



USJ PA Studies Health and Immunization Policy

Health Insurance

All physician assistant students must carry health insurance during their enrollment at USJ. They may indicate coverage through a parent, spouse or private plan, which must meet certain published requirements. The student is required to show proof of coverage at the beginning of each school year. If a change occurs, the student must report it immediately to the program. A student who fails to provide acceptable documentation of the above, or fails to notify the program of a change, will not be permitted to have any patient interactions sponsored by the University. This can result in course failures, the student not graduating, and/or having a delay in graduation.

Health and Immunization Documentation

[A 3.07: The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply: a) a policy on immunization and health screening of student. Such policy must be based on then current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for health care professionals and state specific mandates.

A 3.17: Student academic records kept by the sponsoring institution or program, in a paper or electronic format, must be readily accessible to authorized program personnel and must include documentation: b) that the student has met institution and program health screening and immunization requirements

A 3.19: Student health records are confidential and must not be accessible to or reviewed by program, principal or instructional faculty or staff except for immunization and screening results, which may be maintained and released with written permission from the student.]

PA Studies students, staff, and faculty who have patient contact must show documentation of immunization against a number of vaccine-preventable diseases before participating in the academic programs of the University of Saint Joseph PA Studies Program.

Prior to matriculation, and annually as directed by the program, every student must submit paperwork proving immunization and a recent physical exam to the University of Saint Joseph Student Health Services Office utilizing the USJ form entitled [“Health Professions Student Health Form”](#). Additional forms may be required. Health science students do not qualify for health related exemptions that may be an option for non-health science students as it relates to Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) and Varicella. It is necessary for PA Studies students to either provide evidence of vaccination against these diseases or titers reflective of immunity.

Proof of having obtained the following immunizations is required:

- **Varicella (Chicken Pox)**
 - positive titer documenting immunity OR
 - proof of two vaccinations, 4 weeks apart

- **PPD test within the past year**
 - “2 step” PPD with a distinct second PPD administered 1-3 weeks after the first PPD
 - Two step PPDs may be required every 6 months for clinical sites



- Positive PPD result may require additional testing such as chest x-ray or serologic testing, at discretion of USJ Health Services
 - Students determined to have active disease will not be permitted to matriculate until treated and cleared by a health care provider
 - **Tdap (Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis)**
 - Booster must have been within ten years of anticipated PA Program graduation
 - Td is not a sufficient replacement for Tdap.
 - **Influenza vaccine for the current season of matriculation**
 - Students who qualify for a medical exemption for the influenza vaccine are subject to school and clinical facility protocols, such as being mandated to wear a facial mask at all times during flu season.
 - Students must receive annual influenza vaccinations while matriculated, or follow guidelines as noted above
 - **Hepatitis B**
 - Documentation of series completion, 3 doses (0, 1 and 6 months)
 - If vaccination history is unavailable or unclear, titers and revaccination may be required at the discretion of USJ Health Services
 - **MMR (Rubella, Rubeola, Mumps)**
 - Vaccine (2 doses)
 - Date of birth exemptions are not allowed for health science students.
 - The first dose must have been received at 12 months of age or later and the second must have been received at least 28 days after the first and after 1990
- OR**
- positive antibody titers for all three diseases
 - All non-immune MMR titers must be followed by booster vaccination.

Physical examination: Documentation of a recent physical examination is required prior to matriculation. Additionally, an annual physical exam is required for the clinical year. Thus, a student will need to have submitted documentation of a minimum of two physical examinations completed within their time in the program. [Example: For the Class of 2023, physical exams would be completed December 2020 (prior to entry) and then again in December 2021 (prior to entering the clinical phase).] In some instances, an annual exam will be required before the final semester [continuing with our example, in December 2022] in order to meet clinical site requirements for health screening. As a result, students should anticipate needing an annual exam each year while enrolled in the program, and schedule their appointments accordingly.



The student is responsible for arranging their own medical appointments and for all associated costs. USJ Student Health Services does not furnish routine physical examinations or “Fit for Duty” exams.

Evidence of health insurance: Students must provide proof of health insurance coverage prior to matriculation.

Documentation

Documentation may be in the form of written immunization records, copies of medical records containing such data, lab reports of titer results, or authentication by a health care provider. In case of the latter, an original signature accompanied by the provider’s printed name, credentials, address, and telephone number is required. Costs for physical examinations, immunizations, serologic testing, twostep PPD, and radiographs needed (as applicable) to meet the health-screening and immunization requirements are the responsibility of the student.

All immunizations and proof of same must be consistent with The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC-P) most up-to-date standards.

Note: All students must meet the USJ Student Health Services and PA Studies Program health requirements. In addition, students may need to meet additional or different requirements of a facility/agency in which they are attending a supervised clinical practice experience. Students may be required to supply a clinical agency with evidence of health-related documentation. In some cases, the Director of Clinical Education is required to provide documentation to a facility indicating a student has met the organization’s health requirements. To do so, the student must also submit a release form, indicating they permit the PA Studies program to release their immunization information to prospective clinical sites. A student who fails to provide acceptable documentation of the above will not be permitted to have any patient interactions sponsored by the University. This can result in course failures, the student not graduating, and/or having a delay in graduation.

Immunization profiles must be current at all times. If during the year a profile lapses, the student must update it before enrolling in the next semester, and/or beginning or continuing clinical experiences. As stated above, PPD skin test and influenza vaccine are required annually.

Students are strongly encouraged, but not required, to obtain meningococcal vaccination prior to matriculation, if not already vaccinated.



COVID-19 Immunization and Mask Policy (as of 7/2/2021)

Based on CDC guidance and in the interest of protecting the health and safety of the USJ community, a vaccine requirement has been implemented for fall semester 2021 for student-athletes and for residential students.

At this time, USJ does not intend to extend the vaccination requirement to other students, but unvaccinated students should be aware of the following:

- They will be required to wear a mask when indoors on campus, except when eating or drinking.
- If they are identified as a close contact and must quarantine, or if they contract COVID and must isolate, they will not be able to attend classes in-person and classes will not be offered remotely.
- Internship, clinical, student teaching, and field experience sites off-campus may require vaccination. A student who is not fully vaccinated by the beginning of the fall semester may have to wait up to 6 weeks before completing the vaccination process and will not be allowed access to the site(s) until then.

[Note: Several clinical rotation sites and large health systems in the State of CT & NY have notified the PA Studies Program that they are requiring all clinical trainees to be fully vaccinated, as a condition of placement at their facilities.]

Students who are fully vaccinated receive a bracelet that must be worn on campus to indicate that the student does not need to wear a mask in most indoor locations. To obtain a bracelet, students must complete a form that can be found on MyUSJ under Student Health Services (SHS), and provide proof of vaccination, such as an image of their vaccine card.

“COVID-19 vaccines are effective at keeping you from getting COVID-19. After you are fully vaccinated, you can start doing some things you had stopped doing because of the pandemic.” (Center for Disease Control). A person is considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna) or 2 weeks after receipt of the single dose of the Janssen vaccine.

Adapted from President’s June 24 [USJ Memo for Vaccine Clinic on Campus](#)

Updated information on COVID-19 policies and procedures at the University of Saint Joseph can be accessed at <https://www.usj.edu/student-life/covid/> .

Updated: July 2, 2021