GUIDANCE FOR VCOM STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF
FOR THE VIRGINIA, CAROLINAS, LOUISIANA, and AUBURN CAMPUSES

This policy is in effect as of 2/21/2022 and replaces the prior policy.

Over the past two years, the country has learned much about COVID-19 virus, its spread, the variants, and the vaccine. During this time, VCOM has periodically changed the policies and information on the website so to keep up with and practice guidelines that are based upon the most current evidence-based medical facts. It has been common to all campuses to update and/or change guidance as new knowledge is acquired regarding COVID-19. In a recent meeting of College Presidents, not one President reported to having a policy that was adequate to address the entire semester. This serves as the February 2022 update to the VCOM policy and will be the policy to follow through the remainder of the year unless an update is announced.

A new educational module update has been added to the required COVID-19 education for VCOM students, faculty, and staff. The update includes new information on COVID-19, the variants, and the vaccine. VCOM requires all faculty, students and staff to review the update, which is part of the PowerPoint modules created by the VCOM clinical faculty which summarizes the most recent evidence based medical facts about COVID-19, the variants, and the vaccines.

- For students this information is on the CANVAS page.
- For faculty and staff this information is on the HR website.
- A link for public education has also been provided on the website.

HISTORY and PROGRESS: In the summer of 2021, much of the country had moved to Phase 2 or 3 guidelines for preventing the spread of COVID-19. Since July of 2021, a new rise in COVID-19 occurred in all states where VCOM campuses are located. VCOM responded by implementing new policies and procedures for faculty, students, and staff on the VCOM Campuses.

The Delta and Omicron variants brought about a new rise in the numbers of patients with COVID-19 in October, late December and early January. While vaccination did reduce the complications from COVID-19, the number of cases rose to new heights. Most importantly, the severity of cases in vaccinated persons was much less overall.

While great strides have been made in vaccination nationwide, many of our southern states in the VCOM region still lag behind. Fortunately, the VCOM student, faculty, and staff community is >98% vaccinated across the campuses. The vaccination status and the attention to quarantines, hygiene, cleaning, and keeping a campus that is essentially closed to others (unless invited) has kept our campuses open, without any delays of the student program, and without any deaths in our faculty, staff, or students during the pandemic. VCOM fully supports the Surgeon General’s message that vaccination remains the most important health initiative to reduce the threat of COVID-19 for the country.

As a medical school, the VCOM family (employees and students) must also be a part of the message that vaccination is needed to save lives and prevent the spread of COVID-19, much as our other vaccinations. As a medical school we must all continue to dispel the misinformation that exists surrounding the vaccine and to promote the evidence based medical information regarding COVID-19 and vaccination.
SECTION 1: VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

Students: VCOM now recognizes the COVID-19 as a required vaccination for all students.

Employees: VCOM requires the COVID-19 vaccination for all employees.

From the CDC Website: Approved or Authorized Vaccines
- Pfizer-BioNTech: 2 initial vaccines
- Moderna: 2 initial vaccines
- Johnson and Johnson’s Janssen vaccine – in some situations – see CDC website for more information
- The Booster is now available for all employees, and is recommended by the CDC

Students and employees are considered as fully vaccinated if:
- The student or employee has received two doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines for COVID-19 in the past six months or received the initial series greater than six months ago and received the booster within the current academic year.
- The student or employee received at least one dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine for COVID-19 in the past six months or received the initial series earlier and has received a booster in the current academic year or
- The student or employee contracted COVID-19 and has a documented positive test within the past six months (natural immunity).
- While VCOM does recommend all students and employees follow guidelines for a second booster after six months, VCOM is not requiring a second booster within the academic year at this time, or until more information is available.

Exemptions
- Religious and Medical exemptions may apply for employees and students who appropriately apply for an exemption through their COVID-19 officer. Additional exemptions may apply where the exemption is required by state law.
- Students who seek exemption for the vaccine during the OMS-1 and OMS-2 year must request an exemption through the Associate Dean for Student Affairs as their COVID-19 officer.
- Students who seek exemption for the vaccine during the OMS-3 and OMS-4 year must request an exemption through the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs as their COVID-19 officer.
- Employees who seek exemption must apply for the exemption through Human Resources.

