Immunisation Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy details the principles and legislative requirements that Macquarie University (the University) has adopted to minimise the Risk of transmission of Vaccine Preventable Disease for the ongoing health and safety of staff, students, contractors and Volunteers.

(2) The Policy specifies the minimum Immunisation requirements for staff, students, contractors, and Volunteers of the University who undertake activities where there may be an increased Risk of transmission of Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPD) and tuberculosis.

Background

(3) Immunisation is a critical control to protect people from contracting or transmitting Vaccine Preventable Diseases. The University acknowledges that the activities of some staff, students, contractors and Volunteers may increase the Risk of contracting illnesses or disease.

Scope

(4) Immunisation requirements apply to all workers (including employees, contractors, subcontractors, outworkers, apprentices, trainees, and students gaining work experience) and students (including graduate research students), and Volunteers, (to be known as the University Community) who undertake work in areas assessed as requiring Immunisation for Vaccine Preventable Diseases and/or tuberculosis, on University activities, including placements.

Section 2 - Policy

(5) Members of the University Community conducting activities endorsed by the University where an increased Risk of acquisition and/or transmission of a Vaccine Preventable Disease and/or tuberculosis exists and they pose a Risk of altering a person's health status must meet the University's Immunisation requirements and, where appropriate, conform to requirements outlined by the relevant regulatory bodies as a minimum.

(6) The identification of increased Risk is achieved through a risk assessment led by the line manager/convenor/academic supervisor in consultation with those involved in the activity and the relevant faculty or Deputy Vice-Chancellor portfolio work health and safety (WHS) adviser.

(7) The following areas are deemed to be of increased Risk per clause (6) and require consideration and documentation of specific requirements for Immunisation:

a. any area that provides a health service, including (but not limited to) Macquarie University Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences Clinics;
    i. health professional students are required to be immunised to the NSW Health risk category A requirements except for undergraduate chiropractic and exercise sports science students who will meet the requirements of the risk assessment by the faculty;
b. University personnel working in environments, which include contact with:

i. live animal(s);
ii. deceased person(s) and / or animal(s);
iii. human body or animal part(s);
iv. person or animal blood and other body or animal product(s);
v. infectious material or surface(s); and/or
vi. equipment that might contain infectious material e.g. instruments, trays, bed linen, sheets, syringes, etc.; and/or
vii. regular or frequent contact with clients who are immunocompromised, have chronic health conditions, are pregnant, are pre-school age, or are elderly;

c. other work and research environments upon identification of a Risk to altering a person's health status; and
d. specific geographical environments:
    i. habitation in, visitation to, or climates and/or conditions that increase the person's exposure to illness and disease and the potential for contracting such illness or disease.

(8) A staff member who is subject to an Immunisation requirement and is not medically, physically or emotionally able to be immunised is required to report this to their line manager as soon as practicable.

(9) Subject to clause 10, in circumstances where there is a conscientious objection, a medical contraindication or other reason that impacts participation in this process, the University will use risk management principles to address the matter on a case-by-case basis. This may include making reasonable adjustments to the activity where possible, transferring the relevant person to another area, or not endorsing a person's participation in the specified activity.

(10) Students enrolled in practical, clinical or professional courses do not have the availability of conscientious objection to Vaccination requirements as this will prevent any placement or work within Macquarie University Health or any NSW Health facility per the NSW Health Policy Directive - Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Against Specified Infectious Diseases.

(11) Prospective University staff are responsible for costs of Vaccination and Immunisation screening requirements if specified as a pre-employment or pre-placement requirement as outlined in the letter of offer.

(12) For existing staff and graduate research students, the relevant faculty, school or centre is responsible for resourcing Vaccinations and pathology tests (for example, for proof of immunity) if required to prevent work-related transmission of VPD or are for work-related placements or travel.

(13) Costs for course related Vaccinations and Immunisation screening for undergraduate and post graduate coursework students are at the individual's expense.

Travel Vaccinations

(14) For international travellers, International SOS provides pre-departure information regarding required Vaccinations for specific destinations. Staff and students travelling overseas can obtain information regarding International SOS from their relevant work /study area/department.

Section 3 - Procedures

(15) For individuals who are not classified under NSW Health category A or B requirements, a risk assessment must be completed before they begin any University endorsed activity. This assessment should be carried out by the relevant supervisor, manager, or faculty advisor, in consultation with work health and safety (WHS) advisers and the people involved, to determine whether the activity poses a Risk of contracting a Vaccine Preventable Disease (VPD). Individuals who are classified under NSW Health, category A or B requirements, do not require a risk assessment to

determine this.

