



UNIVERSITY POLICY

Section: 60.1.35

Section Title: Human Resources (HR): Universitywide HR Policies & Procedures

Policy Name: Immunization Policy for Rutgers Employees and Prospective Employees

Formerly Book: N/A

Approval Authority: Senior Vice President for Human Resources

Responsible Executive: Senior Vice President for Human Resources

Responsible Office: University Human Resources

Adopted: 02/10/2022

Reviewed:

Revised:

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1. Policy Statement

This Policy is intended to enhance the health and safety of our faculty and staff and protect them and the people with whom these employees come into contact from exposure to specified Communicable Diseases while working in our facilities and to promote the health of the University community. Under this Policy, immunizations for the Communicable Diseases specified in this Policy are mandatory for all employees of Rutgers and any Finalist, unless the individual is an Exempted Individual. Exempted Individuals must wear a face mask in all areas designated by Rutgers. In addition to this Policy, Rutgers encourages and supports other methods for preventing the spread of Communicable Diseases, including good hygiene initiatives and encouragement for sick co-workers to stay home.

2. Reason for Policy

Certain Communicable Diseases, such as COVID-19, are contagious diseases, often respiratory in nature, caused by pathogens such as viruses and bacteria. These pathogens can cause mild to severe illness and lead to the hospitalization and death of many individuals each year. The most effective way to prevent infection from these pathogens is through vaccination along with everyday preventative steps such as handwashing. This Policy is intended to reduce the risk of these diseases being acquired in the University community by maximizing immunization and making provision for mandatory face mask usage for Exempted Individuals.

3. **Who Should Read This Policy**

All University employees and any Finalist as defined in Section 5 below.

4. **Resources**

[Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) COVID-19 Vaccination Resources](#)

[CDC COVID-19 Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\) Vaccine Recommendations](#)

[New Jersey Executive Order No. 283 \(Governor Murphy\)](#)

[New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub](#)

[Universitywide COVID-19 Information](#)

[University Policy 100.3.1: Immunization Policy for Covered Individuals](#)

5. **Definitions**

Communicable Diseases: Contagious illnesses specified by the University that may lead to significant risk to the health and safety of students, employees, patients, and visitors, including but not limited to COVID-19, and other contagious illnesses.

COVID-19: A respiratory disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, a coronavirus discovered in 2019.

COVID-19 Immunization: Currently, administration of a primary series and booster shot (if eligible) of any COVID-19 vaccine authorized or approved for use in the United States by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is required by the University. The University, in accordance with CDC Guidelines, reserves the right to amend and add additional requirements. As of the date of this Policy, there are currently three COVID-19 vaccines authorized for emergency use or approved by the FDA and recommended by the ACIP: two mRNA vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna) and one viral vector vaccine (Janssen [Johnson & Johnson]).

Exempted Individual: An individual who is not required to obtain a COVID-19 Immunization due to receipt of an approved medical exemption or religious exemption from Rutgers University.

Finalist: A prospective employee that has reached the final stage in the pre-employment process, has received a conditional offer of employment, and has been selected to move on to the onboarding process.

Hiring Unit Representative: An individual, typically a Hiring Manager or HR Generalist, who oversees the onboarding process on behalf of the department that wishes to fill a vacant position.

6. **The Policy**

I. **COVID-19**

- A. Under this Policy, COVID-19 Immunization is mandatory as a condition of employment for any Finalist who has accepted a conditional offer of employment at Rutgers University, unless the individual is an Exempted Individual. All Finalists must provide proof of COVID-19 Immunization or be approved by Rutgers for a medical or religious exemption prior to commencing employment with the University. Failure to do so will result in rescission of the

Finalist's conditional offer of employment. Instructions for uploading vaccination certifications and/or applying for a religious or medical exemption will be emailed to each Finalist once a signed offer letter of employment is returned to the Hiring Unit Representative.

- B. Under this Policy, COVID-19 Immunization is mandatory for all employees unless the employee is an Exempted Individual. Employees must provide proof of COVID-19 Immunization or be approved for a medical or religious exemption by the date specified by the University. Employees who have received any part of a COVID-19 Immunization from any provider other than Rutgers must submit proof of immunization as a condition of employment via the [Rutgers Vaccination Portal](#) (NetID required).
- C. A Finalist who is not eligible for a booster shot at the time of a conditional offer of employment must upload proof of same to the [Rutgers Vaccination Portal](#) within 14 calendar days of becoming eligible. Failure to do so will result in rescission of the conditional offer of employment if the Finalist becomes eligible prior to commencement of employment or in disciplinary action up to and including termination if the Finalist commences employment.
- D. Employees who are not eligible for a booster shot by the date specified by the University must submit proof of same to the [Rutgers Vaccination Portal](#) within 14 calendar days of becoming eligible. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- E. In the event that a regular/recurring COVID-19 vaccine becomes recommended by the CDC (similar to an annual flu shot), this Policy makes such regular/recurring vaccination mandatory for all employees and Finalists as a condition of employment unless such individual is an Exempted Individual.

