

## A guide to Immunisation, Screening & Health Clearance

<b>Document Reference: MVLS – Clearance Guide</b>
<b>Date Reviewed: 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023</b>
<b>Next Review Date: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026</b>
<b>Version No: 01.00</b>

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## 1. Introduction

The University of Glasgow occupational health department are responsible for processing your health clearance to ensure that you are fit to train and meet the standards for practice as set by Higher Education Occupational Health Physicians/Practitioners (HEOPS).

Occupational health is concerned with the effect of health on work, and the effect of work on health. Our role is to support and safeguard, as far as reasonably practicable your health, safety, and welfare throughout your studies at the University of Glasgow.

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

Occupational health is available Monday to Friday 08:30hrs to 16:30hrs, and can be contacted on:

Email: [ohu@admin.gla.ac.uk](mailto:ohu@admin.gla.ac.uk)

Telephone : 0141 330 7171

Once you have finished reading this guide, we strongly recommend that you begin collating your vaccination documentation in preparation for providing immunisation evidence to support your health clearance process, if you cannot provide immunisation evidence, your health clearance may be delayed.

This includes evidence of:

- MMR vaccination
- Varicella (chickenpox) history or vaccination
- TB
- Hepatitis B vaccination/serology

**You should upload a copy of immunisations and/or serological blood test results along with your health declaration form.**

Occupational health works closely with the schools to schedule clinics that have limited interruption to your scheduled studies, however, we encourage you to attend scheduled appointments, and if you are unable to attend that you contact occupational health to reschedule at your earliest convenience. If you are late in attending appointments, occupational health shall endeavour to see you; however due to busy clinic schedules this may not be possible, resulting in the appointment having to be rescheduled.

## 2. Data Protection and Confidentiality

Occupational health records are stored both electronically and in paper format, the content of which are not shared with anyone outside occupational health, including MVLS staff, tutors, course directors or your GP without your explicit consent.

Occupational health is committed to maintaining your privacy, dignity, and confidentiality always. We adhere to the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR, NMC & GMC codes of confidentiality.

On completion of your health clearance process, you shall be provided a copy of your vaccination records and blood test results; however, you also have the right to request access to any other records that we may hold about you.

You may speak to occupational health confidentially about any health issues that you feel may impact you whilst you are on your course. We may encourage you to share information with the University if we believe that adjustments/support may help you during your studies. We may encourage you to contact Student support services or the student EAP provider for specific guidance and support; however, we will not reveal any information that you have provided without consent, unless there is reason to believe that you, or another person, may be in danger or in the event of a court order for release of records in a judicial dispute.

### 3. Health Declaration

You should have received a health declaration to complete if you have not done so, we would encourage you to do so at your earliest convenience. The health declaration is part of the clearance process, and without it, your clearance shall not be completed.

You have a duty to provide relevant, truthful, and accurate information to occupational health, and no information should be withheld, any failure to do so, may result in reconsideration of your fitness to practice.

**Dishonesty is incompatible with training in a regulated profession and may lead to you being removed from your course. Kindly ensure that you answer all questions truthfully.**

If you declare any health matters, you may be contacted by occupational health to discuss further with a specialist occupational health clinician. This may be conducted by telephone, videocall or on campus, this is to ensure that we can advise of reasonable adjustments/support for you to undertake your course of study. We also need to ensure that you are well enough to complete your course.

Occasionally we may require a medical report from your GP or any treating specialist clinician, we will require your written consent to allow us to make contact. It can take significant time to receive medical reports from external agencies, therefore it may be useful for you to obtain a report in the interim that you can share with occupational health.

### 4. Immunisations and blood screening

As part of your screening process, occupational health is responsible for ensuring that you have been appropriately screened and received relevant blood tests and immunisations as recommended by the Department of Health. You will not be fully cleared until we are satisfied that all necessary blood tests and immunisations have been completed.

