

## PLACEMENT OPERATIONS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS IMMUNISATION & HEALTH RECORD FORM

*Disclaimer: the information provided in this document is summarised information from The Australian Immunisation Handbook 10th Edition, 2013, it is not intended to be nor should it be interpreted as medical advice. All students should consult a qualified health care practitioner before taking any action to address immunisation and health record requirements*

### General Questions

**Q: When should I commence my immunisations?**

**A:** All immunisation requirements are expected to be completed prior to the deadline set by their discipline specific Placement Officer, these dates are set to ensure students are confirmed for placement within a reasonable timeframe. It is recommended students commence the immunisation process as soon as they have received their Letter of Offer and/or the immunisation information via email from their discipline specific Placement Officer as some immunisation courses require up to 7 months to complete.

**Q: Where can I have my vaccinations?**

**A:** Vaccinations can be conducted by the La Trobe University Medical Centre, located on the corner of Plenty Road and Kingsbury Drive, Bundoora or with the student's preferred medical practitioner. Immunisation and Health Record forms must be completed, signed and dated by a medical practitioner.

**Q: What if I do not wish to have vaccinations?**

**A:** Students have the option to opt out of providing evidence of their immunisation history. Please be aware that non-participation in the immunisation requirements may increase a student's risk of contracting disease through exposure to infected patients/clients in the clinical setting and could also lead to the refusal of a health facility from accepting a student for placement and thus may prevent a student from meeting the required components of their degree program.

Conscientious objectors are advised to reconsider a career in the healthcare industry prior to accepting an offer of admission. Vaccinations are required for all staff/students working in clinical settings as they are at risk of transferring infectious diseases to patients and clients in healthcare settings

**Q: What if I am unable to have vaccinations finalised before the due date?**

**A:** Placements are a core requirement of the course. Students who fail to have their vaccinations may be withdrawn from their placement. Withdrawal after the census date will incur academic and financial penalties and would delay a student's progression in their course of study.

Students are expected to upload their immunisation and health records by the due date. For those students who do not have sufficient time to complete all immunisations prior to the deadline due to the time required for the recommended schedule to be followed, the Placements Team may be able to make arrangements for the student to attend placement by exception. Exceptions are managed on a case-by-case basis and are dependent on individual facility policies.

**Q: Do I need to update the Immunisation and Health Record Form every time I receive a new vaccination?**

A: The Immunisation and Health Record form only needs to be uploaded once. Any updates to the form after the date that it has been signed by the medical practitioner cannot be accepted. Students are then required to upload the evidence of any missing documents (e.g. a copy of your medical practitioners immunisation record or printout proof of your flu shot or any extra serology reports) as they have them done. Students are not required to upload the Immunisation and Health Record form each time they have an updated booster or add any additional evidence, please only upload the actual evidence. Students with incomplete Immunisation and Health Record forms who haven't supplied the extra evidence for the missing documents will be emailed by a member of the Placements Team.

**Q: I have uploaded the Immunisation and Health Record Form that the medical practitioner has fully completed. Why do I need to upload serology evidence and vaccination records?**

A: The Immunisation and Health Record form is only part of what is required. Students need to upload copies of their vaccination records (either baby books, council records or medical practitioner vaccination history reports) and serology tests as well. The Immunisation and Health Records form is completed by a medical practitioner so that the Placements Team can ensure an appropriately qualified person has checked each of the requirements to verify that students have met the required immunisation and immunity status. The evidence (e.g. vaccine records and serology tests) is needed to provide to placement providers upon request, and to ensure students can prove their immunisation and immunity status. A placement provider may request the University or students to provide evidence of the full vaccination records and serology records. For example, if there is an outbreak of Measles at a facility the placement provider may request the University to provide proof that a student at that facility have been vaccinated for Measles. We then need to provide this evidence by way of vaccination records and/or serology confirming immunity.

