

Dear Faculty and Staff,

The email below has just been sent to our students. It shares the news that Longwood will include Covid-19 vaccination among its health requirements for students for the coming year, and the reasoning behind this decision.

The email notes that, per direction from the Commonwealth to all state agencies, Longwood will strongly encourage but not require vaccinations for employees. Under a new Commonwealth policy for state workers announced this week, we can award up to eight hours of Public Health Emergency Leave to cover time off for an employee to get vaccinated or address any side effects. Please speak to your supervisor if you need to schedule that.

In the days ahead we will provide some brief updates to our Covid Workplace policy to reflect evolving guidance. Under state guidelines, employees who are not fully vaccinated should wear masks when around others on campus. While temporary workplace accommodation and leave policies specifically related to Covid-19 remain in place for now, employees should not assume those policies will continue indefinitely now that vaccines are widely available.

If you have questions, I encourage you to speak with your supervisor, or email [questions@longwood.edu](mailto:questions@longwood.edu) or [HRCovid19@longwood.edu](mailto:HRCovid19@longwood.edu).

Thanks,

Matthew McWilliams  
Assistant Vice President for Communications  
Longwood University

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Dear Students,

Over this past 15 months, we have successfully navigated the Covid-19 pandemic by stepping up as a community – looking out not just for ourselves, but for one another. We have also come to appreciate how extraordinarily important it is to be together in person. When we gather fully again this fall, we will all be eager to put the burdensome restrictions of this past year behind us.

Official guidance from the CDC and others makes clear the pathway to a normal year is vaccinations. As the [American College Health Association's latest guidance](#) states clearly: "With comprehensive vaccination, indoor classes, group sizes, residence hall occupancy, eating establishment operations, and sporting events may default to pre-pandemic guidance."

That is why I am sharing the news today of Longwood's decision to require students on campus to be vaccinated for Covid-19. The requirement will be added to our existing and longstanding vaccination requirements for the coming academic year. It does not apply to online-only students who are not on campus.

Like other Virginia universities, we will allow religious and medical exemptions, as we do with other required vaccines.

If you do not confirm you are vaccinated, for any reason, you will still be allowed to register and come to campus. However, all students (including those completing student teaching) who do not certify they are vaccinated will need to sign a form acknowledging they may be subject while on campus to masking requirements, mandatory testing, or restrictions on certain activities, including many social activities. If unvaccinated you will also likely be required to quarantine for up to two weeks if contact exposed to a positive case (which is no longer the case for anyone who is vaccinated).

All incoming and returning students will receive by the end of July a link to a short, straightforward web form that will ask them either to confirm that they have been vaccinated, or accept the conditions.

We recognize some people may prefer to wait to be vaccinated until the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has moved at least one of the approved vaccines out of the current Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) status and given it full approval. We don't know exactly when that might take place – it could be a matter of days, weeks, or months before the required review of long-term safety data is complete. If such approval has not been granted by July 15, we will extend the deadline for this requirement.

Following direction provided by the Commonwealth for state employees, and recognizing a range of individual circumstances, we are encouraging but not mandating vaccinations for Longwood employees.

In closing, like virtually every university, Longwood already requires a number of vaccinations for communicable diseases, with reasonable exemptions. The reasoning for all of them is the same: We live, work, and study together – and a critical mass of our community being vaccinated protects all of us, not just the recipient.

Covid-19 vaccines have now been administered with extraordinary safety and efficacy more than 2 billion times globally, and are driving down cases and hospitalizations across the U.S. and elsewhere. They are the tool that will allow us all to return to normal – and that will be the case here on campus this fall, too.

Thank you. Be on the lookout for further communication about the web link next month. If you have questions, you can email [questions@longwood.edu](mailto:questions@longwood.edu).

Matthew McWilliams  
Assistant Vice President for Communications  
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