

A background photograph of three young adults sitting on concrete steps outdoors. A woman with long blonde hair and glasses is in the center, smiling and looking at her smartphone. To her left, another woman is partially visible, holding a laptop. To her right, a man is partially visible, wearing blue sneakers. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal filter.

Occupational Health
HEALTH CARE
STUDENT CLEARANCE
Everything you need to know

Anyone starting a course in health care work needs to undergo Health Care Worker (HCW) clearance in line with the Department of Health and Public Health England (PHE) policy, which can be found in the Green Book (please see references). This is also a professional requirement by the GMC, NMC, HCPC and other healthcare regulatory bodies as part of preserving patient safety and protecting healthcare workers.

Student HCWs must be cleared before commencing work so that:

- Patients are protected from the risk of acquiring blood borne diseases from health care students
- Health care students are protected by immunisation from acquiring blood borne viruses from patients



All health care workers are under an ethical and legal duty to protect the health and safety of their patients. Any health care workers suffering from an infection **MUST NOT** rely on their own assessment of the risk they pose to patients; they must seek an independent medical assessment (OH, A&E, GP, etc). Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 health care workers have a legal duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others, such as colleagues and patients and co-operate with their employer in health and safety matters.

(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents>)

What is involved in student HCW clearance?

The first step in being cleared is a pre-course questionnaire which will involve your medical history and any previous vaccinations or immunisations you may have already had. This can be completed online via a link sent to your personal email address. You will be required to provide proof of any vaccinations/ immunisations you have had (please see Vaccination evidence).

After we have received your pre-course questionnaire you will be offered a course clearance appointment to confirm you are able to undertake your course and to administer any further missing vaccinations or blood tests you may need for your course.

Once you have had the minimum number of recommended vaccinations, show the required immunity levels and completed any infection checks (EPP) you will be cleared for placement.



Course clearance appointment requirements

If, by the time of your course clearance appointments, you have not uploaded your immunisation evidence or emailed/posted it to our administration team, you should bring it to your appointment. Your immunity record will be created and updated with your evidence as and when vaccinations are administered or blood test results are received.

You **MUST** bring photographic ID to your appointment. Failure to prove your identity will result in termination of your appointment. This is vital to collecting Identified Validated Samples (IVS) (PHE 2017a, Pg 15.)

In certain circumstances you may be eligible to receive a blood test kit which may save you attending an appointment. The blood test (which may be a self-test or require a clinician to take blood) must be observed/taken by a clinical colleague willing and able to take blood or observe the self-test. Occupational Health administration will inform you if you are eligible.

Did Not Attend (DNA) and Late Cancelled Appointments

If you are unable to attend your appointment, please contact us as soon as possible and we will be happy to rearrange this for you. Appointments cancelled with less than 3 working days notice and appointments not attended, will attract a fee of £25.00, this fee is to be paid by students and should be paid directly to Heales Medical, following the instructions provided within the late cancellation/DNA email notification.

Prompt payment of this fee is advised, to ensure there is no unnecessary delay in your course/placement progress, as we will not be able to arrange any further appointments until the fee has been settled.

Refusals

If an appointment, blood test or vaccination is refused; the reasons for refusal will be documented and any associated risks/restrictions regarding your course/ placement advised to yourself and notified to the University and your placement area. If you refuse consent for this information to be released you will not be passed as fit to undertake your placement.

Clearance Levels

Course clearance: This means you are fit to begin your chosen course. This will be dependent on any pre-existing medical conditions. Course clearance will be given after a thorough review of your pre-course questionnaire, a phone call or face to face appointment with an Occupational Health nurse may be required depending on the information provided. If necessary the OH practitioner will compile a report to the University (with your consent) advising them of the effect of any medical conditions you have and any advice regarding potential adjustments.

Placement clearance: This means you are fit to start your placement. You will receive this once you have had the minimum number of vaccinations, blood tests and infection tests (EPP) required for your placement. You will be sent an immunity form at this point detailing all vaccinations and blood tests you have received or provided evidence for.

