Over the past two years, the country has learned much about the COVID-19 virus, its spread, the variants, and the vaccine. During this time, VCOM has periodically updated its policies and information to keep up with practice guidelines based upon the most current evidence-based medical facts. This policy has kept the VCOM campuses open and safe while contributing to the safety of our communities. The VCOM students, faculty, and staff were required to complete education on COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccination via a presentation created by VCOM faculty summarizing and providing students and employees with access to the most current evidence-based information on the vaccine.

**HISTORY:** In the summer of 2021, much of the country moved to Phase 2 or 3 guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Since July, there has been a rise in COVID-19 cases in all states where VCOM campuses are located. In preparation for a fall semester where COVID-19 remained a threat, VCOM implemented new policies and procedures for faculty, students, and staff on the VCOM Campuses.

The Delta variation brought about a new rise in the numbers of patients with COVID-19, especially in the Southern states where the VCOM campuses were located. While vaccination did reduce the numbers of cases and more importantly the severity of cases in northern states where vaccination was prominent, the southern states led the country in new COVID-19 cases and variants.

While great strides have been made in vaccination nationwide, the southern states and the VCOM region still lag behind. Fortunately, the VCOM student community is >98% vaccinated and the VCOM faculty and staff community is > 97% vaccinated across the campuses. This has kept our campuses open and without any faculty, staff, or students’ deaths during the pandemic. VCOM fully supports the Surgeon General’s message that vaccination is the most important health initiative to reduce the threat of COVID-19 for the country and allow a return to normal.

As a medical school, the VCOM family wishes to be a part of the message that vaccination is needed to save lives, and as a medical school, we will work to continue to dispel the misinformation that exists surrounding the vaccine and promoting vaccination.
SECTION 1: VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

Students: VCOM now recognizes the COVID-19 as a **required vaccination for all students**. The FDA studies have concluded, and the COVID-19 vaccine and boosters are fully approved by the FDA.

OMS-1 or OMS-2 students are to provide the proof of vaccination (copy of vaccination card with vaccination within the past 8 months) to the Associate Dean for Student Services. OMS-3 or OMS-4 students are to provide the proof of vaccination to the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs. OMS-3 or OMS-4 students are also subject to the vaccination requirements of their clinical sites.

**Exemptions for Students** may apply for those with medical or other exemptions that are allowed by applicable law. Students seeking an exemption may apply through the Associate Dean for Student Affairs (OMS-1 or OMS-2) or the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs (OMS-3 or OMS-4).

- Students who are not vaccinated but who demonstrate proof of having COVID-19 in the past 180 days are considered to have natural immunity and may postpone vaccination to allow for the 180 days of natural immunity.
- In Alabama where requiring proof of vaccination is not allowed, any student who elects to not provide proof of vaccination will be identified as being non-vaccinated and must then follow the policies and procedures in this document that apply to non-vaccinated students (see chart as to testing and mask requirements.) As students in the OMS-3 and OMS-4 year are also subject to the vaccination requirements of their clinical sites, not being vaccinated may (will likely) restrict the available sites and/or rotations where the student is eligible to participate.

Employees: VCOM now requires the COVID-19 vaccine for all employees. Employees are to provide proof of vaccination (a copy of the vaccination card) to Human Resources.

**Exemptions for employees** may apply for those with medical or other exemptions that are allowed by applicable law. Employees seeking exemption must apply through Human Resources.

- Employees who are not vaccinated, but who demonstrate proof of having COVID-19 in the past 180 days, are considered to have natural immunity and may postpone vaccination to allow for the 180 days of natural immunity.
- Employees who seek an exemption are to apply through Human Resources and the Dean or their Division Officer. Employees who are granted an exemption must follow all policies for masking and testing as in the policies and procedures (see chart and policy). In rare cases the employee may need to be reassigned.
- In Alabama where requiring proof of vaccination is not allowed, any employee who elects not to provide proof of vaccination will be identified as being non-vaccinated and must then follow the policies that apply to non-vaccinated employees (see chart and policy).

