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**Student Guide to Occupational Health Services**

**Provided by OH Works**

**INTRODUCTION**

OHWorks Ltd is an independent SEQOHS accredited Occupational Health (OH) service. Our role is to provide advice to the University on your fitness to enrol on your chosen course of study and fitness to practice as a healthcare student when on placement with or without adjustments taking into consideration any existing declared health conditions and current immunisation status to certain communicable diseases as defined by Department of Health.

Occupational Health is concerned with the effect of health on work, and the effect of work on health and to make sure you are fit to undertake the course you have chosen both physically and emotionally. Our role is to safeguard, as far as reasonably practicable, your health, safety and welfare throughout your time at university and to ensure your fitness to perform tasks involved effectively and without risk to your own or others’ health and safety. This includes time that you will spend on your clinical placement.

Occupational health clearance and, where needed appropriate vaccinations, is very important to protect patients, students and healthcare workers from communicable infections which can be transmitted in the healthcare setting.

The General Medical Council (GMC) is the body that licences medical practitioners in the UK and oversees the training of medical students. The GMC considers that there is a duty for medical staff to be vaccinated against communicable diseases and paragraph 80 of the GMC Good Medical Practice guidance for doctors' states: “You should be immunised against common serious communicable diseases (unless contraindicated).”

The Occupational Health service is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.  You can contact us on:

**Email: kmms@ohworks.co.uk**

**Tel: 01227 286288**

Once you have finished reading this guide, we strongly recommend that you begin to collect evidence of previous vaccination documentation in preparation for the first clinic. **You must bring all available documentation with you otherwise your health clearance may be delayed**. You may be able to obtain this evidence from your General Practitioner (GP) or family physician, previous OH provider (if applicable) or your childhood immunisation records. (Red baby book for those born in the UK).

Evidence required is:

* Having had 2 x Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccinations or blood test results showing immunity to measles and rubella.
* Having received 2 x varicella vaccines or blood test result showing immunity to varicella.
* BCG vaccination against Tuberculosis.
* Having had 3 x Hepatitis B vaccinations or blood test result showing immunity to Hepatitis B.
* Having had pertussis (whooping cough) vaccination in the last 5 years
* All students should have a documented history of immunisation against Diphtheria, Polio and Tetanus (DPT).

**We know that you may not have had every vaccination but if you have proof of any kind, please attach it to your health questionnaire or bring it along with you.**

**Please ensure that, where relevant, any health records or laboratory results have been translated into English.**

**Bringing your immunisation history to your first appointment will significantly speed up the process to ensure you are cleared to undertake your first placement.**

**Data Protection and Confidentiality**

Records are stored electronically and will not be shown, nor their contents be shared, with anyone outside of OHWorks – including University Placement Staff, Tutors, Course Directors, or your GP – without your explicit consent.  OHWorks is committed to maintaining your privacy, dignity, and confidentiality always.  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.

You may speak to us confidentially about any health issue that you feel you may need support with whilst you are on your course.  We may advise you to share information with the University if we feel that adjustments could be made that would help you during your studies, however we will never reveal any information that you have given us without your consent, unless we have good 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.

**HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE – FITNESS TO ENROL**

By now, you should have completed an online health questionnaire.  If you have not done so, you must complete one today.  The health questionnaire is part of the clearance process, and your ability to start the course will be delayed if the questionnaire has not been completed.

You can access the health questionnaire at this website:

[**https://www.healthquestionnaire.co.uk/kmms/**](https://www.healthquestionnaire.co.uk/kmms/)

You have a duty to provide relevant, truthful, and accurate information to OHWorks and no information should be withheld.  Any failure to do so may result in the offer of a place being withdrawn or reconsideration of your fitness to continue with the course.

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

Occupational Health is required to preserve medical confidentiality, and we only reveal health information with your informed consent. Information provided to the university is restricted to issues relevant to your fitness.

You will have received automatic **Fitness to Enrol** if you did not declare any health concerns on your health questionnaire or if we felt that your health condition would not affect your ability to study and undertake your clinical placements.

