

1. Q: When does the UC Immunization Plan go into effect?

A: The UC Immunization Plan begins Fall 2015 with an “Educational” Phase, whereby all Incoming Students, the UC campuses, and the community are notified that vaccination will be required the following year. All Incoming Students are required to submit documentation as of the fall 2016 academic term.

2. Q: How does UC determine which vaccines and screening to require?

A: The UC is following the recommendations of the California Department of Public Health ( C D P H ) Immunization Branch for Colleges and Universities. The current requirements reflect those in place on March 16, 2016: <http://eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-1014.pdf> However, UC reserves the right to modify these requirements pending revisions to the recommendations by CDPH. Changes in CDPH’s recommendations, as of February 1 each year, will be incorporated into the requirements affecting the incoming fall class for that year.

In general, these requirements pertain to those vaccine-preventable illnesses that can be spread by respiratory secretions (saliva, coughing, sneezing), and pose a risk to others who might become ill due to classroom or residential contact. These include, measles, mumps, rubella (German measles), diphtheria and pertussis (Whooping cough), varicella (Chickenpox), and meningitis vaccines, as well as screening for tuberculosis.

3. Q: Why is UC implementing this policy?

A: There has been an increase in outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illnesses over the past five to ten years, and now many illnesses that we thought were disappearing are returning. Although many of these diseases are considered “mild”, they can cause serious illness and death. Pertussis was responsible for hospital stays for hundreds of people in California during the past two years, including intensive care admissions and in a few cases, death. Recent outbreaks of measles also have resulted in hospitalizations, and new cases of mumps across the country threaten the health and fertility of non-immune students. Thousands of students have been exposed to active tuberculosis across several campuses.

4. Q: Why wasn’t this done sooner?

A: The cost of vaccination was often a barrier to getting all the recommended immunizations. However, the Affordable Care Act has mandated that preventive services such as vaccination be covered at 100%--meaning that these services are now available to all. Another reason that UC did not pursue an immunization policy in the past had to do with the time and cost for staff to gather, review and verify students’ immunization records. However, now all of the campuses use the same electronic medical record system that enables students to enter their immunization history directly into their medical record. Each campus may verify some, or all, of these records by obtaining an image, copy of the yellow vaccination record, or another form of proof of documentation. However, we anticipate automating the verification process over the next several years, and thereby limiting additional staff time needed for this process.

5. Q: I was not vaccinated as a child. Will I not be admitted to UC until all of the vaccinations have been obtained?
- A: Starting in academic year 2017-18, all UC campuses may begin implementation of registration holds for students who have not documented completion, or who have not begun the process of completing, all of the required vaccines. Several campuses already place registration holds if students have not met the tuberculosis screening requirement. Please check with your campus Student Health Services for information regarding the timeline for registration holds related to immunization requirements.
6. Q: I/my family have concerns regarding the safety of vaccines and have chosen not to be vaccinated. Will I be prevented from attending classes at UC if I do not obtain the required vaccines?
- A: During the initial phases of the Immunization Plan implementation, no registration holds will be placed. However, beginning in academic year 2017-18, students who have not provided evidence of the required vaccinations may not be able to register for classes.
7. Q: I had an allergic reaction to a vaccination. Am I still required to be vaccinated to enter UC?
- A: It is very important that the doctor/nurse practitioner/physician assistant who cared for you at that time document what happened to you when you had the problem with vaccination. If you had a true “allergic reaction”, then we will need to know which vaccination caused the problem, and whether you were able to become immune to that illness. You will need to complete a “Medical Exemption Request Form,” and submit it to the Medical Director at your campus Student Health Services (SHS). If your request for a medical exemption is denied by your campus SHS Medical Director, you have a right to appeal the decision to a UC Immunization Exemption Appeals Committee (IEAC) by submitting an appeal request, along with the Medical Exemption Request Form filled out by your treating medical provider, to the Medical Director of your campus Student Health Services (SHS). (provide link to Immunization Exemption Policy and form) Students who have submitted appeals will be able to attend courses during the quarter/semester that their appeals are undergoing review.
8. Q: Is there a process to request a personal/religious belief exemption from the UC Immunization Policy?
- A: The UC convened a task force over the summer of 2015 to make recommendations regarding the types of exemptions from the policy that should be considered and the appropriate documentation and appeals process that would be required. This work group included representatives from every campus, as well as a leading medical ethicist and representatives from the California Department of Public Health. The task force, which subsequently was named the Immunization Exemption Policy Committee (IEPC), has recommended that only medical

exemptions be allowed. Requests for exemptions for non-medical reasons will be denied and are not eligible for appeal.

9. Q: Will I be able to get the vaccines I need from the Student Health Service on my campus?

A: Yes, though incoming students are strongly encouraged to complete all necessary vaccinations and/or testing prior to arriving at their campus, and to submit their vaccination history and documentation in advance to minimize the chance that they will experience a delay in registration if vaccination requirements have not already been met. Where necessary, students may alternatively obtain the necessary vaccinations/testing at the SHS where they are enrolled. While all of the campus Student Health Services stock and administer the required vaccinations, our expectation is that you receive these vaccines BEFORE arriving at UC. Currently the campus SHS centers do not bill insurance plans other than their respective Student Health Insurance Plans (SHIP or UC SHIP) available on your campus - which means you would need to pay out-of-pocket for these immunizations. Some campuses may charge you a fee for the administration of the vaccine as it is a pre-entry requirement. Check with your local campus Student Health Services.

10. Q: I don't have the SHIP or UC SHIP Insurance Plan, and didn't get my vaccinations or testing done by my regular medical provider at home – how can I request that my outside insurance cover some or all of the costs to get vaccinations or testing done at SHS?

A: If do not have SHIP or UC SHIP, and decide to obtain vaccinations at the SHS on your campus, SHS will provide you with an itemized list of charges for you to send to your insurance company to request reimbursement. While many insurance companies will retroactively reimburse their members for services already obtained, some require prior authorization. If you do not have SHIP or UC SHIP it is important for you to check with your insurance company before receiving services at SHS to verify your coverage.