

Dear Student

**IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS UNDERTAKING  
CLINICAL PLACEMENT WITHIN NSW HEALTH FACILITIES**

---

**Occupational Assessment, Screening & Vaccination against Infectious Diseases**

Transmission of vaccine preventable diseases in healthcare settings has the potential to cause serious illness and avoidable deaths in patients, staff, students and other users of the health system as well as others in the community.

NSW Health's policy directive on *Occupational assessment, screening and vaccination against specified infectious diseases* (\* see note below) requires all facilities in the NSW public health system to ensure that existing staff, new recruits, health care students and other clinical personnel are assessed, screened and vaccinated against the infectious diseases specified in the policy directive.

Students enrolled at a university, TAFE, high school or other educational institution may be required as part of a course of study to access NSW Health facilities to undertake clinical placements, work experience, observation or other arrangements. Students who are undertaking clinical placements which involve patient contact as defined under Category A must comply with the requirements of the *Occupational assessment, screening and vaccination against specified infectious diseases* policy directive. Category A is defined in Information Sheet 1, attached. Information Sheet 2 describes the vaccinations required by Category A applicants (or other evidence of protection, where applicable) and the circumstances under which students require TB screening.

You are advised to take these Information Sheets with you, along with your *Health Care Worker/Student Vaccination Record Card*, when you consult your local doctor for vaccination(s). You are also advised to undertake all vaccinations and screening (if required) as soon as possible, as fulfilling some of these requirements may take several months to complete.

Students will not be accepted for clinical placement unless they comply with the requirements of the *Occupational assessment, screening and vaccination against specified infectious diseases* policy directive. Failure to complete the requirements of the policy directive will result in suspension from attending clinical placements in the NSW Health system and may jeopardise your course of study.

\* **Please note:** the *Occupational assessment, screening and vaccination against specified infectious diseases* policy may be revised from time to time. Please consult the following website prior to enrolment/commencement of the academic year for the current version of this policy and supporting information [www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/immunisation/ohs/](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/immunisation/ohs/)

If you have any queries about the above requirements, you should, in the first instance, speak to your course coordinator.

Yours sincerely



Kim Stewart  
**A/Director, Health Protection**  
8 December 2009

NSW Department of Health  
ABN 92 697 899 630  
73 Miller St North Sydney NSW 2060  
Locked Mail Bag 961 North Sydney NSW 2059  
Tel (02) 9391 9000 Fax (02) 9391 9101  
Website [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)

## INFORMATION SHEET 1. – Risk categorisation guidelines

### Category A

**Protection against the specified infectious diseases is required**

**Direct physical contact** with:

- patients/clients
- deceased persons, body parts
- blood, body substances, infectious material or surfaces or equipment that might contain these (eg soiled linen, surgical equipment, syringes)

**Contact** that would allow the acquisition or transmission of diseases that are spread by **respiratory means**. Includes persons:

- whose work requires frequent/prolonged face-to-face contact with patients or clients eg interviewing or counselling individual clients or small groups; performing reception duties in an emergency/outpatients department;
- whose normal work location is in a clinical area such as a ward, emergency department, outpatient clinic (including, for example, ward clerks and patient transport officers); or
- who frequently throughout their working week are required to attend clinical areas, eg food services staff who deliver meals.

**All health care students (eg medicine, nursing, allied health) are Category A.** Students in disciplines outside of these health related areas (for example, business studies or accountancy) who are unsure about whether their access to NSW Health facilities will require such contact should seek appropriate advice from the coordinator in their educational institution.

### Category B

**Does not require protection against the specified infectious diseases as level of risk is no greater than that of the general community**

- No direct physical contact with patients/clients, deceased persons, blood, body substances or infectious material or surfaces/equipment that might contain these.
- Normal work location is not in a clinical area, eg administrative staff not working in a ward environment, food services staff in kitchens.
- Attends clinical areas infrequently, for short periods of time eg walks through or visits a ward occasionally on administrative duties; is a maintenance contractor undertaking electrical maintenance work in a clinical area.

Although such persons may come into incidental contact with patients (eg in elevators, cafeteria, etc) this would not normally constitute a greater level of risk than for the general community.

## INFORMATION SHEET 2. – Checklist: Evidence required from Category A applicants

### Evidence required to demonstrate protection against the specified infectious diseases

1. Acceptable evidence of protection against specified infectious diseases includes:
  - a written record of vaccination signed by the medical practitioner, and/or
  - serological confirmation of protection, and/or
  - other evidence, as specified in the table below.
  - **NB:** the health facility may require further evidence of protection, eg serology, if the vaccination record does not contain vaccine brand and batch or official certification from vaccination provider (eg clinic/practice stamp)
2. **TST screening is required if the person was born in a country with a high incidence of TB, or has resided for a cumulative time of 3 months or longer in a country with a high incidence of TB, as listed at:**  
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/Infectious/a-z.asp#T>
3. In certain specialised clinical settings, for example, in transplant, oncology or neonatal wards, the health facility *may* require serological evidence of protection (in addition to evidence of vaccination or other evidence) to ensure that the risk to vulnerable patients is minimised.

Disease	Evidence of vaccination	Documented serology results	Other acceptable evidence
<b>Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> One <u>adult</u> dose of diphtheria/ tetanus/ pertussis vaccine (dTpa). <b><u>Not ADT.</u></b>	<b>Serology will not be accepted</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> History of completed age-appropriate course of hepatitis B vaccine. <b>Not “accelerated” course.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Anti-HBs greater than or equal to 10mIU/mL	<input type="checkbox"/> Documented evidence of anti-HBc, indicating past hepatitis B infection
<b>Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 doses of MMR vaccine at least one month apart	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive IgG for measles, mumps and rubella	<input type="checkbox"/> Birth date before 1966
<b>Varicella (chickenpox)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 doses of varicella vaccine at least one month apart (evidence of one dose is sufficient if the person was vaccinated before 14 years of age)	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive IgG for varicella	<input type="checkbox"/> History of chickenpox or physician-diagnosed shingles (serotest if uncertain)
<b>Tuberculosis (TB)</b>		<b>Not applicable</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuberculin skin test (TST)
<b>See note 2 above for list of persons requiring TST screening</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>	Note: Interferon-gamma release immunoassay (IGRA) is not generally accepted. In the event that an IGRA has been performed, screening by TST will be required if the IGRA result is negative or equivocal.  Persons with positive TST/IGRA must be fully assessed by a TB service within 3 months of commencement of clinical duties or clinical placement and must be asymptomatic when commencing clinical duties or clinical placement.	
<b>Influenza</b>	<b>Annual influenza vaccination is not a requirement, but is strongly recommended</b>		