

# Health Screening & Immunizations

Each student must meet the PA program's health screening and immunization requirements prior to matriculation and before entering the clinical phase of training. The PA Program contracts a third-party service (EXXAT) to record and certify each matriculants' health screening and immunization status.

Student health records are confidential and must not be accessible to or reviewed by the PA Program faculty or staff except for immunization and screening results, which may be maintained and released with written permission from the student. This written consent allows the following:

- EXXAT to release information regarding immunizations, tuberculosis screenings, drug screenings, and background checks to the PA Program
- PA Program to release information regarding immunizations, tuberculosis screenings, drug screenings, and background checks via EXXAT with clinical sites.
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## Required Forms

All students are required to submit the Austin College PA Student Health Forms to the Health Services office before matriculating into the PA program. **These forms will NOT be accepted directly by the PA Program.** Failure to complete and turn in forms as described below will result in the inability to matriculate into the AC PA Program.

The following items comprise the PA Student Health Forms and required for new students:

- Disability Accommodations Form
- Health Services Authorization Form
- PA Student Physical Examination Form
- Health Insurance Waiver/Enrollment Instructions
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**Immunization forms, the PA Student Physical Examination Form, background check, and drug screening documentation must be submitted to EXXAT.** Note that students will be submitting the PA Student Physical Examination form to BOTH AC Health Services and Exxat.

The physical examination must be performed by a licensed health care provider. No faculty or staff member of the PA program will have access to the information contained in this form; it is held confidentially by Health Services and Exxat. The PA program will only receive notification from Exxat that the student has been cleared to participate in the PA program plan of study.

## Immunizations

The PA program follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) current immunizations guidelines for healthcare workers in establishing its requirements for students to participate in supervised patient care activities. It is the sole responsibility of the student to complete and submit all of the correct requirements/documentation before the due date(s) and to never let any of those requirements/documentation expire. Student noncompliance with immunizations at any time while enrolled in the program may result in a delayed graduation or an inability to complete the clinical phase of training, resulting in dismissal. Concerns regarding the below vaccination requirements need to be addressed with the Program Director.

Proof of each of the following must be dated and signed by a healthcare professional prior to submitting to the third-party tracking service (EXXAT).

- **Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)** The student must provide documentation of two MMR vaccines given at least 28 days apart or a positive titer showing immunity.
  - The student must provide documentation of two MMR vaccines given at least 28 days apart or a positive titer showing immunity.

- If students do not have two documented doses of MMR they need to be serologically tested for immunity. If the student has a negative titer, the student will need to repeat the two-shot series.

- **Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis**

- The student must provide documentation of a single Tdap vaccination. Students who do not have documentation of a previously received dose of Tdap need to receive a dose of Tdap before matriculation.
- All students are required to receive Td boosters every 10 years thereafter.

- **Varicella (Chicken Pox)** The student must provide evidence of varicella immunity in one of the following ways:

- Documentation of two doses of varicella vaccine given at least 28 days apart
- Laboratory evidence of immunity through a qualitative titer If the student has a negative titer, the student will need to get two doses of varicella vaccine, four weeks apart.

- **Hepatitis B**

- The student must provide documentation of vaccination (3-dose series of Recombivax HB or Engerix-B OR 2-dose series of Heplisav-B) by submitting a quantitative antibody titer proving immunity.
- If the titer is negative or the student has not previously been vaccinated for Hepatitis B, the student must receive the series and undergo antibody titer testing one month after the final dose of the repeated series.
  - Students receiving the Hepatitis B series may matriculate into the program with the first dose marked complete, but the student must remain in compliance and get the subsequent doses as per their provider's recommendation. The series must not extend beyond six (6) months in total. Students who continue to have a negative titer after two rounds of a Hep B series are considered "non-responders."
  - An 'In-progress' designation within Exxat will be considered temporarily as complete by the program if the student is in the process of completing their HepB vaccination series.

