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 CDC guidelines for Institutions of Higher Education, state guidelines, and those practice guidelines based upon the most current evidence-based medical facts. VCOM also established and maintains this document for quick access to the VCOM campus policies regarding COVID-19.

**HISTORY:** In 2020 VCOM responded to the COVID-19 outbreak with a closed campus and on-line learning for a period of approximately four months. VCOM operated systems which presented the classroom learning and materials both in person and on-line which allowed the campuses to be nimble in such a move. In fall of 2020, VCOM moved to a hybrid model of classroom, laboratory, and on-line learning which allowed for increased distancing. These measures allowed all students to complete their academic year. In the summer of 2021, much of the country moved to Phase 2 or 3 guidelines in preventing the spread of COVID-19, however the fall brought additional increases in cases around the country. During the spring, summer and early fall of 2021, each of the VCOM campuses moved to an approximate 97% to 98% vaccinated status for both students and employees on each of our campuses. While isolated cases have continued, they have been few and without serious consequence. The precautions taken over the last two academic years and the vaccination policy established have kept our campuses safe.

Since the December 2021 holidays, there has been a rise in COVID-19 cases in all states where VCOM campuses are located, much the same as followed the 2020 Christmas holiday, only it is more likely with the Omicron variant rather than the Delta variant. In preparation for the spring semester where COVID-19 remains a threat, VCOM continues to revise and publish the new policies and procedures for faculty, students, and staff on the VCOM Campuses, to keep our campuses open and safe.

VCOM continues to 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 for 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 the CDC guidelines including vaccination.
SECTION 1: DETERMINING YOUR VACCINATION STATUS

Determine if you are considered VACCINATED by any of the following:

- If you are fully vaccinated by having received the Pfizer or Moderna series (2 injections) within the last 6 months
- If you received the Pfizer or Moderna series (2 injections) greater than six months ago, but have received at least one booster
- If you have received the J & J initial injection within the last 2 months
- If you have received the J & J initial injection greater than 2 months ago and have received a booster of Pfizer or Moderna since that time (or J & J when that is made readily available)
- If you have contracted the Delta or earlier variant of COVID-19 and tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 6 months

(Currently as of January 2022, VCOM is not requiring more than one booster by VCOM employees and students as the literature has not yet supported the benefit of an additional or second booster. A second booster may be required in the future if the scientific studies support the need for a second booster six months after the last booster).

SECTION 2: GENERAL RULES IF YOU HAVE CONTRACTED COVID-19

Self-Quarantine Rules for those who test positive for COVID-19

- You must isolate regardless of vaccination status.
- Stay home for at least 5 workdays (M-F) and longer if fever and/or symptoms persist. All symptoms including fever and cough should be resolved.
- If you have no symptoms or the majority of symptoms (including fever) have resolved after the 5 working days, you may return to work or campus, but you must continue to wear a mask and you must practice appropriate hygiene measures for an additional 5 days (use hand sanitizer, do not share items, avoid touching shared surfaces).
- Students returning to campus should avoid anatomy and PPC/OMM lab for a period of 7 workdays since onset of illness and must be symptom free.
- You must wear a mask for 10 days and practice all hygiene measures to prevent transmission. Face shields are also recommended if available and working close to others upon return.
- Students should notify their COVID-19 Officer of their illness and of their plan to return prior to returning (appropriate Associate Dean). Students should document their illness on MyHealthTracer.com
- Employees should notify HR on the first day of their illness and of their plan prior to return. Employees should document their illness on MyHealthTracer.com.

SECTION 3: QUARANTINE MEASURES OF SAFETY FOR PERSONS WITH EXPOSURES TO COVID-19

I. If you had significant exposure to someone with COVID-19

There are also new quarantine guidelines for significant exposures to COVID-19. The guidelines are different for vaccinated vs. unvaccinated persons. (Refer to section 1 to determine your vaccination status.)

Significant exposures are considered to be direct contacts with a person who has COVID-19 including touching, sharing items, being exposed to bodily fluids (cough or emesis) and/or an exposure for a prolonged length of time and or prolonged exposure without a mask to a person with COVID-19. Students or Employees must document in MyHealthTracer.com on the day of any significant exposure and must update a report their condition if any symptoms occur or if they contract the virus. Students and employees must also update their status in MyHealthTracer.com the day of and prior to returning to campus after a significant exposure self-quarantine. If symptoms or illness follows the exposure, the student or employee must document this and notify their COVID-19 Officer on the day the symptoms occur. Documenting in MyHealthTracer.com helps the College track the number of cases and to keep all students and
employees safe.

