

RIC COVID Response Update Spring 2022

This document is an addendum to the Fall 2021 COVID response plan with updates and highlights for Spring 2022. Given that Rhode Island is still in the High Risk (Red) category for COVID transmission, there will be few changes to the mitigations from the fall. RIC will continue to monitor the trends and risks of Coronavirus and seek guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) to assure continued effectiveness.

The spring semester 2022 begins January 18, 2022. RIC will continue to prepare and provide the appropriate mitigations to keep the campus safe. RIC will also extend efforts to assure that every student on campus complies with our vaccination policy which is paramount to protecting the health of our community.

Vaccinations – Students

- All students are required to be fully vaccinated prior to coming to campus, or have an approved medical or religious exemption. This information must be uploaded into the MediCat portal. New students for the spring will have no greater than four weeks to be fully vaccinated from the start of spring semester. One shot must have been received prior to January 18.

- Religious and medical exemptions are available, these forms must be downloaded and re-uploaded through the Medicat portal for consideration. No in-person or hybrid course attendance will be allowed until vaccinated/exempted status is approved. Religious exemptions are due by January 7 for the spring semester.
 - Students who are not fully or partially vaccinated and do not have an approved exemption will receive a Center for Health & Wellness hold "CHW" and cannot report to campus.
 - These students will be informed that they may not attend in-person or hybrid classes and may not participate in any events on campus (with the exception of vaccination clinics).
 - They may, however, enroll in fully remote classes.

Vaccinations – Faculty and Staff

- Unless otherwise exempted, all staff and faculty are required to get vaccinated and strongly encouraged to receive a booster for the spring semester. There remains an exception for select employees to this requirement. Please contact human resources for more information.

Asymptomatic Testing – Students

- All students with vaccination exemptions, students residing in the dormitories, all

athletes and all Music, Theater and Dance students are required to have proof of a negative COVID-19 test 72 hours prior to returning to campus for the spring. Rapid test results will be accepted. All other students are strongly encouraged to have a COVID-19 test before returning to campus.

- Unvaccinated students are required to participate in weekly asymptomatic COVID-19 testing.
- Vaccinated students may be required to participate in COVID-19 surveillance testing.
- COVID-19 testing will be done in Sweet Hall in the spring. COVID-19 testing on campus will be provided Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., no appointment necessary.
- THIS IS AN ASYMPTOMATIC CLINIC- anyone with symptoms or have been exposed to someone who is positive for symptoms cannot be tested at Sweet Hall.

Asymptomatic Testing – Faculty and Staff

- Faculty and staff, regardless of vaccination status, are encouraged to participate in surveillance testing.
- COVID Testing will be done in Sweet Hall dorm in the spring. COVID-19 testing on campus will be provided Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., no appointment necessary.
- THIS IS AN ASYMPTOMATIC CLINIC-anyone with symptoms or have been exposed to someone who is positive for symptoms cannot be tested at Sweet Hall.

Symptomatic Individuals – Students, Faculty and Staff

- Any employee or student who is experiencing illness or any symptoms related to COVID-19, including cough, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, headache, nausea or vomiting, runny nose, fatigue, recent loss of taste or smell and/or poor appetite, even if fully vaccinated, is asked to remain home.
- Faculty and staff experiencing any of these symptoms should inform their supervisor and contact the Office of Human Resources for further guidance.
- Students should call Health Services for COVID-19 testing and follow additional protocols that their specific academic programs may require, such as students in the School of Nursing.

Communication and Reporting: COVID-19 Student Report Form

- Consistent with guidance from the CDC, state and local officials, RIC has implemented a tool for faculty and staff to report students with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. Should a faculty or staff member learn of a student with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, they must [complete the Student Report Form](#) so that Health Services/COVID Team may be notified and follow up, as appropriate, with the student.

Masks

- As we begin the semester in High Risk, masks are required in all building on campus. This will be revisited as appropriate.

