



## A Guide to Immunisation, Screening & Health Clearance



Prepared by Innovate Healthcare, Occupational Health July 2024



## Introduction

Innovate Healthcare Management Group Ltd is an independent Occupational Health (OH) service. We are processing your health clearance to ensure you are fit for study and fit for your practice placements, and will be responsible for your Occupational Health throughout your time at the University.

We are SEQOHS, ISO9001 and ISO27001 accredited which means our services, policies and processes are assessed annually by the Faculty of Occupational Medicine and other regulatory bodies to ensure we deliver to the highest and safest quality standards.

Occupational Health is concerned with the effect of health on work, and the effect of work on health. Our role is to safeguard, as far as reasonably practicable, your health, safety and welfare throughout your time at University. This includes time that you will spend on your clinical placement.

Students who have applied to study health programmes are required to obtain Occupational Health clearance. This is to ensure that you are fit for all aspects of the course, and also to protect the public who may be affected by your placement activities.

The Occupational Health service is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm and if you have any questions please get in touch using the details below:

Email: [studentvaccinations@innovatehmg.co.uk](mailto:studentvaccinations@innovatehmg.co.uk)

Phone: [0161 527 7405](tel:01615277405)

Our clinics will run on-campus:

AECC University College, Garnet Campus, Parkwood Road, Bournemouth, BH5 2DF  
(room specifics to be confirmed)

You will be asked to provide documentary evidence of vaccinations as part of our screening process for the following vaccinations (MMR, Varicella, Mantoux, TB, HepB) so please start to collect this now. Your GP should be able to assist.

If you cannot provide written evidence, you will be entered into the Immunisations programme requiring all recommended vaccinations (as described in the Green Book, Chapter 12):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book#the-green-book>

**WE KNOW THAT YOU MAY NOT HAVE HAD EVERY VACCINATION BUT IF YOU HAVE PROOF OF ANY KIND, PLEASE SHARE IT!**



## Data Protection and Confidentiality

Records are stored electronically and securely within our system. Access will be limited to members of the Innovate team and key members of the university team. Records will not be shared with anyone else without your explicit consent. Innovate is committed to maintaining your privacy, dignity and confidentiality at all times. We adhere to the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR and the NMC and GMC Codes of Confidentiality.

You will be provided with a copy of your vaccination records in due course; however, you also have a right to request access to any other records that we may hold for you.

## Health Screening questionnaire

You will be invited to complete our digital screening questionnaire. This is part of the clearance process and you will not be permitted to commence the course if it is not completed.

Please do not delay your response, and remember you have a duty to provide relevant, truthful and accurate information. Failure to do so may result in your acceptance on the course being withdrawn.

Some of you may need to speak to a Clinician so we ask that you keep an eye out for calls once you have submitted the questionnaire. The call may be from a withheld number.

## Immunisations and blood screening

The second part of the clearance process is to ensure that you have undergone blood screening and received the vaccinations as recommended by the Department of Health. You will not be fully cleared until we are certain that you have had the necessary vaccinations or blood tests.

As a healthcare student, you must comply with Department of Health guidelines on immunisations and screening required to protect you and your patients during the course of your work.

We will invite those who need vaccinations to book their first appointment via our online portal. Subsequent appointments will be discussed and booked during the first appointment.

Clinics run regularly at agreed dates and locations each day Monday-Friday and between 9am and 5pm. It is a mandatory requirement to attend and failure to do so may impact your ability to go on Clinical Placement and you may be charged by the University for **non-attendance**.

For more information about immunisations for Healthcare Workers, please take a look at the Government Guidelines contained within the Green Book, Chapter 12:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immunisation-of-healthcare-and-laboratory-staff-the-green-book-chapter-12>

We require you to be vaccinated for some infectious diseases if you do not already have immunity to them. Whilst we cannot force you to have a vaccination it is unlikely we will confirm that you are fit for clinical placement without appropriate vaccinations and therefore the University may undertake additional risk assessments which may mean some placements are considered to high risk for you to attend which may limit the variety of placements you are able to attend.



