

Vaccine Preventable Disease Procedures

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1. Governing Policy

[Work Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Work Health and Safety Management System](#)

2. Purpose

These procedures outline the process for identifying requirements when undertaking work, study or research where there is a risk of exposure to vaccine-preventable disease.

3. Scope

- a. These procedures apply to staff, students or others who, as part of their work, study or research may be at risk of exposure to vaccine-preventable diseases through work in biological laboratories, field work, clinical settings, working with animals or other tasks where they may be exposed to infectious or zoonotic disease.
- b. Additional vaccination requirements not covered by these procedures:
 - i. these procedures do not negate any requirements that a third party may impose in regard to requirement for vaccination to enter or work on sites under their control (e.g. aged care or health sector)
 - ii. for vaccination requirements related specifically to overseas travel – see the [Travel Policy](#)
 - iii. any requirements determined for student placements as part of their [Work Integrated Learning \(WIL\)](#) activities
 - iv. COVID-19 requirements – see [COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#) or [COVID-19 Student Vaccination Policy](#).

4. Definitions

Infectious disease

Infectious diseases are disorders caused by organisms — such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites, prions, fungi, and fungal-like organisms that are

	infectious or potentially infectious to humans, plants, and terrestrial and aquatic animals.
Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)	As defined under the Gene Technology Act 2000
Risk Group of Microorganisms	Microorganisms are classified into risk groups. The following four classifications of infective microorganisms are based on the pathogenicity of the agent, the mode of transmission and host range of the agent, the availability of effective preventative measures, and the availability of effective treatment: Within Australia Risk Groups are defined in AS2243.3:2022
Vaccine Preventable Disease (VPD)	Infectious diseases caused by organisms that can be prevented, or its impact reduced by being vaccinated.
Zoonotic disease	A disease that can be transmitted from animals to people or, more specifically, a disease that normally exists in animals but that can infect humans.

5. Risk Management

- a. The University seeks to minimise the risk of acquiring vaccine-preventable disease (VPD) whilst undertaking activities for the University. This is regardless of whether the source of the infectious organism is a Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) or Non-GMO.
- b. The Supervisor / Manager has a responsibility to eliminate or where not possible ensure the risks of exposure to infectious disease are minimised, as far as is reasonably practicable. The Supervisor / Manager in consultation with relevant staff / students must complete a risk assessment to identify workplace tasks / locations or other activities associated with an increased risk of acquiring and/or transmission of a VPD.
- c. Risk assessments are to be completed before the work commences and include identifying sources of potential infection, including the [risk grouping](#) of organisms, work process, spills, decontamination and handling of waste.
- d. The risk assessment must outline what controls will be in place to manage or reduce the likelihood of infection and transmitting VPD in addition to vaccination.
- e. The risk assessment must identify if changes in a person's health status, such as pregnancy or becoming immunocompromised occurs, then the Supervisor / Manager must review the risk assessment and associated procedures to identify if any changes are required to their work tasks.
- f. Some activities or organisms of certain [Risk Groups](#) have been identified as increasing the risk of acquiring or transmitting of VPD, these include when:
 - i. handling or exposed to human body fluids, blood and blood products
 - ii. handling human faeces, urine or intestinal contents
 - iii. handling infectious organisms associated with vaccine-preventable diseases
 - iv. exposure to mammalian foetuses, placentae or uterine contents
 - v. contact with animals, animal blood, tissues, products, carcasses or animal waste
 - vi. exposure to zoonotic pathogens when working with animals

- vii. exposure to wild caught or infected biting arthropods
- viii. exposure to wildlife or wildlife products or carcasses
- ix. working overseas especially in countries where it has been determined there is a risk of identified VPD infection
- x. exposure to contaminated sharps, any other contaminated surfaces, materials or equipment
- xi. exposure to waste water or sewage facilities
- xii. working as Mortuary Technicians, Embalmers or Histology worker
- xiii. healthcare providers in remote Indigenous communities
- xiv. exposure to infected soil or dusts
- xv. any other group of persons where a risk assessment determines potential exposure warrants vaccination.

