

# METHODIST UNIVERSITY

## STUDENT COVID-19 VACCINATION POLICY

### Summary

In light of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's full approval of at least one COVID-19 vaccine, this policy mandates that all students who live, learn, or work on campus at Methodist University during the 2022-2023 academic year be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines have been demonstrated to be a safe and effective tool in reducing the spread of the SARS CoV-2 virus and in preventing severe illness and death from COVID-19. This policy describes the COVID-19 vaccination requirements in place to protect the health and safety of the Methodist University campus community, including its students, faculty, staff, and others who engage in-person at Methodist University.

### Policy

#### I. General

This policy requires all students accessing the Methodist University campus in-person to receive a COVID-19 vaccination, with limited exceptions. More particularly, this policy applies to all Methodist University students (undergraduate and graduate) who are enrolled in any in-person class, reside in University housing, and/or participate in any in-person activity on campus. This requirement has taken effect in response to the FDA's granting full approval of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine on August 23, 2021.

For the purposes of this policy, "students" are defined as any individual matriculated or otherwise enrolled full-time or part-time at Methodist University as well as visiting, auditing, exchange, continuing education, and international students taking in-person courses at Methodist University.

#### II. Vaccination Requirements

All students attending Methodist University in the Fall 2022 term and thereafter will be provided with information about the COVID-19 vaccination and must either: (i) receive a COVID-19 vaccination; or (ii) obtain an approved Exemption as further described below.

A. **Information.** Methodist University will regularly update students with appropriate information about COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines, which information will include, without limitation, COVID-19 infection prevention protocols, where to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine, the benefits and risks of COVID-19 vaccinations, and the consequences for the failure to obtain a vaccine.

- B. Receipt of Vaccine.** Students who plan to attend in-person classes or in-person events, live in University housing, and/or utilize in-person services or resources (e.g., the library or collaboration spaces) at Methodist University shall provide evidence of receiving the full vaccination series (i.e., both doses of a two-dose series) of any COVID-19 vaccination authorized for emergency use or granted approval by the FDA. For the Fall 2022 term, students must be fully vaccinated no later than the Grace Period deadline established by the University pursuant to Section IV.A of this policy. For purposes of the Fall 2022 term, a fully-vaccinated student is one that has completed all doses of the approved vaccines and uploaded their proof of vaccination to MU Health Services. For all subsequent terms, students must provide such evidence prior to coming to campus and show that such vaccine was received at least two weeks prior to arriving on Methodist campus for any reason, including, without limitation, moving into a residence hall, attending in-person campus classes and/or entering any Methodist University building or other facility.

Students may apply for a medical or religious exemption to the vaccination requirement, and medical and religious exemptions will be granted in accordance with federal and local law. Students with approved medical or religious exemptions will be subject to pre-arrival and weekly prevalence testing requirements and other public health measures. Students who are not vaccinated and do not qualify for an exemption are not permitted to come to campus for any reason.

Students must submit documentation providing proof of full COVID-19 vaccination to the MU Health Services portal using the step by step guide available at <https://www.methodist.edu/health-services/covid-upload>. Proof of COVID-19 antibodies through test results cannot be used as an alternative to receipt of a COVID-19 vaccination.

International students who obtained a COVID-19 vaccination may provide documentation signed by a healthcare provider duly licensed to practice medicine in the United States or a foreign country, and such documentation must include the dates of vaccination and name of the COVID-19 vaccination given. International students who have received COVID-19 vaccines not licensed or under an Emergency Use Authorization (“EUA”) by the FDA in the United States may apply for a medical accommodation, as discussed below, which will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. In general, these students will be designated as partially vaccinated and they will therefore be subject to the conditions of the medical accommodation until further notice.

### **III. Exemptions**

#### **A. Allowable Exemption Categories**

1. *Online or Fully Remote Exemption.* Students whose course of study is fully remote with enrollment through MU Online may be exempted from this vaccine requirement. For this exemption to apply, the student must have no physical presence on campus nor reasonably anticipate using on-campus services for the entirety of the academic term. Such students must submit an attestation to the campus that states they understand they will not be allowed to come onto campus unless they submit proof of vaccination as indicated above or are granted an exemption.
2. *Medical Accommodation.* Students who are not yet fully vaccinated and international students who received a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized or approved by the FDA may apply for a temporary medical accommodation to allow them time to become fully vaccinated. Any such requests will be reviewed and granted on a case-by-case basis by the University. All students granted a medical accommodation under this section will be subjected to certain restrictions set forth in Sec. III. C. below and may be subject to other restrictions imposed by Methodist University in its absolute discretion.
3. *Medical Exemption.*
  - i. Students may be exempt from this vaccine requirement if a duly licensed health care provider certifies in writing that the COVID-19 vaccination may be detrimental to the student's health or is otherwise contraindicated. Methodist University shall provide reasonable accommodations to those students whose medical condition(s) contraindicates COVID-19 vaccination so long as the failure to be vaccinated does not prevent the student from otherwise fulfilling the programmatic or curricular requirements of their academic program. Students requesting a medical exemption from the COVID-19 vaccination requirement shall use the medical exemption form available on the Methodist University COVID-19 Resource Website.
  - ii. Any such requests will be reviewed and granted on a case-by-case basis by Methodist University. If approved, the exemption will apply for the period of time designated by the health care professional, if any.
  - iii. All students granted a medical exemption will be subjected to certain requirements set forth in Section III.C. below and may be subject to other requirements imposed by Methodist University.

