



## **VACCINATION POLICY**

Policy Effective Date: April 20, 2021

### **Actions Required of All Students and Employees:**

- **Obtain COVID-19 Vaccination**
- **[Submit Vaccination Record Online to Seminary](#)**

### **Purpose**

Vaccination against viruses and other diseases improves the health and wellness of employees, reduces absences, decreases healthcare expenses, reduces doctor visits, and improves morale. Seminary of the Southwest desires to provide everyone with a safe place for working, learning and formation. Our adoption of this vaccination policy is intended to enhance a safe environment.

This policy requires vaccination of all seminary students, faculty, and staff against COVID-19. The goal is to protect our students, employees, their families, and the broader community from COVID-19 infection, as we all do our part to minimize community spread.

This policy is intended to comply with all federal, state, and local laws and is based upon guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of Health and Human Services, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and public health and licensing authorities as applicable. However, this policy assumes no legal duty unmandated by public policy.

### **Effective Date of Policy**

The Texas Department of State Health Services announced that beginning March 29, 2021, it is able to provide vaccines for all adults in the state of Texas because of an increase in the vaccine supply. In view of expanded statewide access to the vaccine, this policy becomes effective on April 20, 2021, when COVID-19 vaccination appointments become widely available and accessible in Austin.

### **Applicable Scope**

This policy requires COVID-19 vaccinations of all students and employees, regardless of whether you have been previously infected with COVID-19. If you were previously infected with COVID-19, you are

still required by this policy to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. This policy may also apply to contractors and vendors with regular access to or presence in the seminary's facilities.

## **Requirements**

All new and returning students are required to obtain the vaccine and submit to the seminary proof of their COVID-19 vaccination by July 15, 2021, unless the vaccine is inaccessible or a special exception has been granted in writing by the seminary. All faculty and staff are required to obtain the vaccine and submit to the seminary proof of their COVID-19 vaccination by July 15, 2021, unless the vaccine is inaccessible or a special exception has been granted in writing by the seminary.

Employees who neglect to fulfill the requirements of this policy by the established deadline after COVID-19 vaccinations are widely available in Austin may be placed on unpaid leave and their status will be evaluated periodically to determine if and when it may be appropriate for them to return to work. Employees may also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including separation from employment, if they intentionally violate this policy, wrongfully refuse to get vaccinated, or provide false or misleading information to support an exception request.

Students who neglect to fulfill the requirements of this policy by July 15, 2021, will be ineligible to attend on-campus classes and events, and may not reside in seminary-provided student housing.<sup>1</sup>

The procedure for requesting an exemption from this policy is described below in the section title *Requests for Medical and Religious Exceptions to Vaccination Policy*.

## **Proof of Vaccination**

Depending on the brand of vaccine available for administration at the time of your appointment, your clinician will inform you whether one or two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine are required to be administered. If a second dose is required, your clinician will instruct you.

Once your vaccine regimen has been completed, your clinician will provide you with a written vaccination record. You must submit your vaccination record to the seminary to demonstrate compliance with this policy. Please upload an image of the vaccination record and submit it online using this [link](#). Please do not email your vaccination record to any member of the faculty or staff. Submit it online only.

Any person requiring assistance in locating a COVID-19 vaccination provider may contact Austin Public Health. Employees and students are encouraged to pre-register for the COVID-19 vaccination program through Austin Public Health's [registration portal](#) or through the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Expectations regarding return to in-class instruction will be communicated via email to all students after this policy becomes effective.

## **Requirement for Periodic Revaccination**

Public health authorities may recommend or require periodic coronavirus revaccinations. In this event, the seminary's vaccination policy will apply to revaccination protocols as may be promulgated by public health authorities.

## **Vaccine Shortage Contingency**

Those who are unable to receive a vaccine due to shortage or other reasons may be subject to additional safety or virus mitigation measures as determined by the seminary consistent with public health authority guidelines.

## **Special Exemption**

### **Requests for Medical, Conscientious Objection, and Religious Exemption from Vaccination Policy**

A special exemption to this policy is considered upon submission of a written request expressing the reasons an exemption is being requested.

To assist any employee or student who is disabled, who is pregnant, who is a nursing mother, who has a qualifying medical condition for which a physician's letter has been provided that contraindicates the vaccination, or who objects in writing to being vaccinated for reasons of conscience, including a sincerely held religious belief and practice, the seminary will engage in an interactive process to determine if a reasonable accommodation can be provided without imposing an undue hardship on the seminary or creating a direct threat to the health or safety of the employee and others on campus.

To request an accommodation for any of the above reasons, you must submit a written request to the executive vice president via email: [fred.clement@ssw.edu](mailto:fred.clement@ssw.edu). Once the seminary receives your written request, we will engage in an interactive process to identify potential accommodations on a case-by-case basis. Applicants must cooperate and participate in this interactive process honestly and in good faith, and they may be asked to provide additional information in support of the accommodation request. Even if a disability, conscientious objection, or sincerely held religious belief is established by an applicant, the request may be denied due to the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting undue hardship or direct threat posed by the lack of vaccination, depending on the circumstances. Requests for special exemptions will be decided by a small committee of the administration maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

## **Non-Discrimination / Non-Retaliation**

As stated in its other policies, the seminary does not discriminate against its employees or students with regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age, disability and genetic information (including family medical history), or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law. The seminary also accommodates

disabilities and sincerely held religious beliefs to the extent required by law, and prohibits retaliation for any conduct protected by applicable law. Although an accommodation request may be denied if it poses an undue burden on the seminary or presents a direct threat to the health and safety of others, the seminary will not retaliate against any employee merely for requesting an accommodation.

If you believe that you have been treated in a manner not in accordance with this policy, please notify the dean, academic dean, or executive vice president immediately.

### **Confidentiality**

The seminary will keep all employees' and students' vaccination status and underlying medical condition(s) confidential, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and any other applicable law or regulation.

### **Side Effects**

If an employee or student employed by the seminary suffers any side effects, illness, or injury caused by the vaccination, any lost wages or permanent impairment caused by those side effects may be covered by the seminary's workers' compensation program. Additionally, if an employee or student suffers minor side effects such as fatigue, arm pain, headaches, low-grade fever, etc. and requests time off work within three days after receiving a vaccination dose, the time off will be excused and may be paid without reduction of the employee's accrued sick or PTO time.