Exemptions: Employee exemptions are only those required by state law. In Alabama where state law prohibits, VCOM does not require proof of vaccination, however VCOM will consider any student or employee who does not provide proof of vaccination as not vaccinated and the employee or student must then follow the policies in this document for those who are unvaccinated.

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 using the most recent evidence-based studies on COVID-19, the COVID-19 variants, and on vaccination. These are required to be completed by
all students, faculty, and staff. Vaccination education must be promoted as it is the only solution shown to deter COVID-19 and/or to reduce the effects of the illness and to prevent further deaths. Again, VCOM is not aligning with any political agendas and as a medical school is promoting education on the virus and vaccination, on requiring vaccination for campus safety, and to 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 and play a role in providing information that is factual regarding COVID-19.

Following the guidelines by the [CDC for Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) for operation to date, has allowed VCOM to continue operations offering a medical education program that has been relatively uninterrupted, and the student’s education has not been delayed. VCOM will continue to follow the CDC guidelines for institutions of higher education, based upon the most recent evidence-based medical data. We are making great strides in vaccination with 98% of faculty, staff, and students having received the initial vaccinations across our campuses.

Currently two variants, Omicron and Delta, are classified as [Variants of Concern (VOC)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/index.html) in the United States. [CDC Nowcast projections](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/nowcast-projections.html) for the week ending February 12, 2022, estimate the combined national proportion of lineages designated as Omicron to be 100%.

The above is a graph of reported daily cases since January of 2020. Please note that in January through July of 2020, the nation saw a rise in cases that began to fall in October. However, the cases tripled again in November through February, peaking in December and January of 2021. By June of 2021, the cases had fallen and remained lower in July and August. The cases began to rise in late September and early October 2021 and fell again. In November however the cases began to rise again and peaked to an all-time high in January and February before falling once again. The vaccination status remained less than 50% in most states when the latest rise(s) occurred.

Fortunately, the Omicron wave (the most recent wave) would have crippled our already burdened hospital systems had the new wave of Omicron seen the same complications as Delta. The vaccine while not fully preventing the Omicron variant illness has seen diminished number of complications and hospitalizations in fully vaccinated persons. Currently vaccination remains our only hope to combat this illness. 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 occur alongside those from COVID-19.
“COLOR ZONES FOR CAMPUS SAFETY” for the 2021-2022 academic year.
With an ever-changing COVID-19 environment, VCOM created their own color zones of safety, directed primarily for the campus environment. The improved method provides for quick changes in policy required for the VCOM campus safety. While the zones pay attention to what is going on in the community, the changes address behaviors on our campus, which is essentially a closed campus and addresses more the occurrence of the virus in our student body and our employees, while paying attention to the spread within our communities and state. With a 98% immunized student body and employees, within our closed campus we are able to follow policies that allow certain freedoms that are not advised in the general community setting. Each zone on our charts is to alert faculty, staff, and students to certain procedures providing the safest operations of our campuses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The safety zone tables created for the campus interpret the COVID-19 conditions by COLOR ZONES. These color zones are not the same as those applied to functions in the community at large and those must be followed by following the CDC guidelines.

On campus, the chart of color zones and the current zone are posted by the entrance. These are being updated to the new policy in early March.

Faculty, Staff, and Students are also notified by email of any high-risk red zone conditions that would essentially close the campus.

Students in the clinical setting are also notified of the charts indicating the current zones of safety for the campus in case the student in the third- or fourth-year plan to return to the campus. VCOM OMS-3 and OMS-4 students, however, are distributed across a larger geographic area in their clinical years and so are instructed to primarily follow the instructions and requirements of their clinical site.

See the table that follows for expected behaviors on our closed campuses where VCOM students and faculty are 98% vaccinated as well as any expectations on screening and behaviors by students and employees who remain unvaccinated. There are many reasons a student or employee may not be vaccinated including medical conditions where the vaccine is not recommended. Therefore, each employee and student is encouraged to avoid any discrimination against any student or employee who is not vaccinated and who have been granted an exemption from this requirement.

