School of Dentistry and Oral Health
Health Policy

1.0 Purpose

This policy aims to minimise the risk of students, staff and patients contracting or spreading a blood borne or other infectious disease. Diseases such as influenza, measles, rubella and pertussis (whooping cough) are vaccine-preventable diseases to which you may be exposed during professional practice. Besides putting your health at risk, students and staff may transfer infectious agents to patients and other staff and students. The likelihood of contact with patients and/or blood or body substances determines vaccine recommendations in this policy. All students and staff of the School of Dentistry and Oral Health are expected to comply with the specific requirements set out in this policy, many of which are requirements of Queensland Health and the Dental Board of Queensland.

This policy also outlines the School’s policy on student treatment of blood borne infected patients.

Students and clinical staff who are unable to comply with the relevant University and School of Dentistry and Oral Health immunisation requirements will not be able to participate in exposure prone procedures. For students this may mean they are not able to complete their degree.

A student or staff member who does not abide by the standards which are socially/professionally expected of them could find themselves under the scrutiny of the law and charged with acts of negligence for not protecting their patients.

2.0 Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, the term “blood borne disease” includes human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV).

Blood Borne Virus is abbreviated as BBV.

The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council is abbreviated as NH&MRC.

Invasive Procedures: According to the Dental Board of Queensland Policy #9, invasive procedures “Include any surgical entry into tissue, body cavities or organs, or repair of traumatic injury.”

Exposure Prone Procedures: According to the Dental Board of Queensland Policy #9, exposure prone procedures “Are a subset of invasive procedures which are characterised by the potential for direct contact between the skin (usually finger or thumb) of the health care worker and sharp surgical instruments, needles, or sharp tissues (spicules of bone or teeth) in body cavities or in poorly visualised or confined body sites (including the mouth). Procedures where the hands and fingertips of the worker are visible and outside the body at all times, and internal examinations/procedures that do not require the use of sharp or cutting instruments are not considered to be exposure prone and thus are unlikely to pose a risk of transmission of HIV, HBV or HCV…”. Exposure prone procedures are the majority of clinical dental procedures.

3.0 Principles

The School of Dentistry and Oral Health seeks to comply with the Dental Board of Queensland’s Policy #9 ‘Dental Practitioners Infected with Blood Borne Viruses.’ Staff and students should read and understand this policy, with attention given to section 3 ‘Principles’ found at:
4.0 The Australian Standard Vaccination Schedule

Immunisation of dental and oral health students and clinical staff should be in accordance with the standard recommendations of the National Health and Medical Research Council as documented in the Australian Immunisation Handbook 8th edition 2003 which can be accessed at http://www9.health.gov.au/immhandbook/pdf/handbook.pdf
Changes to the 2003 handbook can be accessed at http://immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/content/handbook03-changes

5.0 Blood-Borne Viruses

Students and staff have a responsibility to be aware of their status in relation to blood-borne viruses including HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. Students and staff who engage in at risk behaviour or suspect that they may have been infected with a blood-borne virus at any time during a students study or a staff members position at the School have a duty to seek testing and counselling and to notify the Director of Clinical Operations of the School of their infection status should it be positive. Griffith University Health Service, Gold Coast (07 555 28794) will assist you with these issues.

5.1 Responsibility for ascertaining infection status

In accordance with the Dental Board of Queensland Policy #9, testing for blood borne viruses should be undertaken:

- “prior to commencement of work requiring the performance of exposure prone procedures; and
- while continuing to perform exposure prone procedures, repeat testing at least every three years is required;
- where risk of seroconversion for a blood borne virus exists either through involvement in a significant non-occupational exposure to blood or bodies substance (e.g., unprotected sexual intercourse with an individual infected with HIV or HBV) or through occupational exposure (e.g., needle stick injury), more frequent testing is required.”

5.2 Restrictions

A student or staff member who refuses to be immunised against Hepatitis B or who refuses to disclose their HIV, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C status will be automatically deemed a non-responder and may not be allowed to undertake exposure prone procedures. Exposure prone procedures are the majority of clinical dental procedures. Students who are unable to undertake exposure prone procedures may not be able to complete their dental or oral health therapy degree.

