

The University of Texas at Tyler – COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Students and Employees Entering Affiliated Medicare/Medicaid-certified Facilities

Overview:

This information and accompanying procedures are intended to support our partner facilities that are required to comply with the [CMS Rule](#).

Persons Affected:

All UT Tyler students and employees going to affiliated Medicare/Medicaid-certified facilities covered by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services' interim final regulation ("CMS Rule") that mandate COVID-19 vaccination for workers/students in the covered facilities (even if they are not providing any direct patient care).

Definitions:

1. **Covered Facility** means any Medicare or Medicaid-certified facility that is regulated under the Medicare Conditions of Participation, Conditions of Coverage or Requirements for Participation. This includes but is not limited to: hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, home health agencies, hospices, clinics as providers of outpatient physical therapy or speech-language pathology services, psychiatric residential treatment facilities (PRTFs), rural health clinics, and pharmacies.
2. **Covered Personnel** means all students, trainees, staff and faculty entering a Covered Facility, regardless of clinical responsibility or patient contact.

Information:

1. Compliance Requirements:

- a. All Covered Personnel entering a Covered Facility are expected to comply with the requirements of the Facility.
 - b. This does not apply to Covered Personnel who have been approved for a placement that is 100 percent remote. If and when they need to enter a Covered Facility, they must demonstrate vaccinated status or request an exemption, and meet all Covered Facility's requirements.
2. To facilitate compliance for our partner Facilities, the COVID-19 vaccine(s) are offered free of charge. Contact your program director or coordinator for updated guidance and directions on where you can receive your immunization.
 3. To be compliant, Covered Personnel must do one of the following:

- a. Provide the academic Department with proof of each vaccine dose via the designated compliance mechanism (e.g. CastleBranch, American Databank, myRecordTracker, or software as directed by your Department, etc.) by the compliance deadline. Proof of immunization must include a copy of the COVID-19 Vaccination Card indicating when the vaccine was received and the version/brand of the vaccine.
- b. Comply with the designated procedure for obtaining a permissible exemption as described, including a timely request so that it can be reviewed and decided before the compliance deadline.

4. **Exemption:**

a. **Medical**

- i. Exemption to required immunization may be granted for certain medical contraindications. Standard criteria will be established and include a severe allergy to the vaccine or components as defined by the most current recommendations of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html#Contraindications>
- ii. Personnel requesting a medical exemption must submit the Request for Medical Exemption from COVID-19 Vaccine form and provide documentation of medical contraindications to the academic Department.
- iii. If a Facility where a Covered Personnel is present in any capacity identifies a safer alternative version of the vaccine that circumvents the medical contraindications, they must agree to receive that alternative version of the vaccine or resubmit an exemption request form specific to the alternative agent.

b. **Religious**

- i. Covered Personnel requesting a religious exemption, because one or more of the vaccines conflicts with a sincerely held religious belief, must submit the Request for Religious Exemption from COVID-19 Vaccine declination form and explain the basis for the requested religious exemption. Requests should be submitted to their academic Department.

c. **Timely Request for Medical or Religious Exemption**

- i. Any request for exemption must be submitted in order to allow sufficient time for requests to be considered.

d. **Requirements upon Receiving Approved Exemption.**

- i. If an exemption is approved, the individual will sign either electronically or by written documentation attesting to the compliance of the requirements of the approved workplace accommodation(s), which can be provided in one or more different ways.
- ii. If an exemption is denied, the individual must complete the vaccine prior to starting their placement.

- iii. All accommodations are designed to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to at-risk individuals in keeping with UT Tyler's clinical programs' obligation to protect the health and safety of patients.
- iv. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following measures:
 - 1. appropriate masking and PPE
 - 2. restriction from eating, drink, socializing in public settings
 - 3. exclusion from participating in certain in-person group activities or meetings
 - 4. social distancing/segregation from patients and other students
 - 5. transfer or relocation of student to appropriate clinical unit or site
 - 6. screening prior to each shift
 - 7. COVID-19 testing
 - 8. preapproved request of an incomplete in the course until vaccination is possible or the risk of contracting and spreading the virus ends

5. Information for assisting Covered Facilities with Compliance:

- a. Covered Personnel without documentation of all necessary doses of vaccination or an approved exemption will be considered noncompliant and will be restricted from all Covered Facilities.
- b. Noncompliant student lists and approved exemption lists will be monitored by the academic Department for appropriate compliance action as it relates to the student's ability to complete their placement, as well as for purposes of any audit by CMS or at the request of a Covered Facility utilized by UT Tyler clinical programs.
- c. If vaccination or an approved exemption has not occurred prior to the placement students may be required to withdraw from courses with all accompanying consequences at the date of withdrawal.
- d. If a Covered Personnel approved for an exemption is found to be out of compliance with the requirements pertaining to their approved accommodation(s), they may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including failing the course.
- e. Covered Personnel who submit false or misleading documentation are subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program.

6. Responsibilities:

- a. Covered Personnel must receive a complete primary vaccination series (i.e., both doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or the single dose of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine) or complete the process for a permissible exemption.
- b. The academic Department will accept, evaluate, approve/deny and report on requests for exemptions from Covered Personnel. The Department will notify student of status of

request and applicable accommodation requirements. Covered Facilities may have additional criteria by which they evaluate an exemption request and will have final authority on approval of requests submitted to the Facility.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Request for Medical Exemption from COVID-19 Vaccine
- Attachment B: Request for Religious Exemption from COVID-19 Vaccine