

EMPLOYEE FAQs FOR VACCINE AND MASK REQUIREMENTS

Vaccines

Are employees required to be vaccinated against COVID-19?

MSCA faculty teaching in the Day contract are required to receive an FDA or WHO authorized COVID-19 vaccine by **September 1, 2021**, and a second dose, if required as part of the vaccine regimen they received, by **October 1, 2021**. MSCA Faculty not reporting to campus on or before September 1, 2021, due to authorized leave, shall be required to be fully vaccinated prior to returning to campus.

AFSCME unit members are required to receive an FDA or WHO authorized COVID-19 vaccine by **September 15, 2021**, and a second dose, if required as part of the vaccine regimen they received, by **October 13, 2021**.

APA unit members are required to receive an FDA or WHO authorized COVID-19 vaccine by **September 7, 2021**, and a second dose, if required as part of the vaccine regimen they received, by **October 5, 2021**.

What if an employee is not fully vaccinated when they return to campus?

Employees who are not fully vaccinated are required to wear a mask in compliance with CDC guidelines and are required to participate in the University's weekly surveillance testing until fully vaccinated.

Will an employee be able to secure an exemption for health or religious grounds?

Employees may seek a documented medical or religious exemption from Human Resources. Written requests for medical or religious exemptions should be sent to Tina Bones or in Human Resources (lbones@westfield.ma.edu). Human Resources will also be able to assist you with any questions.

Will employees approved for an exemption be required to comply with any additional health and safety measures?

Employees approved for a medical or religious exemption are required to wear masks at all times on campus and are required to participate in weekly asymptomatic (surveillance) testing offered at the University (New Hall, 141B) on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. or providing Human Resources weekly proof of a test conducted at an external site.

How will the University verify an employee's compliance with the vaccination requirement?

To continue to keep our campus safe and make informed decisions relating to COVID-19 matters, it is important to send a photograph or make a copy of your vaccination card or vaccination status to Human Resources' Gozel Pshenichnaya (gpschenichnaya@westfield.ma.edu). Additionally, the University may verify employee's vaccination status on the Massachusetts Immunization Information Database (MIIS) launched by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Immunization Division.

How will the University enforce the vaccine requirement?

Employees who refuse vaccination without an exemption are not permitted to work and will be prohibited from accessing the University's campus. Once vacation leave is exhausted, employees will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence and will be subject to discipline or other adverse action, consistent with an employee's applicable labor agreement.

What if an employee experiences side effects after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine?

Employees are permitted to use their accrued sick leave for incapacitation or side effects due to a COVID-19 vaccination. The Massachusetts Emergency Paid Sick Leave may also cover leave to recover from a COVID-19 vaccination. The Massachusetts Emergency Paid Sick Leave is in effect until Sept. 30, 2021 and provides employees up to five days of paid sick leave. Employees should consult Tina Bones (lbones@westfield.ma.edu) in the Human Resources Office for more information.

Masks

Please note, notwithstanding a government order, the implementation of a mask requirement is at the discretion of the university, and subject to the terms of the agreements reached with employee unions.

Do I have to wear a mask if I am vaccinated?

Yes. At universities that have a mask requirement, everyone, regardless of vaccination status, is required to wear a mask that complies with CDC guidelines over their mouth and nose in non-private spaces inside campus buildings, indoor facilities, and university transportation. Should changed circumstances result in the expansion or reduction of the University's mask requirement, employees will be notified before the change. The University will have some masks available for employees who have forgotten, lost or damaged their mask. Employees should consult their supervisors regarding mask supplies for their respective area.

What if an employee chooses not to wear a mask on campus?

Employees' refusal to comply with the requirement will be subject to progressive disciplinary action.

Health and Safety

Are employees who test positive for COVID-19 permitted on campus?

No. Employees who test positive for COVID-19, whether vaccinated or not, are required to isolate in accordance with [CDC guidelines](#). Employees should contact their supervisor and the University's Human Resources Office regarding leave.

What leave is available for employees who test positive for COVID-19?

If the employee is unable to work, they shall be required to use accrued sick, personal, or vacation leave, or take an unpaid leave of absence until they are able to return to the workplace. Eligible employees may have access to their respective sick leave bank, in accordance with the terms of respective labor agreements. Additionally, employees who test positive will be permitted to use up to five days of Massachusetts Emergency Paid Sick Leave, should such leave be available (expires on 9/30/2021).

May employees work remotely if they test positive for COVID-19?

Employees should consult their respective supervisor and the Human Resources Office for guidance.

Is COVID-19 asymptomatic testing available for employees on campus?

Although the CDC and Mass. DPH do not recommend that asymptomatic vaccinated individuals are tested, as a result of impact bargaining with unions, asymptomatic (surveillance) testing is available in New Hall 141B on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. If employees feel sick, they should not come to campus. Rather, they should consult their physician and notify their supervisor and Human Resources.

If I feel sick, can I get tested on-campus for COVID-19?

Employees should NOT report to work if they feel sick. Employees who feel sick should consult their physician and inform their supervisor and Human Resources.

Does the campus have a COVID-19 contact tracing plan?

Yes. The campus will follow contact tracing protocols pursuant to CDC guidelines and in collaboration with local boards of health, where applicable. Gozel Pshenichnaya manages contact tracing for Human Resources.

Will employees be notified if a student or colleague tests positive for COVID-19?

Campus community members will be contacted if they have been identified as a close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 positive person on campus, in accordance with the campus contact tracing protocols.

Will COVID-19 updates be available to the campus community?

Yes. The University will continue to share health and safety information with our campus community and update the online COVID-19 dashboard at least weekly.

Will employees be able to participate in campus events and meetings remotely?

The University will continue to require that all in-person campus events and meetings be conducted in a manner that takes into consideration the health and safety of attendees, while also making available Zoom or other web technologies, if practicable, to employees who wish to participate remotely.

Are faculty members permitted to conduct office hours remotely?

Yes. Office hours may be conducted remotely. However, this does not preclude faculty members from conducting office hours in-person and on campus.

Are employees permitted to use accrued leave or access the sick leave bank to care for parents, children, and spouses?

Employees are allowed to use accrued leave for personal illness or to care for parents, children, and spouses with COVID-related illness. However, sick leave banks are not permitted for use for a family illness. Sick leave banks are for an employee's personal illness only. Employees should contact Tina Bones (lbones@westfield.ma.edu) in the University's Human Resources Office for a full list of benefits