

FAQ

COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate

General

Q. Does Paul Smith's College require students be vaccinated against COVID-19?

Beginning in Fall 2022, all **new** students (including graduate students) must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to move into residential housing or attend class unless they have been granted a religious exception or medical exemption to the vaccine. "Full vaccination" refers to the primary vaccination series (more details below).

For students enrolled in the 2021-22 academic year, COVID vaccination is strongly encouraged but not required.

Q. Is the booster shot required?

No. While the College strongly encourages COVID vaccination, including booster shots when eligible, we will not be requiring students to get the booster shot.

Q. When do I need to submit COVID vaccination proof by?

Proof of full vaccination (the primary series) should be uploaded to the [Student Health Portal](#) by August 1, 2022 for the start of the Fall 2022 semester and by Jan 1 for students starting in the Spring 2023 semester.

Students are *strongly encouraged* to upload vaccination documentation, including booster shots if received, as soon as possible after receiving their injection(s).

Q. How do I submit my vaccination documentation?

Students should upload proof of COVID-19 vaccination to the [Student Health Portal](#). If you have any difficulty logging in, please contact the IT Help Desk at 518.327.6465 as soon as possible.

After you upload your vaccination documentation, you will receive a confirmatory email to your Paul Smith's email address, which will clear you to move in and/or attend class. If you do not receive an email within 3 business days after uploading your vaccination documentation, please call 518.327.6319 to confirm that it was received.

Important Note: If you are a current student and have already uploaded your documentation to the Student Health Portal, you do not need to do so again unless you have received additional shots, e.g., the booster injection.

Q. Can I move into a residence hall without being fully vaccinated?

No. If you are a new student, you must be fully vaccinated and have uploaded your vaccine proof prior by Aug. 1, 2022 to move into a residence hall for Fall '22 or to attend classes (unless exempt).

Q. Can I participate in sports if I am not fully vaccinated?

Athletic conferences have established their own set of guidelines around vaccination that may differ from those set forth by the College. Please contact your coach or the Assistant Director of Athletics Zack Luzzi at zluzzi@paulsmiths.edu for more details.

Q. I am an international student and I was vaccinated outside of the United States. Am I considered fully vaccinated or will I be expected to do anything additional?

If your vaccine approved by [the World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) and you are considered fully vaccinated as specified in the WHO approval, you are considered fully vaccinated at the College for Fall 2022 purposes. You can upload proof of vaccination through [the Student Health Portal](#).

If you received a vaccine that is not approved by the WHO or the Food & Drug Administration (FDA), please contact Student Health Services at 518.327.6319 to discuss.

Q. I am a master's student who takes online classes but needs to go to campus. Will I need to be vaccinated and boosted to access services and resources?

All students, whether they are taking in-person classes or not, must adhere to the College's vaccination policies and have their vaccination documents approved in the Student Health Portal unless they have been granted a medical or religious exemption.

Q. How will failure to participate in the vaccination program be enforced?

New students who have not uploaded primary vaccination proof by Aug. 1, 2022 will be notified via email that they have missed the deadline and will not be able to move into housing or attend class if documentation is not uploaded immediately. If a student does not abide by the vaccine requirement, they will be dropped from all registered courses and will be un-enrolled by Aug. 30, 2022.

Exceptions, Medical Exemptions, and Special Circumstances

Q. Are there any exemptions to the COVID vaccine requirement?

Primary vaccination is required for all new students starting programs in the Fall of 2022, however the College will consider requests for medical and religious exemptions to immunization. Exemption request documentation will be available for download from the College website [here](#) beginning on April 21, 2022 and, when completed, should be uploaded to the Student Health Portal and an email sent to healthservices@paulsmiths.edu alerting Health Services that an exemption request has been uploaded.

For students enrolled in the 2021-22 academic year, COVID vaccination is strongly encouraged but not required.

Q. How do I apply for a medical or religious exemption?

Exemption request forms can be downloaded from the website [here](#) starting on April 21, 2022. Once completed, they should be uploaded to the Student Health Portal and an email sent to healthservices@paulsmiths.edu alerting Health Services that an exemption request has been uploaded.