AS IT IS ANTICIPATED THE CAMPUSES WILL GO THROUGH TIMES WHEN CASES INCREASE TO RED OR ORANGE AND TIMES WHEN WE SEE A DECREASE TO GREEN. THE TABLES BELOW WITH COLOR ALERTS REGARDING SAFETY APPLY TO ALL CAMPUSES in 2022. (table on next page)
### VCOM Campus Policies for the Vaccinated and Unvaccinated Students and Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZONE</th>
<th>RISK &amp; TESTING</th>
<th>MASKS</th>
<th>ATTENDANCE</th>
<th>EVENTS</th>
<th>&gt;Cleaning/ Sanitizing</th>
<th>REQUIRED SCREENING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GREEN</strong></td>
<td>RISK VERY LOW on campus with few cases in students and employees and less cases in the county or state</td>
<td><strong>MASKS</strong></td>
<td><strong>REQUIRED</strong></td>
<td><strong>ALLOWED</strong></td>
<td>. Students; If planned and approved through Associate Dean for Student Affairs (with approval of the Dean and President).</td>
<td>MyHealthTracer.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing required if any illness that suggests virus</td>
<td>. Not required by those vaccinated.</td>
<td>Required on campus attendance for employees</td>
<td>Students required to attend all Mandatory Learning Activities</td>
<td>All faculty staff events must be planned through Dean and/or Division Officer and the President</td>
<td>Normal cleaning and sanitizing</td>
<td>. All employees and students who are vaccinated are asked to report their status weekly and/or anytime when exposed or ill.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. Required by all those not vaccinated.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>. All employees and students who are not vaccinated must document once per week (beginning of week) before coming to campus.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>. All employees and students must document if ill or if a significant exposure regardless of vaccination status.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>YELLOW</strong></td>
<td>MINIMUM RISK remains on campus, but cases reported in Community or State</td>
<td><strong>MASKS required indoors at all times by those who are NOT vaccinated</strong></td>
<td><strong>ATTENDANCE REQUIRED for all Mandatory Learning Activities and according to the Academic Calendar.</strong></td>
<td><strong>EVENTS LIMITED but allowed.</strong></td>
<td>. On Campus indoor events must be planned through the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the Deans office or for faculty and staff through the Division Officer and President.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>. Testing required for all persons who have illness, and reporting to appropriate COVID-29 officer</td>
<td>. Masks are not required by those who are vaccinated and may be worn at the discretion of the faculty member or student.</td>
<td>. Faculty/Staff attendance to regular job required unless the employee hired to an off campus position as determined by the Dean, President, or Division Officer.</td>
<td>. On Campus outdoor events also allowed but must be planned through Associate Dean for Student Affairs &amp; Dean. On Campus faculty &amp; staff events must be planned through the Division Officer &amp; President.</td>
<td>Increased cleaning and sanitizing morning and evening</td>
<td>. All employees and students who are vaccinated are asked to report their status weekly and/or anytime when exposed or ill.</td>
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<td>Masks may be removed in offices by those vaccinated if all attendees in agreement.</td>
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<td>. All employees and students who are not vaccinated must document 2 times per week (beginning and end of week) before coming to campus.</td>
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<td>. All employees and students must document if ill or significant exposure occurs regardless of vaccination status.</td>
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<td><strong>ORANGE</strong></td>
<td>RISK: Cases increased in state &amp; local &amp; increased cases on campus Screen weekly &amp; Testing on Mon. &amp; Thurs. prior to coming to campus for unvaccinated. Testing required for all exposed or with illness</td>
<td><strong>MASKS REQUIRED</strong></td>
<td><strong>EVENTS LIMITED</strong></td>
<td><strong>Increased cleaning and sanitizing morning and evening</strong></td>
<td>. All faculty staff events must be preapproved through both the Dean &amp; President. Masks will be required for all. Negative tests may also be required. Few events will be approved.</td>
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<td>By all students and employees at all times on campus whether vaccinated or not vaccinated.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>. If Vaccinated: Once per week required, twice per week, Monday and Friday preferred AND at any time of illness or unprotected significant exposure.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>. Student attendance REQUIRED for MLA.</td>
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<td>For those who are NOT vaccinated entry is on Monday and Thursday prior to coming to campus</td>
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<td>. Faculty Staff attendance required unless pre-approved by the Dean or the Division Officer &amp; the President</td>
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<td></td>
<td>. Move to 6 ft. distancing in classrooms</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RED</strong></td>
<td>HIGH Campus closed except essential employees &amp; student testing</td>
<td><strong>MASKS REQUIRED ON ALL AREAS OF CAMPUS</strong></td>
<td><strong>NO EVENTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
<td>Monday and Friday entries and at any illness or exposure occurs</td>
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SECTION 4: QUARANTINE MEASURES OF SAFETY FOLLOWING ILLNESS AND DIRECT EXPOSURES