Social Distancing

- As we begin the semester in High Risk, all individuals must maintain a minimum physical distance of three feet from others while on the RIC campus.
- NOTE: in the fall, classes, meetings or events with a certain percentage of unvaccinated students were required to maintain six feet social distancing. Due to the expected reduction in exemptions this spring, and the low numbers of classroom transmission reported in Rhode Island among institutions without such a requirement, RIC will not begin the semester with the six feet requirement for classrooms. We will continue to monitor.

In-Person Meetings

- Faculty and staff may hold meetings in person and/or remotely and follow the protocols regarding mask wearing and/or physical distancing. Individuals who have concerns should consult with their department chairs or supervisors.
- Staff who have approved teleworking arrangements may continue to participate remotely. If an in-person meeting is required, the supervisor will inform the employee in advance.
- There may be situations in which employees participate in meetings remotely due to quarantine requirements and/or flexible/asynchronous work schedules. It is the responsibility of supervisors/department managers to accommodate teleworking meeting participants whenever necessary and/or possible.

RIC Health Services

- The role of Health Services has continued to expand during the COVID-19 pandemic, with Health Services often adding testing, contact tracing and case management to its

responsibilities. Health Services will continue to provide medical and public health expertise to the campus community and deliver current, sound, evidence-informed recommendations, while maintaining essential services to students.

RIC Student Mental Health

- The following steps will be taken to improve access to mental health services to support the needs of students returning to campus:
- Renew the HOPE LINE for another year.
 - Continue to provide options for drop-in crisis counseling.
 - Continue to provide options for virtual and in person same-day urgent appointments.
 - Increase/bolster communication to students about the availability of Counseling Center services through text messaging and social media.
 - Designate peer-based outreach and peer-based support groups either virtually or in- person.
 - Improve the coordination of medical and counseling services to increase access to MH services/care.
 - Develop clear pathways for intervention/referral for behavioral health issues.
 - Offer additional resources, which may be found at [zencare.com](https://www.zencare.com)

RIC Employee Mental Health

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) – During these unprecedented times of crisis many of our colleagues’ mental and behavioral health have been negatively impacted. Employees seeking mental health and/or stress management support are encouraged to contact the EAP. The EAP is a completely free and confidential benefit available to all RIC employees and their immediate family members. The EAP is administered in conjunction with Beacon Health Options (Beacon), using their “Beacon Well-being” platform. [For additional information, please visit the EAP website.](#)

Accommodations

- The college is committed to taking steps consistent with appropriate guidance to create a safe environment for the entire campus community as it reopens and transitions to standard operations. In order to achieve its dual goals of creating a safe campus as well as returning to an on-campus experience the college will provide, in certain circumstances, accommodations to working conditions through the ADA process, and/or adjustments to employment requirements. Decisions on adjustments will be largely guided by RIDOH who has identified high-risk as employees with immunosuppressing conditions or employees having a household member with such a condition, and employees over the age of 65. The Office of Human Resources will be providing detailed information to all faculty and staff to make them aware of these additional mitigations. Similarly, the Disability Services Center will inform students of their opportunity to

request reasonable accommodations under the ADA.

Human Resources

- RIC will continue to follow the RIDOH's guidelines regarding employees who have COVID-19 symptoms and update as needed. Effective immediately, fully vaccinated employees are no longer required to quarantine following a known COVID-19 exposure; however, employees are encouraged to continue to self-monitor for symptoms.
- Fully vaccinated employees and those who are not vaccinated or exempted who experience COVID-19 symptoms may not report to work or must leave the workplace if symptoms develop while at work. Employees must continue to contact their supervisor/department chair and inform them of their situation. Employees must also follow up with the Office of Human Resources for further guidance and/or approval to return to work.
 - Employees will discharge sick time for this purpose. Any COVID-19 exposure at work that results in an employee being sent home by the Office of Human Resources to quarantine will continue to be paid administrative leave.
- Exempted faculty and unvaccinated staff who are in-person on campus at least one-half day each week are strongly encouraged to participate in weekly COVID-19 testing. Fully vaccinated faculty and staff are encouraged to participate in random surveillance testing. Campus testing is available.
- Employees who request a leave of absence due to a personal illness or family illness will follow the applicable collective bargaining unit policy/procedures, the Department of Administration policy/procedures, the Postsecondary Council personnel policies/procedures or state and federal regulations/procedures when applying for leave.