- **Definition of Significant Exposure:**
  - Being within 6 feet of a person who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period or having direct exposure to respiratory secretions (examples being coughed or sneezed on, sharing a drinking glass or utensils or other items, direct contact involving touching), or in clinical education years, caring for a person who has COVID-19).

- **Guidelines for Self-Quarantine following Significant Exposures for Non-vaccinated Students and Employees:**
  - A minimum of a 5-day self-quarantine period is required (without illness or fever) and testing is required for the non-vaccinated student or employee prior to return. The College utilizes working days (M-F) for the 5-day count.
  - If symptoms occur, the non-vaccinated student or employee must test on the first day of symptoms and report their status and test results to their COVID-19 Officer.
  - The non-vaccinated student or employee who does not develop symptoms must also notify their COVID-19 Officer (the appropriate Associate Dean) of the exposure, of the test results, and of their condition on the 5th workday, prior to return the following day. The student or employee must mask for 10 days on or off campus, however the unvaccinated student or employee always wears a mask on campus.

- **Guidelines for Self-Quarantine and testing for Fully Vaccinated Students and Employees following significant exposures.**
  - A period of self-quarantine is not required if the employee or student is fully vaccinated who has been exposed if no symptoms are occurring. For example, a student may come in to take an exam, but it is not recommended they attend any labs or courses that are not required if they have had a significant exposure in the past 5 days. The fully vaccinated employee or student who has experienced a significant exposure must mask for 10 days and should not come to campus if symptoms occur. The fully vaccinated student or employee when returning must be sure to mask for 10 days, practice good hygiene, including use of hand sanitizer and avoid sharing items with others. Significant exposures have still led to infection in fully vaccinated individuals who have contracted the Omicron variant. Fortunately, the symptoms have been less in those who are fully vaccinated.
    If symptoms develop in the fully vaccinated student or employee following a significant or prolonged exposure, the student or employee should self-quarantine and should be tested to see if they have contracted COVID-19. To see if tests are readily available the student or employee should contact HR or their COVID-19 Officer. Testing is not required unless symptoms of illness present.

- **Guidelines for Self-Quarantine and testing for Non-Vaccinated Students and Non-Vaccinated Employees following significant exposures.**
  - Students and Employees who are not vaccinated: A minimum 5-day self-quarantine is required following any direct exposure or significant exposure and a negative test is required on day 5 of the self-quarantine and must be submitted to their COVID-19 Officer prior to returning. If testing positive, additional days of self-quarantine are required until symptom-free and a negative test or 10 days maximum since onset have passed.

- **Quarantined periods and Excused Absences.**
  - Quarantine periods for employees must be taken from sick days, vacations days, and/or other leave time (unless all work can be done off campus and is approved by the supervisor).
  - Quarantine periods for students must follow the guidelines and the student must be working with the COVID-19 Officer and Medical Education appropriately for the absences to be considered excused absences and for an opportunity to be provided to make up exams and/or mandatory labs and work. Students in the OMS-3 and
OMS-4 years should work with Clinical Affairs to ensure all are appropriately informed of their absences. Students in the OMS-3 and OMS-4 year must follow the guidelines of their clinical year.

SECTION 4: VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR VCOM STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

Vaccination: VCOM now recognizes the COVID-19 vaccine as a **required vaccination for all students and employees**. The FDA studies have concluded, and the COVID-19 vaccine and boosters are approved by the FDA. VCOM also fully supports the need for a booster if it has been 6 months or greater since vaccination or having COVID-19 illness.

If a student or employee has had the initial series of COVID-19 vaccinations plus a booster, VCOM does not require a second booster during the 2021-2022 academic year, as the science on the efficacy of a second booster is not conclusive at this time.

1. 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 at the beginning of the year and at any time a booster was received. This is done through documentation in the MyHealthTracer.com application.
2. OMS-3 or OMS-4 students are to provide the proof of vaccination to the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and to the site coordinator at their clinical sites. Documentation for the College is through the MyHealthTracer.com application.
3. Employees are to provide proof of vaccination to Human Resources and are asked to document in the MyHealthTracer.com application as well.
4. Those who do not submit proof of vaccination will be considered to be unvaccinated and must follow the rules for those who are unvaccinated.
5. Exemptions from the mandatory vaccination may apply for those with medical or other approved exemptions that are allowed by applicable state law.
6. Employees or students seeking an exemption may apply through their COVID-19 Officers and forms are available in HR or through the Officer.
7. Employees or Students who are not vaccinated, but who demonstrate proof of having contracted COVID-19 in the past 180 days are also considered to have natural immunity equivalent to vaccination in that manner. These employees or students may postpone vaccination to allow for the 180 days of natural immunity.
8. Exemption forms may be obtained from the appropriate COVID-19 Officer.