## Vaccinations for clearance

For students on healthcare courses we will issue clearance of vaccinations to you and the University once you have met the following conditions:

- Health questionnaire clearance (This is part of the admission process so won't get on the course without completing this)
- At least three doses of Hepatitis B vaccine OR evidence of vaccination and immunity
- At least two doses of MMR vaccine OR evidence of already having two doses
- Confirmation you have had chicken pox, the Varicella vaccine OR evidence of immunity to varicella
- TB screening and vaccination where required
- Additional blood screening for roles where EPP clearance is required

**Without the fitness certificate, you will not be able to start your clinical placement, which may affect your student funding.**

**Not providing evidence of vaccination status doesn't affect your student funding, it does however affect your progression on the programme which may result in you having to take 'leave of Absence' for a year.**

**Additionally, we will not clear you for your first placement unless you have evidence to prove, or we have delivered the following vaccinations:**

- **At least one dose of HepB**
- **At least one dose of MMR**
- **Mantoux test has been completed (if required)**
- **BCG administered (if required)**
- **Varicella administered (if required)**

As you can see there is a number of immunisation and tests to be carried out. Therefore, it is essential that you book your appointments when asked and ensure you attend at the right time so that you are appropriately protected and ready for going out to practice.

## Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a virus that affects the liver. It may start as an acute disease, causing a mild illness that lasts for a few weeks, or it can be a severe life-threatening illness leading. For some people the Hepatitis B virus lingers, causing a lifelong chronic illness that may result in long-term liver problems such as cirrhosis or liver cancer.

Hepatitis B is spread when infected blood, semen, or other bodily fluid enters the body. An infected mother can pass the disease on to her child at birth. Infection is spread by:

- Having unprotected sex with an infected partner
- Sharing needles, syringes, or other drug paraphernalia
- Using something that may contain an infected person's blood, such as a razor or toothbrush

In healthcare, you may come into contact with infected blood whilst providing care to patients or through sharps, splash or needlestick injuries. Many people who are a carrier of Hepatitis B have no symptoms at all and may not be aware they are a carrier.



## Hepatitis B continued.....

It takes only a microscopic amount of blood to transmit the virus and it is highly infectious - there is up to a 30% chance of acquiring the virus from an infected carrier if you become exposed. The virus can also live outside the body on used instruments and hard surfaces for up to a week. The best protection against developing Hepatitis B is to be vaccinated against the virus therefore it is essential that all healthcare workers be vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

The vaccine for Hepatitis B is highly effective. The majority of adults who receive one dose develop protective levels of antibodies within one month of receiving a single dose. It is important, however, to complete the course of three vaccinations and have a blood test afterwards to ensure immunity is achieved.

### Vaccination schedule

The schedule requires three vaccines. You will have the first dose at your first appointment, second dose a month later, and the final dose a month after that (following the accelerated schedule).

A minimum of four weeks after the third vaccination, you will require a blood test to ensure you have responded. In some cases, a booster vaccination is required as immunity levels are not quite sufficient. Some people simply do not respond to the vaccination and do not develop immunity.

It is important to identify these people so we can advise what to do if you were exposed to a patient's body fluids. Post-exposure treatment is available and can help to prevent infection.

You cannot start placement until you have had at least TWO doses of vaccine. You must complete the course and have a blood test before we release your vaccination and immunity report to you. You will need this when looking for employment after graduation.

## Chickenpox (varicella)

You must be immune to chickenpox as it is important to protect you and patients from this, particularly those who have cancer, are immunocompromised or are pregnant.

We need to have a clear history that you have had chickenpox OR a copy of a blood test result demonstrating you have immunity OR evidence of vaccination. Students that did not have infection within a temperate climate will need to be screened for chickenpox if no documentary evidence is provided. If you have no evidence of immunity, we will take a blood test to ascertain this. We will notify you if you need vaccination because you are not immune.

### Vaccination schedule

Students that do not have immunity to chickenpox will require two vaccines given at one-month intervals. You cannot start placement until you have had at least ONE dose. Further blood tests are not required following vaccination.



## Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)

We need to ensure you are immune to measles and rubella so that you do not transmit this to patients and we need to ensure we protect you from acquiring it whilst on your clinical placement. We need to see documentary evidence of a blood test demonstrating you have immunity to measles and rubella OR evidence of receiving two MMR vaccinations.

Everyone is entitled to receive two doses of MMR vaccine, as it is part of the national Public Health schedule for immunisations. Therefore, you may choose to attend your GP practice to obtain these vaccinations in advance of enrolment. The GP should not charge you for this service.

## Vaccination schedule

Students that do not have immunity to measles or rubella will require two vaccines given at one-month intervals. You cannot start placement until you have had at least ONE dose.

