COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs
Updated March 23, 2021

1. **Have any current Messiah University students and employees received the COVID-19 vaccine?**

   Currently, Messiah University does not yet have access to the COVID-19 vaccine. However, under Pennsylvania’s current vaccine plan phase, some individual students and employees have been able to receive the vaccine due to their roles as healthcare workers/students or other first responders, or due to their age and/or related personal health conditions.

2. **Should I inform Messiah University if I have been vaccinated?**

   Yes, it is important for Messiah to know from a public health standpoint how much of its population has been vaccinated. Students and employees who have been fully vaccinated should submit proof of vaccination to the Engle Center by uploading it via the Document Upload Page on the Engle Center’s Online Health Portal. (Both students and employees may upload documentation using this link.)

   https://messiah.studenthealthportal.com/Document

3. **What does Messiah consider to be “fully vaccinated”?**

   Following the CDC’s guidelines, Messiah considers an individual fully vaccinated two weeks after the receipt of the second dose in a two-dose vaccine series, or two weeks after receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine). The duration of the vaccine’s effectiveness is still being evaluated by the CDC but their early research determined it to be at least three months. NOTE: for fully vaccinated students and employees to participate in the campus benefits outlined below, they must submit proof of vaccination to the Engle Center.

4. **If I’ve been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 will I still need to test, quarantine or follow campus mitigation measures during the spring semester?**

   Below is a summary of key points of impact for students or employees who have provided proof of full vaccination to the Engle Center:

   **Mitigation Practices**

   **On-campus (public space):** Currently, the Pennsylvania Department of Health continues to recommend the CDC’s COVID-19 prevention measures for all individuals in public spaces, regardless of vaccination status. Accordingly, while outside of your student residence, you must continue to follow all mitigation protocols as outlined by the University, including wearing a mask, social distancing, and completing the daily health screening.
**On-campus (student residences):** As permitted by CDC guidelines, **fully vaccinated students may now visit unmasked with other fully vaccinated students in their room or apartment.** You may also continue to visit unmasked in your residence with those in your “Messiah bubble.”

**Off-campus:** The CDC and the state’s department of health continue to urge limiting non-essential travel, even for fully vaccinated individuals. However, **fully vaccinated students who must travel off-campus are expected to follow the CDC guidelines at all times.** The University will be amending the daily health screening questions to allow students to confirm that they have provided documentation of their fully vaccinated status to the Engle Center.

**Testing and quarantine:**

- **You will be exempt from the University’s surveillance testing** within three months following the last dose in your vaccination series.
- **You will not be required to test and will be exempt from quarantine,** should you be exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, if you are within three months (90 days) of your final vaccination dose and have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure.
- **However, fully vaccinated individuals may still be required to test and undergo quarantine if:**
  - they become symptomatic with COVID-like symptoms at any time and as advised by Engle Center medical personnel.
  - they become symptomatic after exposure to a COVID-positive person and as advised by Engle Center medical personnel.

**Note:** Individuals who are partially vaccinated (i.e., someone who is two weeks from the first dose of vaccine in a two-dose series) may be eligible for a lesser quarantine or enhanced health and safety measures in the event of an exposure and as determined by Engle Center Health professionals.

5. **When are Messiah students and employees expected to be able to have access to the COVID-19 vaccine?**

**Widespread access:** Messiah University is eagerly anticipating further clarity and guidance from the CDC and the Pennsylvania Department of Health regarding our campus community’s broader access to the vaccine and how we may provide vaccination for our students and employees.

As of the publish date of these FAQs, Pennsylvania is in phase 1A of its vaccination roll out plan, which includes long-term care residents, health care workers and other first responders, and individuals at high risk due to age or medical condition. Phase 1B lists “people in congregate settings not otherwise specified as long-term care facilities” as well as “education workers” as being eligible for vaccination. We are hopeful, but have not yet received official confirmation from the state, that these references would include colleges and universities. [View Pennsylvania’s vaccination phases and who is eligible in each phase](/).
**Individual access:** In the interim, some individuals are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine under Pennsylvania’s current phase. If you would like to know if you qualify, you may use the eligibility quiz on the Pennsylvania Department of Health website. If eligible, you may pursue your individual access to the vaccine via the distribution locations listed on the state’s website.

6. **Is Messiah planning to serve as a community vaccination site for COVID-19?**

Messiah University has submitted a formal proposal to the state to serve as a community vaccination site, and we have completed the Department of Health’s requirements demonstrating that we meet their standards for consideration. The University is currently waiting to hear if we will be selected and we will communicate additional details as we learn more.

7. **Will Messiah students and employees be able to be vaccinated on campus? Or will they need to secure the vaccine on their own?**

While Messiah is actively pursuing various options to be able to vaccinate students and employees on campus, we have not yet been able to secure this opportunity. If Messiah employees and students have access to the vaccine through other means, we encourage them to go that route at this time.

8. **Will Messiah require its students and/or employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19 when the vaccine is more widely available?**

We greatly appreciate our students and employees who have already been vaccinated for COVID-19 elsewhere, and it is our strong institutional desire for our campus community as a whole to be vaccinated as it becomes available. At this time, Messiah does not plan to make this vaccination mandatory for students or employees during the spring 2021 semester.

The University will communicate its vaccination expectations for the fall 2021 semester no later than June 15, 2021, pending its evaluation of ongoing factors such as access to vaccine, CDC recommendations, the rate of spread of COVID-19 in the U.S. and abroad, etc.

9. **If I’m an out-of-state student, may I be vaccinated in Pennsylvania?**

As of the publish date of these FAQs, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, you may be vaccinated outside of your home state. However, other states have been making changes to their related protocols, so it is important to follow/confirm this on the state’s department of health website.

10. **How long will it take Pennsylvania to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine across the various phases?**
According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health website, currently “The department does not have a time-table of how long it will take to distribute COVID-19 vaccines across the commonwealth since there is only a limited supply of vaccine available at this time.” Messiah University, through individual contacts and our affiliations with statewide educational associations, is closely monitoring the statewide distribution plan so that we may provide information and access as quickly as possible for our campus community.

11. Where can I learn more details about the COVID-19 vaccine?

You may learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine at the national level on the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov), or at the statewide level on the [Pennsylvania Department of Health website](https://www.health.pa.gov).