Infected students and staff must not undertake exposure prone procedures, therefore restrictions on professional practice apply. Infected students may not be able to complete their degree. Infected students should inform the Director of Clinical Operations of the School, and are encouraged to seek counselling in relation to personal health measures and training and career issues.
5.3 Positive infection status

A student or staff member who discovers that he/she returns test results in any of the following categories:

5.3.1 Hepatitis C antibody positive
5.3.2 Hepatitis B antigen positive
5.3.3 HIV antibody positive

must immediately cease to perform exposure prone procedures; seek medical expert advice and inform the Director of Clinical Operations of the School of Dentistry and Oral Health of status on a confidential basis. Failure of a student or staff member to notify the School immediately of their status and cease to perform exposure prone procedures may result in removal from the School.

6.0 A Students Immunisation Status

Before enrolment, a student should seek medical advice to determine immunity to common infections (laid out in the flowchart in this policy, section 10.6). Parents or a general practitioner may have the relevant information on file. Alternatively, local government immunisation clinics may have vaccination records, however you would need to know where you were vaccinated in order to obtain the information. Students are expected to obtain the appropriate immunisation where not previously vaccinated.

7.0 Student Placements in Queensland

Students are required to supply evidence of immunisation status (see section 10.2 of this document) to the School of Dentistry and Oral Health who are responsible for providing this information to Queensland Health. Completion of the School’s Medical Examination meets Queensland Health requirements. It is mandatory that students attending a placement in a Queensland Health Facility are immunised against Hepatitis B, with a strong recommendation that they are also immunised against Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Tuberculosis, Varicella Zoster virus (chickenpox) and Pertussis (whooping cough).

If a student tests positive for HIV or Hepatitis B and C they are required to self-disclose positive status to the School. Queensland Health requires the School of Dentistry and Oral Health to inform them of the student’s positive status before the student undergoes clinical experience within a Queensland Health Facility. Queensland Health may restrict patient access, put into place appropriate measures to safeguard the wellbeing of their patients or deny access to their facilities. The School of Dentistry and Oral Health can only advise Queensland Health of a student’s positive status after receiving written consent from the student to pass on this sensitive information. Disclosure will be managed in accordance with the Queensland Health Confidentiality Policy and any persons receiving this information within both the School of Dentistry and Oral Health and Queensland Health are obligated to protect the confidentiality of the student and only pass this information on to others on an “as needs” basis, deemed to be where a student’s positive status may put a patient at risk.

A student who refuses to be immunised against Hepatitis B or who refuses to disclose their HIV, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C status will be automatically deemed a non-responder and may not be allowed to undertake placement where exposure prone procedures occur. Exposure prone procedures are the majority of clinical dental procedures, therefore students who are unable to undertake exposure prone procedures may not be able to complete their dental or oral health therapy degree.

Further information may be found at:

a) Queensland Health – Immunisation and Infection Control
8.0 Student Placements in NSW

The NSW Department of Health (NSW Health) requires all students who attend placement at a NSW Health facility to undergo compulsory screening and vaccination against infectious diseases. Proof of immunity status is required. The School’s Medical Examination meets NSW Health requirements.

Further information detailing NSW screening and vaccination policy can be found at:
   a) NSW Policy Directive – Occupational Screening and Vaccination against Infectious Diseases [link]
   b) NSW Policy Directives & Guidelines [link]

9.0 Student’s Action List

- Read, understand and adopt the recommended practices concerning infection control, found in the Infection Control Procedure Manual at [link].
- Sign and date the Statutory Declaration found at [link].
- Review your immunisation status and bring records of previous immunisations or blood tests as outlined in the flowchart in this policy, to your healthcare appointment. You can make an appointment with the University’s Health Service Gold Coast Campus on 07 5550 8794.
- Mantoux testing should be undertaken and BCG vaccination can be arranged subsequently if appropriate.
- If you are exposed to infections against which you are unlikely to be immune or plan to work amongst patients who might be particularly susceptible to infection, you can seek advice from the University’s Health Service Gold Coast Campus on 07 5550 8794.
- Students are advised to keep records pertaining to vaccination and tests, concerning the transmission of infection, indefinitely.

10.0 Vaccinations and Tests Required

10.1 Appointments and Testing
Appointments for required vaccinations and tests can be made with health care providers at the Griffith University Health Service Gold Coast (07 555 28794), or with your doctor of choice. At this appointment, previous infection with or immunity to a number of infections will be assessed. It is recommended that you bring any records of blood tests or immunisations to your appointment. If you have an appointment with Griffith Health please take with you the Griffith Health Service Appointment Card at the end of this policy.

