

Council on Postsecondary Education
State of Rhode Island

COVID-19 VACCINATION of Council Non-Classified Employees

Adopted: 09/15/21 (CPE)

POLICY

Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) recognizes the toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the country, the states, and the Rhode Island public institutions of postsecondary education. Now that vaccines for COVID-19 are available to the citizens of this state and throughout the country, there is ample opportunity for everyone to be vaccinated. The public institutions for postsecondary education are transitioning back to in-person learning and on-campus student activity, and a return to normalcy. Our efforts must continue to focus on offering students, faculty, and staff a safe in-person college experience and workplace. To that end, the CPE's faculty and non-classified employees (including internal payroll employees) at the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC) and its centers, Rhode Island College (RIC), and Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) will be required to be fully vaccinated by November 1, 2021, subject to approved medical exemptions or religious accommodations. The three approved vaccines have been deemed safe by the FDA, are widely available, and both the CDC and the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) are recommending that individuals get vaccinated against COVID-19.

In addition, since there are state classified employees who work at the OPC and at RIC and CCRI, we call on and strongly encouraged them to also get vaccinated as soon as possible.

PRACTICES

The CPE's faculty and full and part-time non-classified employees (including internal payroll employees) at OPC and its centers, RIC, and CCRI shall be required to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 pursuant to RIDOH protocols and requirements, on or before November 1, 2021, subject to approved medical exemptions or religious accommodations; and they must upload their proof of vaccination documentation pursuant to the process established for same at OPC RIC and CCRI by November 1, 2021.

Exemptions for medical conditions or sincerely held religious beliefs will be recognized in accordance with the EEOC guidance, and must be requested pursuant to the applicable procedures, practices, and requirements for same at OPC, CCRI and RIC. Exemptions must be requested in writing by completing a Medical Immunization Exemption Certificate or Religious Immunization Exemption Certificate. The deadline for requesting an exemption is October 15, 2021. If additional time is needed to provide supporting documentation an extension may be requested, but documentation must be supplied prior to the November 1, 2021 deadline. Faculty and non-classified employees granted exemptions or who are only partially vaccinated must be tested regularly in accordance with OPC's, RIC's and CCRI's COVID-19 testing protocols, and must provide test results to OPC, RIC or CCRI, as per the their protocols.

Faculty and non-classified employees may apply for a medical exemption for a COVID-19 vaccination for the following reasons:

- Severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) after previous dose or to a component of the vaccine
- Immediate allergic reaction of any severity after a previous dose or known (diagnosed) allergy to a component of the vaccine
- History of myocarditis or pericarditis after a first dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine
- History of myocarditis or pericarditis unrelated to mRNA COVID-19 vaccination
- Monoclonal Antibody Treatment (MABS) prior to 90 days of October 1, 2021 (the faculty member or non-classified employee should get vaccinated no later than 91 to 120 days after MABS)
- Faculty and non-classified employees out of work on long-term medical leave, or medical documentation from a treating provider indicating need for exemption

Faculty and non-classified employees at OPC, RIC and CCRI who have approved medical exemptions or religious accommodations, or who are only partially vaccinated, are required to be tested in accordance with existing protocols, with negative results, to be able to enter OPC Office and its centers, and buildings at RIC and CCRI.

If an application for an exemption is denied, the faculty member or non-classified employee will have fourteen (14) days from notice of denial to receive either a single dose vaccine or the first of a two dose vaccine.

Noncompliance with this vaccination policy may result in the imposition of discipline pursuant to the process set out in applicable collective bargaining agreements or CPE policy.

The CPE requests that the OPC, CCRI and RIC take immediate steps to provide proper notification to their faculty and full and part-time non-classified employees of this policy and the institutions' specific additional procedures, practices, and requirements. OPC, CCRI and RIC shall also provide their faculty and non-classified employees with a contact person(s) and/or office(s) for questions and technical assistance regarding this CPE policy and procedures.

It is also acknowledged that this CPE policy, and the policies and practices at RIC and CCRI, may need to be amended based upon future developments regarding the status of the COVID-19 pandemic within the state and elsewhere.

Faculty and non-classified employees (including internal payroll employees) at OPC, RIC and CCRI should refer to their appropriate human resource personnel and follow subsequent communications to ensure that this policy is understood and followed. This policy will take effect upon its adoption by the CPE.