Vaccination Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) The purpose of this Policy is:

a. To minimise the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to the University community as far as reasonably practicable; and
b. To meet best practice standards set by NSW and QLD Government immunisation policy directives.

Scope

(2) This policy applies to:

a. staff, students, contractors and visitors who in the course of their employment or study may be exposed to infectious disease or blood-borne pathogens that are preventable by vaccination; and
b. managers and supervisors of staff and students who may be exposed to infectious disease or blood-borne pathogens that are preventable by vaccination.

(3) This policy should be read in conjunction with the HRP23: Infectious disease and blood-borne pathogens - preventable by vaccination.

Section 2 - Definitions

(4) Infectious diseases preventable by vaccination include:

a. measles, mumps & rubella;
b. varicella (chicken pox);
c. pertussis (whooping cough);
d. hepatitis B;
e. tetanus and
f. Any other disease identified as a risk, associated with research activities or international travel.

(5) 'Blood-borne pathogens' includes the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and other blood-borne viruses.

(6) 'Health Practitioner' includes:

a. General Practitioner;
b. Nurse;
c. Midwife;
d. Aboriginal Health Worker;
e. Chiropractor;
f. Dentist;

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g. Occupational Therapist;
h. Physiotherapist; and
i. Podiatrist

(7) The areas or staff roles in which there is an increased risk include any of the following:

a. working with infectious organisms;
b. working with human blood or body fluids;
c. clinical work with humans;
d. working with non-human primates or other animals;
e. first aid Officers;
f. facilities workers;
g. cleaners;
h. security staff; and
i. employees travelling overseas on approved University business.

(8) 'Zoonotic Disease' is an infectious disease that can be transmitted from animals to humans including but not limited to:

a. Q Fever;
b. Rabies and
c. Avian Influenza.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(9) Southern Cross University is committed to providing a safe and healthy work and study environment, and in keeping with this commitment, to prevent or minimise the risk of infectious or blood-borne diseases.

Roles and Responsibilities

(10) The University has a duty of care to provide a safe place of work and study. Specific responsibilities are:

Heads of Work Units	- Ensure relevant state legislation is complied with. - Ensure staff and students are appropriately trained in correct infection control techniques, where applicable.
Managers/Supervisors	- Where practicable, have a duty of care to prevent people from becoming ill or injured as a result of an infectious or communicable disease whilst under their supervision. - Are to ensure all workers who may be at risk of exposure to a vaccine preventable disease have the relevant vaccinations as required for their role. - Laboratory or practical class supervisors ensure that employees and students are fully informed and instructed in appropriate procedures for handling and disposal of potentially infected material. As well as ensuring the Standard Precautions are followed at all times. Standard Precautions are standard operating procedures that apply to any situation in which there is a risk of contact with human blood, body fluids and tissues regardless of their perceived infectious risk. These precautions include: + aseptic techniques; + hand washing; + use of personal protective equipment (gloves, face shields, plastic apron); + appropriate disinfection of equipment; and + implementation of environmental controls. Standard precautions incorporate safe systems of handling blood (including dried blood), other body fluids, secretions and excretions (excluding sweat), non-intact skin and mucous membranes and human tissues.
Employees and Students	- Follow all health and safety guidelines relevant to their area or the University community. - Follow the University's vaccination requirements for the work they are undertaking. - Exercise a duty of care to prevent the spread of the disease to others in the University community. This duty may require the individual to disclose to the University that they have an infectious or communicable disease.

Hazard Identification and Risk Management

(11) Each work unit (e.g. academic work unit, administrative unit, health clinic or research centre) must assess infection control risks related to their activities.

(12) During the planning stage of any experiment or teaching practical using animal or human material which has a risk of infection, the identification of all possible hazards and a documented assessment of the risks associated with the hazards must be undertaken.

(13) Where high-risk hazards are identified, controls to minimise such risks must be established using the hierarchy of controls. The Workplace Health and Safety Team within HR Services can provide advice on this process.

(14) Employees and students using potentially infective material must:

a. be informed of the identified hazards and the control measures prior to commencing the activity. The effectiveness of the control measures must be reviewed regularly and improved, if necessary, prior to repeating that activity;
b. consider the potential for infection and the quantity of contaminated material that may be generated;
c. consider the probability of employees being exposed to the effects of an infectious or communicable disease or infected material;
d. identify the routes of transmission and the possibility of multiple exposures;
e. consider the likelihood of an accident/incident occurring and the potential consequences;
f. consider the effect an accident/incident may have on the University community or business; and
g. complete the University's site specific inductions to ensure they are fully informed of their responsibilities and the potential risks.

(15) All possible hazards must be identified. A documented assessment must be made of the risks associated with the hazards undertaken during the planning stage of any experiment or teaching practical using animal or human material which has a risk of infection. The documented assessment is kept by the work group.