#### 4. *Religious Exemption.*

- i. Students who hold genuine and sincere religious beliefs which are contrary to COVID-19 vaccination may be exempt after submitting a written statement, signed by the student (or a parent or legal guardian if the student is under age 18) to that effect. Such statement should explain how receiving the COVID-19 vaccination conflicts with the student's sincere religious belief or practice and how not receiving the COVID-19 vaccination will not otherwise prevent the student's completion of their programmatic or curricular requirements of the academic program. General philosophical, conscientious, or moral objections to such vaccine **shall not** suffice as the basis for a religious exemption. Students requesting a religious exemption from the COVID-19 vaccination requirement shall use the religious exemption form available on the Methodist University COVID-19 Resource Website.
- ii. Any such requests will be reviewed and granted on a case-by-case basis by Methodist University. If the bona fide religious beliefs of a student (or the parent/guardian if under age 18) are contrary to the immunization requirement for a COVID-19 vaccine, the student will be exempt from the requirement.
- iii. Students granted a religious exemption will be subjected to certain requirements set forth in Section III.C. below and may be subject to other requirements imposed by the University.

5. *Deadline.* Any exemption request must be submitted by June 1, 2022 (new/transfer students) or June 30, 2022 (returning students), for the Fall 2022 semester, and by the date specified by Methodist University for subsequent terms. However, all students are encouraged to submit any exemption requests as soon as possible.

**B. Additional Considerations for Students with Exemptions.** Students who are granted a medical or religious Exemption pursuant to paragraphs (2), (3), or (4) above, and who will be accessing any part of Methodist University campus without first receiving a COVID-19 vaccination, must either: (1) quarantine for at least ten (10) days upon arrival; (2) submit an attestation to the campus that they have quarantined for at least ten (10) days prior to arrival; or, (3) provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test within the last seventy-two (72) hours. All students with exemptions will be subject to mandatory weekly COVID-19 testing administered by the University. Such students will also be required to adhere to the health and safety protocols implemented by the University, which

may include social distancing, mask-wearing, and additional surveillance testing, among others. Exceptions to the mask-wearing requirement include when students are (1) in their private residential or personal space, (2) eating meals on-campus while seated and social distancing is appropriately enforced, or (3) by themselves. Methodist University may impose additional restrictions as needed. Students with approved exemptions may also be excluded from all in-person classes and activities at the University's discretion should a COVID-19 outbreak occur on campus.

#### **IV. Compliance.**

- A. **Grace Period.** Given that the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) was the first COVID-19 vaccine to receive full FDA approval on August 23, 2021, the University is allowing students until October 15, 2021, to either (i) show proof they have completed a full vaccine series (meaning that the student has received at least one dose of a single dose vaccine series or at least a second dose of a two-dose series), provided, however, that this period does not include the two-week window after completion of the series needed for immunity, or (ii) submit requests for an exemption based on medical or religious grounds. As long as the request for an exemption was received before deadline, the grace period will extend through the review period of any such exemption.

However, for any student who timely submitted, but was not granted, a medical or religious exemption request, and the date of denial of such request does not afford the student sufficient time to become fully vaccinated by October 15, 2021, such student will have an additional opportunity to come into compliance with the full vaccination requirement by showing proof that they have received a single dose vaccine series or at least one dose of a two-dose series within 10 days from the date of the denial of their exemption request, and will therefore be subject to the conditions of the medical accommodation discussed in Section III.A.2 above. Otherwise, the student will either be unenrolled, or may revert to fully remote instruction if that is an available option based on the student's course of study and is otherwise permitted by the University, and will no longer have access to any in-person campus activities or services.

- B. **Failure to Comply.** Upon expiration of the time periods identified above, any student who has not shown that they have completed a full vaccine series or been granted an exemption will either be unenrolled, or may revert to fully remote instruction if that is an available option based on the student's course of study and is otherwise permitted by the University, and will no longer have access to any in-person campus activities or services. No refunds of tuition, housing, dining, and all other fees and charges will be issued for the period of time when the student was not permitted to attend classes, reside in University housing, and access campus due to non-compliance with this policy. Students

who officially withdraw from the University will be given refunds in accordance with the applicable Refund Policy.

- C. **Additional Requirements.** Methodist University has the discretion to impose additional health and safety restrictions as it deems appropriate for the campus community as the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to change.