Exemption requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis; they are not automatically granted. Exemption requests will be evaluated by members of the College's Health & Safety Committee. Decisions are final unless additional information is requested by reviewers.

Q. What is the deadline to submit a request for a medical or religious exemption?

Exemption requests for the Fall 2022 Semester should be uploaded to [the Student Health Portal](#) by **July 1, 2022**. Exemption requests for the Spring 2023 Semester should be uploaded by **Dec. 31, 2022**.

Note: These dates are the latest an exemption request can be submitted for consideration. Students are *strongly encouraged* to upload exemption requests as soon as possible. Every attempt will be made to issue a decision on exemption requests within 2 weeks of receipt. Students who place a deposit to attend Paul Smith's College after these deadlines will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and a deadline determined at that time.

Q. Can I appeal an exemption decision?

All decisions of the committee are final and not subject to appeal. Individuals are permitted to reapply if new documentation and information should become available.

Q. If I am not vaccinated due either to being a student enrolled in the 2021-22 academic year or because I've been approved for a religious exception or medical exemption, what guidelines must I follow while on campus?

- Prior to arrival on campus for the Fall 2022 or Spring 2023 semesters, students who are unvaccinated must show proof of either a negative PCR test OR a negative rapid antigen test taken within 5 days prior to arrival on campus. These results should be uploaded to [the Student Health Portal](#).

Notes:

- 1) *The rapid antigen test cannot be an at-home test. It must be a rapid antigen test taken at a facility (lab, pharmacy, Urgent Care, doctor's office, etc.) and documentation must clearly show the student's name, date of birth and the date the test was taken.*
 - 2) *If the student has tested positive for COVID in the 90 days prior to arrival, they must submit a negative test result from a rapid antigen test rather than a PCR test result (which can test positive for up to 90 days after infection).*
- Unvaccinated students may be required to participate in surveillance testing during the academic year. The type of frequency of testing will be determined shortly and posted here when decided upon.
 - It is recommended that unvaccinated students wear masks in all indoor spaces during times of moderate or high community transmission according to the CDC.
 - All students must comply with New York State and local health orders. Additional safety measures may be deemed necessary by the College, local public health, environmental health and safety, occupational health, or infection prevention authorities.

Q. I understand the College has a vaccine mandate for employees as well. If I am granted a medical or religious exemption to the student vaccine mandate and I want to work for the College as a student employee, do I have to apply for another exemption from the employee mandate?

Yes. Incoming students and employees are required to receive the primary COVID vaccination unless exempt. There are different considerations and processes for employees than for students, so you will also need to request a separate medical or religious exemption from the College's Human Resources Department if you intend to work as a student employee. Please contact Gwen Goodman, Director of Human Resources, at 518 327-6242 or ggoodman@paulsmiths.edu for more information.

Q. How will I know if my fellow students attending class or accessing College facilities are unvaccinated?

The College will not disclose vaccine status of individual students to fellow students. It is not acceptable to ask anyone their vaccination status. If a student or an employee is on campus or at any PSC location, they have observed the required protocols.

Definitions and Detail

Q. What does it mean to be “fully vaccinated”?

Per the CDC, people are considered fully vaccinated:

- Two weeks after the second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- Two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's (Janssen) vaccine, or
- If primary vaccination was received outside the U.S., please contact Health Services to determine status.

Q. If I want to get a booster shot, when should I get one?

This depends on when you received your primary vaccination. People become eligible for the booster:

- 5 months after the 2nd shot of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or
- 2 months after the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine

For example, if you received the 2nd Pfizer dose on March 1, 2022, you would be eligible for the booster shot on Aug. 1, 2022.

Students are strongly encouraged to get the booster shot when they are eligible, however the College does not require students to get the booster injection.

Please note: all COVID policies are subject to change at the College's discretion. Policy decisions may be influenced by various factors, including but not limited to COVID caseload on campus, campus vaccination rate, community transmission rate, emergence of new variants, and state and federal recommendations.

Revisions
May 2022
April 2022