SECTION 2: REQUIRED EDUCATION ON COVID-19 AND ON VACCINATION - FOR ALL FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS. THE EDUCATION IS BASED UPON EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICINE FOR ALL STUDENTS

Recognizing the need for vaccination education, VCOM faculty created educational modules on COVID-19 and on the COVID-19 vaccination. These are required by all students in the curriculum and by all faculty and staff through Human Resources. Vaccination education must be promoted, as the only solution for COVID-19 is the vaccine. To prevent further deaths, we must understand and promote vaccination and recognize the COVID-19 virus as a true public health emergency! Every student, faculty member, and staff member are a part of the medical college community, and it is the role of the medical college in the community to save lives. In this case, the vaccine is an important instrument in saving lives.
Here are some additional fast facts when comparing the risks of COVID-19 to any risk associated with the vaccine: As of October 19, 2021; there have been:

- 44,857,861 cases of COVID-19
- 723,205 deaths
- There are **approximately 2 deaths per every 300 persons who contract the virus**. Deaths are more common in the elderly and/or those with underlying health conditions, especially respiratory disorders, diabetes, and severe obesity.
- 99% of the COVID-19 infections tested are now testing as the Delta variant
- 77% of persons living in the U.S. had had at least one dose of the vaccine
- As of October 6, 2021, over 403 million vaccine doses have been administered with 8,638 deaths (This number is among people vaccinated who have died of any cause within the time frame to be possibly related to the vaccine - even if not proven related to the vaccine).

Following the guidelines by the **CDC for Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)**, for operation to date, has allowed VCOM to continue operations offering an uninterrupted medical education program. VCOM will continue to follow the CDC guidelines for institutions of higher education, based upon evidence-based medical data. We are making great strides in vaccination with more than 97% of faculty, staff, and students being fully vaccinated across campuses.

The above is a graph of reported daily cases since January of 2020. Please note that in late July and early August of 2020, the nation saw a rise in cases that tripled the August cases in December and January. The recent August – September rise in cases in 2021 crippled hospitals throughout the United States. The vaccination status remained less than 50% in most states when this rise occurred. If the U.S. continued with the same increases in waves, the already burdened hospitals would be overwhelmed, resulting in many deaths. While we do not know if the vaccination will prevent another December surge, now that the vaccination rate has reached 70% across our nation, we are hopeful the surge will be reduced over the holidays and that the death rates will drop compared to December 2020. Vaccination remains our only hope. Remember that when the hospitals are overwhelmed by those with COVID-19, the hospitals are also unable to care for the day-to-day emergencies that have occurred before and continue to occur alongside the emergencies brought about by the pandemic.
“COLOR ZONES FOR CAMPUS SAFETY” for the 2021-2022 academic year. To create an improved method for providing the changes in policy required for when COVID-19 increases or decreases in the region, VCOM created the Color Zones for Campus Safety. Campus policy changes in each zone to reduce the risk for all students, faculty and staff. The changes alert faculty staff and students to specific procedures providing the safest operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The safety zone tables interpret the COVID-19 conditions by COLOR ZONES.

On campus, the chart of color zones and the current zone are posted by the entrance. Faculty, Staff, and Students are also notified by email of any high-risk red zone conditions that close the campus.

Students in the clinical setting are also notified of the charts indicating the current safety zones for the campus, if they return to campus. However, VCOM OMS-3 and OMS-4 students are distributed across a larger geographic area in their clinical years and are instructed to follow the instructions and requirements of their clinical site.

