Vaccination

Vaccine Compliance Program

Cornell is working to comply with Executive Order 14042. An employee who is not in compliance by 12:01 AM EST January 18, 2022, will be ineligible for continued employment.

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 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 schedule and the January 18, 2022 vaccination deadline. 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

All individuals five years of age and older that reside in the United States are eligible to receive the vaccine. Visit https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/ for information on vaccine sites, appointments, and instructions.
Vaccination Mandate

The White House has announced that it will be extending the deadline for Executive Order 14042, Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors. In compliance with the order, the university will now require all employees, regardless of work location, to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by January 18, 2022, or to have obtained a university-approved disability/medical or religious exemption from the vaccine mandate by that date. This requirement includes all Cornell faculty and staff members as well as temporary and casual employees, including those who work fully or partially from a remote location. Details and updated FAQs are available on Working During COVID-19 website.

After January 18, 2022, anyone who fails to comply, including those only partially vaccinated or in the exemption process will be removed from Cornell’s payroll. Employees hired on a date that precludes their timely completion of the full vaccination by January 18, (e.g. just prior to, on or after January 18), may not begin employment until they provide proof of vaccination or apply and are granted an exemption.

Information about the vaccine compliance program and the exemption process will be directly communicated to employees who have not provided documentation of full vaccination status in Cornell’s vaccine registry in Daily Check.

Vaccination timelines to meet the federal government’s January 18 deadline

Employees must be fully vaccinated by January 18, 2022; it is not sufficient to have started the vaccination process by that date. The full vaccination process – which begins on the date of the first dose and ends on the date an individual is considered fully vaccinated – can take as long as six (6) weeks.

Individuals are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving their final dose schedule of an FDA- or WHO-authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccine.

- Moderna vaccine:
  - first dose administered before December 7;
  - second dose completed by January 4.
- Pfizer vaccine:
  - first dose administered before December 14;
  - second dose completed by January 4.
- Johnson & Johnson vaccine:
  - first (and only) dose completed by January 4.

Vaccination 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

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

Cornell Vaccine Compliance Program FAQs

Cornell is working to comply with Executive Order 14042, Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors. The Safer Federal Work Force Taskforce has also issued guidance and FAQs for Federal Contractors and Subcontractors subject to the Executive Order.
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; the New York State Department of Health also has an extensive website.

I don’t work on a federal contract, why does this apply to me?

Yes. The Safer Federal Workforce Task Force Guidance requires that all employees of a federal contractor working at a covered workplace be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 by January 18, 2022 even if the employees themselves do not directly or indirectly work on or in connection with a federal contract. An employee who works at a location where they might come into contact with someone working on a federal contract including through the use of common areas such as lobbies, elevators, stairwells, meeting rooms, kitchens, dining areas or parking garages must also comply with the vaccination requirement.

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. This includes employees who work for Cornell in states other than New York.

How do I request a disability/medical and/or a religious exemption?

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.

I previously submitted proof of vaccination and got a message saying it was denied. What do I do?

The message you received should have included the next steps you must take to address the issue identified during the verification process. If you no longer have that email or have questions, contact the COVID-19 Support Center.

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

Employees who have a documented medical condition that makes any of the approved vaccines unsafe, may request a medical exemption from the vaccination requirement. If you are concerned about such a condition, you are encouraged to consult with your health care provider.

If you choose to get the vaccine 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.

What does “will be removed from our payroll” mean?

An employee who is not in compliance by 12:01 AM EST January 18, 2022, will be ineligible for continued employment.

Am I eligible for unemployment insurance if I am terminated on January 18, 2022 for refusing to get vaccinated 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.

What happens to my retirement account if my employment ends on January 18, 2022?

As is true for all of your benefits, you should contact the HR Services and Transitions Center to discuss the impact of leaving Cornell on your benefits. Your access to your retirement accounts depends on your age and length of service.
I had a prior COVID-19 infection, is this allowable for compliance or exemption?

No. Consistent with Safer Federal Workforce Task Force Guidance, prior COVID-19 infection is not sufficient to meet the requirement.

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

No. Consistent with Safer Federal Workforce Task Force Guidance, an antibody test cannot be used as proof of vaccination.

I don’t plan to receive a vaccination or request an exemption. Can I use accrued vacation or HAP/sick leave after January 18, 2022?

No. An employee who is not in compliance by 12:01AM EST January 18, 2022, will be ineligible for continued employment, and will not be eligible to use accrued leave beyond that date. Eligible employees with accrued vacation on January 18 will receive a lump-sum payment for that time in accordance with University Policy 6.9: Time Away From Work. Per Policy 6.9, upon termination of employment, health and personal leave balances are canceled. Health and personal leave may not be taken after the last day worked.

I don’t plan to receive a vaccination, but I will be requesting an exemption. Can I use accrued vacation or HAP/sick leave after January 18, 2022 if the university has not concluded their review of my exemption request?

Unvaccinated employees who have an exemption request pending as of January 17 2022 will be placed on an unpaid leave and may supplement that leave with accrued vacation leave until the exemption process is completed. If the exemption request is denied, Cornell will consider an employee’s request to remain on an unpaid leave until fully vaccinated, on the condition that they take prompt steps to get vaccinated. If the leave is approved, employees may supplement the unpaid leave with accrued vacation leave, but not HAP/sick leave.

If I have received my first dose of a 2-shot vaccine series by January 18, 2022, can I use accrued vacation or HAP/sick leave after January 18, 2022 until I become fully vaccinated?

An employee who has had the first dose of a 2-shot vaccine series by January 18, 2022 will be placed on an unpaid leave effective January 18 until they are considered fully vaccinated or up to 30 days. Employees may supplement the unpaid leave with accrued vacation leave, but not HAP/sick leave.

If I am not fully vaccinated but I am on approved leave, will my employment be terminated on January 18, 2022?

No. If you are on an approved leave, you must come into compliance with the university’s vaccination requirement by being fully vaccinated or obtaining a university-approved exemption before you may return to work.

Will employees be required to receive a third vaccine or a booster shot in order to be considered fully vaccinated?

At this time, neither a third vaccine nor a booster is required by the Safer Federal Work Force Taskforce Guidance.

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.