If you have declared a health condition and automatic clearance has not yet been provided, this is because we are still processing the questionnaire and will arrange a follow up health assessment with an OH practitioner. This is to ensure that can provide advice and guidance on the appropriate support for you to be able to undertake your course.  We also need to ensure that you will be well enough to complete your course.

Occupational Health is here to support you by providing advice to the University about how your health may relate to the demands of your course. While we may offer recommendations, such as possible adjustments to support your participation, it is the University that makes the final decision about whether you can enrol or continue the

course.

Occasionally we may need to write to your General Practitioner (GP) or specialist for additional information.  We will ask you to provide your written consent to allow us to do so.  It can take 6-8 weeks for specialist reports to be issued therefore any specialist reports that you may already have may be useful in the interim. Please forward these if asked to do so by the OH practitioner.

**IMMUNISATIONS & BLOOD SCREENING – FIT FOR PLACEMENT & FULLY VACCINATED**

The second part of the clearance process is to ensure that you do not pose a risk of infection to others and similarly to ensure that you are protected from vaccine preventable communicable infections and biological hazards dependant on your chosen course of study and the risks it may pose.

The University has a duty of care to ensure you have been screened for communicable infections and are fully immunised OHWorks follows the Department of Health and Social Care’s Green Book chapter 12, which sets out the standards that determine which vaccinations are required for different healthcare workers. You will not be fully cleared until we have assessed your immunity status to measles, rubella, chickenpox, tuberculosis (TB), hepatitis B varicella, DPT (diphtheria, polio and tetanus) and pertussis (whooping cough).

In addition, you will have a blood test to check for evidence of active infection with hepatitis B, hepatitis C and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). In line with Department of Health Guidance this test needs to be performed by Occupational Health using a UK accredited laboratory, so previous results cannot be used, unless they meet this criterion. If you test positive for one of these viruses it does not automatically mean that you cannot train as a doctor.

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 is made immune or resistant to an infectious disease, typically by the administration of a vaccine.
* Vaccination is the administration of a [vaccine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaccine) to stimulate an individual's immune system to develop [immunity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immunity_(medical)) to a specific disease.

You will be advised and offered vaccination as per recommended guidanceif you do not already have immunity to them.  If you decline the offer of vaccination, we willadvise the University of your non-immune status, and it will be for them to decide the level of risk and acceptance to the course or continuation on the course.

We would however state that placements where you work with children, pregnant women

and immuno-compromised patients will require you to be immune to measles, rubella, varicella and be vaccinated against pertussis. We would not be able to issue you with a clearance certificate for placement in those areas without you meeting this criterion.

Occupational Health will issue a **Fit for Placement Certificate** to you and the University for Year 1 placements once you have met the following conditions:

* Health questionnaire clearance.
* At least one dose of Hepatitis B vaccine OR evidence of immunity.
* One dose of MMR vaccine OR evidence of immunity to measles and rubella.
* One dose of Varicella vaccine OR evidence of immunity to varicella.
* TB screening and vaccination where required.
* One dose of Pertussis containing vaccine within the past 5 years
* Exposure Prone Procedure (EPP) screening which includes testing for HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.

**Without your Fitness for Placement Certificate for Year 1 you will NOT be able to start your clinical placement, which may affect your student funding.**

You will receive a final **Fully Vaccinated Certificate** once you have completed your vaccination courses and undergone the relevant blood screening. This certificate may be issued at the same time as your Fitness for Placement Certificate. This will depend on your immunization status at the start of medical school and your engagement with the vaccination and screening requirements in your first term. The requirements for this final certification are [list of requirements as below]

* Health questionnaire clearance.
* Three dose of Hepatitis B vaccine and antibody check OR evidence of immunity.
* Two doses of MMR vaccine OR evidence of immunity to measles and rubella.
* Two doses of Varicella vaccine OR evidence of immunity to varicella.
* TB screening and vaccination where required.
* One dose of Pertussis containing vaccine within the past 5 years
* Exposure Prone Procedure (EPP) screening, which includes testing for HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Please note that, even if you have your Fitness for Placement Certificate, you will not be able to start your clinical placements in Year 2 or undertake any of the following procedures as described in the KMMS programme until you have your Fully Vaccinated Certificate:

* Carry out Venepuncture
* Carry out Intravenous Cannulation
* Measure Capillary Blood Glucose
* Carry out wound care and basic wound closure and dressing including suturing
* Arterial/ Venous Blood Gases
* Prepare and administer injectable (intramuscular, subcutaneous, intravenous) drugs
* Inject local anaesthetics
* Carry out blood transfusion
* Take Blood Cultures
* Assist in Theatre

Please note that until you have the **Fully Vaccinated Certificate** (including antibody levels for Hepatitis B) you **CANNOT** perform them, you are however able to observe.