Events

- For spring, events and meetings will be allowed to maintain three-foot distancing, as opposed to six-foot, if admission is limited to persons who can verify that they have been vaccinated upon entry (e.g., show vaccination card, picture of vaccination card, state approved app, etc.), or submit proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within prior 72 hours.

Travel

- As we begin the semester in High Risk, RIC will maintain the fall COVID travel policies. Of note, student study abroad will not be approved for countries in orange or red level transmission rates, and international faculty led student trips will not be approved

under the current pandemic levels.

- Faculty and students may seek approval for college-sponsored travel when the purpose of that travel is deemed to be necessary for academic progress and cannot reasonably be postponed or handled remotely (i.e., to conduct research, to present research at an academic conference, to participate in an internship or academic experience required for graduation, or for a similar educational or co-curricular experience, etc.).

Please see appendix A for more details and the approval process.

APPENDIX A



Spring 2022 RIC Travel Policy & COVID-19

These supplemental travel policies shall be in effect while RIC is in Moderate, Substantial or High risk due to COVID-19.

Students

Students taking part in RIC-sponsored out-of-state travel, must be fully vaccinated, and proof of their vaccination must be accepted in MediCat.

Student Athletes:

- For athletes, pending additional information from the NCAA and the Little East conference, unvaccinated and partially vaccinated student-athletes will be allowed to practice on campus but be masked at all times, and must complete three tests a week on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday schedule.
- At this time these student-athletes will be prohibited from competition at home or away.
- Off campus travel will be restricted until further notice to no overnight travel, no restaurants, with take-out food being the option on the road.
- All student-athletes will be required to test under the guise of the Department of Athletics within 24 hours of competition whether home or away.
- All spectators as well as officials, indoors as well as out, will be required to wear masks and retain recommended social distancing.
- Face coverings must be worn by all student-athletes and Tier 1 members (i.e., coaches, trainers, etc., this pertains to Tier I members of visiting teams as well) at practice and competition, inside and out, unless they are engaged in physical activity.
- Regardless of vaccination status, and per NCAA policy, all student-athletes will be masked when on college-sponsored transportation.
- Practices will be conducted within stable groups not to exceed 26 per RIDOH recommendations.
- These policies are in effect until October 1st, at which time they will be reviewed in conjunction with the latest updates from both local and national authorities.

Student Groups:

- Student groups requesting to travel off-campus must receive permission from the Dean of Students and the Director of Student Health Services to ensure the proposed trip is aligned with local, state and federal public health guidelines and regulations.
- Please allow two (2) weeks for approval. Students and student groups requesting to participate in college-sponsored travel should not book travel arrangements until travel has been approved.

Study Abroad:

- Students seeking to study abroad must receive permission from the Director of Study Abroad and the Director of Student Health Services to ensure the proposed trip is aligned with local, state and federal public health guidelines and regulations, and are not allowed to travel to countries experiencing orange or red-level transmission rates of COVID-19.

In addition, all host partners must provide COVID-19 contingency plans. Students traveling must also sign the Rhode Island College Study Abroad COVID-19 Acknowledgement Form. (below)

Employees

- All employees taking part in college-sponsored travel out of state — or employees leading college-sponsored travel off campus for students or colleagues — must be fully vaccinated, and proof of their vaccination must be provided to Human Resources, who will hold this information in confidence.
- All travelers must also adhere to any visitor guidelines specified by the location or institution they are visiting.
- Travel will only be allowed if it is deemed essential (see definitions below), including being mission critical and/or needed for tenure/promotion purposes for full-time tenure-track faculty members.
- Faculty requests for essential travel must be reviewed by the Dean and approved by the Office of the Provost. Please allow two weeks for approval and do not book travel until approved.
- Staff travel must be pre-approved by the employee's vice president, have vaccination status confirmed by Human Resources and be approved by the Director of Student Health Services. Please allow two (2) weeks for the approval

What is essential academic travel for faculty and students?

