

[Skip to Main Content](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ

The University of Massachusetts Lowell is looking forward to safely welcoming students to campus this fall. Please review our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) below and continue to monitor this website as the university will continue to provide updates and additional details as guidance from the CDC and local health experts changes over time.

- [Are students required to be vaccinated before returning to campus for Spring 2022?](#)
- [Will booster shots be required?](#)
- [Am I safe getting a COVID-19 vaccine under the Emergency Use Authorization \(EUA\)?](#)
- [Are you hearing from students that they want to be vaccinated?](#)
- [By when do I need to submit my proof of vaccination?](#)
- [How do I find out if my proof of vaccination has been verified?](#)
- [Which COVID 19 vaccines will be accepted by UMass Lowell?](#)
- [How do I add my COVID-19 vaccination data to my Student Health Services medical record?](#)
- [Am I still required to be vaccinated if I take all my classes online and never intend to be on the UMass Lowell's campus?](#)
- [Are faculty and staff required to be vaccinated?](#)
- [Are there exemptions to the immunization requirement?](#)
- [Will international students who have been vaccinated in their countries need to be re-vaccinated with a vaccine that is authorized for use in the U.S.?](#)
- [I may need to wait a while before I get my vaccine. Is that OK?](#)
- [I am eligible for a vaccination. Can I get vaccinated at UML?](#)
- [Will there be a fully remote/virtual option for students who are enrolled but are not vaccinated?](#)
- [Will a cancellation fee be charged for students who opt out of university housing because of vaccine requirements?](#)
- [Will my enrollment deposit be refunded if I choose not to enroll because of vaccine requirements?](#)
- [Will I know if my roommate or classmates are vaccinated or have an exemption?](#)
- [Will face coverings still be required?](#)
- [Will asymptomatic surveillance testing be required? Will weekly testing still be required for residents?](#)
- [Will students who don't get the vaccine be able to use the Campus Rec Center and other on-campus resources?](#)
- [How will this impact students' ability to gather and participate in activities and programs?](#)
- [What is the impact of receiving an exemption?](#)
- [If I am on co-op or have an internship off campus, will I be required to be vaccinated?](#)
- [Will visitors to campus have to be vaccinated?](#)
- [What happens if I do not get my COVID-19 vaccine by the beginning of the semester?](#)
- [I am an unvaccinated student arriving to campus, what do I do?](#)

Are students required to be vaccinated before returning to campus for Spring 2022?

Yes, UMass Lowell [announced in April 2021](#) it was adding the COVID-19 vaccine to the [existing list of required vaccinations](#) for enrolled students. All enrolled undergraduate and graduate students who wish to live or learn or conduct research on campus or access on-campus resources or property must be vaccinated.

The deadline for Spring semester is Jan. 10, by which time all students must have uploaded proof of vaccination to the [Student Health Services Patient Portal](#) or have an approved religious or medical exemption. The verification process may take up to 10 business days. Please submit

your documentation as soon as possible to avoid any delays. If you have questions about your immunization compliance status please access your immunization record through the [Student Health Services Portal](#).

Students not meeting these requirements will not be allowed to move into the residence halls and are at risk of not being able to attend in-person classes or labs. Students in this situation will need to change their schedule to online courses. Undergraduate students should contact their faculty or professional advisor to review course offerings available to them through [Graduate, Online & Professional Studies](#) and should also contact the [Solution Center](#) to receive clarification on the impacts to their financial aid packages if they choose to transition from in-person classes to online classes for the fall semester.

Students taking classes only online will not be impacted, regardless of their vaccination status.

Will booster shots be required?

Yes, students are required to obtain a booster shot by **Feb. 28** if eligible and within 30 days of becoming eligible thereafter. Approved vaccination exemptions will remain in effect. Medical exemption requests for the booster are due by Jan. 31, 2022.

All currently eligible UMass Lowell employees are required to obtain a booster shot by **Feb. 15**. Employees not currently eligible to receive the booster are required to exercise best efforts to obtain their booster shot within 14 days of becoming eligible.