## Tuberculosis (TB)

We need to ensure you are provided with some protection against TB whilst on your clinical placement. Vaccination does not necessarily make you immune but provides you with some protection; we cannot say how much and for how long, but it is thought to be around fifteen years to a lifetime in some cases.

We will be looking for evidence of a BCG scar (likely to be on your left upper arm) or evidence from your GP that you have had the BCG vaccination. If you do not have a BCG scar we will arrange for you to have a Mantoux skin test. The results of the test will determine if you need a TB (BCG) vaccination.

**IMPORTANT:** If you need a Mantoux test we will inform you of the date of your two appointments. There will be an appointment for the test and a second for the nurse to check the result of the test 48-72 hours later and, where appropriate, give you a BCG vaccination. You **MUST** attend both appointments. Failure to attend Mantoux appointments is one of the main reasons why students miss the deadline for being cleared for placement. We cannot arrange a one-off Mantoux appointment as the vaccine is only available in a multi-dose vial: we arrange Mantoux clinics when lots of students requiring the test can attend on the same date. It is therefore extremely important that you attend the dates that you are given and do not miss them.

## Live vaccines

Some students are unable to have live vaccines because of pregnancy and certain types of medication or health conditions. Please ensure you take a list of your medications to your appointment. If you are unable to have a live vaccine (MMR, VZV and BCG) we will review your health clearance to assess whether adjustments can be made so that you can continue on the programme.



## HIV test

Healthcare students have a professional responsibility to ensure that they are well enough to work in clinical practice. For many courses, a diagnosis of HIV is not a barrier to training and we would not notify the University as a matter of routine.

All students may request a HIV test through the pre-enrolment screening questionnaire.

## Hepatitis C test

All students may request a Hepatitis C test through the pre-enrolment screening questionnaire.

## Needle Phobia

We know that many students may be anxious when they attend clinic. Please make sure that you have plenty to eat and drink before attending and tell the nurse if you are anxious or have a needle phobia. In many clinics we have a couch available for you to lie on whilst having injections or blood tests. Please also wear a short sleeve top to enable us to access your upper arm easily for vaccination and taking blood.

**Please note we have hundreds of blood test results to process in a short space of time so please be patient. Please do not contact us to check on the progress of your clearance. We will be able to ensure you have the appropriate notification and vaccination before you go on your first clinical placement provided you have attended all of the appointments as required.**

## Sharps and splash injuries

During your time as a student you may sustain an accidental splash or sharps injury. This can be very frightening, however it is very important you report any injury immediately to the team looking after you on placement for immediate support - please note you may be asked to attend A&E.

## Referrals

Some students may be referred to see us during their time at University. The purpose of the consultation is to review the information provided, to assess whether any health conditions may impact upon practice and whether a student will need adjustments to help them on placement.

Referrals may also be made following a period of absence or return from maternity leave.

We will make recommendations as clinically indicated and we may arrange for you to be seen by an Occupational Health Physician or other clinical specialist the Nurse considers it appropriate.

If you feel that you may need further assistance whilst on placement, or if you have concerns about your physical or mental health you should speak to your tutor as soon as possible.



## Attending appointments

Please be aware that we will inform the University if you fail to attend an occupational health appointment, cancel within 24 hours of an appointment or arrive too late for us to carry out the planned consultation or vaccinations. The University will also be charged for the missed appointment, which may be passed on to you.

**Some students have jeopardised the start of their placements by not engaging with Occupational Health so please do not leave booking appointments until the last minute and make sure you regularly check your emails and voicemail. We also recommend checking spam/junk folders.**

**Please ensure that your online health questionnaire is completed as soon as possible and that you have located all of your vaccination records ready for the immunisation clinics. Failure to complete the occupational health process means failure to comply with the requirements of your course.**

## Consent

You will be asked to provide your consent for any reports sent to your tutor or Placement Team. You may choose to release the report without prior viewing and you will then be sent a copy for your own records.

You are also entitled to see a copy of the report before it is sent to your tutor or Placement Team. It is important to note that the purpose of prior viewing is to correct any factual inaccuracies, not to alter the opinion of the Occupational Health Advisor, Physician or Psychiatrist.

*Any delay in receiving your consent could result in you being asked to interrupt your placement whilst the University considers your fitness to practice and/or study in the absence of an Occupational Health report.*

## Feedback

We welcome your feedback and you may be asked to complete a feedback questionnaire. You are welcome to contact us at any time if you have feedback whether good or bad.