- Faculty and students may travel when the purpose of that travel is deemed to be necessary for academic progress and cannot reasonably be postponed or handled remotely (i.e., to conduct research, to present research at an academic conference, to participate in an internship or academic experience required for graduation, or for a similar educational or co-curricular experience, etc.).
- Academic Scholarship:
- Travel required for a professional purpose that is necessary and cannot reasonably be postponed or handled remotely.
- Is necessary to preserve the safety/well-being of research subjects and/or participants.
- Preserves the continuity of research that cannot reasonably be repeated, replaced or performed remotely.
- Is deemed necessary and time-sensitive for tenure and promotion of faculty.
- Advances critical research in the national or global interest.
- College Business
- Travel that is mission-critical to and necessary for the core educational and business functions of the college presently or for the continuation of those core functions in the future, such as recruiting, performance on grant and contract deliverables, or participation in vital partner/inter-institutional consortium/organizational meetings, etc.

RIC Essential Academic Travel Request Form

- Faculty and students must complete the **RIC Essential Academic Travel Request**

Form (below).

Rhode Island College Study Abroad COVID-19 Acknowledgement Form

The public health risk from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic is real. It is known to spread very quickly via person-to-person transmission and may spread without any obvious symptoms. As Rhode Island College continues to respond to this pandemic, we are taking precautions based upon applicable federal, state and local regulations and guidelines to minimize the spread of the virus. However, this is a collective and unified effort, with everyone sharing in the obligation to do their part to be, and stay, safe.

Participation in Rhode Island College study abroad involves a real and potential risk of personal injury including contracting COVID-19, as well as the loss of academic credits and financial repercussions resulting from the disruption of a program.

As a participant in a study abroad program, I have been advised and I acknowledge that:

- Rhode Island College will not be financially liable for unrecoverable program fees, return travel costs, or other personal expenditures lost as a result of my program's cancellation, interruption or alteration.
- Rhode Island College will not be able to provide academic accommodations if my program is cancelled interrupted or otherwise altered. I understand and acknowledge that cancellation, interruption or alteration of a study abroad program after the add/drop date may result in the loss of an entire semester's worth of credit, and that any academic accommodations provided by the study-abroad program, if offered, may not be accepted by Rhode Island College.
- I understand and acknowledge that my study-abroad program or host university may modify or interrupt in-person teaching and move to remote or online instruction with little or no notice to respond to surges in COVID-19 infection rates or in response to local government instructions or otherwise.
- Rhode Island College will not be able to provide residential accommodations or quarantine arrangements in the event of the cancellation or interruption of my program. I understand and acknowledge that I am solely responsible for procuring my own residential accommodations should I be ordered to quarantine or self-isolate while attending my study-abroad program unless such arrangements are provided by my host program or university.
- Insurance coverage provided by Rhode Island College does not cover evacuation or other accommodations due to disruption to travel plans resulting from a pandemic unless I have specifically procured and confirmed such coverage. Coverage does include medical expenses resulting from the treatment of COVID-19 but does not extend to losses for travel and accommodation expenses unless I have specifically procured such coverage. I understand and acknowledge that I am solely responsible for these expenses. I am aware that coverages may be available for COVID-19 related expenses that may not otherwise be covered, and I acknowledge that procuring any such coverage or similar coverage is my responsibility if I choose.