See the chart that follows:
# Polices for Vaccinated and Unvaccinated Students and Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Risk and Testing</th>
<th>Masks</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Increased Sanitizers &amp; Cleaning</th>
<th>Required Screening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green</strong></td>
<td>Very Low Risk Testing: Weekly, if Not Vaccinated OR if you have Significant Exposure to or Symptoms of COVID-19 (Regardless of Vaccination Status)</td>
<td>Masks: Not Vaccinated: Recommended. Vaccinated: Not required.</td>
<td>Student Attendance: Required for all Mandatory Learning Activities and testing. Faculty/Staff attendance required.</td>
<td>Events Allowed: All student events must be planned through the Director of Student Affairs (with Dean and President).</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not Vaccinated: All employees and students not vaccinated must document at least 2 times per week (beginning and end of week). Vaccinated: All employees and students are asked to report once weekly. Illness or Significant Exposure: All employees and students must document if ill or if any significant unprotected exposure to a person with COVID-19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yellow</strong></td>
<td>Minimum but Increasing cases in the Community or State Testing: Weekly, if Not Vaccinated OR if you have Significant Exposure to or Symptoms of COVID-19 (Regardless of Vaccination Status)</td>
<td>Masks: Not Vaccinated: Mask required indoors at all times. Vaccinated: Masks required in halls &amp; classrooms where 6 ft. distancing not possible. Masks may be removed in offices by those vaccinated if all attendees are in agreement.</td>
<td>Student Attendance: Required for all Mandatory Learning Activities. Faculty/Staff attendance: to regular job required unless altered by the Dean, President, or Division Officer.</td>
<td>Events Limited: Indoor events must be planned through the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and/or Dean’s office or for faculty and staff through the Division Officer and President. Outdoor events may be planned through the Associate Dean for Student Affairs &amp; Dean.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not Vaccinated: All employees and students not vaccinated must document at least 3 times per week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday). Vaccinated: All employees and students are asked to report once weekly. Illness or Significant Exposure: All employees and students must document if ill or if any significant unprotected exposure to a person with COVID-19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orange</strong></td>
<td>Moderate: Limited Opening Times for Campus Testing: Weekly, if Not Vaccinated OR if you have Significant Exposure to or Symptoms of COVID-19 (Regardless of Vaccination Status)</td>
<td>Masks: Required at All Times on Campus By all students and employees (Regardless of Vaccination Status)</td>
<td>Student Attendance: Required for all Mandatory Learning Activities. Move to 6 ft. distance in classes Faculty Staff attendance: required unless approved to work off-campus through the Dean or the Division Officer &amp; President.</td>
<td>Events Limited: All events must be preapproved through both the Dean &amp; President. Masks will be required for all. Negative tests may also be required.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not Vaccinated: All employees and students not vaccinated must document at least 3 times per week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday). Vaccinated: All employees and students are asked to report once weekly. Illness or Significant Exposure: All employees and students must document if ill or if any significant unprotected exposure to a person with COVID-19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red</strong></td>
<td>High: Campus Closed Except for Essential Employees</td>
<td>Masks: Required on All Areas of Campus</td>
<td>Online Classes. Campus restricted to a limited number of employees</td>
<td>No Events</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>All employees and students must document at least 3 times per week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) and any day before coming to campus. Illness or Significant Exposure: All employees and students must document if ill or if any significant unprotected exposure to a person with COVID-19.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AS IT IS ANTICIPATED THE CAMPUSES WILL GO THROUGH TIMES THIS FALL WHEN CASES INCREASE TO RED OR ORANGE AND TIMES WHEN WE SEE A DECREASE TO GREEN. THE TABLES ABOVE WITH COLOR ALERTS REGARDING SAFETY APPLY TO ALL CAMPUSES in 2021-2022.

SECTION 4: QUARANTINE MEASURES OF SAFETY

• SELF QUARANTINE:
  
  o **Vaccinated Students and Employees**: Following CDC guidelines, a minimum required 5-day self-quarantine period without illness is required **IF** following any direct, significant, *unprotected* exposure. Quarantine is not required if the person is vaccinated and a mask was worn OR if there was not direct contact (touching, etc.) with a person with an illness and exposure was less than 15 minutes. If illness follows an exposure, the employee or student must test negative before returning to campus.

  o **Students and Employees who are not vaccinated**: A minimum 6-day self-quarantine following any direct exposure and a negative test must be submitted prior to the employee or student returning to campus (to their COVID-19 Officer).

  o **Quarantine periods for employees** must be taken from sick days, vacations days, and/or other leave time (or a time where work can be done off campus as approved by the supervisor).

  o **Effective November 1, 2021**, all employees who are not vaccinated will be subject to COVID-19 testing (currently expected to be once per week on Mondays), self-administered in front of a VCOM-designated medical professional tele-proctor.

