



Policy Number and Chapter: 07.025 Student Affairs

Policy Title: Student Immunization and Screening/Testing

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.

Application of Policy. Incoming students who have been admitted to UNT and International students.

Definitions.

The following definitions apply for purposes of this policy only:

1. **Bacterial Meningitis.** "Bacterial Meningitis" 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).
2. **Entering student.** "Entering student" means:
 - a. A student entering UNT for the first-time, including a student who transfers to UNT from another public, private, or independent institution; or
 - b. A student who attended any public, private, or independent institution of higher education and who is enrolling at UNT following a break in enrollment of at least one Fall or Spring semester.
3. **High risk student.** "High risk student" means a student who is considered to be at high risk for tubercular disease (TB) as defined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including a student coming to the UNT from a country of high incidence of TB (≥ 20 cases per 100,000 population), a student who has a history or a positive TB test, or a student who has had close contact with anyone who was sick with TB.
4. **International student.** "International student" means a student who is not a citizen of the United States or its territories and who has entered the United States on a student visa, specifically to enroll at the UNT including students attending the Intensive English Language Institute (IELI).
5. **Online and other distance education courses.** "Online and other distance education courses" 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.

6. Tuberculosis (TB). "Tuberculosis (TB)" is a disease caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis that usually attacks the lungs or any other part of the body (e.g. kidney, spine, and brain). If not treated properly, TB can be fatal.
7. Tuberculosis (TB) screening. "Tuberculosis (TB) screening" means the process for identifying persons at high risk for TB infection and disease through a questionnaire where the student identifies risk factors for TB infection and disease.
8. Tuberculosis (TB) test. "Tuberculosis (TB) test" means the accepted methods to determine if a student has developed an immune response to the bacterium that causes TB. Accepted methods include Mantoux tuberculin skin test or an Interferon Gamma Release Assay blood test.

Procedures and Responsibilities.

- I. The Executive Director of the Student Health and Wellness Center (SHWC), in consultation with the University Registrar and International Office, will administer UNT policy related to vaccinations for entering UNT students, and will develop procedures and forms to:
 - A. Designate the office to collect and maintain evidence of a student's compliance with vaccination requirements.
 - B. Designate the office to collect and maintain evidence that a student is exempted from compliance with the vaccination requirement.
 - C. Designate the office to consider requests and grant extensions in justifiable circumstances to extend the date of compliance for the bacterial meningitis vaccination requirement.
 - D. Consider appeals to decisions of the Director or designee related to the vaccination requirements as set forth in this policy.
- II. Bacterial Meningitis Vaccination for Entering Students to the University
 - A. Unless excepted in accordance with the terms of this policy, all entering UNT students must provide evidence of having received an initial bacterial meningitis vaccination dose or booster during the five-year period preceding and at least 10 days prior to the student's first day on campus, either the first day of the semester in which the student initially enrolls at UNT or the first day of residence hall move-in, whichever occurs first for the student, or following a break in enrollment of at least one Fall or Spring semester at UNT or another institution. Evidence must demonstrate that the vaccine was administered by a medical professional authorized by law to administer a vaccine and may include:

1. 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;
 2. An official immunization record from a state or local health authority; or
 3. An official record received from school officials, including a record from another state.
- B. 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.
- C. Registration materials provided to students prior to their initial enrollment at UNT will include:
1. Notice of the student's right to claim an exemption from the bacterial meningitis vaccination requirements as set forth below; and
 2. Notice of the importance of consulting a physician about the need for immunization against bacterial meningitis to prevent the disease.

Responsible Party: Director of the Student Health and Wellness Center
Executive Director or a designee.

III. Tuberculosis Screening Requirements for International Students

- A. Within three (3) weeks after the 12th class day of an international student's first attendance on campus, all incoming international students must either:
1. Be screened and/or tested for TB; or
 2. Provide documentation using the SHWC's standard form verifying the results of TB testing with a TB blood test or TB skin test administered in the United States within the previous six (6) months.
 - a. The TB blood test is the preferred method of testing and is required for students from countries with high incidence of TB. A copy of the results must be submitted.
 - b. TB skin testing may be utilized by students from countries at low risk of TB. If a TB skin test is utilized, the date and time of administration is required, and results must be read within 48-72 hours and include millimeters of induration. Any reading over 10 mm requires a TB blood test. Please note, following the TB screening process, if an international student falls within the risk category of "high

risk student,” the student submitting TB skin test results will be required to have a TB blood test administered with procedures developed by the SHWC.

- c. Students who have been previously treated for TB may submit official copies documenting prior treatment; a copy of a CXR obtained in the United States in the previous six (6) months is also required.
- B. International students who fail to comply with the TB testing requirements of this policy will be blocked from access to UNT registration and will not be permitted to register for future terms until the requirements of this policy have been certified and filed with the SHWC. Students will be permitted to remain enrolled during their first term of study.

Responsible Party: Executive Director of the SHWC, Vice-Provost, Vice-Provost and Dean of International Affairs

IV. Exceptions to the Meningitis Vaccination

- A. A student will not be required to submit evidence of having received vaccination or booster dose against bacterial meningitis if:
1. 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; or
 2. The student is enrolled only in online or other distance education courses; or
 3. The student is enrolled in a continuing education course or program that is less than 360 contact hours, or a continuing education corporate training; or
 4. 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; or
 5. All course-related face-to-face interactions with the student occur outside the State of Texas; or
 6. The student is incarcerated in a Texas prison.
- B. 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:
1. An affidavit 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; or

2. 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.
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 above exemptions do not apply.

Responsible Party: Registrar and Student Health and Wellness Center

V. 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.

VI. Confidentiality of Vaccination and TB Test Records

UNT will 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)*.

References and Cross-references.

Tx. Educ. Code §51.9192, Subchapter Z
19 TAC Part 1, Chapter 21, Subchapter T

Forms and Tools.

All related forms are available on the SHWC web site at: www.healthcenter.unt.edu.

For information on requesting a conscientious exemption, students may see the Texas Department of State Health Services for additional information at:
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm#exclusions>.

Revision History

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