

## CLINICAL REQUIREMENTS/REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

In addition to meeting the MPAS Program's Technical Standards, there are Clinical Requirements/Required Documentation. All costs associated with obtaining a physical, immunizations, necessary laboratory studies, and additional health requirements as required are the responsibility of the student. Submitting proof of documentation and annual updates as relevant must be submitted to the program via *CastleBranch*. Requirements, which are part of enrollment into the Program and with relevant updates are as follows:

1. Current [health insurance](#)
2. TB test results
3. Immunization records including required vaccinations and/or relevant titers (or proper medical waivers)
4. A statement of medical clearance signed by the student's primary care provider
5. Clearance of results of substance abuse test (urine drug screen)
6. Clearance from background check (BCI and FBI)
7. Technical Standards

The student is responsible for any costs associated with not carefully following *CastleBranch* requirements/directions.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

Students are expected to show proof of personal health insurance coverage before the start of the MPAS Program through *CastleBranch*. Students are to maintain health insurance coverage throughout the entire MPAS Program. The college health insurance policy is billed in the first semester as a one semester prorated fee and the college policy is billed again in the Fall for the entire coverage year.

## TB TESTING AND IMMUNIZATIONS

(Also available at <http://www.mercycollege.edu/background>)

The following health screenings/immunizations are required for students in College Health Programs at Mercy College of Ohio. **Requirements are subject to change based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or clinical affiliation site guidelines.**

**LIVE VACCINES CAN INTERFERE WITH THE TUBERCULOSIS (TB) TEST RESPONSE AND CAN RESULT IN DELAYS UP TO FOUR WEEKS IF BOTH ARE REQUIRED.**

### Required Screenings:

Tuberculosis (TB) Screening (one of the following, must be negative; renews annually):

- A. 2-step Mantoux PPD at entry followed by annual 1-step PPD
- B. Previous 2-step Mantoux PPD with subsequent annual 1-step PPD screenings
- C. Serum T-Spot or QuantiFERON test annually
- D. In the event that a student has had the BCG vaccination, serum T-Spot or QuantiFERON test annually

If TB screen is **positive\*\***, the following is required:

1. Negative chest X-ray radiology report within past 5 years with negative TB AND Symptoms Review **AND** annual negative TB Symptoms Review

2. If chest X-ray is *not* negative, one of the following is required:

a. Confirmation of appropriately collected negative sputum results

**OR**

b. proof of adequate treatment and medical clearance (free from communicable diseases) with appropriate follow-up as indicated by Provider

**\*\*NOTE:** *Physician Assistant students with a positive TB test must show adequate treatment and/or medical clearance as indicated PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF CLASSES*

**Required Titers:** (completed prior to start of the program)

1. Hepatitis B IgG Antibody Titer\* - positive
  - A. If titer is not positive:
    - a. 3 new doses of Hepatitis B (3 dose series: 0, 1, 6 months) AND
    - b. Anti-HBs serologic retest 6-8 weeks after final dose
  - OR**
  - c. 2 doses of Heplisav-B<sup>™</sup> (HepB-CpG) Vaccine (2 dose series: 0 and 2 months) AND
  - d. Anti-HBs serologic retest 6-8 weeks after final dose
2. Measles (Rubeola) IgG Antibody Titer\* - positive
  - A. If titer is not positive:
    - a. 2 doses of MMR (0 and at least 28 days later); no serologic retest necessary
3. Mumps IgG Antibody Titer\* - positive
  - A. If titer is not positive:
    - a. 2 doses of MMR (0 and at least 28 days later); no serologic retest necessary
4. Rubella (German Measles) IgG Antibody Titer\* - positive
  - A. If titer is not positive:
    - a. 2 doses of MMR (0 and at least 28 days later); no serologic retest necessary
5. Varicella (Chickenpox) IgG Antibody Titer\* - positive
  - A. If titer is not positive:
    - a. 2 doses of Varicella (0 and at least 28 days later); no serologic retest necessary