Should you wish to undertake tests at a location other than the Griffith University Health Service, all required blood tests must be done by a NATA (National Association of Testing Authorities) laboratory, such as QML Pathology or the Gold Coast Hospital QHPSS Lab. Additional NATA certified labs may be found at [link].

10.2 Medical History
All Dentistry and Oral Health students are required to undergo a medical examination designed to prevent and detect disease prior to undertaking clinical/laboratory exposure. A School of Dentistry and Oral Health Medical Examination form must be completed and returned to the Administrative Assistant (Placements). A copy of the School Medical Examination Form can be found at [link]. It may also be obtained from Griffith University Health Service, Gold Coast (07 555 28794).

Staff are required to provide health records to the School Administrative Officer, as outlined on the ‘Staff Statutory Declaration’ form provided in offer package or at an initial training session.
10.3 Costs
Students and staff are responsible for all costs incurred for required vaccinations and tests. Vaccine costs for students are not covered by the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme, Medicare, Queensland Health or by Griffith University.

10.4 Compliance
Students are required to sign and date the Statutory Declaration, in the presence of a Justice of Peace or Commissioner of Declaration, found at www.gu.edu.au/school/doh This is a requirement prior to commencement of clinical/laboratory studies. Students who do not feel that they can comply with the requirements are required to discuss their objections with a nominated representative of the Head of School.

Failure to comply with these requirements may lead to an increased risk of obtaining or transmitting a blood borne infection and may put patients, staff and other students at risk. Students who fail to comply may be unable to undertake practical work where risk for infection is high. This could prevent completion of the requirements of a course or degree.

Staff must also complete a Statutory Declaration, provided in an offer package or at an initial training session.

10.5 Confidentiality
Collection of confidential information is being done with the clear goal of protecting students, patients and staff from harmful situations. All student and staff records will be treated with absolute confidentiality. To safeguard the wellbeing of patients, staff and other students the Head of School may be notified if a student or staff member has tested positive for a blood borne virus, has immunosuppression, requires antibiotic cover for dental treatment, or has another medical condition which may require modifications to clinical/laboratory procedures.

10.6 Immunisation and Blood-Borne Viruses Flowchart

**HIV**

Q1. Do you have results from a recent HIV antibody test?

YES: Go to question 2.

NO: You need to know your HIV antibody status.

Q2. Was your HIV antibody test positive?

YES: It is highly recommended that you seek confidential medical and career advice. You must not undertake any exposure prone procedures during clinical work. An appointment should be made with the Director of Clinical Operations of the School of Dentistry and Oral Health to discuss the consequence of an infectious status on a confidential basis.

NO: If you are not HIV positive you do not need to do anything further. Take your results to your appointment with a medical doctor when you undergo your medical examination.

**Hepatitis B**

Q3. Do you have results from a recent Hepatitis B antigen test (HepBAg)?

YES: Go to question 4.

NO: You need to know your HepBAg status.

Q4. Was your HepBAg test positive?
YES: It is highly recommended that you seek confidential medical and career advice. You must not undertake any exposure prone procedures during clinical work. An appointment should be made with the Director of Clinical Operations of the School of Dentistry and Oral Health to discuss the consequence of an infectious status on a confidential basis.

NO: If you are negative to Hepatitis B AND have documented antibody to Hepatitis B you don’t need to do anything further. Take your results to your appointment with a medical doctor when you undergo your medical examination.

If you do not have documented antibody to Hepatitis B you may require:

- a booster to confirm the presence of Hepatitis B antibody;
- a vaccination course (three injections, second at one month, third at 6 months) followed by a blood test within three months after the third dose of hepatitis B vaccination;
- further tests if the vaccination is unsuccessful.

An approved rapid immunisation schedule is available for persons requiring urgent immunisation against hepatitis B. Consult the Griffith University Health Service for details.

**Hepatitis C**

Q5. Do you have results from a recent Hepatitis C antibody test?

YES: Go to question 6.

NO: You need to know your Hepatitis C antibody status.

Q6. Was your Hepatitis C antibody test positive?

YES: If you are hepatitis C positive it is highly recommended that you seek confidential medical and career advice. You must not undertake any exposure prone procedures during clinical work. An appointment should be made with the Director of Clinical Operations of the School of Dentistry and Oral Health to discuss the consequence of an infectious status on a confidential basis.

NO: You do not need to do anything further. Take your results to your appointment with a medical doctor when you undergo your medical examination.