6. Controls for Preventing Infection and Transmission

- a. Vaccination is not a substitute for good infection control practices also known as **standard precautions**, as outlined in [Australian Procedures for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare](#) and information in the Australian Standard 2243.3:2022.
- b. Engineering and isolation controls such as working in containment facilities, Biosafety cabinets, enclosed rotors etc. must be outlined in the risk assessment and implemented where required by legislation or where reasonably practicable to implement.
- c. Where higher order engineering or isolation controls cannot be implemented e.g. in field work or remote community practice, then precaution such as sharps handling, sterile technique, personal protective equipment, training and any other relevant administrative controls must be implemented to reduce the likelihood of infection and transmission as far as reasonably practicable. This is to be in combination with vaccination where a VPD has been identified.

7. Vaccination Requirements

- a. Staff, students and others must be informed of vaccination requirements if a risk assessment of the work / activity to be conducted has identified that they are at risk of a disease and a relevant vaccine exists. A list of vaccine preventable diseases is available – see [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#)
- b. Each person who may be exposed to an activity where there is an increased risk of acquisition or transmission of a vaccine preventable disease, must be assessed by a Medical Practitioner to ensure all possible contraindications are also taken into account. This is particularly important if the individual may be pregnant or immunocompromised, as this may change their immunisation requirements – see [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).
- c. Individuals must action vaccination requirements, including any boosters, or screening for immunity, with their medical practitioner or vaccination provider as soon as possible and prior to the potential exposure occurring.
- d. Documented evidence of vaccination or immunity where relevant to a VPD must be provided to the University where a risk assessment has identified the need for vaccination (see Procedure 10).

8. Accident/Incidents Reporting

- a. All accidents / incidents that occurred where the work / study undertaken with infectious organisms is the confirmed source of infection must be reported via FlinSafe.

- b. If the incident involves a Genetically Modified Organism it must also be reported immediately to the [Biosafety Officer](#) as required by the Regulator.
- c. Where the accident / incident involves exposure to human blood or body fluid then the [Blood & Body Fluid Exposure](#) procedure must be followed.

9. Communicating Vaccination Requirements

- a. It is the responsibility of the Supervisor / Manager to risk assess and communicate health and safety information including the risk of disease posed by the work / study conducted in their area to any relevant staff, students and others such as cleaning and maintenance staff.
- b. Where a risk assessment indicates vaccination is a suitable control measure, it is the supervisors/ managers responsibility to inform relevant staff, students or others of this and provide them information around vaccination requirements prior to starting any work / study.
- c. The provision of information about the relevant vaccine-preventable diseases and the risk associated must be recorded on the [Declaration of Informed Consent for VPD](#) and must be provided to individuals as part of the communication process.
- d. When known prior to employment, any vaccination requirements that have been identified as part of the work should be incorporated into pre-employment documentation.

10. Record Keeping

- a. It is recommended that the individual maintains their own vaccination / immunisation records.
- b. Where vaccination has been identified as a control measure for working in increased risk areas or tasks for VPD then any vaccination certificates, immunity confirmation, medical practitioner letters, declarations of consent or declined immunisation statements must be uploaded to Workday against the staff member's personnel file.
- c. If evidence of prior vaccination is required then the Supervisor / Manager may request to sight the records prior to the commencement of working on the identified VPD activity. They are not required to keep a copy as long as the staff member has uploaded the documentation to Workday.
- d. For Higher Degree by Research (HDR) and undergraduate students, the documentation is to be maintained against their record in InPlace.
- e. Information provided to the University in compliance with these procedures will be stored securely and treated confidentially in accordance with relevant laws and the University's [Privacy Policy](#).