SECTION 5: MAINTAINING AN AWARENESS OF THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

A student experiencing any of the following symptoms may *not enter* College facilities and should isolate immediately. Symptoms most common to COVID-19 include the following:

A. Fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) or chills,
B. Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing,
C. Extreme fatigue from illness, with muscle or body aches,
D. Headaches related to an acute illness
E. New and remarkable loss of taste, smell, and appetite
F. Sore throat and congestion
G. Nausea, or vomiting, and/or diarrhea,

It is not likely you will experience all the symptoms above, and so if you are experiencing any of the symptoms and feel ill, you must stay at home and isolate yourself from others to see if further illness develops and *test*. In general, **there are no illnesses that you want to bring to the campus**, so stay at home until it is determined NOT to be COVID-19. Students must log any illness on the MyHealthTracer.com application. You must also contact your COVID officer to report illness.

Recognize that some employees and students who are vaccinated have contracted the Delta variant. While they have been ill, the illness of those vaccinated to date has been mild. So, if you become ill with any viral symptoms, complete the MyHealthTracer.com application and be tested before coming to campus! VCOM has purchased testing kits and has partnered with a telemedicine laboratory to monitor testing. This is an effort to save employees and on-campus students from expensive testing. Testing kits are provided by HR and the Associate Dean to all employees and on-campus students. Employees and students may pick up tests (one to keep at home) for free once the tests arrive (end of October). Please see the protocols for testing in Appendix A.
If an employee or student becomes ill on campus, please notify your COVID-19 Officer so arrangements for testing can occur. The COVID-19 officer will follow up with the student and/or employee on results of COVID testing to assure others on campus are notified when needed and safe.

**SECTION 6: ADDITIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH SAFETY MEASURES TO AVOID COVID-19 OUTBREAKS AND TO KEEP YOU SAFE!**

Frequent cleaning of the building and hand sanitizer stands at all entrances will continue next to high use areas All employees and student should practice good hand and face hygiene practices and wash hands frequently. Also use the hand sanitizer frequently esp. before/after touching doors, elevators, stair rails and frequently used surfaces. Employees and students should avoid sharing items such as pens, phones, computers, or other hand-held items.

**General Safety Measures:** You should continue to socially distance where possible. Do not congregate in halls, parking lots, bathrooms, libraries, or other small areas where social distancing cannot occur. Outdoor events are encouraged over indoor events.

**Safety Measures related to Restroom Use and Handwashing:** To avoid overcrowding, the restrooms’ capacity is limited to the number of people in the stalls and no more than 4 persons waiting inside the bathroom. For this reason, to avoid congregating by bathrooms, employees should attempt to use bathrooms at times when students are not on a break (not at the 10-minute period before the hour i.e.: 9:50 to 10, 10:50 to 11, or from 12 to 12:15). Employees & students should wash hands for 20 seconds or more and use hand sanitizer.

**Continue to Avoid Others Who Are Ill when off campus** whether at home or in transit so to not bring COVID-19 or other illnesses to campus. You may confidentially notify Human Resources (HR) or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs if you are concerned about someone on campus who is ill or someone off campus who is ill but may have exposed others.

**SECTION 7. DELIVERY OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS ON CAMPUS**

This section describes the safety measures that have been put in place and that will continue in order for the curriculum to be delivered in a safe environment in the classrooms and laboratories.

**A. CLASSROOMS:** While in **Green and Yellow zone** status the classrooms will now be used at full capacity as restrictions for seating have been limited and the campuses are 97% vaccinated. Students should be aware when the campus is in the **Orange zone** status, **split classrooms** will be used for better social distancing. During the **Red zone** status, the campus will essentially be closed and all classes will be online. Students and employees will be informed of status a minimum of weekly, and Color Zones for Campus Safety posters and the Current Color Zone sign will be displayed by the entrances.