II. **Additional Immunizations**

From time to time, the University may specify additional Communicable Diseases for which employees and Finalists must be immunized or receive an exemption. The University will determine the date by which any such immunizations must be completed and determine the date by which exemption requests must be submitted. Updated and/or additional immunization requirements will be communicated to employees with sufficient lead time to enable individuals to submit proof of immunization, obtain immunizations, or request an appropriate exemption. Updated and/or additional immunization requirements will be communicated to Finalists at the time a conditional offer of employment is extended in order to enable Finalists to submit proof of immunization, obtain immunization, or request an appropriate exemption. Proof of immunization for any such Communicable Diseases must be submitted prior to commencing employment for Finalists and in accordance with University-established deadlines for employees. If the University specifies additional Communicable Diseases, the University will specify how to submit proof of same.

III. **Exemptions**

Any employee or Finalist who wants to apply for an exemption must submit either a medical exemption or religious exemption form for consideration. All Finalists who sign and return a conditional offer of employment and all employees who wish to apply for an exemption must complete an attestation statement and submit an exemption request consistent with the requirements below. The University will review all completed and submitted exemption request forms. Employees and Finalists will be notified of the outcome of their requests via email. Except as otherwise provided by any applicable agreement, all decisions of the University will be final.

A. **Medical Exemptions**

Individuals may be eligible for a medical exemption in accordance with applicable law and on a case-by-case basis, if they have a medical condition which precludes them from being vaccinated against the specified Communicable Disease(s), and if the condition is supported by appropriate documentation from a treating health care provider.

1. Finalists seeking a medical exemption must complete the medical exemption request process and be approved prior to commencing employment. Instructions for applying for a medical exemption will be emailed to a Finalist once a signed offer letter of employment is returned to the Hiring Unit Representative.
2. An employee requesting a medical exemption must complete and submit the completed request form and any appropriate supporting documentation online via the [Rutgers Vaccination Portal](#) (NetID required). The request must be submitted and approved by the date specified by the University.

B. **Religious Exemptions**

Individuals may be eligible for a religious exemption from the immunization requirements in accordance with applicable law.

1. Finalists seeking a religious exemption must complete the religious exemption request process and be approved prior to commencing employment. Instructions for applying for a religious exemption will be emailed to the Finalist once a signed offer letter of employment is returned to the Hiring Unit Representative.
2. An employee requesting a religious exemption must complete and submit in the completed request form online via the [Rutgers Vaccination Portal](#) (NetID required). The request must be submitted and approved by the date specified by the University.

C. **Exempted Individuals**

1. For Exempted Individuals, it is mandatory to wear properly a face mask (available from Rutgers) over the mouth and nose in all areas designated by Rutgers. Masks will be available generally, at no cost, and should be changed when they are overly moist, become ripped, or otherwise deteriorate. Exempted Individuals may be subject to additional requirements as deemed appropriate by the University.
2. In general, once Rutgers approves a religious exemption, an individual will not be required to submit subsequent requests for exemption in the future.
3. In general, once Rutgers approves a medical exemption, unless otherwise limited, an individual will not be required to submit requests for exemption in the future.
4. If approval of a medical exemption is limited, an exemption is only valid for the period of time during which the medical condition exists. Individuals will be required to receive the appropriate vaccination(s) or reapply for an exemption after the expiration date of the medical condition.

IV. **Non-Compliance**

Any individual who fails to be vaccinated by the applicable deadline, fails to be approved for a valid medical or religious exemption by the applicable deadline, or otherwise fails to comply with the provisions of this Policy, will not be permitted to work at Rutgers University and will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. A Finalist who fails to be vaccinated prior to the commencement of employment, fails to be approved for a valid medical or religious exemption, or otherwise fails to comply with the provisions of this Policy, may have his or her conditional offer of employment rescinded.

It is the hiring unit representative's responsibility to confirm compliance with all requirements of this Policy prior to the first day of employment. The hiring unit representative is authorized to release the appointment transaction for processing only after visual verification of vaccine mandate compliance.

V. **Limited Scope**

The provisions of this Policy are limited to the requirements set forth above and are not intended to, and shall not, change any requirements regarding the use of personal protective equipment, or other immunizations, required by other University Policy, University directive, or applicable law.

Covered Individuals (as that term is defined in [University Policy 100.3.1: Immunization Policy for Covered Individuals](#)) must comply with the requirements of University Policy 100.3.1. This Policy does not replace or supersede University Policy 100.3.1.

VI. **Exceptions**

Exceptions to any provisions within this Policy may be granted only by the Senior Vice President for Human Resources or his or her designee.