**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 rarely it can be a severe life-threatening illness. 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. There is now effective medication to suppress the hepatitis B virus in this group of people with chronic infection.

Hepatitis B is spread when infected blood or other bodily fluid enters the body.

In healthcare, you may come into contact with infected blood whilst providing care to patients or through sharps, splash, bites 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.

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. Most 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.

**Hepatitis B Vaccination Schedule**

The schedule requires three vaccines. If you have not previously been vaccinated you willhave the first dose at your first appointment, the second after one month and the third after six months. Some students may be required to have an accelerated schedule which the clinician will discuss with you in person taking into account placement dates. A minimum of four weeks after the third vaccination, you will require a blood test to ensure you have responded to the vaccination. In some cases, a booster vaccination is required as immunity levels are not quite sufficient.

**Hepatitis B Non-Responders**

Some people simply do not respond to the vaccination and do not develop immunity. If you have not generated an adequate immune response after two courses of hepatitis B you are considered a ‘non responder’. It is important for us to identify ‘non responders’ as soon as possible so that the University can undertake a risk assessment to evaluate potential exposure risks and determine if any role specific precautions or adjustments are necessary.

**Chickenpox (Varicella)**

Varicella is a highly infectious disease and is transmitted by personal contact or droplet spread. 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.

A copy of a blood test result demonstrating you have immunity OR evidence of vaccination will be considered as evidence of protection.

**Chickenpox (Varicella) Vaccination Schedule**

Students that do not have immunity to chickenpox will require two vaccines given at 4 weeks apart.  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.

**MMR 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. Further blood tests are not required following vaccination.

**Pertussis (Whooping Cough)**

Students who have not received a pertussis containing vaccine in the last 5 years must receive a pertussis containing vaccination booster.

**Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Vaccination Schedule**

Students who do not have evidence of a pertussis containing vaccine in the past five years will require one vaccine.

**Tuberculosis (TB)**   
   
Tuberculosis is caused by infection with bacteria of the Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex and almost all cases of TB in the UK are acquired through the respiratory route by breathing in infected respiratory droplets form a person with infectious respiratory TB.

We will be looking for evidence of previous BCG vaccination by looking for a small scar (likely to be on your left upper arm) or evidence from your GP that you have had the BCG vaccination. All students will be required to complete a TB symptom checker form at the clinic. This form will help us to identify which students may require further specialist screening. It is recommended that BCG vaccination is offered to healthcare workers who are unvaccinated due to the risk of exposure.

If you do not have a BCG scar, we will arrange for you to have blood test to identify any previous exposure to TB or vaccination. BCG vaccination cannot be administered to an individual with a positive test result. If you have recently moved to the UK from a country with high rates of TB or have signs and symptoms of TB, we will arrange a blood test to check for current or previous infection. Those with a positive blood test will be referred to their GP for further investigation and treatment if required at a TB clinic.

It is important to know that having a BCG scar does not mean you are fully immune to TB. It gives you some protection, but for how long is unknown. Your own immunity is the best protection against acquiring TB.

**Live Vaccines**

Please note that pregnancy is a significant contraindication to receiving a live vaccine, as it may pose a risk to the developing baby. Given that live vaccines can lead to complications during pregnancy, it is your responsibility to ensure you are not pregnant.  If there is any uncertainty, we strongly recommend taking a pregnancy test beforehand. If you believe you may be pregnant, please inform the advisor during your appointment so that appropriate guidance can be provided

Some students may beunable to have live vaccines because of pregnancy and certain types of medication or health conditions. If this applies to you, please bring a list of your current medications to your appointment so we can fully understand your circumstance. Should live vaccines not be suitable, please be assured that we will carefully review your health clearance and explore whether reasonable adjustments can be made to support your continuation on the programme. Our aim is to work with you to ensure your health and safety while enabling you to meet the requirements of your course.

