

# COVID-19 vaccine mandates for Massachusetts community colleges to end

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Posted: Mar 2, 2023 / 01:15 PM EST

Updated: Mar 3, 2023 / 07:43 AM EST

GREENFIELD, Mass. (WWLP) – Following the end of this semester, all community colleges in Massachusetts will no longer require students enrolling to have the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges which represents all 15 community colleges in the state recently made the decision, according to Greenfield Community College.

“Taking into consideration the changing public health landscape around COVID-19, including the anticipated end of the national public health emergency declarations, the community college presidents have decided that, after the conclusion of final exams of the Spring 2023 semester, the COVID-19 vaccine requirement will be lifted. Students and employees will no longer need to provide proof of vaccination as a condition of entry, participation, or enrollment. Certain groups of students and employees may continue to have COVID-19 vaccination requirements as a condition of their clinical or external placements,” a statement from MACC said.

“After serious considerations about the health and safety of our students, staff, and faculty, as well as considering how to best serve our entire community with affordable, high-quality education, the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges determined that ending the COVID vaccine requirement on campuses in time for commencements was the right step,” Greenfield Community College President Michelle Schutt said.

The President of Springfield Technical Community College agrees that this is the right move after mandating the COVID vaccine for quite some time. “Are students are of our communities and I think that is one of the reasons why we really want to continue to just lower the barriers to access higher education,” said STCC President, John B. Cook. “We have not seen large-scale clustering or outbreaks if you will on campus”

The association's decision was decided through several factors, including the end of the national and public health COVID-19 emergencies coming this May. This decision affects enrollment at the following colleges:

- Berkshire Community College
- Holyoke Community College
- Northern Essex Community College
- Bristol Community College
- Massasoit Community College
- North Shore Community College
- Bunker Hill Community College
- MassBay Community College
- Quinsigamond Community College
- Cape Cod Community College
- Middlesex Community College
- Roxbury Community College
- Greenfield Community College
- Mount Wachusett Community College
- Springfield Technical Community College

Community colleges in Holyoke and Greenfield will be joining STCC in monitoring the state of COVID in their communities with a focus on testing, social distancing, and masking when necessary. The colleges are still encouraging vaccination. Certain programs, like ones in healthcare, may still require the COVID-19 vaccine to enroll.

“Due to the effectiveness of the vaccine requirement early on in the pandemic, our campuses have continuously been highly vaccinated,” Schutt said.

The COVID-19 vaccine has been mandatory in all community colleges in the state since January 2022.