

## COVID-19 Vaccination Program FAQs

1. **I do not have any approved Exceptions and I received my Primary Series outside the United States. What boosters do I need to have to comply with the policy?**

A person is Up-To-Date with their COVID-19 vaccination when they have received all doses in the Primary Series and all CDC- or CDPH-recommended boosters, when eligible. The CDC has made specific recommendations for people vaccinated outside the United States, which depend on whether the vaccines received are accepted in the United States, whether the Primary Series was completed, and whether a booster dose was received. For details, please review the information online at the CDC website.

2. **I do not have any approved Exceptions. What boosters do I need to have to comply with the policy, and when do I need to get them?**

The policy requires you to be [Up-To-Date](#) on your Vaccine(s). This means that you have received the Primary Series and all additional doses or boosters recommended by the CDC or by CDPH, including the updated (bivalent) booster if recommended for you. Please consult your location to determine the compliance deadline for boosters. If you are a health care worker subject to the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\) order](#) discussed in COVID-19 Vaccination Program FAQ #7, please refer to that FAQ for additional booster compliance deadlines applicable to you.

3. **Why is UC allowing Exceptions for reasons other than Medical Exemption? If California can eliminate personal belief and religious exceptions for K-12 students, why can't UC do the same?**

The University is required by law to offer reasonable accommodations to individuals who qualify for an Exception to the vaccination requirement based on their disability, as well as to employees who object to vaccination based on their sincerely-held religious belief, practice, or observance. A decision was made to adopt and implement a single uniform COVID-19 Vaccination Program consistently across all groups of Covered Individuals. Vaccination against the virus that causes COVID-19 is a critical step for protecting the health and safety of our communities.

4. **How do I apply for an Exception?**

Covered Individuals who seek an Exception must complete the request form provided by their Location and submit it to their location's applicable Responsible Office. Model Forms have been published in Section IX.A of this Program Attachment for adaptation or as-is use by each Location.

5. **I am pregnant. Will I be eligible for a Medical Exemption?**

No, but unless you work in a University health care facility, you are eligible for a Deferral throughout your pregnancy until the time that you return to in-person work or instruction, as

applicable, following pregnancy. You may also be eligible for a disability accommodation. It is important to understand, however, the additional risks you and your baby will be exposed to if you contract COVID-19 during pregnancy. Information about these risks – including increased risk to the life of the mother and the health of her fetus – is [posted on the CDC website](#). There is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 Vaccines, cause fertility problems. The [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists \(ACOG\)](#) recommends that all eligible individuals, including pregnant and lactating individuals, be vaccinated. Note: Those who work in University health care facilities or clinics are subject to an [order originally issued in 2021 by the California Department of Public Health](#) that does not allow for deferrals based on pregnancy. These individuals therefore must be Up-To-Date on their Vaccines.

**6. I was recently diagnosed with COVID-19, and/or I had an antibody test that shows that I have natural immunity. Does this support a Medical Exemption?**

You may be eligible for a temporary Deferral for up to 90 days after your diagnosis or treatment. [According to the US Food and Drug Administration](#), however, “a positive result from an antibody test does not mean you have a specific amount of immunity or protection from SARS-CoV-2 infection ... Currently authorized SARS-CoV-2 antibody tests are not validated to evaluate specific immunity or protection from SARS-CoV-2 infection.” For this reason, individuals who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or had an antibody test are not permanently exempt from vaccination.

**7. How do the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) orders and guidance regarding COVID-19 vaccination of health care workers affect employees at the University’s medical centers, health professional schools, and clinics?**

The August 5, 2021 CDPH order, as amended (on December 22, 2021, February 22, 2022, and September 13, 2022), requires that health care workers subject to the order have their first dose of a one-dose regimen or their second dose of a two-dose regimen for COVID-19 by September 30, 2021. It also requires that health care workers eligible for booster doses per the order to receive booster doses no later than March 1, 2022 and that health care workers not yet eligible for boosters be in compliance no later than 15 days after the CDPH’s recommended timeframe for receiving the booster dose. (Note that the University’s COVID-19 Vaccination Program may have different timeframes and compliance deadlines that may also apply.) The CDPH order permits health care workers to decline these vaccination requirements on one of the limited grounds recognized by the order.