**Chickenpox (varicella zoster virus – VZV)**

Q7. Have you previously had chicken pox?

YES: You are considered to be immune to chickenpox. Take any records to your appointment with a medical doctor when you undergo your medical examination.

NO: You need to have a blood test to see if you are immune to chickenpox and if you are not immune it is recommended that you be vaccinated.

**Diphtheria/Tetanus**

Q8. Have you received at least 5 diphtheria/tetanus toxoid shots, at least one of which was administered above the age of 10 years?

YES: You do not require any boosters unless you sustain a high risk injury. Take any records to your appointment with a medical doctor when you undergo your medical examination.

NO: It is recommended you have diphtheria/tetanus toxoid shots.
Pertussis

Q9. Have you had a pertussis booster in the last 5 years?

YES: You do not require a further pertussis booster. Take any records to your appointment with a medical doctor when you undergo your medical examination.

NO: It is recommended you have a pertussis booster, provided a primary course of immunisation was given in childhood. This is available with a combination vaccine for diphtheria and tetanus as an adult formulation (DTpa). This single immunisation will provide cover for conditions listed in Question 8 and 9.

Measles, Mumps, Rubella

Q10. Have you documented evidence of vaccination with at least 2 doses of measles mumps rubella (MMR) vaccine?

YES: You are considered immune to MMR. Take any records to your appointment with a medical doctor when you undergo your medical examination.

NO: It is recommended you complete your 2 vaccinations against MMR (a history of previous infection with one or more of measles mumps or rubella is not considered reliable evidence of immunity nor is it a contraindication for vaccination against the other components of the vaccine. It is not necessary to check serology prior to vaccinating against MMR).

Tuberculosis (TB)

Q11. Do you have a scar from a previous BCG vaccine (against TB) or have you lived in a country in which TB is endemic?

YES: You should have a two-step Mantoux test. Consult the Queensland TB Control Centre on 07 3896 3955.

NO: You should have a one-step Mantoux test. Consult the Queensland TB Control Centre on 07 3896 3955.

Q12. If you have had your Mantoux test already, was it positive?

YES: You will be referred for further advice at the time of your Mantoux test. Take your records to your appointment. At consultation you may be advised by the Queensland TB Control Centre to not undertake clinical work for a period of time. In this event an appointment should be made with the Director of Clinical Operations to discuss this on a confidential basis.

NO: BCG vaccination is recommended. Take any Mantoux test records to your appointment.

Influenza

Q13. Will you be having contact with patients this year?

YES: It is recommended but not essential that you receive an annual influenza vaccine.

NO: You are not required to have an influenza vaccine this year.
Hepatitis A

Q14. Are you planning to work in areas where Hepatitis A, meningococcus, malaria or HIV are prevalent?

YES: You may wish to discuss the pros and cons of vaccinations, antimalarials and/or post exposure prophylaxis against Hepatitis A with an infectious disease specialist.
Health Status Flowchart

MEDICAL CHECKUP

- Were you immunosuppressed or had you a condition requiring antibiotic cover for dental treatment?
  - YES
  - An appointment should be made with the Dean of Dentistry and Oral Health and the Clinical Director to discuss your health status on a confidential basis.
  - NO
  - Complete the Statutory Declaration found in the Clinical and Community Placement Forms and Policies.

HIV, HEPATITIS C, HEPATITIS B

- Did you have a negative result from your recent antibody test?
  - YES
  - Complete the Statutory Declaration found in the Clinical and Community Placement Forms and Policies.
  - NO

- Did you have a negative result from your recent Mantoux test?
  - NO
  - You will need to have your BGG vaccination. Complete the Statutory Declaration found in the Clinical and Community Placement Forms and Policies.
  - YES

TUBERCULOSIS

- It is highly recommended that you seek confidential medical and career advice from an infectious disease specialist. You must not undertake any exposure prone procedures. In some instances you may not be able to undertake clinical work. An appointment should be made with the Dean of Dentistry and Oral Health to discuss status on a confidential basis.
11.0 Treatment of Blood Borne Infected Patients

Universal precautions, and the high standards of infection control, exist because it is never known for certain whether or not any given patient is carrying a blood borne virus (BBV) or other potential pathogen. All patients are assumed to be potentially infectious.