**B. MASKS** must be worn at all times in the building by those who are not vaccinated for all color zones. Masks will be required of all students and employees including those vaccinated when the color zone is Yellow, Orange, or Red. **See the chart for further detail.**

**C. ACADEMIC CALENDARS** The Associate Deans for Medical Education on each campus will continue to provide the academic calendars.
   a. The academic calendar will list when the classes or lab occurs and whether the lecture or lab is a mandatory learning (ML) event or an asynchronous learning event (AL).
   b. **SEAT ASSIGNMENTS** will continue as they have in the past before the COVID-19 pandemic.
   c. **ANATOMY AND PPC/OMM LABORATORIES** are considered as mandatory learning events. All students must attend laboratories and/or have an excused absence (which will require remediation). Masks must be worn by all students who are not vaccinated. These labs are split and no more than 50% of the class are in the laboratories at any one time. Additional altered schedules may occur during **Orange and Red status**.
d. **PPC/OMM lab partners will be chosen for the entire block** to avoid exposure to multiple students. Students will be allowed to choose their own partners.

D. **Faculty supervising LABORATORIES must be vaccinated.** If not vaccinated, the faculty member must report to the Dean for other assignments (Other assignments are not guaranteed and the faculty member who is not vaccinated may be required to take leave).

E. Altered schedules may occur during and following a Red status.

F. Again, OMS-3 and OMS-4 students in the clinical years should follow the requirements of their clinical site. **If uncertain about the requirements, students in the clinical years should speak with their DSME and site coordinator to understand the requirements.**

**SECTION 8. EARLY CLINICAL EXPERIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL TRIPS**

Early clinical experiences and international trips have been placed on hold due to the increasing numbers of patients with COVID-19, both in the U.S. and in our partnering International sites. When these are reinstituted, employees and students will be notified.

**SECTION 9: POLICIES AFFECTING THE OMS-3 AND OMS-4 CLINICAL PROGRAM**

- **SECTION 9 IS FOR FACULTY AND STAFF WHO OVERSEE THE DELIVERY OF THE OMS-3 & OMS-4 CLINICAL PROGRAM ONLY and FOR STUDENTS IN THE OMS-3 AND OMS-4 CLINICAL PROGRAM**

**History:** VCOM initially (2020-2021 academic year) determined new clinical program requirements for the OMS-3 and OMS-4 students while under COVID-19 restrictions. The schedule allowed students to finish their academic program on time.

**Vaccination:** All OMS-3 and OMS-4 students will be required to be vaccinated to ensure a timely program and the clinical rotation site to which the student was originally matched. Vaccination is required for patient care for the fall term unless a qualified exemption is granted.

A. Students must recognize that VCOM is not the owner of the hospitals or practices where students normally train, and each hospital or practice has the right to establish its own vaccination requirements.
   - When the clinical site requires vaccination or an exemption, the student must provide the site with proof of vaccination or exemption or be relocated to a site that does not require vaccination. It is not always possible to find a site that allows students who are not vaccinated to be in the hospital or their practice and this may cause a delay in the student’s clinical program.

B. **Proof of Vaccination may also be required by many hospitals to qualify for their residency audition rotations.** ACGME has stated that students should be made aware that it reflects poorly on the student (with residency sites) if they are not vaccinated and do not have a medical contraindication.

C. **OMS-3 and OMS-4 Students who ARE NOT vaccinated for COVID-19 will be required to self-quarantine after any direct exposure to a patient or other person with COVID-19** and will generally require a negative test prior to returning to patient care. This may result in a delay in the student’s educational program. Students must follow the guidelines of the clinical site as well.

D. **For students who ARE vaccinated** and who have an significant unprotected exposure may also be required to self-quarantine. If required however, the self-quarantine is generally shorter (5 days). The student will be required to follow the guidelines of their clinical site as to days of self-quarantine required and if any testing as these may vary by site.
E. Students should be aware that if they become ill with COVID-19, the time allowed for recovery and quarantine may delay their program.

F. It is considered unprofessional and unethical for a student to represent themselves as fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to a clinical site if they are not vaccinated, and the student may be suspended and referred to the Honor Code Council or PESB if they misrepresent their status.

