



USJ PA Studies Health Insurance, Health & Immunization Documentation Policies

Updated February 21, 2024/TM

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. (This often occurs in January.) 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.]

Immunization

PA Studies students, staff, and faculty who have patient contact must provide 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. All matriculated students are required by [CT State Law](#) to provide proof of adequate protection against measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella. Examples of documentation include immunization records, provider-verified history of disease, and/or titers reflecting immunity. In addition, many of the University of Saint Joseph affiliated clinical sites require documentation of up to date COVID-19 vaccination, and in most instances, annual influenza vaccination.

Prior to matriculation, and annually as directed by the program, every PA student must submit documentation of immunization and a recent physical exam to the University of Saint Joseph Student Health Services Office via the USJ student health portal, *myHealth*. Once enrolled, students will log in to usj.studenthealthportal.com to find all assigned forms, and refer to PA program materials for details on any additional required documentation.



Health science students do not qualify for health-related exemptions that may be an option for non-health science students. All PA Studies students must either provide evidence of vaccination or titers reflective of immunity.

Proof of having obtained the following is required:

- **Varicella (Chicken Pox)**
 - Positive titer documenting immunity
 - If negative titer, proof of two subsequent vaccinations, at least 28 days apart is required. Repeat titer must be drawn 6 weeks after the second dose.
- **Tuberculosis**
 - Negative IGRA/QuantiFERON®-TB Gold Blood Test (To be completed every December while enrolled)
 - Positive QuantiFERON-TB Gold result may require additional testing, such as chest x-ray at discretion of USJ Student 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 after the age of 18 and within the past 10 years
 - **Td is not an acceptable replacement for Tdap.**
- **Influenza vaccine for the current season of matriculation**
 - Students must receive annual influenza vaccinations while matriculated.
 - Students who have not been vaccinated for are subject to school and clinical facility protocols, and will be mandated to wear a facial mask at all times during flu season (Oct-March).
- **Hepatitis B**
 - Positive Titer for Hepatitis B
 - If negative titer, documentation of subsequent completion of Hep B immunization series, (Hepislav-B 2 doses, Engerix-B 3 doses), with repeat titer drawn 6 weeks after last dose.
 - If, after subsequent immunization the student does not seroconvert, documentation of the student's Hep B status must be provided by the student's PCP.
- **Meningococcus**
 - Meningococcal vaccination (ACWY and Men B) **is required** for all PA students prior to the beginning of the clinical phase, in December at the end of year 1, most recent (September 8, 2023) [update for healthcare workers from the CDC.](#)



- **MMR (Rubella, Rubeola, Mumps)**
 - Positive antibody titers for all three diseases
 - All non-immune MMR titers must be followed by booster vaccination; if at least one of the three disease titers is positive, only one booster is required; if all three disease titers are negative, then 2 boosters are required.
 - Repeat titer(s) for specific disease(s) is/are required at least 6 weeks after last dose.

COVID-19 Vaccination:

While the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) is no longer requiring students to submit proof of COVID-19 vaccination as a condition of enrollment, please be aware that certain programs and learning/clinical sites require students to be vaccinated against COVID-19. It is the responsibility of the student to understand how their vaccination status may impact timely completion for programs that require clinical/practicum experiences.

- As required by the ARC-PA, [**Standard A3.07**] the program follows the most recent CDC and state guidance for healthcare workers. [CDC guidance, dated September 8, 2023](#), recommends updated COVID-19 vaccination for healthcare workers.
- As such, students enrolled in the USJ PA Studies program will be required to confirm COVID-19 vaccination requirements to comply with program-specific clinical placement policies that may differ from USJ policies. Clinical placement policies supersede any instances in which the University of Saint Joseph may grant vaccination exemptions, because the university cannot guarantee alternate clinical placements if a student does not comply with the clinical partner's vaccination/booster requirements or other policies. Students who do not comply with these policies risk their eligibility for assignment to a clinical site, and therefore continuation and/or completion of their program of study.
- **It is the responsibility of the student to be aware how their vaccination status may impact participation and timely completion for programs with clinical or practicum experiences.**

****NOTE:**

Students enrolled in health professions programs who choose to not be vaccinated against influenza and/or COVID-19, may not be able to accumulate the core components, clinical hours, and/or supervised clinical experiences required for degree completion, due to/depending upon site-specific vaccination requirements, which are beyond the control of the University.



Physical examination:

Documentation of a recent (within the past year) 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 2025, physical exams would be completed December 2022 (prior to entry) and then again in December 2023 (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 2024] 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. 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, two- step 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 as noted above.

****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 always be current. 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, the influenza vaccine is required annually.