Vaccination

(16) As defined at clause (7) workers at risk of exposure to vaccine preventable disease during the course of their work must:

a. comply with vaccination requirements for their role; and
b. provide one of the following:
    i. a vaccination history downloaded from Medicare Online; or
    ii. a Vaccination Record Form completed by their GP.

(17) It is recommended employees discuss post-vaccination testing with their GP, to determine the level of protection conferred by the vaccine. Non-responders (those people who have not developed protective antibody levels following vaccination) will not have immunity, and should discuss their options with their supervisor.

(18) There is no vaccine for HIV. Any potential exposure to HIV requires consultation with Head of Work Unit and the Manager, Workplace Health and Safety. A risk assessment is to be undertaken well in advance of the proposed activity and approved by Head of Work Unit.

Risk of Exposure and Vaccination Requirements

(19) Employees and students within the following groups have been identified as being at risk of exposure to

infectious disease or blood-borne pathogens during the course of their work or student placement. Vaccinations are only required for employees and students who are exposed to the identified risk.

Group	Identified Risk	Required Vaccinations
SCU Health Clinic Practitioners	Direct contact with blood or body substances and exposure to airborne contaminants from infected patients	- Measles, Mumps, Rubella - Pertussis - Varicella - Hepatitis B * Strongly recommended annual Influenza Vaccine
SCU Health Clinic administrative staff, Counsellors, Clinical Supervisors and others	Exposure to airborne contaminants from infected patients. Possible contact with blood or body substances	- Measles, Mumps, Rubella - Pertussis - Varicella * Strongly recommended Hepatitis B and annual Influenza Vaccines
Academic Work Unit based Technical and Teaching Staff	Direct contact with blood or body substances	- Hepatitis B * Strongly recommended annual Influenza vaccine
Facilities and Maintenance Staff	Indirect contact with blood and body substances. Increased risk of tetanus prone wounds.	- Tetanus - Hepatitis B * Strongly recommended annual Influenza Vaccine
First Aid Officers	Direct contact with blood or body substances	- Tetanus - Hepatitis B * Strongly recommended annual Influenza Vaccine
Students on Placements - in certain clinical settings where vaccinations are required	Direct contact with blood or body substances	- Measles, Mumps, Rubella - Pertussis - Varicella - Hepatitis B - Tetanus - Diphtheria * Strongly recommended annual Influenza Vaccine Students may be required to undertake additional vaccination and/or screening as per the policy directives of the host organisation e.g.Tuberculosis
All staff and students who are identified by the relevant manager or supervisor as being exposed to blood, body substances, infectious diseases and/or zoonotic diseases	Direct contact with blood, body substances, infectious diseases and/or zoonotic diseases	Relevant vaccinations as required following advice from relevant Manager/Supervisor and the Manager, Workplace Health and Safety.
Staff undertaking approved international travel for work		Complete the immunisation schedule as advised by International SOS

Declining Vaccination and Medical Contraindications

(20) Employees and students who decline vaccination must submit a written declination of informed non-consent. It is recommended these persons discuss any of their concerns with a medical practitioner before making this decision.

(21) Employees and students identified in this policy as being at risk of exposure and who choose not to receive the identified vaccine will be reallocated work where available. If no other work options are available an assessment will be conducted to determine their ability to perform the inherent requirements of the job.

(22) Employees and students who are unable to be vaccinated due to temporary or permanent medical contraindications are required to provide confirmation of this in writing from their general practitioner or treating specialist.

Communication, Awareness and Training

(23) Southern Cross University will:

a. provide appropriate training to relevant work units or groups at risk within the University;
b. raise the awareness of good hygiene practices as a preventative measure for infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B, measles, pertussis, varicella; and

c. through education, endeavour to reduce the myths, prejudices and unnecessary fears associated with infectious diseases.

Confidentiality and Discrimination

(24) The University will ensure the confidentiality of personal information of employees and students. Stringent confidentiality procedures are enforced within the University in respect of all personal information concerning infectious disease, vaccination status or an individual's medical history.

(25) It is illegal for anyone to discriminate against another person on the grounds that they have contracted a disease such as HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis.

Complaints Procedure

(26) Where an individual believes they have been treated unfairly, or inappropriately, the appropriate policy should be applied:

a. Complaint Policy and Procedure - Staff
b. Complaint Policy - students and members of the public

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	20th April 2020
Review Date	1st March 2025
Approval Authority	Head, Governance Services
Approval Date	20th April 2020
Expiry Date	29th October 2025
Responsible Executive	Kim Franks Vice President (People and Culture)
Head of Work Unit	Kath Drew Director, Human Resources
Enquiries Contact	HR Services

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