**Q: What if I have allergies or become unwell - should I still have my vaccinations?**

A: Students should discuss specific circumstances with their medical practitioner. Written confirmation outlining their individual circumstances will need to be provided to the discipline specific Placement Officer who will then liaise with academic staff and placement providers to establish any restrictions or additional risks for completing clinical placements.

**Q: What if I am pregnant - will I be able to have vaccinations?**

**A:** Students should seek advice from their medical practitioner. Written confirmation outlining their individual circumstances will need to be provided to the discipline specific Placement Officer who will then liaise with academic staff and placement providers to establish any restrictions or additional risks for completing clinical placements.

**Q: What happens if I can't find proof of my baby books and childhood vaccination records - will serology be sufficient?**

**A:** For the majority of placement providers serology will be sufficient however there are some placement providers that require proof of the student's childhood and adolescent vaccination details before they are permitted on placement. A placement provider may refuse to allow the student on placement until such time as they can provide this documentation. If the student cannot provide this information it will limit the placement providers to which they can be placed.

**Q: I am an international student and would like to commence immunisations in my home country. What documents will I be required to present once I enrol?**

**A:** Students who commence immunisations in their own country will still need to complete the Immunisation and Health Records form on arrival in Australia. Students should ensure they have vaccination and serology documentation including official translations to English prior to leaving their home country. When students arrive in Australia, they will need to present all documents and translations, including serology reports, to a medical practitioner who will sign off the forms confirming their documents comply with immunisation requirements.

**Q: Do you accept a Statutory Declaration for any immunisations?**

**A:** No – a statutory declaration is not considered acceptable if students are unable to provide evidence of their immunisation history.

## Section 1. Hepatitis B (HBV)

**Q: I have serology for Hepatitis B confirming immunity, why do I need to provide evidence of the doses as well?**

**A:** The immunisations required are as per the Department of Health Immunisations for Healthcare Workers – 10th Edition document, which states that evidence of a documented course of Hepatitis B immunisation plus serology to confirm immunity is required. If students cannot provide this information it will limit the placement providers to which they can be placed.

**Q: I have serology for Hepatitis A or B confirming immunity but it was from 5 years ago. Is this acceptable?**

**A:** Yes, the University has no time limit on serology results for Hepatitis B. However, some facilities may request updated serology if there are time limits dictated in their Immunisation Policy

**Q: I have only received the first two doses of adult Hepatitis B vaccinations – should I have serology done?**

**A:** If students are completing an adult course of Hepatitis B Vaccinations, no serology should not be done after 2 doses. If the third dose is not scheduled until after the placement is due to commence the discipline specific Placement Officer will contact the placement provider to find out if the student can still attend placement at the venue. Serology following the second dose may be required at the request of the placement provider.

Students that can attend the first placement with only two doses will still need to complete the full course of vaccinations for Hepatitis B and serology as soon as possible.

If students have received 2 doses of an adolescent course of Hepatitis B vaccinations, yes serology should be performed as the course is considered complete after 2 doses.

**Q: I have two doses of paediatric Hepatitis B vaccinations plus a booster and my serology is sufficient. Is this adequate?**

**A:** Yes – students who have three doses in total and have sufficient immunity to Hepatitis B have satisfied the requirements for Hepatitis B.

**Q: I have had all three adult doses of Hepatitis B and my serology was <10 mIU/mL – then my medical practitioner gave me a booster (single 4<sup>th</sup> dose) – do I need to have further serology done?**

**A:** Yes – if the original serology shows insufficient immunity, we require a new serology after the booster (4 weeks after the booster dose) to confirm the immunity levels are now sufficient. If the anti-HBs level remains <10 mIU/mL the possibility of HBV infection should be investigated and, if excluded, the student should be managed as a non-responder to vaccination.

Students who do not respond to the primary vaccination course, and in whom chronic HBV infection has been excluded, should be offered further doses. Further information is available from: [http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/7B28E87511E08905CA257D4D001DB1F8/\\$File/Aus-Imm-Handbook.pdf](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/7B28E87511E08905CA257D4D001DB1F8/$File/Aus-Imm-Handbook.pdf)

**Q: What if my results come back positive for Hepatitis B?**

**A:** Students must seek expert advice from a medical practitioner regarding further management of their status immediately. Students will need to provide written evidence from their medical practitioner confirming their Hepatitis B status. This will need to be declared to the placement provider by the discipline specific Placement Officer who will then provide further advice on the clinical placement implications and associated risks.

