



COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs

Updated May 11, 2021

1. **Now that the vaccine is becoming more widely available, will Messiah *require* its students and/or employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19 for the fall 2021 semester?**

Messiah University sees the COVID vaccines approved by the FDA for emergency use in the United States as its institutional path back to normal life, and strongly encourages all students and employees to be vaccinated. That said, given some public uncertainty due to the newness of the vaccines and the fact that full FDA approval has not yet been granted, at this time **Messiah University is not planning to mandate COVID-19 vaccination for students or employees for the fall 2021 semester.** It is important to note that changes in the pandemic or vaccine approval status could trigger a re-evaluation of this policy. However, should a COVID-19 vaccine mandate be put into place at some point in the future, it would be similar to our current student vaccine policy, which includes options for both religious and medical exemptions.

While not mandated, it is extremely important that the majority of our student and employee populations be vaccinated prior to the start of the fall 2021 semester in order to assure a safe and undisrupted in-person educational experience, particularly for populations in congregate living settings, such as in residence halls, where spread of COVID-19 can be rapid and difficult to contain. We greatly appreciate our students and employees who have already been vaccinated for COVID-19, and we continue to encourage as many as possible to continue to do so. Widespread vaccination of our campus community provides the best opportunity for us to return Messiah to normal, pre-pandemic operations and to make university life feel much more like it is supposed to be for everyone.

2. **Have Messiah University students and employees had access the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Messiah University was approved by the state to serve as a COVID-19 vaccination site, and in partnership with UPMC, hosted an on-campus clinic on April 23 that provided free access to the COVID-19 vaccine for all students, employees and their families, in addition to the general public. Previously some Messiah students and employees were able to receive the vaccine in off-campus locations. The University is also open to hosting additional vaccination clinics for campus and community populations.

3. **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. Current 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 at <https://messiah.studenthealthportal.com/Document>

4. 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.

FOR EMPLOYEES

5. If I receive the first and/or second vaccine dose during work time, how do I report this time?

Through May 30, 2021, administrative and staff employees may record Pandemic Sick time. Administrative and staff employees who already reported standard sick time should contact the Payroll Office at payroll@messiah.edu and must also cc: their supervisor to indicate any previously reported sick time that qualifies for use of Pandemic Sick time. The Payroll Office will make the adjustment to re-add this time to your Sick leave accrual by moving the time to Pandemic Sick leave.

6. If I experience side effects from the vaccine and miss scheduled work hours to manage the side effects, how do I report this time?

Through May 30, 2021, administrative and staff employees may record Pandemic Sick time. Administrative and staff employees who already reported standard sick time should contact the Payroll Office at payroll@messiah.edu and must also cc: their supervisor to indicate any previously reported sick time that qualifies for use of Pandemic Sick time. The Payroll Office will make the adjustment to re-add this time to your Sick leave accrual by moving the time to Pandemic Sick leave.

FOR STUDENTS

7. If I’ve been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 will I still need to test, quarantine or follow campus mitigation measures during the spring 2021 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.

8. 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.

You may learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine at the national level on the [CDC website](#), or at the statewide level on the [Pennsylvania Department of Health website](#). [Visit this link to find a COVID-19 vaccination site in Pennsylvania.](#)