Council on Postsecondary Education  
State of Rhode Island  

COVID-19 Vaccinations of Students Policy

Adopted: 07/07/21 (CPE)

Policy
The Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) recognizes the toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the country, the states, and 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 a safe, in-person college experience. To that end, CPE believes that students who wish to live, learn, or conduct research on our campuses or access campus resources should be required to be fully vaccinated prior to the beginning of the fall semester, subject to legally recognized medical exemptions, and/or legally recognized disability or religious accommodations. The three approved vaccinations have been deemed safe by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA), are widely available, and both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the R.I. Department of Health (DOH) are recommending that individuals get vaccinated against COVID-19.

In addition, since our goal is to have the fall 2021 semester at Rhode Island College (RIC) and Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) be as close to pre-pandemic status as possible, it is imperative that faculty and staff who have been performing their duties remotely transition back to on-campus work. As such, faculty and staff are strongly encouraged and recommended to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Practices
RIC and CCRI shall immediately take steps to notify their student bodies that they will be required to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 pursuant to DOH protocols and requirements, prior to the start of the fall 2021 semester, subject to legally recognized medical exemptions, and/or legally recognized disability or religious accommodations.

RIC and CCRI may implement other requirements regarding the COVID-19 vaccination that may be related to or required by their mission, programs and housing situation, including, but not limited to establishing procedures and requirements for those students who have legally recognized medical exemptions, and/or legally recognized disability or religious accommodations, or who have not been fully vaccinated prior to a date the institution establishes prior to the start of the fall 2021 semester.
The CPE recommends that the colleges provide proper and advanced notification to their students of this policy and their specific additional procedures, practices, requirements, and deadlines. It is also acknowledged that this policy and the policies and practices at CCRI and RIC may need to be amended based upon future developments regarding the status of the COVID-19 pandemic within the state and elsewhere.

This policy will take effect upon its adoption by the CPE.