- Importantly, some Exceptions available under the University’s COVID-19 Vaccination Program are **not** available to workers and trainees in health care settings under the CDPH order. Specifically, Covered Individuals who work, train, or otherwise access any UC health care facilities – including medical centers, ambulatory surgery centers, Student Health Services, Counseling & Psychological Services, and other campus- and school-based medical and behavioral health clinics – may decline vaccination only based on “Qualifying Medical Reasons” or “Religious Beliefs” under the CDPH order. “Qualifying Medical Reasons” include only CDC-recognized contraindications and precautions, which corresponds with the University’s Policy on Vaccination Programs definition of Medical Exemption.

- Effective February 22, 2022, health care workers subject to the CDPH order who provide proof of COVID-19 infection after completion of the Primary Series may also defer booster administration for up to 90 days from the date of first positive test or clinical diagnosis. Health care workers with a Deferral due to proven COVID-19 infection must be in compliance with the booster requirement no later than 15 days after the expiration of their Deferral.

For these reasons, the University is unable to grant the following for health care workers subject to the CDPH order: (a) Deferrals to the Primary Series based on COVID-19 diagnosis within the last 90 days, (b) Deferrals based on COVID-19 treatment within the last 90 days (though health care workers may be eligible for a Medical Exemption if the treatment they received qualifies as a CDC-recognized contraindication or precaution), (c) Exceptions based on Disabilities that are not CDC-recognized contraindications or precautions, or (d) Deferrals based on pregnancy.

The CDPH order requires that any declination based on Qualifying Medical Reasons be supported by a written statement signed by a “physician, nurse practitioner, or other licensed medical professional practicing under the license of a physician” (that is, a physician, a nurse practitioner or other advance practice nurse, or a physician’s assistant).

The CDPH order also requires that health care workers seeking to defer booster administration due to recent COVID-19 diagnosis must provide documentation of previous diagnosis that includes date of infection from a healthcare provider or confirmed laboratory results.

Covered Individuals should use the University’s Medical Exemption and/or Disability Exception Request form to decline the vaccine for Qualifying Medical Reasons. Likewise, Covered Individuals should use the University’s Deferral Request Form to defer booster administration due to recent COVID-19 diagnosis, and Covered Individuals should use the University’s Religious Exception Request Form to decline the vaccine for Religious Beliefs under the CDPH order.

Additional information is available in Frequently Asked Questions attached to the order. The CDPH order, like the University’s policy, requires individuals who are not Up-To-Date on their vaccines but are permitted to be Physically Present on the basis of an approved Exception to comply with Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions to help avoid preventable transmission of COVID-19.

**8. How does the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) order discussed above impact Covered Individuals who are hired to work at UC health care facilities?**

Covered Individuals hired to work at UC health care facilities (as described in FAQ #7) must be in compliance with the CDPH order as of their start date. To comply with the order, by their start date, they must either (a) have been vaccinated against COVID-19 (i.e., have received their first dose of a one dose regimen or their second dose of a two-dose regimen for COVID-19) and have received their COVID-19 vaccine booster dose if booster-eligible per the order (or be within the 15-day compliance period after becoming booster-eligible); or (b) meet the order’s requirements with regard to declining the vaccine based on “Religious Beliefs” or “Qualifying Medical Reasons” or deferring the booster based on recent COVID-19 diagnosis. FAQ #7 addresses the order’s requirements with regard to declining or deferring the vaccine.

9. **I am a new University of California employee. What is my deadline for complying with the COVID-19 Vaccination Program?**

Complying with the COVID-19 Vaccination Program is a condition of employment. If you're a Covered Individual, please refer to Exhibit 2, Section II.C. for the deadline applicable to you.