### **Required Immunizations:**

1. Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis (Tdap) (renews every 10 years)
  - A. Documentation of Tdap during lifetime AND
  - B. Documentation of adult Td booster or Tdap within past 10 years
2. Influenza Immunization (renews annually)
3. Documentation of COVID-19 Vaccination\* (must include the vaccine manufacturer):
  - A. Proof of two-dose Moderna series
  - B. Proof of two-dose Pfizer series
  - C. Proof of single dose Johnson & Johnson COVID vaccination
4. Meningitis vaccination\*:
  - A. MenACWY (conjugate) vaccines (Menveo<sup>®</sup> and MenQuadfi<sup>®</sup>) – single dose followed by a booster administered a minimum of 8 weeks later
  - OR**
  - B. MenABCWY (conjugate and recombinant protein) vaccine (Penbraya<sup>™</sup>); MenABCWY – single dose followed by a booster administered a minimum of 6 months later **AND**
    - a) If last vaccination is older than five years, documentation of an additional booster of MenACWY or MenABCWY is required. Renewal will be set for 5 years.
5. Others as identified based on outcome of above titers.

\*These vaccines are NOT REQUIRED by Bon Secours Mercy Health however they are recommended as they may effect clinical placement (due to clinical site policies) and may ultimately effect graduation timeline.

Requirements are subject to change based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or clinical affiliation site guidelines. Of note, there is the potential per CDC recommendations to receive a 2- dose series of hepatitis B vaccination if serology is negative. However, to remain congruent with the majority of requirements for clinical sites, the 3-dose hepatitis B vaccination series is required.

Furthermore, the CDC does not recommend annual TB testing routinely. However, given students would arguably be considered a high-risk population with consideration for high turnover rate through rotations as well as multiple specialty exposures and also to remain in compliance with the majority of clinical site requirements, students will be required to receive a TB test yearly.

### **Important Information Regarding Additional Requirements:**

Some clinical sites may have additional health testing, immunization, and/or titer requirements that are not reflected here. Program administration will notify students when aware of such additional requirements. If students are assigned to clinical rotations or request to be placed at a specific site with additional requirements, students must meet

the appropriate health requirements as required by that specific site.

Documentation showing compliance with additional requirements must be provided to the program administrator to be uploaded to the administrator portal of students' accounts with Vendor. Students are advised to keep copies of such documentation in case individual clinical sites require proof of completion. Costs associated with additional requirements are the responsibility of the student.

The immunization status and results of screenings are handled through *CastleBranch*.

### **Medical Contraindication/Waivers or Extensions for Required Immunizations**

This information is also available at the Mercy College of Ohio [website](#) by referencing "Exemption or Due Date Extensions for Clinical Requirements." These policies are subject to change, and the most up-to-date information can be found by visiting the [website](#).

Students unable to receive vaccinations/meet other health requirements due to temporary or permanent reasons may request waivers or extensions, which may be approved or denied by clinical facilities. The College will make a reasonable attempt to find alternate clinical placements for students seeking waivers or extensions, but it is at the discretion of clinical sites whether students are permitted to participate in clinical experiences. **Waivers/Extensions are subject to approval by each clinical or practicum site each semester. If waivers/extensions are denied, it will prevent placement in clinical experiences and progression in the academic program.**

**Requests for an extension/waiver and required documentation must be submitted no later than two weeks prior to the due date, or processing delays could cause the student to miss clinical rotations.**

### **Influenza and COVID-19 Exemption Request**

For medical or religious exemption, contact [exemptions@mercycollege.edu](mailto:exemptions@mercycollege.edu) upon acceptance into the program and/or as far in advance of the immunization deadline as possible to request the required exemption form. The form is updated annually and must be requested each year. Continue with the steps below.

### **Extension and Waiver Requests**

1. Obtain dated/signed Provider's note (on letterhead or prescription pad). NOTE MUST INCLUDE:
  - a. Vaccination(s)/requirement student is unable to complete
  - b. Reason (i.e., pregnancy, documented history of allergy, etc.) *Egg allergy is not an approved exemption if the egg-free version of the influenza vaccine is available.*
  - c. Specific date when student can receive the vaccination/meet requirement, *or* Provider's recommendation that the restriction is permanent
2. Email Provider's note and *Vaccination Exemption Request*, if applicable, to [exemptions@mercycollege.edu](mailto:exemptions@mercycollege.edu) with request for exemption OR extension of due date.
3. The Clinical Compliance Coordinator will review the information and request clarification or additional information, if necessary. The *Waiver for Exemption/Extension Requests* will be emailed to the student. Completed form must be returned to [exemptions@mercycollege.edu](mailto:exemptions@mercycollege.edu).
4. **Approval is not automatic.** Student's request will be shared with the program administrator, who will make a reasonable attempt to find clinical placement for the student. The program administrator will communicate with student whether a clinical site can accommodate the request. If approved, the requirement(s) in student's *CastleBranch* account will be updated. **Waivers/Extensions are subject to approval by each clinical or practicum site each semester.**

