



IBHE and ICCB have updated the [Phase 5 Guidance](#) to reflect Executive Order 2021-22. These FAQ are meant to provide additional helpful information.

Issued September 9, 2021

What does the new Executive Order require for higher education?

- All higher education personnel and students, as defined in the [Order](#), must receive, at a minimum, the first dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine by September 19, 2021, and the second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine within 30 days following administration of their first dose in a two-dose vaccination series.
 - Higher education personnel includes people who are employed by, volunteer for, or are contracted to provide services for an Institution of Higher Education and is in close contact (fewer than 6 feet) with other persons on campus or in a campus-affiliated building or location for more than 15 minutes at least once a week on a regular basis.
 - Higher education students are people who are enrolled in credit-bearing or non-credit bearing coursework at an Institution of Higher Education, either on campus or at an affiliated off-campus location. It does not include individuals who complete their coursework exclusively remotely.
- Beginning on September 19, 2021, higher education personnel and students who have not established that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 must be tested weekly, at a minimum, for COVID-19 until they establish that they are fully vaccinated.
- People who are only on campus and in close contact with others for a short time, such as someone making a delivery briefly, are not included in this requirement.
- Individuals working or taking classes in a fully remote format who do not come to campus are not required to submit to testing or vaccination verifications unless specifically required by the institution.

What Institutions of Higher Education are covered?

- Public and private colleges and universities, as well as private business and vocational schools, technical schools or other educational institutions offering degrees, programs, or instruction beyond secondary school are covered. This includes all locations of the institution where any in-person activities may occur, even if it is not the main campus location.

Where can people get vaccinated? Is there a cost? Is proof of citizenship or proof of insurance required?

- All Illinois residents over the age of 12 are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at no cost and proof of immigration status is not required to receive the vaccine. To find a vaccination center near you, go to [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).

How can Institutions of Higher Education determine if their personnel or students are vaccinated for COVID-19?

- Personnel and students must provide proof through
 - a CDC COVID-19 vaccination record card or a photograph of the card OR
 - documentation of vaccination from a health care provider or electronic health record OR
 - state immunization records.
- Institutions may develop their own methods for documenting proof of vaccination and weekly testing for COVID-19.
- Institutions must maintain medical records in accordance with applicable law.

Are there exemptions from vaccine requirement?

- Any individual who is not fully vaccinated, regardless of the reason, must undergo weekly testing. State and federal law requires exemptions for certain medical and religious reasons. Employees who are exempted from the vaccine requirement due to a medical or religious reason must still undergo weekly testing, as set out in the Order.

What type of documentation do people need to provide to an Institution of Higher Education to be exempt from the vaccination requirement?

- It is up to each Institution of Higher Education to determine what documentation will be required from individuals seeking a religious or medical exemption from the vaccination requirement, in accordance with applicable law.

How can Institutions of Higher Education get a vaccination site set up on campus?

- IDPH can work with IHEs to set up an on-campus vaccination clinic.
- Local health departments can help IHEs locate nearby sites that offer vaccination or an individual can go to [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to [locate a vaccination site near them](#).

Are Institutions of Higher Education required to provide weekly testing for COVID-19 for their personnel and students?

- Institutions of Higher Education are encouraged, but not required by the Order, to provide weekly testing opportunities for personnel and students who cannot or will not get vaccinated for COVID-19. If testing is not conducted on-site, the IHE must obtain proof or confirmation from the higher education personnel or student of a negative test obtained elsewhere.

How can Institutions of Higher Education get access to COVID-19 tests? Who will pay for testing?

- Vaccination against COVID-19 is now widely available, and all persons over the age of 12 are eligible. Vaccination is the leading prevention strategy against COVID-19. We urge you to do your utmost to ensure broad vaccination within your higher education community and minimize the need for testing.
- Testing is often available at local pharmacies, clinics, and other locations. Your local health department can help you locate testing sites or you could locate testing through [IDPH](#).
- If Institutions of Higher Education want to establish an institution-sponsored on-campus testing program, SHIELD Illinois offers inexpensive testing with quick turnaround of testing results. You can connect with them at <https://www.uillinois.edu/shield>.
- Testing must be done using a test that either has Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA or be operating per the Laboratory Developed Test requirements by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services.

When is a CLIA waiver needed for testing?

- Institutions of Higher Education do not need a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) waiver when collaborating with a testing provider for screening, such as SHIELD Illinois. The testing provider will be responsible for obtaining a CLIA waiver.

What type of test for COVID-19 should unvaccinated personnel and students receive?

- Individuals testing to comply with the requirements in the Order should seek viral testing, preferably a PCR test if available. Tests must have Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA or be operating per the Laboratory Developed Test requirements by US CMS.
- [Viral tests](#) indicate whether an individual has a current infection. There are two types of viral tests: [nucleic acid amplification tests](#), including the gold-standard PCR test, and antigen tests.
- At-home tests or self-test kits for COVID-19 are available for purchase from retail pharmacies and other outlets. Some of these tests require supervision from a health care provider through telehealth, who will then confirm the identity of the person taking the test (e.g., by showing photo ID), while others are fully self-administered. For higher education personnel and students, at-home tests that are fully self-administered are permissible when the Institution of Higher Education requires proof of the test result through a video or picture of the test result to be available upon request from the personnel or student. If Institutions of Higher Education choose to allow personnel or students to use at-home or self-tests to attest to their negative status, they should be aware of the limitations of these tests, such as inadvertent improper administration and difficulty in verifying the reported results against the individual's identity.
- Antibody tests should not be used to diagnose a current infection and are not recommended to meet the requirements of the Order.

How can unvaccinated personnel and students provide proof of a negative test for COVID-19?

- Such proof should include a paper or electronic copy of the negative test result for review by the Institution of Higher Education. There should be sufficient personally identifiable information on the test result for the Institution of Higher Education to ensure the specimen and result do in fact apply to the individual required to test.

How can Institutions of Higher Education verify an employee's or student's negative test results for COVID-19?

- The [CDC](#) has provided guidance for verifying a qualifying test result for air travelers that have been modified below as a guide. Those test results must be in the form of written documentation (paper or electronic copy) and must identify the following:
 1. Type of test (indicating it is a NAAT or antigen test)
 2. Entity issuing the result (e.g. laboratory, healthcare entity, or telehealth service)
 3. Specimen collection date.
 4. Information that identifies the person
 5. Test Result

What happens if an individual undergoing at least weekly testing for COVID-19 receives a positive result?

- Individuals who test positive should immediately isolate at home and follow any isolation orders as directed by the local health department.
- For most adults with COVID-19 illness, isolation and precautions can be discontinued 10 days after symptom onset and after resolution of fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, and with improvement of other symptoms.
- For adults who never develop symptoms, isolation and other precautions can be discontinued 10 days after the date of their first positive RT-PCR test result for SARS-CoV-2 RNA.

Who makes the determination that testing more than weekly is required?

- Institutions in conjunction with their local health departments should assess local conditions and determine if testing more frequently is required to slow the spread of COVID-19. The Executive Order does not prohibit IHEs from implementing higher vaccination or testing requirements.