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

- Immunisation is the process whereby a person becomes immune or resistant to infectious disease, typically by the administration of a vaccine.
- Vaccination is the administration of a vaccine to stimulate an individual's immune system to develop immunity to a specific disease.

We require you to be vaccinated for some infectious diseases if you do not already have immunity to them. Whilst we cannot make the blood tests or immunisations mandatory, it is unlikely that we shall state that you are fit for clinical placement without appropriate vaccinations and therefore the University may have further discussions with you to discuss your options.

We recommend that you spend time gathering as much of your vaccination history as possible, as this is required to support your clearance process. If you have received vaccinations from your GP or other health services, you shall be required to provide occupational health with evidence of your vaccinations/blood test results. Your health clearance shall be processed timelier if you can provide all relevant documentation at the commencement of your course. Kindly provide evidence of your childhood vaccinations, this may be logged in your red baby book or by obtaining a printout from your HGP or health care provider as this may save you from requiring further blood tests or vaccinations.

If you have worked in healthcare before, and have evidence of your health clearance, kindly attach a copy of your occupational health certificate when submitting your health declaration.

## **5. Criteria for Health Clearance**

For students undertaking courses in medicine, dentistry, or nursing, we shall issue a certificate of fitness to you, once you have met the clearance conditions:

- Completed health declaration form.
- TB screening based on risk assessment, and completion of IGRA blood test if applicable.
- Varicella screening
- Administration of Hepatitis B vaccine, followed by serology or review of documented evidence.
- Documented evidence of MMR vaccination (2 doses) or evidence of immunity

## **6. Hepatitis B**

Hepatitis B is a virus that affects the liver. It may commence as an acute disease, causing mild illness that can last several weeks, or it can be a severe life-threatening illness. For some, the virus becomes a lifelong chronic illness that may result in long term liver problems such as cirrhosis or liver cancer.

Hepatitis B is a blood borne virus, meaning it is transmitted when infected blood or body fluids enter the body. In healthcare, you may encounter infected blood whilst providing care to patients or through sharps, splash or needlestick injuries. Many people who are carriers of Hepatitis B virus are asymptomatic and may not be aware they are a carrier.

The vaccine for Hepatitis B is highly effective, it is important to complete a primary course of the vaccine, followed by serological testing. In some instances, your level of immunity may be inadequate, which may require further doses of vaccine, this will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

Evidence of immunisation and/or serological testing are required, as Hepatitis B cannot be self-declared.

## **7. Varicella (Chickenpox)**

It is important that you and your patients are protected from Varicella, particularly those who are immunocompromised or pregnant.

Self-declaration that you have suffered from the disease or evidence of immunisation or serological testing is required. Overseas students will require serological testing as part of the clearance process. Depending on the results, immunisation may be required to ensure adequate protection against the disease. A primary course of vaccine consists of 2 vaccines.

## **8. Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)**

It is important to ensure immunity, and that you have adequate protection to protect you from acquiring the diseases whilst on clinical placement. Self-declaration is not accepted, we require evidence that you have received 2 doses of either combined or individual vaccines or serological testing results.

Everyone is entitled to receive 2 doses of MMR vaccine free of charge, as it is included within the national public health schedule for immunisations, therefore you may be advised to contact your GP to obtain the vaccines.

## **9. Tuberculosis (TB)**

Occupational health does not offer B vaccine to students, an individual risk assessment shall be conducted, and where applicable, you may be requested to have an IGRA blood test.

If you have previously received a BCG vaccine, we will request documented evidence and measure any scar that may be visible.

If you have recently moved to the UK from a country with high incidence of TB or have potential signs or symptoms, we will conduct an IGRA blood test to check for infection. These results will support the referral process if applicable.

Countries with a TB incidence rate greater than or equal to 40 per 100,000 people are considered as high incidence countries according to the WHO.