SELF QUARANTINE:

- **Unvaccinated students and employees**: Following CDC guidelines, a minimum required 5-day self-quarantine period without illness is required following any direct, significant, and/or unprotected exposure to a person with COVID-19. Testing is required prior to returning to campus and is done at the end of the 5-day self-quarantine.
  - Unvaccinated students or employees should test on any day if illness occurs.
  - If an unvaccinated student or employee tests positive for COVID-19 they must self-quarantine for 7 days and may not return to campus during this time. Upon return the employee or student must wear a mask at all times on campus (regardless of COVID-19 status).

- **Vaccinated students and employees**: Self-Quarantine is not required for exposure if the person is vaccinated, a mask was worn, and there was no direct contact involving touching or greater than 15 minute exposures.
  - If the employee or student was caring for the person who was ill with COVID-19 resulting in significant direct contact and exposure, a five-day self-quarantine is required.
  - If exposure was limited to casual contact and did not involve direct touching or exposure, and the employee or student exposed was wearing a mask, self-quarantine is not required.
  - Self-quarantine and testing must occur anytime illness with COVID-like symptoms arise.
  - If a vaccinated student or employee contracts the virus (due to new variants), the employee or student should self-quarantine for a period of not less than 5 days and until all illness resolves.

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

Anyone experiencing any of the following symptoms may not enter College facilities and should isolate immediately and be tested for COVID-19. Symptoms most common to COVID-19 include the following:

- Fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) or chills,
- Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing,
- Extreme fatigue with illness including symptoms of fever, muscle or body aches, or other symptoms in this list.
- Headaches related to an acute illness
- New and remarkable loss of taste, smell, and appetite
- Sore throat and congestion
- 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 prior to returning to campus. In general, there are no illnesses that you want to bring to the campus, so stay at home until you are not ill and it is determined your illness was NOT COVID-19. Students and employees 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 Omicron virus, so if you become ill with any viral symptoms, complete the MyHealthTracer.com application and be tested before coming to campus! Up to 3 testing kits are provided by HR and the Associate Dean to all employees and on campus students. VCOM purchased testing kits and a telemedicine laboratory to monitor testing to save employees and on-campus students from expensive testing. Employees and students may pick up tests from the COVID-19 officer – (call to arrange). The COVID-19 officer will follow up with the student and/or employee on test results to assure others on campus are notified of exposures where needed and safe.
SECTION 6: ADDITIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH SAFETY MEASURES TO AVOID COVID-19 & 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 students 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). Everyone 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. Notify HR or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs in a confidential manner 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 98% vaccinated. Students should be aware that, 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 be essentially closed, and all classes will be online. Students and employees will be informed of status a minimum of weekly, and the color zone and tables will be posted 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 Orange, or Red. Masks are recommended during Yellow for those vaccinated but no longer required. 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. Altered schedules may occur during and following any of the Orange or Red status. 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).

D. SEAT ASSIGNMENTS will continue as they have in past.

E. 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. Those who are ill should not come to class.
   a. All labs are split with 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.
   b. PPC/OMM lab partners will be chosen for the entire block if unvaccinated or when in orange status to avoid exposure to multiple students. Students will be allowed to choose their own partners.

F. Faculty supervising LABORATORIES must be vaccinated. If not vaccinated for medical reasons, the faculty member must report to the Dean for additional safety measures or for other assignments (Other assignments are not guaranteed and the faculty member who is not vaccinated may be required to take leave).
SECTION 8. EARLY CLINICAL EXPERIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

Early clinical experiences and international trips have been placed on hold for first- and second-year students during all but Green zone times. This is due to the increasing numbers of patients with COVID-19, both in the U.S. and in our partnering International sites. Travel in larger groups is not recommended. Travel to sites where the risk has been reduced will be allowed for third- and fourth-year clinical rotations in the International sites. When these rotations are reinstituted, both 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 year students while under COVID-19 restrictions. The schedule allowed students to finish their academic program on time during the 2020-2021 academic year.

