

Quick Answer: When to Address Vaccination Status During the Hiring Process

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Recruiting Research Team

Initiatives: [Recruiting](#); [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resource Center](#)

Facing a hypercompetitive labor market and increased pressure to convert candidates, recruiting leaders must go beyond compliance when addressing vaccination status during the hiring process. Use this research to understand best practices for engaging candidates on vaccination status and policies.

Quick Answer

What is the right time to address vaccination status and vaccine requirements during the hiring process?

- Engage candidates about vaccination status and company policies regarding vaccines as early as possible during the hiring process, including on the company website and in job descriptions.
- Equip recruiters and hiring managers with talking points to explain why the company is enforcing vaccination requirements beyond just compliance.

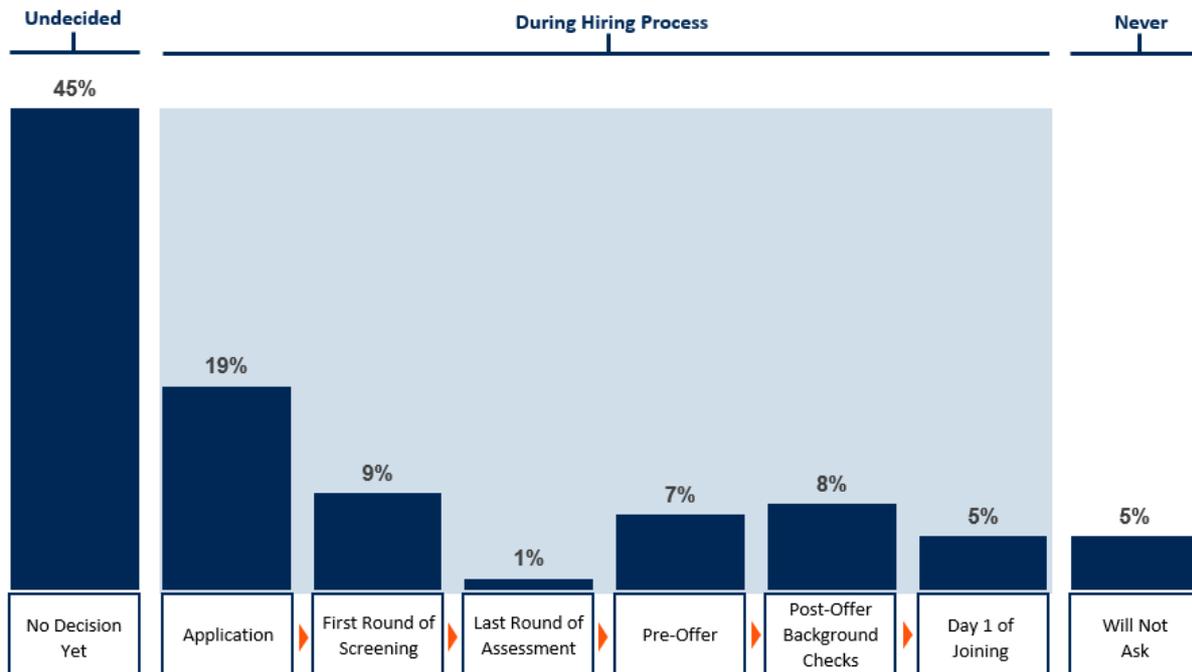
More Detail

As companies adopt policies mandating COVID-19 vaccines and/or regular testing, recruiting leaders must determine how and when to address vaccination status during the hiring process. ¹

According to a recent Gartner poll (October 2021), 45% of organizations globally have not yet determined if or when they will engage candidates about their current vaccination status as part of the talent acquisition process. Of organizations planning to engage candidates during the hiring process, many plan to inquire within the application itself. Conversely, 5% of organizations do not plan on asking candidates at all (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Current Plans for Asking Candidates About Vaccination Status

Figure 1: Current Plans for Asking Candidates About Vaccination Status
Percentage of Respondents (October 2021)



Source: Gartner Managing Employee Vaccination and Workplace Reopening Webinar Poll (27 October) (n = 160 Executive Leaders)

Q: At which stage of the hiring process are you planning to ask candidates about their vaccination status?

Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding

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Be Explicit About Vaccination Requirements Early On

It is essential to address the organization’s policies for vaccination in the beginning of the hiring process. Failure to do so can mean wasted time on ineligible candidates as well as a negative candidate experience.

While adding additional eligibility requirements undoubtedly could make hiring more difficult, if done correctly, it may also have benefits. Candidates, especially those who must work on-site, may place high importance on workplace health and safety and working with vaccinated colleagues. According to a recent Gartner survey, 61% of employees say the rise of COVID-19 variants has made them more concerned about safety in the workplace.² To maximize the potential attraction value and minimize wasted effort on ineligible candidates, include information about the company’s vaccination policies (as well as exemptions) on the website/career site, as well as within job descriptions themselves.

Even further, organizations may tie vaccination status to the conditions of employment within the job application itself, as well as within the offer or contract for candidate signature. Recruiting and HR leaders should work with their organizations' legal departments to determine the appropriate approach and language – for example, “I understand that this job requires me to be vaccinated before visiting a physical office location.”

Ensure Consistent, Purpose-Focused Vaccine Messaging

Recruiters and hiring managers will likely face questions, criticisms and pushback on the organization's policies and exemptions as well as the vaccine itself. For questions about broader vaccine mandates and vaccines, it is important to rely on the expertise of medical professionals and official external sources (such as the [WHO's COVID-19 Vaccine Portal](#)). For questions related to the company's policies, HR leaders must equip hiring managers and recruiters with answers and messaging that not only articulates the policy consistently but also explains *why* the policies are in place.

Reframing the Policies

While these questions are opportunities to create clarity and consistency, they are also opportunities to build on the organization's employee value proposition (EVP) and depoliticize the issue. For example, references to government mandates (such as the recent OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard in the United States ¹) should refer to the White House or government itself and not the “Biden Administration” or “Biden Mandate.”

To tie new policies to the organization's EVP (thus maximizing attraction value and minimizing candidate dropoff), one-to-one conversations and job postings should go beyond compliance to express care for employees. More than 60% of employees want their organization to understand and share in caring about both their family (68%) and their community (62%). ³ Emphasizing these values and in vaccine messaging can enable deeper connections with employees. In short, send a clear message: *Our company cares about more than just your work; we care about your health, your safety and the safety of your community.* Companies may also consider connecting vaccination and other workplace policies to longer-standing brand messages pertaining to mission, culture and values.

Recommended by the Authors

[Key Decisions Following OSHA's New Vaccine and Testing Guidance](#)

[How to Communicate Your COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy to Employees](#)

[How to Manage a Hiring Surge \(Without Additional Resources\)](#)

[Considerations for Mandating Vaccines in Your Organization](#)

[Considerations for a Vaccine Strategy](#)

Evidence

¹ On 5 November 2021, the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) released an emergency temporary standard (ETS), detailing recommendations for employers of unvaccinated workers to prevent the spread of COVID-19. See [COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing ETS](#), U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

² 2021 Gartner Hybrid and Return to Work Survey (n = 3,515). This survey was distributed to over 3,500 employees globally during October and November 2021.

³ 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey. This survey polled 5,000 employees globally on their experiences and expectations of their organizations' employment value proposition and employee experience.

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