11. Arranging and Cost of Vaccinations

- a. Staff, students and others are responsible for sourcing vaccinations as required for their work or study. The University [Health, Counselling and Disability Service](#) or a person's General Practitioner should be contacted regarding vaccination information and availability.
- b. For all new staff appointments where the University requires appropriate vaccinations as a pre-condition of employment for VPD activities, then the staff member must obtain vaccinations at their own expense.
- c. For current staff whose roles have been identified as requiring additional hazard controls (e.g. medical monitoring / further vaccines, boosters etc.) the College / local area will have a process for covering the cost of these measures.
- d. HDR students are not classed as 'employees' of the University. Colleges may decide that they will pay for, or contribute to, such expenses, and this is essentially a decision that should be made at the local level.

- e. Researchers are encouraged to incorporate the cost of vaccinations as part of project budget.

12. Decline Vaccination for a VPD

- a. Staff / students and others have the right to decline vaccinations.
- b. There may be medical reasons why individuals may not be able to be vaccinated including, reactions to a vaccine, or the presence of an underlying medical condition preventing vaccination.
- c. Staff or students or others who decline vaccination or do not have immunity should be advised on the resultant health risks related to their work / study.
- d. In these instances where staff or students and others are not protected by vaccination, the College / Portfolio must formalise this in writing by having the individual complete the [Declined Vaccination Statement for a VPD](#) noting they may be at risk of acquiring the identified disease(s) for which a vaccine is available.
- e. A further risk assessment must be completed in this instance where people working are not vaccinated, identifying how they will then manage the risk, as far as reasonably practicable, noting this may include the person requiring alterations to their work / study tasks to reduce the potential risk of exposure to the infectious diseases.
- f. Where the risk assessment identifies that alterations to work duties are required, further assessment of the University's ability to make reasonable accommodation of these alterations should be undertaken.
- g. Where it has been determined that reasonable accommodation is not possible due to the inherent requirements of the work / study then failure to comply with immunisation requirements may lead to an unacceptable risk of serious illness occurring and will therefore result in the individual **not** being unable to undertake the work / study tasks that place them at risk of a VPD.

13. Responsibilities

<p>College Vice-Presidents and Executive Deans and Portfolio Heads</p>	<p>a. Ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. the effective communication and implementation of these procedures within their areas of responsibility ii. sufficient resources are available to enable compliance with the requirements of these procedures.
<p>Supervisors (including supervisors of students) and Managers</p>	<p>b. Ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. they identify and risk assess tasks / activities where vaccination requirements will need to be considered along with other control measures ii. persons under their supervision are provided with adequate information and resources in relation to seeking appropriate vaccinations where VPD have been identified iii. a specific training and information is provided to contracted workers or others prior to entering a workplace where a risk of infectious disease transmission exists iv. immunisation compliance status for individuals is recorded and requirements followed prior to exposure v. where a person has declined to be vaccinated then the process for failure to comply in Procedure 12 is followed

	vi. continually review immunisation requirements if the nature of work or research / study task is subject to change.
Staff (Workers)	<p>c. Ensure that ongoing compliance and provision of associated records with vaccination / screening, including any booster requirements are kept up to date.</p> <p>d. Provide records of vaccination documentation via WorkDay.</p> <p>e. Comply with risk assessment and safe working procedures including infection control measures to protect themselves and others in the workplace.</p> <p>f. Report any accident / incident, exposure or infection acquired in the workplace where work is the confirmed source to their supervisor and via FlinSafe and to the Biosafety Officer (if a GMO).</p>
Students and others	<p>g. Ensure that ongoing compliance and provision of associated records with vaccination / screening requirements or boosters are kept up to date.</p> <p>h. Comply with risk assessments and safe working procedures including infection control measures to protect themselves and others in the workplace.</p> <p>i. Report any accident, exposure or infection acquired in the workplace where work is the confirmed source to their supervisor and via FlinSafe and Biosafety Officer (if a GMO).</p>

14. Related Procedures and Links

[Work Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Work Health and Safety Management System](#)

[Travel Policy](#)

[Australian Immunisation Handbook](#)

[AS 2243.3:2022 Safety in Laboratories: Part 3: Microbiological Safety and Containment](#)

[Biosafety Manual](#)

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