### **Notes:**

If student has not been released by his/her Provider to receive the vaccination(s)/meet requirement by the extended due date, an updated Provider's note with a new date must be emailed to [exemptions@mercycollege.edu](mailto:exemptions@mercycollege.edu).

*Vaccination Exemption Requests* must be completed routinely as directed by the Clinical Compliance Coordinator.

## MEDICAL CLEARANCE

A Confirmation of Physical Examination and Clinical Requirements Clearance must be filled out by the student's primary care practitioner within the last 12 months affirming that the student has no communicable disease that would pose a danger to patient safety and the student is able to meet the program's Technical Standards and safely participate in the program, with or without reasonable accommodation. This form will be submitted via *CastleBranch* and is required prior to matriculation into the PA program. The form also addresses immunization status of the student.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE TESTING

All students must successfully pass a 10-panel drug test through *CastleBranch* prior to matriculation into the MPAS Program and prior to beginning the MPAS Program's clinical rotations. The 10-panel drug test checks for amphetamine [methamphetamine], barbiturates, benzodiazepine, cocaine, marijuana, methadone, methaqualone, opiates [codeine, morphine], phencyclidine, and propoxyphene.

Students will be required to undergo substance abuse testing at matriculation and before the clinical phase or more frequently as required.

Students who are performing in an unsafe manner, and/or whose behaviors are suspect, may be subject to an assessment by a healthcare provider and may be asked to submit to an immediate drug screening at the student's expense.

Up-to-date detailed information is available at the Mercy College of Ohio [website](#) by clicking on the "Drug Test Requirement" document.

## BACKGROUND CHECK

All PA students must complete a background check and fingerprinting prior to matriculation into the program. This will be completed by students purchasing a package through *CastleBranch* and is a part of the initial acceptance/application process. Students are responsible for any *CastleBranch* related expenses.

Up-to-date detailed information can be found by visiting the Mercy College of Ohio [website](#) and clicking on "Background Check and Fingerprinting." Students will see additional instructions once the steps are followed to create a *CastleBranch* account.

The intent of the background check is as follows:

1. Allow for clinical site placement due to requirements of the clinical sites and their affiliation agreements with Mercy College of Ohio and the PA Program.
2. Enhance the ability to identify those students who may not be able to meet requirements for clinical placement and/or licensure requirements in some states.
  - a. Students with criminal findings on their background check and/or fingerprinting records may not be able to complete requirements for the clinical year and consequently may not be able to graduate from the Program.
  - b. Record of some convictions may disqualify students from taking the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) and consequently keep the student from clinical practice. Any questions regarding clarification need to be directed by the student to the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) and the individual medical board in the state(s) in which the student wishes to eventually practice. In order to matriculate into the program, the student will need to obtain the appropriate eligibility for state licensure and board certification from the NCCPA and appropriate state board as laws vary from state to state.
3. Encourage patient safety and protection of other students and individuals on campus.

The background check is confidential information. Only confirmation of clearance will be accessible to the Program. Written consent will be given by the student for the Program to release clearance confirmation to clinical sites for rotation placement. Inability to complete the requirements on time may result in inability for the student to matriculate into the program or dismissal from the program or other disciplinary action as indicated.

Findings on the fingerprinting or background check will result in *CastleBranch* contacting the student to provide any needed additional documentation or information of the issues found on the background check. This may result in a discussion with the student as to whether clinical placement will be affected. If a clinical site that will accept such offenses cannot be reasonably found, the student will not be able to complete or matriculate into the clinical year and may not be able to matriculate into the program. Each instance will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the PA Program, appropriate College administrators, and/or staff, as well as clinical rotation sites as appropriate. Clinical sites may refuse students based on findings on fingerprinting and/or background checks.

If for any reason any additional clearance (e.g. background check, fingerprinting, drug test) needs to be completed for clinical site requirements, the student is responsible for the related expense.