G. Clinical Educational Modules and post-rotation exams will continue to accompany all required rotations.

H. The Geriatrics rotation in the OMS-3 year has been discontinued until future years when COVID restrictions are lifted. At that time, it will be reinstated as a part of early clinical experiences.

I. All students must use the MyHealthTracer.com as instructed. This is VCOM’s primary source for screening, for identifying outbreaks early, and for contract tracing. This tool is to be used a minimum of weekly by vaccinated students to determine if vaccinated students are impacted by COVID exposure. As this is also used as a screening tool for COVID-19, those who are NOT vaccinated must use the application three times per week. VCOM monitors the data daily to assure there are no outbreaks in the student (or employee) population whether on campus or in the clinical sites.

OMS 3- CLINICAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS for the Class of 2023

Four weeks of required rotations in each of the following: Internal Medicine (inpatient), Internal Medicine 2 (inpatient or outpatient), Family Medicine, Primary Care (FM or IM) in a rural or medically underserved setting, OB/GYN, Pediatrics, Surgery, Psychiatry, and an approved elective (see list in the handbook). A four-week period to complete the research requirement is also provided.

OMS-4 CLINICAL PROGRAM EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS for the Class of 2022 are as follows:

A. Four-weeks dedicated to professional development. This may be taken in one- or two-week periods to allow flexibility for the students to complete residency interviews and the other requirements.

B. Five (5) elective rotations are allowed by VCOM. Electives were designed to prepare the fourth-year student for the field the student wishes to enter and to allow those who have not made a final choice to experience a clinical rotation in a field they are considering. Students will plan their electives when meeting with the Associate Dean for OMS-4 (and with advisement by clinical chairs).

C. Four (4) Selective Rotations. In addition to electives, students must complete the required selective rotations. These are based on required medical knowledge to enter residency and may be tailored to the field the student is to enter.

D. The Four (4) required Core Selective rotations for the 2021-2022 academic year include the following: One (1) 4 week surgical selective; One (1) 4 week medical selective; One (1) medical or surgical selective; and One (1) intensive medicine selective.

E. One (1) required Emergency Medicine rotation

F. Only those students who did not complete a research rotation in their third year must do so in the fourth year. This may be done in place of the elective and not cause a delay in the program.

G. Several months of electives are possible in the VCOM Core hospitals where residencies exist, depending upon availability. A minimum of one elective is possible through the VSLO system. (The policy limiting the number through VSLO is by VSLO and is subject to change during the year. VCOM has no authority or control over the VSLO system).

H. The Director for OMS-4 Clinical Rotations will assist the student in determining the rotation availability and preparing their fourth-year schedule.

I. Many outside electives remain restricted nationally by GME oversight groups or by hospitals and residency programs. These restrictions are not VCOM restrictions and are being imposed externally.
J. Most outside elective rotations will require vaccination. This is imposed by the clinical site. Students should stay in contact with the Director for OMS-4 rotations and should check with each site to be aware of these requirements prior to scheduling.

K. Elective and Selective choices for the fourth year selective(s) must be made from the 4th year Selective Rotations List in the student handbook.

L. Interviews for Residency: In 2020, for the first-time, residencies began interviewing virtually. OMS-4 students are to be made aware that online interviews for residency may or may not continue and therefore a rising fourth-year student must be prepared for both types of interviews (in person and online). Ultimately, whether the interview process will be in-person, or the choice of virtual interviews is up to each residency site. Many will be virtual. The Associate Dean for OMS-4 and GME will provide further information on a program as needed.

M. All OMS-4 students are required to use the MyHealthTracer.com online application each day until fully vaccinated.
   a. After vaccination the OMS-3 and OMS-4 student must enter proof of vaccination weekly or when experiencing illness. This may change if the community at large enters the Red zone.

N. In general, whether by VCOM or by the vast majority of hospitals and residency programs, all OMS-4 students are expected to complete vaccination as they are considered healthcare workers. Students should recognize that many clinical sites will not allow students to rotate unless fully vaccinated and many residency programs will not select a student who is not vaccinated.

O. Students should be aware it is doubtful that you will be able to match to a residency if not participating in vaccination. This is NOT a VCOM decision, but the decision of the residency program.

