I. Policy

Vaccine preventable illnesses continue to occur on American campus communities and pose a significant threat to the public’s health. The goal of Student Health Services (SHS) and the university is to provide adequate protection against vaccine preventable diseases by requiring newly entering students to be vaccinated and/or screened for certain highly contagious diseases.

This goal can best be achieved through a mandatory pre-matriculation immunization requirement. The University of South Carolina immunization requirements are consistent with the recommendations of the American College Health Association and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. Exceptions to this policy may be granted in the event of valid medical contraindications or for documented religious reasons. In the event of a measles emergency, these exempted students will be excluded from campus activities until such time as is specified by Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

Compliance of all immunization, post screening tests, treatment regimens, and monitoring are mandatory. Students not fulfilling the immunization requirements, with exceptions for valid medical contraindications or documented religious reasons, will not be permitted to register for classes.

II. Procedure

A. All incoming students under the age of 21 must provide the following prior to attending class at the University of South Carolina:

1. Meningoccal

   a. Provide proof of vaccination for Meningococcal Meningitis.
b. Proof of receipt of a conjugate meningococcal vaccine (e.g. Menactra or Menveo) is required for all incoming students under the age of 21 and who have not received the conjugate vaccine within the past 5 years. If it has been between 2-5 years since receiving the Menomune vaccine, the student should receive the Menactra or Menveo vaccine. If it has been more than five years since receiving any meningitis vaccine, it is required to get the Menactra or Menveo vaccine.

c. A handout from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) concerning Meningococcal Disease will be provided and after reading the risks and benefits of vaccine and hazards of bacterial meningitis, the student may sign a Meningitis Vaccine Declination Waiver form, declining the vaccination. If the student is under the age of 18, a parent or legal guardian must also sign the waiver.

d. Based on the availability of the vaccine from the manufacturer, Student Health Services will offer the vaccine during the summer orientation and fall registration.

2. Measles, Mumps and Rubeola

a. All students born in 1957 or later and enrolling at USC Columbia, must prove immunity to rubeola (red measles), rubella (German measles), and mumps. Proof of immunity requires the following:

1. Two doses of MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) are required for students born in 1957 or later.

2. Dose 1 given at age 12 months or later

3. Dose 2 given at least one month after first dose

4. Individuals born before 1957 are exempt from this requirement

b. A positive serum titer (blood antibody) may also provide evidence of immunity

c. Vaccines are offered and may be administered through SHS’s immunization clinic for all incoming students.

3. Tuberculosis Screening Questionnaire and Risk Assessment

a. All new and incoming students will be required to complete the SHS Tuberculosis Screening Questionnaire located within the SHS Immunization Record Form.
b. If any risk is noted on the Tuberculosis Screening Questionnaire the student must complete the Tuberculosis Risk Assessment located within the SHS Immunization Record Form, which will direct them for further tuberculosis (TB) testing.

c. Students who report to campus with documentation of a positive purified protein derivative (PPD) test or who test positive at the Thomson Student Health Center will be evaluated for further testing and possible medical intervention. A chest radiograph is required for positive PPD’s.

d. A (PPD) test for possible tuberculosis exposure is recommended for domestic students who have traveled to areas where tuberculosis is endemic. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website for an up-to-date list at www.cdc.gov.

B. Additional Requirements for International Students

1. International students who arrived within the previous five (5) years where tuberculosis is endemic (visit www.cdc.gov) or any additional countries designated by the medical director of Student Health Services (SHS) must be screened for TB.

2. Tuberculosis screening may be conducted prior to the arrival of the international student. Information should be submitted to the SHS immunization office using the University Immunization Form. Students submitting properly completed forms with negative screening tests (negative PPD or QuantiFERON TB (QFT) Gold Test) will be cleared for registration.

3. Students who send in a record of a positive PPD and a negative chest x-ray will be asked to confirm the positive result with a QFT blood test. If the QFT is positive, a referral will be made to the Richland County Health Department (RCHD) for evaluation and possible isoniazid (INH) therapy. If the student refuses the QFT, a referral will be made to RCHD for evaluation, where the PPD and possibly the chest X-ray will be repeated followed by an evaluation.

4. International students who report to campus without TB screening or who have submitted improper clearance forms will be required to have a QFT drawn at the student’s expense. Students who test positive for TB on the screening examination will be referred for detailed examination.

5. International and English Program for Internationals (EPI) students and other designated students arriving on campus without a tuberculosis exam will be directed to the Thomson Student Health Center for testing and evaluation.
6. Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccination does not preclude testing of a member of a high-risk group. Evidence of BCG is not acceptable to meet the tuberculosis screening requirement.

C. Exemptions to Immunization

1. Exemption to immunization may be granted based on individual’s religious beliefs. For purposes of this policy, "religious beliefs" include those that are theistic in nature, as well as non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as to what is right and wrong which are sincerely held with the strength of traditional religious views. Personal preferences do not constitute religious beliefs.

2. Individuals requesting exemption due to religious beliefs must provide a written request to Student Health Services within thirty (30) days of being offered the vaccine. The written request should clearly explain why the immunization is contrary to the individual's religious beliefs.

D. Recommended Vaccinations

1. In addition to the requirements above, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with the Thomson Student Health Center, recommend certain immunizations to the college population. These vaccines include:
   a. Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (HPV) is highly recommended for all males and females between the ages of 11-26
   b. Hepatitis B
   c. Varicella
   d. Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis
   e. Influenza

Questions should be directed to Thomson Student Health Center Immunization Clinic at 803-777-9511.

III. Reason for Revision

Policy updated for consistency with South Carolina and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.