



**OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT**

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August 23, 2021

COVID-19 Update: Vaccine Requirement, Effective November 1, 2021

Dear TCSPP Community,

If the COVID-19 virus has taught us any lessons over the past 18 months, they are the lessons of unpredictability, humility, nimbleness, and adaptability. Just a few months ago, case rates were declining and vaccination rates were rising. All of us hoped for the moment when masking would be over and when we could gather in person with fewer restrictions and less worry.

Unfortunately, we are not there yet. As with so many aspects of COVID-19, we are confronting yet another curve ball: the Delta variant. This variant is particularly concerning because it is more easily spread than previous strains of the virus and some data suggest the Delta variant might cause more severe illness in unvaccinated persons than previous strains. We know that news of the Delta variant's spread and impact have understandably made some in our community anxious.

Announcing TCSPP's COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement (Effective November 1, 2021)

With this context in mind, and with news that the Food and Drug Administration is moving to approve the Pfizer-BioNTech's two-dose COVID-vaccine today with anticipated approval for the Moderna vaccine soon after, **I am writing to share that TCSPP will require proof of the COVID-19 vaccine for all employees and students accessing a TCSPP campus location or TCSPP-sponsored event, effective November 1, 2021.**

With this decision now in hand, please note:

- TCSPP will release additional information, including the official COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement policy and instructions for how to comply with these requirements on September 7.

- TCSPP will process and approve exceptions to the COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement policy for medical or religious reasons for employees and students.
- Between now and September 7, employees and students should start the vaccination process, if they have not already done so and/or are able to do so. [Find a vaccination site near you.](#)
- TCSPP employees and students will have until November 1, 2021 to comply with the updated requirement. This allows all community members adequate time to get vaccinated if they have not already done so, submit proof of vaccination, or process a religious or medical accommodation.

Vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe illness from all known variants of COVID-19. The vast majority of COVID-19 spread is among unvaccinated individuals, underscoring the importance of our high rates of vaccination in our communities. That is why we have encouraged vaccination so strongly and why we are now setting the requirement for all members of the community who are capable/eligible to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and to upload proof. In the face of the pandemic, no action will have a more important or beneficial impact on the health of our communities than vaccination.

Maintaining Our Flexibility and Vigilance Across Fall 2021

The emergence of the Delta variant and the resulting surge in case counts require that we continue to proceed with additional caution, particularly at the start of the semester. So, in addition to TCSPP's COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement, effective November 1, we will continue to follow the safety guidelines in our [COVID-19 Campus Operations Plans](#), including the **universal masking requirement in place on all TCSPP campuses**. Rigorous masking is a proven, effective check on the spread of COVID-19.

Our ground campuses remain open for Fall 2021: campus-based employees will continue to report to work, facilities will remain open, and in-person instruction will continue. To best respond to the surging COVID-19 cases in our communities, and to give employees and students time to comply with the forthcoming COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement policy, we will also be increasing our hybrid, virtual, and/or flexible arrangements for in-person instruction and operations.

We are planning for this increased flexibility through November 1, 2021. Given the rapidly changing nature of the pandemic, our University-wide Return to Campus Committee will continue to monitor conditions across our campus locations and respond to any future changes accordingly. We will provide an additional update on a return to full in-person instruction and operations in mid-October.

- **For students**, your Campus Dean is working closely with the Chief Academic Officer and Department Chairs to identify what (if any) courses should operate in a flexible or remote environment temporarily to best suit your needs and learning outcomes. You will receive communication directly from your course professor detailing the hybrid, virtual, and/or flexible nature of instruction as it applies.
- **For employees**, the University and Campus leadership teams will ensure you continue to have the flexibility needed to successfully balance your roles and responsibilities on campus with those at home. Relevant changes will be communicated by your Campus Dean.

In Closing

As we make plans to return for Fall 2021, your health and safety continues to be the highest priority. This cautious approach we are taking for the coming fall will support our efforts to keep moving forward as safely as possible.

The Chicago School will continue to thrive, educate students, and serve the community because of the patience and kindness everyone has continued to show each other. We will face Fall 2021 and each semester ahead with flexibility and resilience, ebbing and flowing with the uncertainty a pandemic has brought to our daily personal and professional lives, all the while keeping our eye on ensuring our students continue with their educational journeys.

Warm Regards,

Michele

Michele Nealon, Psy.D.
President

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