**Effective since November 1, 2021, all employees and students who are not vaccinated are subject to COVID-19 testing weekly**, on the first day of the week they report to campus (most will be once per week on Mondays as an example). The self-administered test is done in front of a medical professional tele-proctor, unless notified by HR or the COVID-19 Officer that that this is no longer required.

SECTION 5: 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 education on COVID-19 for students and faculty, VCOM faculty created educational modules on COVID-19 and on the COVID-19 vaccination. These are considered as required to be completed by all students and employees. The modules will be provided as a part of the curriculum annually and will be housed on the employee page in Human Resources on the website for all faculty and staff. The modules will be updated on a regular basis and employees and students will be notified of the updates.

To prevent further needless deaths, and as leaders in the medical community, the VCOM students, faculty, and employees are expected to be leaders in the community in dispelling myths and promoting the medical facts about COVID-19 and promoting the preventive measures including masking and vaccination that should be taken.
Safety measures include indoor masking at times appropriate, increased hand washing and sanitizers, and vaccination. Every student, faculty member, and staff member are seen as a part of the medical college community and must realize their role in promoting these prevention measures to save lives.

Here are some additional fast facts regarding COVID-19 and the vaccine in the United States as of January 2022. These facts change and are updated weekly and are reported online.

Total cases reported to date by 1/13/2022: 63.2 million
Total deaths by 1/13/2022: 843,000 thousand
- There have been 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.
- Vaccination and appropriate precautions remain the major hope in the battle against the COVID virus.
- 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. Our clinical faculty will attest to the number of deaths that could have been prevented by vaccination.
- Employees and students should also be aware of the strain the virus has brought on our clinical faculty and healthcare workers in the community.
- Employees and students should seek to provide on campus support the VCOM clinical faculty who remain on the frontlines in the battle against COVID-19 and who may be reaching the point of exhaustion or “burnout.”
- The majority of COVID-19 infections tested are now Omicron but with some Delta variant persisting and deaths from COVID-19 per persons infected have been decreasing. There are less severe symptoms in those vaccinated and there appear to be less deaths with the Omicron variant and with the new treatments being developed.
- The Delta variant and deaths do continue, so those who contract COVID-19 should be diligent in seeking treatment for any serious symptoms.
- The variants will likely continue to develop and so we must all now learn how to live under a new normal. Although the new Omicron variant has caused less deaths, we are uncertain if all new variants will cause less deaths and we will continue to monitor.

Following the guidelines by the **CDC for Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)** for operations initially and as updated has allowed VCOM to continue operations and a fairly uninterrupted medical education program in the 2020-21 academic year. VCOM will continue to follow the CDC guidelines for institutions of higher education with minimal variation.

VCOM has been able to relax some of the CDC guidelines on campus however, based upon the fact that we are a closed campus rather than a public entity, and the fact our campuses are 97% to 98% vaccinated.

**SECTION 6: “VCOM COLOR ZONES FOR CAMPUS SAFETY” for the 2021-2022 academic year.**

As the COVID-19 status was ever changing and requiring frequent updates to the VCOM Covid policy document, VCOM sought to provide a method for the student or employee to have a quick look at the expected behaviors required by policy when COVID-19 increases or decreases on campus or in the region.

- To provide a quick reference for all, VCOM created the **Color Zones for Campus Safety Charts**.
- These color codes are different than the CDC as we are a 97% to 98% vaccinated Campus and closed Campus rather than a public site. The color zones created apply to the VCOM campuses only and allow VCOM to quickly respond to ever-changing conditions. The zones do not apply to the community.

