



**Policy Chapter:** Chapter 7 Student Affairs

**Policy Number and Title:** 07.025 Student Meningitis Immunization

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**I. Policy Statement**

The University of North Texas (UNT) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for members of the University community by protecting students from vaccine-preventable diseases.

**II. Application of Policy**

Incoming students who have been admitted to UNT

**III. Policy Definitions**

**A. Bacterial Meningitis**

“Bacterial Meningitis,” in this policy, means an illness caused by a type of bacteria called *Neisseria meningitides*. These illnesses are serious, causing inflammation of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord, and include meningitis and bloodstream infections (septicemia).

**B. Entering Student**

“Entering student,” in this policy, means:

1. A student entering UNT for the first-time, including a student who transfers to UNT from another public, private, or independent institution; or
2. A student who attended any public, private, or independent institution of higher education before January 1, 2012 and who is enrolling at UNT following a break in enrollment of at least one Fall or Spring semester.

**C. Online and Other Distance Education Courses**

“Online and other distance education courses,” in this policy, means any course where the instructor and students are not in the same location. An online course may include web-based classes or correspondence instruction. Any online or distance education classes that have any portion that includes face-to-face contact, including meeting in a testing laboratory or classroom to receive interactive video instruction with other students, does not qualify as an online or distance education course.

**IV. Policy Responsibilities**

**A. University Registrar**

The University Registrar must administer UNT policy related to the documentation of immunization for meningitis for entering UNT students, and must develop procedures and forms to:

1. designate the office to collect and maintain evidence of a student's compliance with vaccination requirements;
2. designate the office to collect and maintain evidence that a student is exempted from compliance with the vaccination requirement;
3. designate the office to consider requests and grant extensions in justifiable circumstances to extend the date of compliance for the bacterial meningitis vaccination requirement; and
4. consider appeals to decisions of the Director or designee related to the vaccination requirements as set forth in this policy.

***B. Bacterial Meningitis Vaccination for Entering Students to the University***

1. Unless excepted in accordance with the terms of this policy, all entering UNT students or their parent or legal guardian must provide evidence of having received an initial bacterial meningitis vaccination dose or booster:
  - a. during the five-year period preceding and at least 10 days prior to the student's first day of the first semester in which the student initially enrolls at UNT; or
  - b. following a break in enrollment of at least one Fall or Spring semester at UNT or another institution.
2. Evidence of vaccination must demonstrate that the vaccine was administered by a medical professional authorized by law to administer a vaccine and may include:
  - a. the signature stamp of a physician or their designee, or a public health personnel on a form which shows the month, day and year the vaccination or booster was given;
  - b. an official immunization record from a state or local health authority; or
  - c. an official record received from school officials, including a record from another state.
3. The Registrar or designee may grant extensions to individual students to extend the date of compliance to no more than 10 days after the first day of classes of the semester or term in which the student initially enrolls under justifiable circumstances as determined by the Registrar. A decision of the Registrar or designee related to justifiable circumstances may be appealed in accordance with procedures to be developed by the Registrar.
4. Registration and enrollment materials provided to students prior to their initial enrollment at UNT must include:
  - a. notice of the student's right to claim an exemption from the bacterial meningitis vaccination requirements as set forth below; and

- b. notice of the importance of consulting a physician about the need for immunization against bacterial meningitis to prevent the disease.

**C. *Exceptions to the Meningitis Vaccination***

1. A student will not be required to submit evidence of having received vaccination or booster dose against bacterial meningitis if:
  - a. the student is 22 years of age or older by the first day of classes of the semester or term in which the student initially enrolls;
  - b. the student is enrolled only in online or other distance education courses;
  - c. the student is enrolled in a continuing education course or program that is less than 360 contact hours, or a continuing education corporate training;
  - d. the student is enrolled in a dual credit course which is taught at a public or private K- 12 facility not located on a higher education institution campus;
  - e. the student is incarcerated in a Texas prison.
2. A student, or parent or guardian of a student, will not be required to submit evidence of having received the bacterial meningitis vaccination if the student submits the following, in accordance with established UNT procedures:
  - a. An affidavit or certificate signed by a physician, who is duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States, which states that in the physician's opinion, the required vaccination would be injurious to the health and/or well-being of the student;
  - b. An affidavit signed by the student stating that the student declines the required vaccination for reasons of conscience, such as religious or philosophical belief. Affidavits must be submitted on forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (THHS). The exception form from the THHS must be submitted no later than 90 days after the date the affidavit is notarized to be valid; or
  - c. evidence of submitting a conscientious objection form through a secure, Internet-based process developed and implemented by THHS;
3. During a disaster, public health emergency, terrorist attack, hostile military or paramilitary action, or extraordinary law enforcement emergency declared by an appropriate official or authority from the THHS and is in effect for the location of UNT, the exemptions in Section IV.C.2.b and IV.C.2.c do not apply.

**D. *Recommended Immunizations for Students***

In addition to vaccination requirements established by Texas law, UNT recommends that all students have current immunizations for polio, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, rubella, mumps, and measles. Consideration should also be given to vaccination against hepatitis A,

hepatitis B, and varicella.

**E. Confidentiality of Vaccination Records**

UNT must maintain all records created to comply with this policy in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accessibility Act (HIPAA) as appropriate.

**V. Resources/Forms/Tools**

For information on requesting a conscientious exemption, students may see the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#) for additional information.

**VI. References and Cross-References**

[19 Texas Administrative Code, Part 1, Chapter 21, Subchapter T](#)  
[Texas Education Code § 51.9192](#)

**VII. Revision History**

Policy Contact:	Senior Associate Vice President of Enrollment and Registrar
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