**Q: I have received 3 doses of Hepatitis B vaccines, but the brand names are different – is this sufficient?**

**A:** According to the Australian Immunisation Handbook this does not meet the standard immunisation schedule for Hepatitis B, however the University will accept an explanatory letter from a GP/Immunisation Nurse that confirms the completion of a full immunisation schedule.

## **Section 2. Hepatitis A**

**Q: I have serology for Hepatitis A confirming immunity but it was from 5 years ago. Is this acceptable?**

**A:** Yes, the University has no time limit on serology results for Hepatitis A. However, some facilities may request updated serology if there are time limits dictated in their Immunisation Policy

**Q: What about Hepatitis A immunisation - should I have this as well?**

**A:** If you cannot provide serology confirming immunity or a history of Hepatitis A vaccinations you will need to be immunised for Hepatitis A.

**Q: If I have serology for Hepatitis A confirming sufficient immunity do I still need to provide evidence of the two doses and dates of doses.**

**A:** No – students who have serology confirming immunity for Hepatitis A do not need to provide proof of the actual doses.

**Q: I have only had one dose for Hepatitis A - do I need to complete the full course of vaccinations and serology.**

**A:** Yes - Students need to complete the full course of vaccinations, they do not need to have the serology as well. If the next vaccinations are not scheduled until after the placement is due to commence the discipline specific Placement Officer will need to contact the placement provider to confirm if the student can attend placement

as scheduled. Some placement providers may request students provide positive serology prior to attending placements if the immunisation schedule is still partially complete at the time of commencement.

**Q: Do I need to have two doses or three doses for Hepatitis A.**

**A:** This will depend on the vaccine given. If the vaccine is for Hepatitis A only it will be two doses. If it is a combination vaccine for Hepatitis A and B it will be three doses. Students that are unsure should discuss this with their medical practitioner for further clarification.

**Q: I have evidence of one dose of Hepatitis A and serology – do I need a second dose?**

**A:** Yes – Placement Providers expect students to complete a full course of Hepatitis A immunisations, once a course has been started you are expected to finish it regardless of positive serology mid-way through the course.

**Q: I have completed the full course of vaccinations for Hepatitis A – do I need to have serology?**

**A:** No – students who have evidence of the full course of vaccinations do not need to provide serology results.

### **Section 3. Varicella**

**Q: I have never had Chickenpox or shingles - will I need to have this vaccination?**

**A:** Students with a negative clinical history of varicella and negative varicella serology will need to be immunised. That is, two vaccinations one month apart. Students must keep their vaccination records or serology results as some placement providers may ask for verification of the student's vaccination status.

**Q: I have provided a date for clinical Chickenpox or shingles but have no evidence – is this sufficient?**

**A:** No – students are required to submit either serology indicated immunity to Varicella or details of a completed course of varicella vaccinations – 2 doses 4 weeks apart.

**Q: I have evidence of one dose of Varicella and serology – do I need a second dose?**

**A:** Yes – at the time of implementation of a universal varicella vaccination program in Australia, a single dose was considered adequate for protection. However, the recommendation has recently been updated to include a second dose to provide an optimal immune response. Students who received a single dose in childhood or adolescence are required to complete the full course of two doses.

## Section 4. Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis (dTpa)

**Q: Is there serology I can do for dTpa?**

**A:** No – serology is not accepted for Diphtheria, Tetanus or Pertussis. Only details of a vaccination received less than 10 years prior to the submission date will be accepted.

**Q: I have had an ADT Vaccination in the past, is this acceptable?**

**A:** No – ADT vaccinations only cover Diphtheria & Tetanus, students are required to have a dTpa vaccination that includes Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis.