The measures to be taken in each zone help to reduce the risk for all students, faculty and staff on campus for the safest campus operations under the current COVID-19 threat.
### VCOM Campus Policies 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>Risk: Is low in the state (and Community)</td>
<td>Masks: + Required for those not vaccinated:</td>
<td>Student Attendance: Required or those who are vaccinated:</td>
<td>All student events allowed:</td>
<td>+ Required for those who are vaccinated:</td>
<td>Yes: Not vaccinated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Testing: If not vaccinated unless significant exposure or symptoms.</td>
<td>Not Required for those not vaccinated:</td>
<td>Faculty/Staff attendance required:</td>
<td>All faculty and staff events must be planned through Dean and/or Division Officer with notification to the President's office:</td>
<td>+ Required for those who are vaccinated:</td>
<td>Vaccinated: All employees and students who are vaccinated are asked to report their status once per week:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly testing for those not vaccinated, on Monday before coming to campus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All faculty and staff events must be planned through Dean and/or Division Officer with notification to the President's office:</td>
<td></td>
<td>ILLNESS or SIGNIFICANT EXPOSURE: All employees and students must document if ill or if any significant unprotected exposure to a person with COVID-19, whether vaccinated or not:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yellow</strong></td>
<td>Risk: Minimum but increased cases in the Community or State</td>
<td>Masks: - Not vaccinated: Masks required indoors at all times.</td>
<td>Student Attendance: Required for all Mandatory Learning Activities and testing.</td>
<td>ON-CAMPUS EVENTS LIMITED number allowed: Indoor student events must be planned through the Associate Dean for Student Affairs with final approval by the Dean's office and notification to the President. Faculty and staff events must be planned through the Division Officer or the Dean and the President.</td>
<td>+ Required for those who are vaccinated:</td>
<td>Yes: Not vaccinated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Testing: Weekly, if not vaccinated - or - if you have significant exposure to or symptoms of COVID-19 (Regardless of vaccination status)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All faculty and staff events must be planned through the Division Officer or the Dean and the President.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vaccinated: All employees and students are asked to report once weekly:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>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>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orange</strong></td>
<td>Risk: Moderate: Campus open times and areas limited</td>
<td>Masks: Required at all times on campus:</td>
<td>Student Attendance: Required for all Mandatory Learning Activities. Move to 6 ft. distance in classrooms:</td>
<td>EVENTS LIMITED: The majority of events are cancelled. Any event must be preapproved through both the Dean &amp; President. Masks will be required for all. Negative tests for attendance may also be required:</td>
<td>+ Required for those who are vaccinated:</td>
<td>Yes: Not vaccinated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Testing: If no exposure Twice weekly for those not vaccinated and following any significant exposure. For those vaccinated test following significant exposure only.</td>
<td>By all students and employees (Regardless of vaccination status):</td>
<td>Faculty Staff attendance: required unless pre-approved to work off-campus through the Dean or Division Officer &amp; President:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vaccinated: All employees and students are asked to report once weekly:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>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>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red</strong></td>
<td>Risk: High: Campus closed except essential employees</td>
<td>Masks: Required on all areas of campus:</td>
<td>Online Classes: No events on campus. Events held online:</td>
<td></td>
<td>+ Required for those who are vaccinated:</td>
<td>Yes: Not vaccinated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vaccinated: All employees and students must document at least TWICE WEEKLY IF COMING TO CAMPUS AND ONCE PER WEEK IF NOT COMING TO CAMPUS. Also, must document any ILLNESS or SIGNIFICANT EXPOSURE:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On each campus, the chart of color zone for the day will be posted by the entrances. Faculty, Staff, and Students are also notified by email of any high-risk orange or red zone conditions that propose a high threat or that would close the campus.

OMS-3 AND OMS-4 Students in the clinical setting must follow the guidelines on the color zones chart when coming to campus. The color zones have no other impact for the VCOM OMS-3 and OMS-4 students. Students in the OMS-3 or OMS-4 years should first check with their Site Coordinators for the current policies to follow in their clinical site. The student may be referred back to their Associate Dean.

SECTION 7: MAINTAINING AN AWARENESS OF THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

A student or employee experiencing any of the following symptoms may not enter College or clinical facilities and should isolate immediately and schedule testing. 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/or 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 you must 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 and until illness resolves. Students must log any illness on the MyHealthTracer.com application. You must also contact your COVID Officer to report illness.

SECTION 8: 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 especially 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 and must have prior approvals. (see “Events” on the color zone chart)

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 or at home or in transit 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 9. 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 the campuses are 98% 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 by Color Zones for Campus Safety posters by the entrances.

B. MASKS must be worn at all times in the building by all students and employees who are not vaccinated regardless of color zones.