The CDC has strengthened its recommendations on booster shots for individuals 18 and older, with eligibility five months after the second shot of a Pfizer or Moderna vaccination series or two months after a Johnson & Johnson vaccination. Students who were vaccinated outside of the US with a WHO approved vaccine should receive a booster of the Pfizer vaccine type per guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

After receiving their boosters, students should upload their updated vaccination cards to the Student Health Portal. Students not boosted who are eligible to receive the booster and don't have an approved exemption will have a hold placed on their account preventing future course registration until proof of the additional shot is provided.

Am I safe getting a COVID-19 vaccine under the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?

The Emergency Use Authorization designation is meant to facilitate the availability and use of vaccines during public health emergencies, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. In the three phases of clinical trials leading up to granting EUA designation, tens of thousands of doses of vaccine are administered to evaluate safety and efficacy, and EUA authorization is only granted if safety and efficacy standards are met based on this substantial evidence, and that the benefits outweigh risks when used according to the product's approved labeling.

It is anticipated that after six months of usage under EUA status, vaccines currently in use will be granted full FDA authorization. As of Aug. 23, 2021, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for individuals 16 years and older.

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for more [information about vaccine safety](#).

Are you hearing from students that they want to be vaccinated?

More than 82% of students enrolled for in-person classes are, or will shortly be, fully vaccinated, a number that has increased dramatically in recent days. We expect this rate to continue to grow.

By when do I need to submit my proof of vaccination?

Please submit your proof of vaccination as soon as possible. Students who have not uploaded proof of vaccination to the [Student Health Services Patient Portal](#) by **Jan. 10** will not be allowed to move into the residence halls and are at risk of not being able to attend in-person classes or labs.

Students in this situation will need to change their schedule to online courses. Undergraduate students should contact their faculty or professional advisor to review course offerings available to them through [Graduate, Online & Professional Studies](#) and should also contact the [Solution Center](#) to receive clarification on the impacts to their financial aid packages if they choose to transition from in-person classes to online classes.

Students are required to obtain booster shots by **Feb. 28** if eligible and within 30 days of becoming eligible thereafter. Students not boosted who are eligible to receive the booster and don't have an approved exemption will have a hold placed on their account preventing future course registration until proof of the additional shot is provided. Students taking classes only online will not be impacted, regardless of their vaccination status.

The verification process may take up to 10 business days. Please **submit your documentation as soon as possible** to avoid any delays. If you have questions about your immunization compliance status, please access your immunization record through the [Student Health Services Portal](#).

Faculty and staff must obtain booster shots by **Feb. 15**, if eligible, and within 14 days of becoming eligible.

How do I find out if my proof of vaccination has been verified?

Access your immunization record through the [Student Health Services Portal](#). We appreciate your assistance in allowing our staff to focus on the verification of records, so we can move students to compliant status as quickly as possible. Should you still need to call or email after checking the portal, will respond as soon as possible and we appreciate your patience with any necessary delays.

Which COVID 19 vaccines will be accepted by UMass Lowell?

UMass Lowell will accept proof of vaccination with vaccines approved by Emergency Use Authorization by the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) (U.S. FDA) as well as the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO). These organizations are regularly reviewing vaccines for their development processes, safety and efficacy. We will be monitoring the approval processes throughout the summer months.

How do I add my COVID-19 vaccination data to my Student Health Services medical record?

Please follow the steps below to upload your COVID-19 vaccination data as soon as you receive the first dose, then again after you receive the second dose. Update your record when you receive a booster.

You do not need to wait to complete the series of shots to enter your COVID-19 vaccine information. A photograph of your COVID-19 CDC vaccination card is acceptable for your documentation. (New Students: Please wait until you are assigned a UML email address to follow the steps below.)

