

Meredith students, faculty, and staff,

As an educational institution committed to science, community, best practices, and each other, we have strongly encouraged vaccinations, among many layers of protection (e.g., hand washing, social distancing, mask-wearing, etc.) as the most powerful way yet to stop the pandemic and pursue a return to normal. We are pleased that to date, nearly 80% of employees and over 73% of students have submitted proof of vaccination. Now that at least one of the vaccines is fully approved, we have more confidence than ever in their efficacy and their contributions to our families' and colleagues' and community's health, as well as our own.

In spite of the good news and while these vaccination rates are good, North Carolina is averaging more than 37 COVID-related deaths per day, and the ICU beds in Wake County are full. Clearly, this virus still poses a significant threat to us all, and particularly to the unvaccinated. For these reasons, **we are adding the COVID-19 vaccination to the list of required vaccinations for students**, unless religious and/or documented medical exemptions apply. COVID-19 vaccinations **will also be required for all employees**, except for those with religious or documented medical exemptions.

We have listened to a wide range of opinions, arguments, and applications. Inspired by our College brand, *Going Strong*, we acknowledge the power of using our strengths for personal choices with individual consequences; even more powerful, however, is using our strengths to support those beyond just ourselves. While one person may make a decision for that person's options, as the leaders of the College, we have to make decisions for the benefits of over 2,500 members in our community, including infants, children, adults of all ages, retirees, those with immunocompromised systems, and those coming and going through our borders as guests, visitors, and contract workers. **Ultimately, our guiding concern is the health and safety of our entire community.** This decision was made in consultation with Meredith's Administrative Management Council and health experts.

Knowing that full FDA approval was important to some of you, we waited to implement this requirement until at least one of the vaccines received full approval. However, you can choose any of the vaccines--Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson--to satisfy Meredith's vaccination requirement.

While we would prefer to implement the requirement immediately, we recognize that logistics require us to consider multiple factors that may challenge a rapid implementation; **thus, enforcement of the vaccination requirement will begin with the spring 2022 semester.** All students and employees must **enter vaccination status in the [portal](#) by Tuesday, January 4, 2022.** We urge you to go ahead and complete your vaccination protocol and enter that information as soon as possible, so we can plan for any testing, distancing, masking, or other protocols we may need to have in place for the second semester.

**If you have already submitted proof of vaccination, you do not have to do so again.**

If you want to request an exemption for religious or physician-documented medical reasons, you will be able to do that through the portal, beginning on Friday, October 15, 2021; responses to these requests will go out prior to the start of second-semester classes. Please submit your exemption request as soon as possible after 10/15/21 to allow for the review time. Those granted a waiver through our review process will still need to mask and be tested weekly until further notice.

In addition to testing, masks, social distancing, hand-washing, and other steps, vaccinations are part of the toolkit we have to keep a healthy population and decrease the likelihood of significant campus interruptions. In addition to acting on best research-based evidence and reducing the likelihood of illness or even death for yourself or others, these vaccinations will mean we

- will have more options for the classroom experience and work environment
- will feel greater confidence in socializing on campus
- can move more freely on and off-campus
- can accept or oversee internships and other paid employment where vaccinations are required
- are better positioned to enjoy club/organization/athletic/cultural events participation

Information about COVID-19 and the vaccine is available on the [Staying Strong](#) site. An initial set of FAQs about Meredith's vaccination requirement is included below. Answers to additional questions will be posted to the Staying Strong site in the coming weeks.

We appreciate so much your ongoing attention to your own health and that of others.

-The Meredith Executive Leadership Team

## **COVID Vaccination Requirement FAQs**

### **Why is Meredith requiring the COVID vaccination prior to the start of spring semester 2022?**

Meredith College accepts the science showing that vaccination is the best way to protect our whole community. Keeping Meredith and its people safe is our first priority, as we have stated throughout our pandemic communications. Vaccinations are the latest addition to the tools we already use: testing, masking, social distancing, hand washing, hand sanitizer stations, CampusClear, and routine cleaning, as well as when necessary, disinfection. As the science shows, these tools overlap to address gaps in the prevention of transmission and minimization of effects, meaning these multiple practices are most likely to offer optimal protection.

For expert information on the COVID-19 vaccine, consider watching [Meredith College's webinar \*Viruses and Vaccines: The History, Science, and Impacts of COVID-19\*](#)

### **I have already submitted proof of vaccination to the portal - do I need to do anything else to comply?**

No. If you have already submitted proof of vaccination, there's nothing else you need to do at this time.

### **What will the vaccination cost?**

Vaccinations continue to be available at no cost in the United States to anyone age 12 and older.

### **Where can I get vaccinated?**

In Wake County, there are [free vaccination sites](#) available most days. Increasingly, COVID-19 vaccinations are also available at area pharmacies and doctor's offices. The pharmacy in Ridgewood is offering vaccinations by appointment and is within walking distance of campus.

The [North Carolina Vaccine Locator](#) includes a list of both government and private vaccine location sites throughout the state.

### **Do I have to get the Pfizer vaccine to satisfy Meredith's vaccine requirement?**

No. You can take the two-shot Pfizer vaccine, the two-shot Moderna vaccine, or the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Taking any of those vaccines will satisfy the Meredith COVID-19 vaccination requirement.

**How much time must pass between the first and second shots for Pfizer and for Moderna?** Physicians and vaccination experts guide the timing of doses. If you take the **Pfizer** vaccine, you must allow **three weeks** between the first and second doses. If you take the **Moderna** vaccine, you must allow **four weeks** between the first and second doses.

**How long before I am considered fully vaccinated after getting vaccinated?**

You need to allow **two weeks beyond the last shot in your series** (after the single shot for Johnson & Johnson; after the second shot for Pfizer or Moderna). That's why Meredith is announcing our vaccine requirement now (September 2021) to allow plenty of time for you to get a vaccine and be fully vaccinated (two weeks after your last dose).

**How soon can I take the vaccination?**

For maximum protection, you should take the vaccine as soon as possible. If you are on campus, unvaccinated, and subject to routine surveillance testing, being vaccinated sooner rather than later means you can stop the routine surveillance testing when you have received emailed approval from student health services to do so.

**Can I take the vaccination just before I return to school for spring semester?**

You need to **have finished your vaccination or vaccination series at least two weeks before you return to campus** for the start of spring semester.

**Once I am vaccinated, how do I report my vaccination status to Meredith College?**

You will need to upload a scan or photograph of your vaccination card into the portal <https://cvdsubmit.meredith.edu/> and complete the required data fields there. You must do so by **January 4, 2022**.

**What if I need a medical exception or religious exemption to this requirement?**

You can fill out the form for either request and upload it to the portal after Friday, October 15, 2021. You will be notified by the College if/when the exception is granted. Note: students or employees who want or need to exercise their right to exemption may be subject to special masking, distancing, and testing requirements.

**Will there be any testing requirements for the Spring semester?** Testing requirements for the Spring will depend on campus and community conditions later this year. We will announce any testing requirements closer to the end of 2021 and/or the beginning of 2022.

sent at 10:55 a.m., 9/16/21