption from the COVID-19 Vaccination/Booster Requirement to complete and submit the required form(s) which are linked in the Procedures by the deadline stated in the Procedures.

Q.14. I had a prior COVID-19 infection, when should I get a booster?

Individuals who are fully vaccinated and have had COVID-19 should still get a booster. Generally, all individuals are eligible for a booster shot five months after they have received their second vaccine dose of a Moderna and Pfizer series and two months after they have received the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

The only exceptions are:

- If you currently or just recently have COVID-19, wait 2 weeks after your diagnosis and until you are asymptomatic before obtaining a booster.
- If you received monoclonal antibody or convalescent serum therapy to prevent COVID-19, wait for 30 days before getting a booster.
- If you received monoclonal antibody or convalescent serum therapy to treat COVID-19 (in other words, if the therapy was given after a diagnosis of COVID-19 was made), wait 90 days before getting a booster.
- Contact your primary care physician with any additional questions.

If you are in any of these situations and as a result, you will not be able to receive your booster by the deadline, please submit a request for a temporary medical exemption.

Q.15. Can I use a recent antibody test to prove my booster status?
Q.16. I had a prior COVID-19 infection, is this allowable for compliance or exemption with the booster requirement?

No. Prior COVID-19 infection is not sufficient to meet the requirement.

General Questions

Q.17. If I want more information about COVID-19 vaccines, where can I find it?

The CDC provides an excellent resource at [Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/); the [New York State Department of Health](https://www.health.ny.gov) also has an extensive website.

Q.18. I submitted proof of vaccination or booster and got a message saying it was denied. What do I do?

The message you receive notifying you of the denial should include the next steps you must take to address the issue identified during the verification process. If you can't locate the email or have questions, contact the [COVID-19 Support Center](https://www.cdc.gov).

Q.19. Will I receive any communication from Daily Check regarding my compliance status?

Information about the vaccine and booster compliance program and the exemption process will be directly communicated to employees who have not provided documentation in Cornell's vaccine registry in Daily Check.

Q.20. What happens if I get sick after receiving the required vaccine or booster? Will I be eligible for Worker’s Compensation?

If you get the vaccine/booster and experience side effects, you may be eligible for paid leave you are otherwise entitled to if you are ill and unable to work. If you choose to file a work-related injury claim, the NYS Workers’ Compensation Board will determine whether the claim qualifies for coverage under state law.

Q.21. Am I eligible for unemployment insurance if my employment is terminated for refusing to get vaccinated or get the booster and I am not approved for an exemption?

New York state is responsible for determining eligibility for unemployment insurance and does so on a case-by-case basis.

Q.22. What happens to my retirement account if my employment ends because I do not comply with the vaccine or booster requirement?

Please contact the [HR Services and Transitions Center](https://www.cornell.edu) to discuss the impact of leaving Cornell on your benefits. Your access to your retirement accounts depends on your age and length of service.

Q.23. If I am on approved leave when any relevant deadline occurs, does the requirement apply to me?

No. If you are on an approved leave, you must come into compliance with the university’s vaccination and booster requirements or obtain a university-approved exemption before you may return to work.
More Information

FAQs about vaccination at Cornell are available on the covid.cornell.edu website.

For more information, please access information on the New York State COVID-19 Vaccine What You Need to Know website and/or the Tompkins County Health Department website.

You may submit questions to the Cornell COVID-19 Support Team by clicking here. Direct personal health-related questions to your primary care doctor or medical provider.