## Section 5. Polio

**Q: Is there serology I can do for Poliomyelitis (Polio)?**

**A:** No – there is no serology test for Polio, we only require the evidence of the student's childhood or adult Polio vaccination history.

**Q: I have uploaded evidence of a booster dose of Polio however I cannot find evidence of the three doses I had as a child. Do I need further doses?**

**A:** A completed poliomyelitis vaccination schedule for children is three primary doses and one booster dose of IPV (IPOL) or an IPV-containing vaccine. Where a child received their third primary dose of IPV or an IPV-containing vaccine after the age of 3.5 years, a booster dose is not required.

A course of three doses of IPV (IPOL) or IPV-containing vaccines is required for the primary vaccination of adults. No adult should remain unvaccinated against poliomyelitis.

Students who are unable to locate evidence of three childhood doses plus a booster dose, have an incomplete form and will need to complete the adult immunisation schedule (three doses) to provide adequate evidence where a placement provider requires this information. This is particularly the case if you are allocated to specific placement provider such as Goulburn Valley Health and some metro placement providers.

Some placement providers will accept a statutory declaration for polio, please contact the discipline specific Placement Officer for further advice.

**Q: I have five polio vaccinations but there are only four boxes on the immunisation form?**

**A:** Students who have had five doses of Polio can list the last two most recent doses under each other under the Booster box.

## **Section 6. Measles, Mumps & Rubella**

**Q: Although I have received required doses of Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine, my serology shows I have insufficient immunity – do I require boosters?**

**A:** Yes – students will need to have a minimum of one booster dose if they have insufficient immunity. Their medical practitioner will advise if two doses are required. Further serology is not required unless indicated by the placement provider.

**Q: My serology for Measles, Mumps and Rubella shows I have immunity to Measles and Rubella but not immune to Mumps am I required to provide further evidence?**

**A:** Yes – students will need to obtain a booster dose for MMR. Further serology is not required, unless indicated by the placement provider.

## **Section 7. Tuberculosis Test**

**Q: Am I required to have a Tuberculosis Test?**

**A:** Yes – all students are required to submit details of a TB test – to meet the majority of currency requirements we recommend students have this test completed approximately 3 months prior to their first placement.

**Q: Am I required to provide evidence of a BCG vaccination for Tuberculosis?**

**A:** No – BCG is not recommended for routine use in the general population, given the low incidence of TB in Australia and the variable efficacy reported in adults. However, some groups are at increased risk of tuberculosis and may benefit from BCG vaccination, students should contact their medical practitioner for further advice.

**Q: My placement will be held outside of Victoria, which TB test is required?**

**A:** For most non-Victorian placements a Mantoux skin test is required. Generally Victorian Health agencies accept both the Mantoux ST and QuantiFeron Gold test, if your allocated placement facility requires a specific test you will be advised by discipline specific Placement Officer.

**Q: What if my results come back positive for Tuberculosis?**

**A:** The student's medical practitioner will need to refer them for a chest x-ray and appointment at an Infectious Diseases Clinic. Documented evidence will need to be provided to the discipline specific Placement Officer outlining the testing undertaken and the student's latent TB status.

**Q: How long is the Mantoux or Quantiferon Gold test valid for?**

**A:** There is no recommended validity period for either a Mantoux or Quantiferon Gold test. However, please be advised there are some placement providers that require TB tests within 3 to 12 months of the placement commencing, students will be notified by their discipline specific Placement Officer if they need to provide a yearly TB Test to meet a specific placement provider requirement. To meet the requirements of most placement providers students are advised to have their TB test done no more than 3 months prior to their first placement.

## **Section 8. Influenza**

**Q: My placement is scheduled prior to the annual influenza vaccination being available. What do I need to do?**

**A:** Students who have received the previous year's vaccination will need to provide evidence. They can then have the current vaccination once it becomes available.

For students who did not receive the previous year's vaccination; the discipline specific Placement Officer will need to contact the placement provider to confirm if the student can attend placement as scheduled.