P. Proof of Vaccination: Students should be aware that, just as with the other required vaccinations for clinical care, proof of all vaccines is provided to the clinical sites prior to clinical training. COVID-19 vaccine is now a part of the vaccinations on the list. (In states where proof of vaccination may not be required, the students who have not submitted their proof of vaccination to the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, will have the following information provided: This student has not submitted proof of COVID-19 vaccination to Clinical Affairs. Again, as the hospitals are independent from the College, this may result in a required reassignment to a hospital that accepts students who are not vaccinated)

Q. Students who are fully immunized may now see patients under investigation for having COVID-19 if wearing all appropriate protections as designated by the Clinical Site. The student who is not vaccinated may not see patients with COVID-19 or under investigation for COVID-19, and if the unvaccinated student examines such a patient, they will be required to notify the COVID-19 Officer (or the DSME) of the exposure. This may require a period of quarantine (according to the site or if the site does not specify their requirements will be 7 days and a negative test). This may delay the unvaccinated student’s program. Students should also check the site on the time periods required for quarantine.

R. Students in clinical education should report any illness to their clinical education site and assure that they are excused for the day if experiencing any symptom of illness.

S. Students who are vaccinated must also report any significant exposures on MyHealthTracer.com application. However, if wearing a mask and using all precautions does not generally have to quarantine unless he or she develops symptoms and/or tests positive. If the policy of the institution requires additional quarantine or testing the student must follow that testing or quarantine of the site.

T. A Student MUST COMMUNICATE providing Notification of both:
   a. Illness or Symptoms of COVID-19 and/or
   b. Unprotected exposures (which may require missing days from a rotation depending on vaccination status and type of exposure).
      The communication of the notification is to:
   c. The clinical faculty member with whom they are rotating
d. The site coordinator and DSME (if in a VCOM core site) and the COVID-19 Officer (who is the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs).

e. Log the illness on MyHealthTracer.com.

Students should anticipate that all missed clinical rotations days will need to be remediated to pass the rotation and this can generally be done on weekends if a small number of days.

Summary: VCOM expects OMS-3 and -4 students to model exceptional physician professional behavior to safeguard their health and the public’s health. This is accomplished through vaccination, early recognition of signs and symptoms, taking timely protective actions to avoid the transmission of COVID-19 to others in the clinical setting, and by reporting their situation to those responsible for their learning and well-being.

VCOM is hopeful the OMS-3 and OMS-4 students may complete the year without interruption. However, the academic calendar for these students may change as hospitals and clinics adapt to increased COVID-19 cases.

SECTION 10: TRAVEL

A. International Travel and Vaccination: Students who are traveling outside of the country must be vaccinated.

B. Travel to US Regions with high COVID-19 prevalence: Students traveling to states where the prevalence of COVID-19 is high must also be vaccinated.

C. Travel by vaccinated students:
   a. Vaccinations are required by all who are traveling internationally. This prevents illness for the student or employee and prevents the student or employee from becoming a vector on campus. **Most countries will require proof of vaccination and a negative test to enter the country and the U.S. requires proof of vaccination for re-entry.**
   b. The CDC information provides that for those “Fully Vaccinated” the person can safely travel in the United States. If not vaccinated and the student travels to high-risk areas for COVID-19, the student will only be allowed to return after a self-quarantine period, which may cause a delay in the student’s program.
   c. **If a student is seeking self-quarantine time following travel,** the time must be pre-approved or the missed work will not be allowed to be remediated. Approvals will be limited as with other excused absences. Students who travel internationally without prior approval will be referred to the Honor Code Council.
   d. Safe activities are still recommended while on travel such as encouraging outdoor activities, (i.e.: camping, hiking, etc.) and recommending avoiding concerts, and indoor public gatherings that are considered super-spreaders.
   e. **Travel to VCOM international sites** is postponed at this time as VCOM cannot guarantee the availability of appropriate medical care for students or faculty should they contract COVID-19 and cannot guarantee that the student's program would not be delayed by a required self-quarantine.
   f. **If the student or employee is fully vaccinated,** and the country of travel is considered low risk (1 and 2) the employee or student may travel there and return with limited quarantine.
   g. If an employee who if fully vaccinated travels to any country with high-risk levels (level 3 or 4) he or she should seek approval from their supervisor and a minimum five-day self-quarantine will be required following international travel.
   h. If a student or employee, who is **not vaccinated,** travels internationally (against policy), the period of required quarantine will be a minimum of 10 days upon return and a negative COVID-19 test will be required prior to return to campus. For students this is an unexcused absence and the opportunity to remediate work will not be provided. The student will also be referred to Honor Code Council.
   i. Students who are vaccinated and who have taken international travel must be aware that, even if international travel is approved, if the return to the U.S. is delayed, the student may or may not be able to make up missing exams, labs, or mandatory learning and their program may be delayed.
   j. It is not known when VCOM International Missions will be reinstituted.
Below is a quick reference for CDC requirements.