**Exposure Prone Procedure Screening**

Students on these courses will be undertaking Exposure Prone Procedure (EPP) work during their training and will need to be screened for HIV, Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B surface antigen, in accordance with Department of Health regulations. You will need to provide photographic ID such as a driving licence or passport at the time of the blood test.  We cannot take the blood test without photographic ID. Failure to have correct ID at the clinic may cause delays to your clearance.

This blood test may be taken before or on the same day as administration of Hepatitis B vaccine but if for some reason a blood sample could not be obtained, there would have to be at delay of at least 3 weeks in testing for hepatitis B surface antigen in order to avoid false positive results.

**MENINGITIS**

Rates of Meningitis W are increasing, especially in new university entrants.  All students under the age of 25 are eligible for a free MenACWY vaccination. Please contact your GP surgery for vaccination. This is not available through Occupational Health.

**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 for your result. 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 the appointments as required.**

**SHARPS AND SPLASH INJURIES**

During your time as a student, you may sustain an accidental splash of body fluids to the eye, or body fluids entering an open sore/wound, a bite from a patient or sharps injury from a needle or sharp instrument that has been used on a patient.

This can be very distressing; however, it is very important that you report any injury promptly so you can receive the appropriate treatment and care.  If you have an injury as described above, you should follow this procedure **IMMEDIATELY:**

* Wash the puncture wound liberally with soap and running water immediately and encourage bleeding. Cover the wound with a waterproof dressing.
* Exposed mucous membranes including conjunctivae (eyes) should be immediately irrigated copiously with water. The eyes should be irrigated before and after removing any contact lenses.
* Inform your mentor or practice supervisor about the incident.
* The source patient should be identified and where, if possible, arrangements made for a blood sample to be obtained, with informed consent. This process will be managed by a senior member of staff. It is important that you are not involved in obtaining the source patient’s consent or undertake their blood test.
* If the injury happened during office hours (9am to 5pm Monday to Friday) then contact OHWorks by calling the number given on page one of this guide. It is important that all injuries are reported immediately so that our advisor can perform a risk assessment over the phone and assess whether all appropriate actions have been carried out.
* If the injury happened outside office hours, or at the weekend, you would need to seek urgent assessment by calling NHS 111 who will perform a triage and, if needed, direct

you to an Emergency Department if any treatment is required. You must then call us on the next working day to arrange a follow-up appointment.

* Complete the local Accident/Incident reporting form. This should be undertaken **AFTER** you have been assessed and treated by OH/the Emergency Department. The completion of this form does NOT need to be done immediately.

Complete a [KMMS notification form](https://kmms.ac.uk/contact-us/) so that the university are made aware of the incident. Link to notification form: https://kmms.ac.uk/contact-us/

**Why Immediate Reporting is Important**

If the source patient has HIV, there is a very small risk of transmission. This risk can be reduced by taking *PEP* (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis), ideally within one hour. However, it may still be effective and offered up to 72 hours after exposure, following a risk assessment—so it's important to report any exposure, even if delayed.

We will advise you whether we think this may be indicated at the time of our risk assessment. If so, we will advise you to go to your local Emergency Department or Sexual Health Clinic for this.

There is no post exposure treatment for Hepatitis C but if follow up blood tests were to detect hepatitis C then there is now very effective treatment, which will cure hepatitis C in more than 95% of people.

For non-responders to the hepatitis B vaccine, there is a vaccination called Hepatitis B immunoglobulin, which we will organise to be given to you. This ideally should be given within 72 hours.

Following the risk assessment, we will arrange for a serum save as soon as possible. This does not test for infection but is used as a comparison if any of the follow up tests are positive for infection.

**Follow Up Testing**

All follow-up blood tests will be undertaken in the OH department at the University as per national guidelines dependant on level of risk.