Vaccination: All OMS-3 and OMS-4 students will be required to be vaccinated to ensure a timely academic program completion and to meet the requirements of the majority of the clinical sites. 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 their own vaccination requirements. The majority of clinical sites will require vaccination.
   - When the clinical site requires vaccination, the student must provide proof of vaccination 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 until a site is found offering the required rotation to unvaccinated students.

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 when applying to a residency if the student is not vaccinated and does 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 as the College.

D. For students who ARE vaccinated, and who have an unprotected significant exposure, the hospital or clinical site may still require a period of self-quarantine. If required however, the self-quarantine is generally 5 days, and the student may be able to make up this time on the weekends. The student will be required to follow the guidelines of their clinical site as to days of self-quarantine required and if any testing the clinical site requires.

E. Students should be aware if they become ill with COVID-19, the time allowed for recovery and for 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 this status.

G. 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 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 twice 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.

H. Rotation requirements are no longer listed in this document and are in the handbook.

I. In general, whether by VCOM or by the vast majority of hospitals and residency programs, all OMS-3 and 4 students are expected to complete vaccination as they are considered a healthcare worker. 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.

J. 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 most residency programs.

K. 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.

L. In states where proof of vaccination may not be required by state law (Alabama) the student who has 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 if the current site requires vaccination. This may also impact your being chosen by a hospital site for a residency program.

M. 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.

N. The student who is not vaccinated may not see patients with COVID-19 or any patient 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 5 days and a negative test). This may delay the unvaccinated student’s program.

O. Students must also report any significant exposures or illness on the MyHealthTracer.com application.

P. If fully vaccinated and wearing a mask and using all precautions, the student will generally not be required 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.

Q. Those students not fully vaccinated must self-quarantine following a direct exposure. The student should self-quarantine the number of days the site requires.

R. A Student MUST COMMUNICATE providing Notification of both:
   - Illness or Symptoms of COVID-19 and/or
   - Unprotected exposures of significance (which may require missing days from a rotation depending on vaccination status and type of exposure).

   The communication of the notification is to:
   - The clinical faculty member with whom they are rotating
   - The site coordinator and DSME (if in a VCOM core site)
   - The COVID-19 Officer (who is the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs) AND
   - Log the illness on MyHealthTracer.com.

S. 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 health of the public. 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.
   a. Vaccinations is required by all who are traveling internationally. Most countries will require a proof of vaccination and a negative test to enter the country and the US requires proof of vaccination for re-entry. Masks and additional precautions are highly recommended and required by most countries.
   b. Travel to VCOM international sites is postponed for all OMS-1 and OMS 2 students 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. Soon OMS-3 and OMS-4 students may do rotations in the international sites if the risk is less than a 3. The student participating is warned to know the increased risk associated with the illness and the limited care options of the site for contracting the infection.
   c. If the student or employee is fully vaccinated, and the country of travel is considered low risk and 2) the employee or student may travel there for a VCOM rotations and return with limited quarantine of 5 days.
   d. If a student or employee who is not vaccinated travels internationally (against policy) the period of required quarantine will be a minimum of 5 days self-quarantine regardless of symptoms upon return and a negative COVID-19 test will be required prior to return to campus. For students who travel against this advice, an unexcused absence and the opportunity to remediate work will not be provided. The student may also be referred to Honor Code Council if they ignore the policy.
   e. Students who are vaccinated and who have taken international travel must be aware that, even if international travel is approved, if 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.

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.
   a. The CDC information provides that for those “Fully Vaccinated” the person can safely travel in the United States.
   b. If not vaccinated and the student or employee should not travel to areas known to be of high-risk or increasing numbers for COVID-19.
   c. 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.

C. For All Travel:
   a. 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.
   b. Student and employees may also wish to refer to the CDC website regarding travel, however, the CDC recommendations do not supersede the above 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.