**SECTION 11: Emergent Actions Related to COVID-19:**
The COVID-19 Committee will meet on any emergent conditions that arise and will call a meeting of the Committee whenever needed.

The COVID-19 Committee will meet periodically on student and employee requests for exemption and other issues that may arise throughout the year.

The VCOM liaison with the local Health Department / District or their COVID-19 contact will be notified of new cases. The Directors of the local Health Departments where any of the VCOM Campuses are located will be kept informed of any outbreaks and periodically of the state of the Campus.
As the COVID-19 vaccine is now fully approved by the FDA, VCOM policy now requires that all students and employees receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Exemptions may apply for those with medical or other exemptions that are allowed by applicable law.

As recently published in the VCOM COVID-19 Policy, all students and employees that remain unvaccinated will be subject to weekly COVID-19 testing.

Employees or students who have had documented COVID-19 within the past 180 days are also considered to be in the “vaccinated status” for a period of 180 days past the illness. Documentation of the illness must be provided to HR or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

Those employees or students who do not provide a copy of proof of vaccination will be considered as unvaccinated and must follow the procedures for unvaccinated student and employees and comply with weekly COVID-19 testing.

**COVID-19 TESTING:**
VCOM has procured testing kits and has partnered with a telemedicine laboratory to safely monitor testing. This is an effort to save employees and on-campus students from expensive clinical testing. Each employee and on campus student will be provided with two free testing kits.

**Students and employees who remain unvaccinated** are subject to regular COVID-19 testing, must comply with the following testing protocols:

1. On-campus students and employees who are currently unvaccinated and have not had a confirmed case of COVID-19 within 180 days, will receive three complementary testing kits and are required to test once weekly for COVID-19, beginning November 1, 2021.
   a. Students will receive testing kits from their campus Associate Dean for Student Affairs and must go by the office to obtain the free kits.
   b. Employees will receive testing kits from their campus Director for Human Resources and must go by HR to receive the kits.
2. Weekly testing must occur by those not vaccinated and must be completed prior to 8:30 am on Monday mornings (before reporting to campus).
   a. A negative test, as confirmed by the testing tele-proctor, will allow the student or the employee to report to campus for their classes or workday.
   b. A positive test, as confirmed by the testing tele-proctor, will require the student or the employee to report the positive test to their COVID-19 officer, document through the MyHealthTracer app, and follow the quarantine protocols as defined in the COVID-19 policy.
c. When a student or employee needs additional testing kits, they must see their COVID-19 officer to receive additional kits, which will be at the student/employee’s cost. As we have purchased these in bulk, the cost will be low.

3. **All testing kits provided by VCOM are for use by VCOM students and employees only.** Any unauthorized use of the testing kits by unauthorized persons may result in the student or employee being billed for the cost of the complimentary testing kits.

4. **Vaccinated students and employees** will also receive two testing kits for use if needed for an illness where symptoms are similar to COVID-19.

**Note:** All testing results are kept strictly confidential and in compliance with federal HIPAA regulations. Additional limited testing kits beyond the first two may also be available for vaccinated employees for urgent testing in the event that they begin to develop symptoms consistent with those associated with COVID-19.