## **10. Blood Borne Virus Blood Testing**

In accordance with Department of Health regulations, all students entering the NHS are required to have screening for blood borne viruses:

- HIV
- Hepatitis C
- Hepatitis B Surface Antigen

The blood test shall be conducted at screening clinics by occupational health, photographic ID is required at the time of the blood test e.g., University ID card, passport, driver's license. Bloods cannot be taken without suitable ID being checked at the time of the appointment, failure to produce ID may cause a delay to your clearance.

The blood tests can be conducted at the same appointment as administering immunisations e.g., Hepatitis B, however, if blood cannot be taken, there will be a delay of 3 weeks in testing for Hepatitis B Surface Antigen to avoid false positive results.

Healthcare students have a professional responsibility to ensure that they are fit to work in clinical practice. For many, a diagnosis of a blood borne virus is not a barrier to training, however, if the result is positive, monitoring by occupational health and a discussion with the school may be required.

### **11. Meningitis ACWY Vaccine**

All students are encouraged to have Meningitis ACWY vaccine, especially if new to the University. The vaccine is available free of charge from your GP if under the age of 25 years. If your GP does not offer immunisation services, they should refer you to a vaccination centre to receive your vaccine. The vaccine is available through occupational health at a cost to the student.

### **12. Diphtheria, Tetanus & Polio Vaccine**

All students are encouraged to ensure they have received the childhood immunisation schedule, including a booster dose at school, if you have not received the vaccine, you should contact your GP as it is available free of charge. If your GP does not offer immunisation services, they should refer you to a vaccination centre to receive your vaccine. The vaccine is available through occupational health at a cost to the student.

### **13. Attending screening clinics**

Occupational health liaises with the schools for scheduling clinics to prevent interruption to scheduled classes, we encourage you to make every effort to attend scheduled appointments, if you are unable to attend, we advise that you contact your school of study or occupational health to reschedule, and for the appointment to be reallocated.

Kindly note that we have many students attending screening clinics to process in a short space of time, we ask for your support and patience during these clinics. We request that you do not contact occupational health to check progress of your clearance, as we shall ensure effective communication and notification to each individual student.

We request that you wear a short sleeve top to enable access to your upper arm for vaccination and taking blood.

We are aware that many students may be anxious when they attend clinics, please ensure that you have eaten and had plenty to drink prior to attending your appointment. It is important that you advise us if you are needle phobic or prone to fainting.

## 14. References

Green Book: Chapter 12 Immunisation of healthcare and laboratory staff:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/147882/Green-Book-Chapter-12.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/147882/Green-Book-Chapter-12.pdf)

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations (2002):

UK Health Security Agency, Nov 2022: Integrated guidance on health clearance of healthcare workers and the management of healthcare workers living with blood borne viruses (Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV); UK Advisory Panel for Health Care workers living with blood borne viruses (UKAP)::

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1115603/Integrated-guidance-for-management-of-BBV-in-HCW-November-2022-update.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1115603/Integrated-guidance-for-management-of-BBV-in-HCW-November-2022-update.pdf)

### Appendix 1: HEOPS Medical Students Fitness Standards (2015)



HEOPS\_Medical\_Students\_fitness\_standard

### Appendix 2: HEOPS Dental Students Fitness Standards (2013)



HEOPS\_Dental\_Students\_fitness\_standards

### Appendix 3: HEOPS Nursing Students Fitness Standards (2015)



HEOPS\_Nursing\_Student\_fitness\_standard

### Appendix 4: HEOPS Guidance Fitness to Study with Severe Eating Disorders



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## 15. Change History

Version number	Change detail	Date
V01.00	New document – MVLS Student Clearance Guidance	18 <sup>th</sup> April 2023

## 16. SOP Approval

Developed By	Name	Signature	Date
Head of Occupational Health & Wellbeing	Hazel Bookham		18 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
Approved by	Name	Signature	Date
Occupational Health Consultant	Dr Jonathan Reed		