1. Login to the [Student Health Services Patient Portal](#).

2. Select upload > choose the document you are uploading > Immunization/vaccine/tuberculosis/lab blood titers > select file > upload

3. After uploading your vaccination document, return to the portal homepage and select "immunizations" > other vaccines > enter the date for each dose of the COVID vaccine > submit

Am I still required to be vaccinated if I take all my classes online and never intend to be on the UMass Lowell's campus?

No.

Are faculty and staff required to be vaccinated?

All UMass Lowell employees working on campus are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 or be approved for a medical or religious exemption following agreements finalized with our unions.

Are there exemptions to the immunization requirement?

Just as with all required vaccinations, students may request an exemption from the COVID-19 vaccination requirement, subject to religious and medical reasons pursuant to state and federal law. Please email Wellness_Center@uml.edu to request documents related to the process. Please **submit any exemption requests as soon as possible** to allow enough time for your request to be processed before the beginning of the semester.

Will international students who have been vaccinated in their countries need to be re-vaccinated with a vaccine that is authorized for use in the U.S.?

UMass Lowell will accept proof of vaccination with vaccines approved by Emergency Use Authorization by the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](https://www.fda.gov) (FDA) as well as the [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int) (WHO). These organizations are regularly reviewing vaccines for their development processes, safety and efficacy.

I may need to wait a while before I get my vaccine. Is that OK?

All students must have uploaded proof of vaccination to the [Student Health Services Patient Portal](#) or have an approved religious or medical exemption **by Jan 1**.

Students not meeting these requirements will not be allowed to move into the residence halls and are at risk of not being able to attend in-person classes or labs.

Students in this situation will need to change their schedule to online courses. Undergraduate students should contact their faculty or professional advisor to review course offerings available to them through [Graduate, Online & Professional Studies](#) and should also contact the [Solution Center](#) to receive clarification on the impacts to their financial aid packages if they choose to transition from in-person classes to online classes for the fall semester.

Students taking classes only online will not be impacted, regardless of their vaccination status.

I am eligible for a vaccination. Can I get vaccinated at UML?

UMass Lowell does not provide COVID-19 vaccinations; however, vaccines are widely available throughout every community in Massachusetts and across the country, with and without an appointment. Contact your health care provider or [visit the state's website](#) to find a vaccination site near you.

Will there be a fully remote/virtual option for students who are enrolled but are not vaccinated?

Students who take all classes online are not required to be vaccinated, although in-person classes will not automatically have an online option. Undergraduate students should contact their faculty or professional advisor to review course offerings available to them through [Graduate, Online & Professional Studies](#) and should also contact the [Solution Center](#) to receive clarification on the impacts to their financial aid packages if they choose to transition from in-person classes to online classes.

Will a cancellation fee be charged for students who opt out of university housing because of vaccine requirements?

Students who do not receive an exemption and who choose not to be vaccinated will not be permitted to move into on-campus housing and will be offered the alternative of remote instruction, although not all in-person classes will have a corresponding online section. Fees will be charged in accordance with the housing contract signed by the student.

On-campus housing status changes may impact students' financial aid packages and students should contact the [Solution Center](#) before opting out.

Keep in mind that most colleges and universities in New England have similar vaccination requirements for the fall.

Will my enrollment deposit be refunded if I choose not to enroll because of vaccine requirements?

Yes, you will be issued a refund if you [decline your admission](#), but again please keep in mind that many, if not most, colleges and universities have similar vaccination requirements. Students who drop a course prior to the [add/drop deadline](#) will not be charged tuition for that course. On-campus housing status changes may impact students' financial aid packages and students should contact the [Solution Center](#) before opting out.

Will I know if my roommate or classmates are vaccinated or have an exemption?

While this information is protected by federal privacy laws, any student living on campus or attending classes will be required to be vaccinated OR receive an exemption. You can be assured that your classmates and roommates have received their vaccination or an exemption through the Wellness Center.

Will face coverings still be required?