- A study abroad program, host institution, or local government entity may require me to quarantine upon arrival to their destination, and that this quarantine accommodation will be at my own expense if not provided by my host institution. I understand that I must account for any quarantine requirements in planning my travel and that it is my responsibility to do so. I understand that such quarantine requirements may be imposed in a timeframe that may interfere with my planned study abroad.
- I understand and acknowledge that upon return from my time abroad I may be required to quarantine and the details and costs of such arrangements are solely my responsibility. I understand that any such quarantine requirements may interfere with my post-study-abroad plans and may be imposed in a timeframe that may interfere with my planned post-study-abroad activities.
- I understand and acknowledge that a study abroad program, host institution, or local government entity may impose requirements upon me, including but not limited to, to submit to testing regimes, provide reports on body- temperature readings, share travel and contact information upon request, and submit to self-isolation and/or quarantine at any point during my program.
- I understand and acknowledge that arrangements for continuity of care and/or treatment of any existing medical or mental health conditions are my responsibility and should be made prior to the start of my program and should account for possible travel restrictions, lockdowns and/or complications from COVID-19 that may be related to applicable comorbidities.
- I understand and acknowledge that U.S. Consular Services and American Citizen Services may be unavailable, restricted, or cancelled without notice, in my program's destination.
- I understand and acknowledge that cancellations and disruptions to travel arrangements, as well as local and national lockdowns may limit or adversely impact my ability to arrive to – or depart from – my program, as well as possibly inhibit my movement within my program's country. I understand that I must account for such circumstances in planning my travel and that it is my responsibility to do so. I understand that such circumstances may occur in a timeframe that may interfere with my planned study abroad. I understand that I am responsible for any additional expenses resulting from such circumstances.
- I am aware that travel advice is available from multiple sources, including <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html> and <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/> and that travel may be restricted or prohibited by governmental entities such that my study abroad plans or plans to return from study abroad may be impacted. I understand that such circumstances may occur in a timeframe that may interfere with my planned study abroad or planned return from study abroad. I understand that I am responsible for any additional expenses resulting from such circumstances.

- I understand and acknowledge that it is in my best interest to plan one or more contingencies for early departure, pack accordingly, and monitor local news and reliable and reputable information sources to ensure that I am fully informed and aware of the situation in my program's location.

By digitally signing, I confirm that I have read the above COVID-19 Acknowledgement Form, fully understand the terms, and agree to be legally bound by them.

Signature

Date

Printed name

COVID 19 Risk Acknowledgement

The public health risk from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic is real. It is known to spread very quickly via person-to-person transmission, and may spread without any obvious symptoms, even among vaccinated individuals. As Rhode Island College continues to respond to this pandemic, we are adhering to federal, state and local regulations and guidelines to minimize the spread of the virus. However, this is a collective and unified effort, with everyone sharing in the obligation to do their part to be and stay safe.

Participation in travel involves a real and potential risk of personal injury including contracting COVID-19, being subject to quarantine and/or isolation requirements, and potential disruptions to planned events.

As a participant in college-sponsored travel, I have been advised and I acknowledge that:

- Rhode Island College will not be financially liable for unrecoverable program or conference fees, travel expenses or other expenditures that result due to cancellations, travel restrictions, or mandated quarantine or isolation.
- Rhode Island College will not be able to provide residential accommodations or quarantine arrangements in the event of the cancellation or interruption of my planned travel or event. I understand and acknowledge that I am solely responsible for making my own residential accommodations should I be ordered to quarantine or self-isolate while traveling unless such arrangements are otherwise provided by an outside organization or agency.
- I understand and acknowledge that I may be required to quarantine upon reentry to Rhode Island and/or the U.S. and the arrangement and cost of such arrangements are solely my responsibility.
- If traveling internationally, I understand and acknowledge that U.S. Consular Services and American Citizen Services may be unavailable, restricted, or cancelled without notice, in my program's destination.
- I understand and acknowledge that cancellations and disruptions to travel arrangements, as well as local and national lockdowns may limit or adversely impact my ability to arrive to or depart from my planned destination and may inhibit my movement within the host destination.
- I understand and acknowledge that it is in my best interests to monitor conditions in my destination location using reliable and reputable information sources to ensure that I am fully informed and aware of the conditions and all regulations of the host destination.

By digitally signing, I confirm that I have read the above COVID-19 Acknowledgement Form, fully understand the terms, and agree to be legally bound by them.

Signature

Date

Printed name