(16) The contact and identification details of University Community members requiring Immunisation along with Immunisation requirements and supporting documentation (risk assessment, PD, role) should be sent to the Immunisation team at immunise.screen@mqhealth.org.au for:

a. staff, contractors or Volunteers – by the relevant University supervisor or manager;
b. students – by the faculty and/or placement coordinator within offer of enrolment or placement process; and
c. graduate research students – by their relevant supervisor.

(17) Relevant University Community members must supply acceptable evidence to the Immunisation team such as a Vaccination Record Card, or schedule an appointment with a general practitioner (GP) to:

a. administer required Immunisations;
b. order serology and assess immunity; and
c. complete the Vaccination Record Card and/or discuss Vaccination needs.

(18) The Immunisation team will verify Immunisation status against the requirements outlined per clause (16) and will communicate the outcome to those responsible for initiating the request.

(19) Only relevant University Community members who have met Immunisation requirements may proceed with relevant activities.

(20) If an individual does not meet Immunisation requirements, the University may include making reasonable adjustments to the activity where possible, transferring the relevant person to another area, or not endorsing a person's participation in the specified activity.

(21) For prospective staff, the supervisor is responsible for obtaining advice from the new staff member's HR Team or WHS Advisor to identify roles where pre-employment Immunisation requirements need to be considered during recruitment.

(22) Specific Immunisation requirements relevant to new position descriptions must be established prior to the development of recruitment documents, with consideration of the timelines required for full Vaccination and included in recruitment advertising and letters of offer as a condition of employment.

(23) Where applicable, University Community members are responsible for keeping their Immunisation records up-to-date and providing verification of Immunisation to the University upon request and in accordance with this Procedure.

(24) Health records including Immunisation status are to be managed according to the Privacy Policy, Privacy Management Plan and Records and Information Management Policy having regard to collection, use, disclosure, storage, security and retention.

Macquarie University Health Students

(25) Where a Vaccination is required to address a gap in immunity, the costs are covered by the student.

(26) Macquarie University Health Students must present evidence of Immunisation at Bulk Compliance Verification Day or per other arrangements specified by their faculty or placement coordinator.

(27) Following receipt of the student's evidence of Immunisation, the student's documents will be updated either on ClinConnect which will automatically update the student compliance database (e.g. SONIA) or directly on the SONIA database. Staff Health does not keep a record of student evidence.

(28) If Immunisation documentation is incomplete or requirements are unmet:

a. the faculty compliance administrator will flag the issue; and/or
b. students may be asked to attend an interview with a faculty representative to discuss the matter.

Identified issues will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

(29) Students who fail to meet Immunisation requirements will:

a. be unable to participate in clinical placements; and/or
b. risk suspension or withdrawal from their program, as compliance is mandatory under the NSW Health Policy Directive.

(30) Students are responsible for:

a. keeping their Immunisation records up-to-date;
b. providing evidence of Immunisation to placement providers upon request; and
c. retaining a copy of their Immunisation status for the duration of their course.

(31) The faculty compliance administrator must check documents and records of each students' Immunisation status in the ClinConnect and/or SONIA databases.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(32) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(33) The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

a. Immunisation means inducing immunity against infection by the use of antigen to stimulate the body to produce its own antibodies.
b. NSW Health means the NSW public health system.
c. NSW Health Policy Directive means an official document that establishes the position of NSW Health in regard to infectious diseases.
d. Risk means exposure to a work/study activity or work/study environment that may result in changes in the person's health status.
e. Vaccination means the process of administering a vaccine to a person to improve immunity against infection.
f. Vaccine means a biological preparation that improves immunity to a particular disease. A vaccine contains an agent that stimulates the body's immune system to fight off the disease.
g. Vaccine Preventable Disease means a disease where a specific vaccine has been developed.
h. Volunteer means a voluntary worker who works for the University for the benefit of the University without any financial gain.

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Responsible Executive	Robin Payne Vice-President, Finance and Resources
Responsible Officer	Lance Islip Head, Work Health and Safety +61 2 9850 9723
Enquiries Contact	Lance Islip Head, Work Health and Safety +61 2 9850 9723

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