Consistent with [guidance issued by federal and state public health officials](#), face coverings are required for all faculty, staff, students, vendors and visitors in nearly all indoor common spaces, including classrooms, instructional laboratories, meeting rooms, work areas, break rooms, hallways, elevators, restrooms and campus buses and shuttles. Face coverings are not required outdoors. Please review the FAQ on face coverings that includes additional information, including medical exceptions.

UMass Lowell will regularly re-evaluate the need for face coverings.

To facilitate effective instruction, fully vaccinated faculty members are not required to wear face coverings while teaching in-person classes, if they choose. This permission will depend on the status and direction of the current wave of infections in Massachusetts at the beginning of the semester, and may be rescinded, if necessary.

Will asymptomatic surveillance testing be required? Will weekly testing still be required for residents?

Asymptomatic surveillance testing will not be required for vaccinated students. Unvaccinated employees and students with approved exemptions are required to participate in weekly surveillance testing.

Will students who don't get the vaccine be able to use the Campus Rec Center and other on-campus resources?

Students will be required to get the vaccine or have an approved vaccine exemption in order to use the CRC and other on-campus resources. Students who receive a vaccine exemption will receive information from our campus Wellness Center regarding expectations and guidelines to follow.

How will this impact students' ability to gather and participate in activities and programs?

We are planning for students to safely have the ability to gather and utilize space across campus this fall including: outdoor space, the library, social lounges, study lounges, tutoring centers and fitness centers.

Consistent with [guidance issued by federal and state public health officials](#), face coverings are required for all faculty, staff, students, vendors and visitors in nearly all indoor common spaces, including classrooms, instructional laboratories, meeting rooms, work areas, break rooms, hallways, elevators, restrooms and campus buses and shuttles. Face coverings are not required outdoors. Please review the FAQ on face coverings that includes additional information, including medical exceptions.

UMass Lowell will regularly re-evaluate the need for face coverings.

What is the impact of receiving an exemption?

Students who request and are approved for an exemption will get information from our campus Wellness Center regarding expectations and guidelines to follow.

If I am on co-op or have an internship off campus, will I be required to be vaccinated?

If you will not be on campus at any time, including not living on campus or visiting campus during your co-op or internship, you will not be required to be vaccinated by UML. You will be required to submit proof of vaccination prior to returning to on-campus activities and should plan on submitting the documentation at least three weeks prior to your planned return. Please note that your place of work may have its own requirements.

Will visitors to campus have to be vaccinated?

Like all other immunizations required for students, visitors to campus will not be required to be vaccinated, but will be required to adhere to all campus, local, state and federal guidelines as well as UMass Lowell mitigation strategies in effect.

What happens if I do not get my COVID-19 vaccine by the beginning of the semester?

By Jan. 10, all incoming students must have uploaded proof of vaccination to the [Student Health Services Patient Portal](#) or have an approved religious or medical exemption. Students are required to obtain a booster shot by **Feb. 28** if eligible and within 30 days of becoming eligible thereafter. Approved vaccination exemptions will remain in effect.

The verification process may take up to 10 business days. Please submit your documentation as soon as possible to avoid any delays. If you have questions about your immunization

compliance status please access your immunization record through the [Student Health Services Portal](#).

Students not meeting these requirements will not be allowed to move into the residence halls and are at risk of not being able to attend in-person classes or labs.

Students in this situation will need to change their schedule to online courses. Undergraduate students should contact their faculty or professional advisor to review course offerings available to them through [Graduate, Online & Professional Studies](#) and should also contact the [Solution Center](#) to receive clarification on the impacts to their financial aid packages if they choose to transition from in-person classes to online classes for the fall semester.

Students not boosted who are eligible to receive the booster and don't have an approved exemption will have a hold placed on their account preventing future course registration until proof of the additional shot is provided.

Students taking classes only online will not be impacted, regardless of their vaccination status.

I am an unvaccinated student arriving to campus, what do I do?

All students, including international, must be vaccinated. [Vaccination sites are available throughout the state](#).

Quick Links

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Scroll To Top ^