In the event of a high-risk exposure, including those where the source patient is known to have Hepatitis B, C or HIV, you will need to use condoms for sexual activity until all the blood tests have been completed at 6 months and reported as negative. You should also avoid any blood donations.

Our follow - up testing, involves ensuring you did not develop hepatitis B, C or HIV from the incident. We usually undertake confidential testing at 6,12 and 24 weeks.

**REFERRALS**

Some students may be referred to us by their Course Director during their time at the University due to issues arising in respect of their health and wellbeing.   
  
Following receipt of a referral, consultations will be scheduled, typically with our OH (Nurse)

Advisory Team with the aim of reviewing the information provided, to assess whether any health conditions may impact upon study/practice, and to determine whether a student will need adjustments to help them on placement. Where appropriate consultations will be undertaken by our OH Physician/Psychiatrists.

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 Course Director in the first instance who may then refer you to Occupational Health.

**Adjustments**

Occupational Health is an advisory service, and you should note that we cannot tell the University what to do. If Occupational Health advises adjustments, the operational decision on the feasibility and implementation of any adjustments ultimately rests with the University and the placement areas.  Consideration will be given to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, best practice standards as well as the core competencies of your course. The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as a physical or mental condition that has a substantial and adverse long-term effect on your ability to carry out your daily activities.

Any recommendations and advice given are based on the functional effects of the medical condition. Decisions will be based on the individual’s needs and whether any adjustments would be reasonable within the placement setting. The University and placement areas will need to consider health and safety factors, patient safety, and the protection of the public.

Please note that Occupational Health cannot advise on the location of placement allocation unless for clear health reasons. Social issues such as cost of travel, journey times or childcare issues will need to be discussed with your placement office.

**Consent**

You will be asked to provide your consent for any reports sent to your Course Director 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 Course Director 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 Practitioner. You will be required to provide consent to the report within 24 hours. If we do not hear from you within 24 hours, we will advise the Course Director that you have not provided consent to release the report.

**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.

**FUTURE 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. The University will also be charged for the missed appointment.

**Some students have jeopardised the start of their placements by not engaging with Occupational Health. It is your responsibility to ensure that you cooperate with all Occupational Health procedures. Do not leave the process until the last minute and make sure that you check your emails and voicemail regularly.  If we do not hear from you after two attempts to contact you, we will notify the University.**

**Please ensure that your online health questionnaire is completed as soon as possible and that you have located all 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.**

**STUDENT CHECKLIST**

**Before course commencement**

* Obtain your vaccination details and blood tests from your General Practitioner (GP)/family doctor. Ask your family if they have your childhood immunisation details, in the UK this is known as the 'Red book'
* If you have not received a childhood course of tetanus, polio and diphtheria vaccination and MMR (measles and rubella) vaccination, ask your GP for it now
* If you have not had BCG vaccination, please ask your GP/family doctor to give you this
* If you have not had meningitis vaccination, please ask your GP/family doctor for the MenACWY vaccination
* If you have worked in healthcare previously, ask your occupational health provider to provide you with your blood test and immunisation history
* If you require any vaccinations please ensure you have completed these at least 4 weeks before course commencement

**Your First Immunisation Appointment with Occupational Health**

* Bring all immunisation documentation with you
* Bring photographic identification, such as a driving licence or passport
* Ensure you eat and drink before your appointment
* Wear a short sleeve top to ensure we have access to both arms
* If there is any possibility that you may be pregnant, please undertake a pregnancy test, as we cannot give a live vaccine if we believe you may be pregnant

**After Your First Appointment**

* Please put the date of your next appointment in your diary, and all subsequent appointments
* You will be emailed details on your vaccination after each vaccination and with each blood test, keep this safe, along with your clearance appointments
* Attend all immunisation appointments – please note we are obliged to report all instances of non-attendance to the University as well as charge the University for non attended appointments
* Non-attendance at appointments is considered a lack of professional responsibility, which the University will follow up with you.
* Where you can’t attend advise the OH team immediately and seek to re-book in good time
* **You will not be issued with a clearance certificate if you do not attend your appointments which may impact your ability to undertake placements**