Full clearance: We will continue your immunisation schedule until you have completed all required vaccinations and, as far as possible, achieved the correct level of immunity. You will receive a final immunity form that you may use as evidence for future work.

Immunisations advised for HCW

Healthcare workers (HCWs) who perform EPPs should be vaccinated as per the student HCW group above and also screened for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV infection.

- Hepatitis B (3 doses at 1,2 and 6 months followed by Immunity blood test and possible booster)

Healthcare workers (HCWs) who do not perform EPPs should be vaccinated as per the student HCW group above and also screened for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV infection.

- TB- advisory unless in a clinical area where TB could be prevalent (e.g. chest clinic)
- Measles and Rubella (MMR, 2 doses 1 month apart)

Healthcare workers (HCWs) who perform EPPs should be vaccinated as per the student HCW group above and also screened for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV infection.

- Hepatitis B (3 doses at 1,2 and 6 months followed by Immunity blood test and possible booster)
- TB (scar, Mantoux/IGRA test, BCG 1 dose)
- Measles and Rubella (MMR, 2 doses 1 month apart)
- Varicella (unless you have had chicken pox, 2 doses 1 month apart)
- Diphtheria/Tetanus/Polio- most adults who have lived in the UK should have received the full vaccine programme by the time they leave school. Heales can administer this vaccine, but it is also a GP responsibility, see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tetanus/>.

Healthcare workers (HCWs) who do not perform EPPs should be vaccinated as per the student HCW group above and also screened for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV infection.

Student HCWs who perform EPPs (see below) should be vaccinated as per the student HCW group above and also screened for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV infection.

EPPs are those procedures where the worker's gloved hands may be in contact with sharp instruments, needles tips or sharp tissues (eg bone or teeth) inside a patient's open body cavity or wound where the hands or finger tips may not be completely visible at all times.

EPPs do NOT include: taking blood, setting up and maintaining I.V.I, minor surface suturing, incisions of abscesses or uncomplicated endoscopies, normal delivery of neonates e.g. by a midwife (UK Health Department)

Vaccination evidence

If you have previously been given any of the required vaccines you will need to provide evidence. The evidence must clearly display your name, date of birth, the vaccinations or blood test results and date of administration.

Evidence can be in the form of:

- A printed record from your GP (this can sometimes take 2 weeks so be sure to request it sufficient time; or you may obtain it online if your GP offers this service)
- Vaccination card (not completed by yourself! you would receive vaccination evidence if vaccinated at a travel clinic)
- Immunity records from previous Occupational Health organisations (must include name, date of birth, vaccinations, blood test results and date of administration, name and address of Occupational Health organisation)
- a copy of your Childhood Immunisation Red book

This evidence can either be scanned and uploaded in your pre-course questionnaire online, emailed or posted to Occupational Health administration or taken to your clearance appointment.

If evidence cannot be provided then a blood test to check for immunity levels may be required and/or further vaccinations.

N.b. this evidence is a vital part of the clearance process. You will not be cleared without proof of ALL of the relevant immunisations. By not providing evidence of prior immunisation you will be delaying the clearance process and potentially your ability to start placement.

If a student believes they have undertaken activities that could have put them at risk of contracting a Blood Borne Virus they must report this in the pre-course questionnaire or to the Occupational Health nurse at an appointment.

References:

Department of Health (2001) Health information for overseas travel, 2nd edition. London: TSO.

Public Health England (PHE) (2017a) Integrated guidance on health clearance of healthcare workers and the management of healthcare workers infected with bloodborne viruses (hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV), October 2017 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/655418/Integrated_guidance_for_management_of_BBV_in_HCW_v1.1_October_2017.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book#the-green-book>

Association of National Health Occupational Physicians (2004). Immunisation of healthcare workers ANHOPS Guidelines, September 2004, www.anhops.org.uk

Health and Safety Executive (1998) The reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations 1995: Guidance for employers in the healthcare sector. Health Services Information Sheet 1. Sunbury: HSE Books.



**If you have any questions
about Student clearance
please email us at
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or call us on
03333 449089**

