



VCU

Immunization Requirements for Health Sciences Students

Policy Type: Administrative

Responsible Office: Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences

Initial Policy Approved: March 03, 2016

Current Revision Approved: March 03, 2016

Policy Statement and Purpose

In accordance with Code of Virginia section 23-7.5, all full-time students entering a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth must provide a health history that includes documentation of required immunizations. Prior to enrollment, all students shall be immunized by vaccine against all diseases specified by the Code of Virginia according to the guidelines of the American College Health Association.

Additionally, to foster the health of our students and to minimize the potential risk for transmission of communicable diseases within our community, VCU requires all Health Sciences students whose academic program requires patient contact to show evidence of immunity to varicella (chicken pox), Hepatitis B, and to be tested for tuberculosis and, in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, be vaccinated annually against influenza. These additional requirements do not apply to students participating in certain Exempt Programs that do not require patient contact. A list of Exempt Programs is linked to this policy and is available on the University Student Health Services (USHS) website.

Noncompliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. VCU supports an environment free from retaliation. Retaliation against any individual who brings forth a good faith concern, asks a clarifying question, or participates in an investigation is prohibited.

Students who are not in compliance with this policy will be unable to participate in program activities that involve contact with patients, including some labs and clinical rotations.

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Who Should Know This Policy

Students, faculty, program directors, and administrators, including the Deans, Associate Deans, and Assistant Deans, in the schools of Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Health Sciences related programs are responsible for knowing this policy and familiarizing themselves with its contents and provisions.

Definitions

Health Sciences Students

Health Sciences students include any student in the schools of Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, and Pharmacy.

Health Sciences Related Programs

Health Sciences related programs include The Clinical & Translational Sciences and any program developed as an expansion of, but not housed in, a Health Sciences school.

Medical Contraindications

Medical contraindications are conditions or factors that serve as a reason to withhold a certain medical treatment due to the harm that it would cause the patient/student.

Patient Care Areas

Patient care areas include any area where patients are seen, or may be waiting to be seen, where interaction with human research subjects may occur, and/or other areas that may contain Other Potentially Infectious Materials (OPIM) as defined by the CDC.

Contacts

The Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences (OVPHS) officially interprets this policy. Please direct policy questions, including those about adding programs to the Exempted Programs list if they do not have patient contact, to the OVPHS.

Policy Specifics and Procedures

- Obtaining required vaccines:** Required vaccines and tuberculosis tests may be obtained through USHS during walk-in immunization hours. Vaccines may also be obtained from another provider but students must provide documentation, the "VCU Health Sciences Certificate of Immunization", to USHS that the required vaccinations were obtained.
 - USHS is located at 1000 E. Marshall St., Room 305 on the Medical campus and at 1300 W. Broad Street, Ste. 2200 on the Monroe Park campus
 - USHS will work closely with Health Sciences schools to offer vaccination clinics for Health Sciences students on location and around the academic schedule.

- If a student's tuberculosis test is positive, the student must obtain documentation from a qualified medical provider that a chest x-ray demonstrates the student does not have current or active tuberculosis.
- 2. Submitting required Certificate of Immunizations:** All Health Sciences students must submit a VCU Health Sciences Certificate of Immunizations, located within this policy and on the USHS website, to USHS, documenting all required vaccinations.
- In accordance with Virginia law, any student who fails to furnish a Certificate of Immunization before the beginning of the second semester of enrollment will not be eligible for registration for the second semester.
 - Unless otherwise noted on the USHS website, documentation of annual influenza vaccination must be submitted to USHS by December 1st.
 - The Certificate of Immunization may be hand delivered, mailed, faxed, or emailed to USHS.
 - If the Health Sciences student's program requires submission of the Certificate of Immunization to their office, the student must also send a separate copy to USHS.
 - USHS will maintain records of student vaccinations.
- 3. Requesting Medical or Religious Exemptions:** Exemptions to mandatory vaccinations may be granted on the basis of medical contraindications or on the basis that administration of the vaccine conflicts with religious tenets or practices. All requests for medical exemptions will be reviewed by USHS. Students are required to submit the appropriate forms as outlined below to USHS, and are required to provide documentation of any approved exemption(s) to their program directors and clinical sites. The Medical Vaccination Exemption Form, the Certificate of Religious Exemption Form, and the Health Sciences Influenza Vaccination Exemption form may be hand delivered, mailed, faxed, or emailed to USHS.
- **Requesting medical exemption:**
 - Any student seeking an exemption on the basis of medical contraindication must submit a Medical Vaccination Exemption Form.
 - **Requesting religious exemption:**
 - Students seeking an exemption on the basis of a conflict with religious tenets or practices must submit a Certificate of Religious Exemption Form. The student requesting the exemption is required to sign the form and have it notarized.
 - **Exemption to flu vaccination requirement:**
 - The student requesting the exemption from the influenza vaccination is required to meet with the Director of USHS who may approve the exemption by completing and signing the form.
 - An exemption for the influenza vaccine is valid only for the flu season in which it was granted.
 - Students with an approved exemption to the annual flu vaccine may be required to wear a mask while in patient care areas.

Forms

1. [VCU Health Sciences Exempted Programs List](#)
2. [VCU Health Sciences Certificate of Immunization](#)
3. [Medical Vaccination Exemption](#)

4. [Certificate of Religious Exemption](#)
5. [Health Sciences Influenza Vaccination Exemption Request Form](#)

Related Documents

1. [Code of Virginia section § 23-7.5](#)
2. [University Student Health Services - Immunizations](#)
3. [List of Vaccines and Prices](#)
4. [CDC Influenza Vaccination Information for Health Care Workers](#)

Revision History

None – New Policy

FAQs

1. What is the deadline for obtaining the required vaccines?

Students are required to be vaccinated against all diseases specified by the Code of Virginia according to the guidelines of the American College Health Association prior to enrollment and must provide a health history before the beginning of the second semester of enrollment. The deadline for obtaining the influenza vaccination is December 1st unless an alternative deadline is posted on the USHS website due, for example, to fluctuation in the availability of the vaccine.

2. Where can I obtain the required vaccines?

Students can obtain required vaccinations from USHS during walk-in immunization hours. When there is a cost involved, students should be aware that USHS does not bill health insurance; however, students may submit receipts to their health insurance for reimbursement as applicable. USHS also works closely with each school to provide tuberculosis testing and influenza vaccination clinics. Additionally, students can obtain the required vaccinations from another provider but must submit the required documentation to USHS reflecting that the vaccine has been obtained.

3. How much do the required vaccines cost?

USHS fees for each of the required vaccinations can be found at <http://www.students.vcu.edu/health/immunizations/vaccine--titer-fees/>.

4. What are the consequences for not obtaining the required vaccines?

Students who have not been granted an exemption and who have not obtained the required influenza vaccination will be unable to participate in program activities involving contact with patients.