

**COVID-19 VACCINE POLICY OF THE**  
**MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**  
**FOR EMPLOYEES**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In order to provide and maintain a learning and working environment that safeguards the health and well-being of the college community, during 2021 all Massachusetts Community College members, including students, faculty and staff, have been strongly encouraged to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

With the number of new cases of COVID-19 across the Commonwealth in unvaccinated populations, the increased access and availability of vaccines in the Commonwealth, the Food & Drug Administration's full and pending approval of available vaccines, and consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") that the COVID-19 vaccine has been proven to be extremely safe and highly effective, the Massachusetts Community College Presidents determined that COVID-19 vaccines should be required. Thus, in September 2021, the Presidents announced that by January 2022, all Massachusetts Community College members, including students, faculty, and staff must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and submit verification of their fully vaccinated status to the College absent an approved reasonable accommodation.

## **SCOPE**

The employee vaccination policy applies to all full and part-time employees including faculty and staff, contract and/or hourly employees, interns, and volunteers regardless of whether work assignments are online or in-person as well as to those consultants, vendors or business/governmental invitees that have a regular presence on campus and/or routinely interact with students and/or employees, as determined by the College ("Employees").

The employee vaccination policy does not apply to consultants, vendors or business/governmental invitees who are not regularly on campus and/or who do not routinely interact with students and/or employees (ex. invited to campus for a limited short duration visit) unless such consultants, vendors or business/governmental invitees are otherwise required by the College to follow the requirements outlined in the employee vaccination policy or other College policies.

Consultants, vendors and/or business/governmental invitees who are not regularly on campus and/or who do not routinely interact with students and/or employees (ex. invited to

campus for a limited short duration visit) and/or who are not required by the College to follow the vaccination requirements outlined in the employee policy or other policies will be subject to additional health and safety protocols as determined by the College in consideration of local or state public health or CDC guidance and/or mandates. These additional health and safety requirements will be posted by the College through signage and on the College's websites and/or in agreements as may be applicable.

The employee vaccination policy does not apply to students, including work study students, who are covered under separate student vaccination requirements. Employees who otherwise are enrolled in a course at a community college will also follow the student vaccination policy.

The employee vaccination policy is intended to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and is based on applicable guidance from federal and state public health agencies.

## **COVID-19 VACCINE REQUIREMENT**

### **Verification**

On or before January 3, 2022, verification of full vaccination status is required for employees, as defined above in Scope. This policy relies on the CDC's definition of full vaccination status which currently provides in its guidance that "[i]n general, people are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine."<sup>1</sup>

This policy shall incorporate by reference any changes in the CDC's definition of full vaccination status, including but not limited to booster shots.

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<sup>1</sup> This guidance applies to COVID-19 vaccines currently approved or authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson [J&J]/Janssen COVID-19 vaccines) and some vaccines used for U.S. participants in COVID-19 vaccine trials (such as Novavax). This guidance can also be applied to COVID-19 vaccines that have been listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization (such as AstraZeneca/Oxford). More information is available at [Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC](#)

On or before January 3, 2022, Employees shall provide written proof of an official record of full vaccination status to the College either through an electronic verification process which may include a designated email address, website link, and/or other electronic platform established by the College for such purpose or in person to the Human Resources Office. Employees who work for more than one Community College shall provide vaccination verification to each separate employer on or before January 3, 2022. Employees must follow their College's instructions for providing written proof of full vaccination status and all vaccine verification information shall be treated as confidential.

Employees who fail to submit verification of full vaccination by the January 3, 2022 deadline are not permitted to work either on campus or through telework or to be on campus for any purpose absent an approved reasonable accommodation.

As applicable, Employees shall be placed on leave without pay for no more than 14 calendar days pending submission of the required verification or receipt and approval of an appropriately documented reasonable accommodation. If an employee has a reasonable accommodation request pending and/or has received an initial or subsequent dose of a vaccine but has not yet reached full vaccination status, the College will permit such employee to utilize any accrued personal, vacation and/or compensatory time for the above period. Further, a College may extend the above period to enable an Employee to reach full vaccination status if the Employee has satisfactorily demonstrated that they have started the vaccination process.

Continued failure to submit required verification absent an approved reasonable accommodation shall be cause for discipline up to and including termination consistent with applicable collective bargaining agreements and/or employee handbook.

### **Request for Reasonable Accommodation**

Employees who are unable to submit proof of full vaccination status for any reason and seek a reasonable accommodation should direct their request to the College's Human Resources Office. Employees who work for more than one Community College shall provide their request for reasonable accommodation to each separate employer. Employees must follow their College's instructions regarding reasonable accommodation requests, including submission of necessary documentation.

Requests for reasonable accommodations, including requests to be exempt from the vaccine requirement for medical or religious reasons, will be considered consistent with applicable laws, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

(EEOC)/Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) guidance, and the Board of Higher Education Policy on Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity for the Massachusetts Community Colleges. The College will engage in an interactive process to determine if the Employee is eligible for a reasonable accommodation and, if so, whether the requested accommodation is reasonable and does not create an undue hardship for the College and/or does not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of the Employee or others in the learning and working environment, if applicable.

The individualized interactive process is estimated to take a minimum of ten (10) business days following the receipt of satisfactory documentation supporting the Employee's eligibility for reasonable accommodation. Thus, Employees seeking an approved reasonable accommodation before the January 3, 2022 deadline should submit their reasonable accommodation request and provide necessary documentation as soon as possible and without delay in order to allow adequate time for the individualized interactive process to occur in compliance with this policy.

In the event a reasonable accommodation request is approved, the Employee may be subject to additional health and safety protocols and/or excluded from campus and/or college activities including but not limited to travel for the protection of the health of the Employee and the community, as determined by the College in consideration of local or state public health or CDC guidance and/or mandates.