At the School of Dentistry and Oral Health the Clinical Reference Group, lead by the Clinical Director, have agreed that, provided a BBV positive patient is not cognitively impaired or carrying a potentially dangerous opportunistic pathogen (such as open tuberculosis, for example), they should be treated in the general clinic. This policy has been developed with due consideration of the duty of care to students and the requirement of staff to educate students for their future roles as registered professionals.

Graduates of our clinical programmes who are registered professionals will be required to treat such patients in their practices: to refuse to do so is discriminatory and could result in action from the Dental Board.

11.1 Supporting Policies

11.1.1 Extracted from the Dental Board of Queensland Policy #9 “Dental Practitioners Infected with Blood Borne Viruses”

“3.1 The Dental Board insists that all patients are entitled to good standards of practice and care from their Dental Practitioners and other health care workers (including Student Dental Practitioners) regardless of the nature of their disease or conditions.

3.2 Health care workers owe a duty of care to patients and are therefore responsible for the protection of patients against infection.

3.3 Under the general law and the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995:
   a) An employer has a legal obligation to ensure workplace health and safety of employees, patients and others at the workplace; and
   b) Dental Practitioners as employees, have a legal obligation to comply with employer’s reasonable instructions, including instructions for workplace health safety, and not to willfully place at risk the workplace health and safety of any person in the workplace.

3.4 The Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 prohibits discrimination on grounds of impairment (which includes the presence of a blood borne virus).”

11.1.2 Dental Board of Queensland Infection Control Guidelines

11.1.3 School of Dentistry and Oral Health Infection Control Procedure Manual
11.2 Confidentiality of a Patient’s Infectious Status

If a patient informs in their medical history that they are BBV positive, then that is privileged and confidential information. This remains recorded as part of their confidential medical history, and can only be disclosed to another party with the patient’s explicit permission.

11.3 Treatment of BBV Infected Patients by Students

Third Year Dental and Oral Health Therapy Students
In first semester third year dental students, with limited skills, will not be allocated known BBV positive patients. From 2nd semester third year students will be allocated such patients.

Fourth and Fifth Year Dental Students
Fourth and fifth year dental students may, and should, treat BBV infected patients.

11.4 Skin Breach Injuries

The School’s procedures for Skin Breach Accidents are clear and every student and member of staff should carry a Skin Breach Accident First Aid Card attached to their ID swipe.

11.5 Student Concerns

The Clinical Director, Course Convenors and, if necessary, Dean and Head of School are available to counsel any students with concerns regarding treatment of patients with blood borne infections.
12.0 Related Policies and Forms

Related policies and Forms can be found at [www.gu.edu.au/school/doh](http://www.gu.edu.au/school/doh) current students, policies and procedures.

- School of Dentistry and Oral Health Clinical and Laboratory Requirements
- Infection Control Procedure Manual
- School of Dentistry and Oral Health Medical Examination Form (includes letter to Doctor)
- Statutory Declaration

13.0 Key Contacts

Acting Director of Clinical Operations: Prof Newell Johnson  n.johnson@griffith.edu.au

Administrative Assistant (Placements): Ms Lisa Lowe  l.lowe@griffith.edu.au

DOH School Administration: 07 5678 0793 or doh@griffith.edu.au
APPENDIX A

Students who wish to use the Griffith University Health Service should complete the following form and return it to Griffith Health before their appointment date, if they have not previously attended the Health Service.

PLEASE RETURN TO HEALTH SERVICE G18, 2.21

Patient details:

Student or staff number:……………………………………

Title:  □ Mr  □ Mrs  □ Miss  □ Ms
          □ Other:………………………………………………

First name:………………………………. Initials:…………

Family name:………………………………………………

Date of birth:…………./………./………

Gender: □ Male  □ Female

Addresses:

Residential address:…………………………………………
                      …………………………………………………
                      …………………………………………………

Do you wish recalls to be sent to the above address?
□ Yes  □ No

If no, please specify other address:…………………………
                      …………………………………………………
                      …………………………………………………

BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT DATE

Card Information:

Medicare No.:…………………………Expiry …/…/……

Concession/Health Care Card No ………………………

Expiry date:………./………./………

Veterans No.:………………………………………………

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HEALTH COVER

Fund ………………. Policy No…………………..

Expiry date………………………………………………

Contacts:

BH Phone:………………………………………………

AH Phone:………………………………………………

Mobile:………………………………………………

Email:………………………………………………

Type:  □ Student  □ International student
          □ Staff  □ Visitor