Masks will be required of all vaccinated students and employees when the color zone is Yellow, Orange, or Red. (See the color zone chart for further detail).

C. ACADEMIC CALENDARS The Associate Deans for Medical Education on each campus will continue to provide information on the academic calendars as to mandatory learning events and asynchronous learning events.

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 are recommended for all during laboratories and must be worn by all students who are not vaccinated.

d. All PPC/OMM labs and Anatomy labs are split with no more than 50% of the class are in the laboratory at any one time.

e. Additional altered schedules may occur during Orange and Red status.

f. 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.

g. Quarantines times may be required at certain times for all students (ie: after holidays, large number of employee or students testing positive or significant exposures). The Associate Deans will keep students informed of the return policies and days of self-quarantine.

D. All faculty supervising students in the 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 a leave).

E. 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 or will be notified by the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs.

SECTION 10: POLICIES AFFECTING THE OMS-3 AND OMS-4 CLINICAL PROGRAM

GUIDANCE FOR OMS-3 & OMS-4 STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF WHO OVERSEE THE CLINICAL PROGRAM

1. 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. Exemptions are limited and rare and the student may be excluded by a clinical site, as the clinical site retains the right to determine their own safety requirements.

b. 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.

c. When the clinical site requires vaccination, the student must provide the site with proof of vaccination or be relocated to a site that does not require vaccination if possible.
d. It is sometimes difficult to find a site that allows students who are not vaccinated and a delay in the student’s clinical program may result.

2. Students preparing for residency audition should be aware that **Proof of Vaccination is also being required by the majority of hospitals to qualify for residency audition rotations.** ACGME has stated that students should also be made aware that it reflects poorly on the student if they are not vaccinated, especially if the student does not have a medical contraindication.

3. **OMS-3 and OMS-4 Students who ARE NOT vaccinated for COVID-19** will be required to self-quarantine after any direct or significant exposure to a patient or other persons with COVID-19.
   a. Most clinical sites will then 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.
   b. **For students who ARE vaccinated** and who have a significant unprotected exposure, a five-day self-quarantine may still be required, and this is up to each clinical site.

4. Students should be aware that if they become ill with COVID-19, the time allowed for recovery and quarantine may cause a short delay their program.

5. 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.

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

7. 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.
   a. This tool is to be used a minimum of weekly by vaccinated students and employees.
   b. As this is also used as a screening tool for COVID-19 to prevent outbreaks, those who are NOT vaccinated and at increased risk must use the application a minimum of two times per week.
   c. VCOM monitors the data from MyHealthTracer.com daily to assure there are no outbreaks in the student (or employee) population whether on campus or in the clinical sites.
   d. Failure to use the MyHealthTracer.com as required may result in referral to honor code committee or suspension.

8. **OMS-3- and OMS-4 CLINICAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS** for the Class of 2022 and 2023 have changed for the current year. All students have been made aware and are completing these new requirements. If any questions exist in the requirements, the student should contact the appropriate Associate Dean.

9. **Clinical Electives:** 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.
   A. 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.
   B. Elective and Selective choices for the fourth year selective(s) must be made from the 4th year Selective Rotations List in the student handbook.

10. **Interviews for Residency:** In 2020, for the first-time, residencies began interviewing virtually. OMS-4 students are to be made aware that both online and in-person interviews for residency now exist and the student may or may not continue and therefore a rising fourth-year student must be prepared for both types of interviews (in person and online). The Associate Dean for OMS-4 and GME will provide further information on a program as needed.

11. All OMS-3 and OMS-4 students are required to use the MyHealthTracer.com online application twice weekly until fully vaccinated. Students are required to report both illness and significant exposures. After vaccination the OMS-3 and OMS-4 student must enter proof of vaccination and their condition weekly and at additional times when experiencing illness.

12. Students should be aware that not participating in vaccination can result in not being chosen in the match process. This is NOT a VCOM decision, but the decision of the institution with the residency program.
13. **Proof of Vaccination:** Students should be aware that, just as with the other required vaccinations for clinical care, proof of COVID-19 vaccines is provided to the clinical sites as a part of the immunization record.

14. **Students who are fully immunized may now see patients who are under investigation for having COVID-19 if wearing all appropriate protections and taking all precautions as designated by the Clinical Site.**
   a. **The student who is not vaccinated may not see patients with COVID-19 or under investigation for COVID-19.** If the unvaccinated student examines such a patient, they will be required to notify their preceptor and the DSME of the exposure and that they are not vaccinated. The preceptor and DSME of the site may require a period of quarantine (according to the site or preceptor’s policies).