- **TB Screening**

- All students must have a two-step PPD skin test (TST) or TB blood test (i.e., QuantiFERON Gold or T-SPOT.TB) prior to matriculation into the program.
  - The CDC has updated its TB screening guidelines for healthcare workers to state that after initial screening, "an annual TB test is not recommended unless there is a known exposure or ongoing transmission."
  - Students may need to repeat TB screening while enrolled in the program on an annual basis if required by clinical training sites.
  - CDC guidelines will be followed in the setting of known TB exposure during clinical training.
- All students with positive TB tests (TST or TB blood test) should receive a symptom evaluation and chest x-ray to rule out TB disease. Additional workup may be needed based on these results. The local health department should be notified immediately if TB disease is suspected. □ If the chest x-ray is positive, the student will not be allowed to matriculate or continue in the program until treated and cleared by an infectious disease specialist.
- If a student previously had a BCG vaccine or was born outside of the U.S., a PPD skin test is not acceptable. These students must complete an IGRA test (QuantiFERON Gold, TSpot) instead.
- Individuals with a prior history of positive TB test need to provide documentation of a normal chest x-ray, complete a TB symptom checklist, and be cleared by an infectious disease specialist before they begin the PA Program. Repeat chest x-ray is not required unless they are symptomatic.

- **Influenza**

- All students are required to undergo influenza vaccination during the first fall of enrollment by October 15th.
- Students will need a second vaccination prior to October 15th of the clinical phase.
- If the student wants to request an exemption, they must request the Texas Department of State Health Services form electronically at <https://www.co-request.dshs.texas.gov/>. The form is mailed from DSHS to the student, and it may take up to two weeks to receive the form. The DSHS form must be completed, notarized, and submitted to the Director of Health Services and a copy must be uploaded to EXXAT Approve. It is the student's responsibility to complete the DSHS form and have it notarized.

- **Meningococcal**

- All students matriculating into the program who are younger than 22 years of age need to submit proof of a must provide documentation of a single MCV4 (Menactra, Menveo, MenQuadfi or MenACWY) vaccination received at 16 years of age or older. Students who do not have documentation of this vaccination within the specified time frame must receive a dose of MCV4 before matriculation.
- Meningococcal B vaccinations are strongly recommended for all students but are not required.

- **Polio**

- The student must provide documentation of last Polio booster
- If the student wants to request an exemption, they must request the Texas Department of State Health Services form electronically at <https://www.co-request.dshs.texas.gov/>. The form is mailed from DSHS to the student, and it may take up to two weeks to receive the form. The DSHS form must be completed, notarized, and submitted to the Director of Health Services and a copy must be uploaded to EXXAT Approve. It is the student's responsibility to complete the DSHS form and have it notarized.

- **Hepatitis A**

- The student must provide documentation of vaccination (3-dose series of Twinrix OR 2- dose series of HAVRIX or VAQTA) OR by submitting a quantitative antibody titer proving immunity.
  - If the titer is negative/low/equivocal or the student has not previously been vaccinated for Hepatitis A, the student must receive the vaccine.
  - Students receiving the Hepatitis A series may matriculate into the program with the first dose marked complete, but the student must remain in compliance and get the subsequent dose as per their provider's recommendation. The series must not extend beyond six (6) months in total. Students who continue to have a negative titer after 6 doses are considered "non-responders."
  - An 'In-progress' designation within Exxat will be considered temporarily as complete by the program if the student
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- **COVID Vaccination**

- All students are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Please submit documentation of receiving either a one dose-approved or two-dose approved COVID vaccination. The program may have difficulty placing unvaccinated students in clinical settings based on clinical site requirements. For this reason, unvaccinated students may experience a delay in graduation.

Please note that clinical sites may require additional vaccinations and documentation of titers for certain infectious diseases such as hepatitis C. The program will communicate additional requirements to students in advance. Students

who do not meet the above criteria may not be able to meet the requirements for graduation based on clinical site expectations.

- If students participate in international curricular activities, the program will follow CDC guidelines and require vaccinations and/or prophylaxis based on the region of travel.