15. **Students in clinical education are required report any illness to their clinical education that causes absences.** Site and assure that they are excused for the day if experiencing any symptom of illness. Time missed for illness may be required to be remediated either on weekends or with additional learning activities.

16. In general, vaccinated students who are wearing a mask and using all precautions do 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.

17. A **Student MUST COMMUNICATE providing Notification of any of the following:**
   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).
   c. The communication of the notification is to:
      A. clinical faculty member with whom they are rotating
      B. the site coordinator and DSME
      C. the COVID-19 Officer (who is the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs).
      D. Logging 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.

**SECTION 11. EARLY CLINICAL EXPERIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL TRIPS**

Early clinical experiences and international trips for OMS-1 and OMS-2 students 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 reinstated, employees and students will be notified. International rotations will be allowed when the status of COVID 19 permits. Only students or faculty who are immunized may participate in the international programs for safety of the employee and student and for safety of the patients. In addition, all airlines and countries require vaccination for entry and/or exit.

**SECTION 12: TRAVEL: LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL**

A. **International Travel and Vaccination:** Students and employees who are traveling outside of the country must be vaccinated. This is of course also the requirement established by most countries and the majority of airlines.

B. **Travel within the U.S. to Regions with high COVID-19 prevalence:** Students and employees traveling to states where the prevalence of COVID-19 is high must also be vaccinated or will be required to self-quarantine for not less than 5 working days (M-F) upon return before coming to campus.

C. **Quarantine periods may follow block breaks and holidays.** Students and employees will be notified of such quarantine requirements following block breaks and holidays.
D. General Travel Policies in the United States under the COVID-19 pandemic:
1. Students and employees should avoid areas of high prevalence or risk. This prevents illness for the student or employee and prevents the student or employee from becoming a vector when returning to the VCOM campus.
2. The CDC information provides that for those “Fully Vaccinated” the person can safely travel in the United States.
3. If the employee or student who is not vaccinated is traveling to high-risk areas for COVID-19, the student or employee will only be allowed to return after a five workday (M-F) self-quarantine period and only if symptom free.
   For employees: Days missed must be taken from the employee’s allotted days for illness.
   For students: Days missed will be considered as unexcused as the student was instructed not to travel to areas of high risk, and the student may not be approved to make up missed work.
4. 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.
5. If the student or employee is fully vaccinated, and the country of travel they wish to visit is considered low risk (1 and 2 for COVID) the fully vaccinated employee or student may travel there and return with prior approval and limited quarantine restrictions. If the student or employee is not vaccinated, travel to international sites is prohibited.
   a. If the unvaccinated student or employee travels internationally (against the recommendations of this policy), he or she must self-quarantine period for a minimum 10 working days upon return and a negative COVID-19 test will be required prior to return to campus. Absences are not excused.
6. It is not known when it will be possible to reinstitute the VCOM International Missions for OMS-2 students as the risk to the student is too great at this time.
SECTION 13: Emergent Actions Related to COVID-19:

1. The COVID-19 Committee will meet on any emergent conditions that arise and will call a meeting of the Committee whenever changes to the policy are needed.
2. The COVID-19 Committee will meet periodically on student and employee requests for exemption and other issues that may arise throughout the year.
3. 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.

SECTION 14: COVID-19 TESTING PROTOCOLS FOR STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

1. As recently published in the VCOM COVID-19 Policy, all students and employees that remain in the unvaccinated status will be subject to a minimum of weekly COVID-19 testing prior to coming to campus that week and under high-risk conditions may be increased to twice per week. Students and employees that are vaccinated will be subject to testing if any symptoms present.
2. Those employees or students who do not provide a copy of proof of vaccination (or COVID-19 illness within the last 6 months) will be considered as unvaccinated and must follow the procedures for unvaccinated student and employees and comply with COVID-19 testing protocols.
3. 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 initial free testing kits.
4. The employee or student will be required to purchase the kits when the free kits are no longer in supply.
   a. 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, and document through the MyHealthTracer.com app, and to follow the self-quarantine protocols as defined in the COVID-19 policy.
   b. Any 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.
   c. When the free kits the College has purchased are used, unvaccinated employees and students must pay for their kits.

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 if they begin to develop symptoms consistent with those associated with COVID-19.