

MCPHS University

Immunization Guidance and FAQs

WHAT A STUDENT MUST DO

Your task is to show proof that you've received all the required immunizations or have developed immunity following an illness or vaccination. This must be completed before **August 1** if you are beginning your program in the Fall semester, **December 1** if you are beginning your program in the Spring, or **April 1** if you are beginning in the Summer. You must remain in compliance throughout your enrollment at MCPHS University / Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences ("MCPHS"). A record of your immunizations provided by your healthcare provider is sufficient proof. In many cases, a blood test or titer is accepted as proof of immunity from a vaccine or prior illness.

ABOUT THE IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Who must be in immunization compliance?

Immunization compliance is required for all enrolled students in the following categories:

- All campus-based students
- All residential students
- All online students with an on-site clinical rotation

At MCPHS, these requirements come from three sources.

- First, state law of Massachusetts and New Hampshire require that university students must be immunized against certain diseases to be permitted to attend classes on campus. These immunizations are the vaccines commonly given to children before attending grade school, such as measles, mumps, rubella and tetanus.
- Second, the [MCPHS Immunization Policy](#) and the program you are enrolled in prescribes additional common immunizations, such as the COVID-19 vaccine and booster, if eligible.
- And third, if your program includes clinical rotations, then you will have additional immunization requirements set by clinical sites, such as a Tuberculin (TB) skin or blood test.

TIMELINES

Immunization/Waiver Deadlines for STATE Requirements:

- **August 1**—Fall Admitted Students
- **December 1**—Spring Admitted Students
- **April 1** — Summer Admitted Students

WHAT ARE THE STATE IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS?

All students must show proof of the following **STATE/UNIVERSITY** immunization requirements:

MMR
Varicella (chickenpox)
Hepatitis B

TDaP
Meningococcal

What proof of immunity can I upload?

First, please see page 56 of the [MCPHS Immunization Policy in the Student Handbook](#), where you can find a list of programs and the corresponding immunization requirements.

In general, documented proof of immunity for **STATE** immunization requirements can include:

- **MMR**
 - 2 MMR vaccine doses, OR
 - 1 positive MMR antibody titer
- **VARICELLA (CHICKENPOX)**
 - 2 varicella vaccine doses, OR
 - 1 positive varicella antibody titer, OR
 - a letter from your physician confirming a history of varicella disease
- **HEPATITIS B**
 - 3 hepatitis B vaccine doses, OR
 - 1 positive hepatitis B antibody titer
- **TDAP**
 - 1 TDaP vaccine (adult version) taken within the past 10 years, OR
 - 1 Td booster taken within the past 10 years along with proof of TDaP taken anytime
- **MENINGOCOCCAL**
 - 1 meningococcal vaccine taken after your 16th birthday if you are under the age of 22

Who can I talk to about CLINICAL requirements?

Some programs may require students to attend a clinical rotation or a professional practice phase.

CLINICAL immunization requirements may differ from STATE immunization requirements.

The Immunization Office manages the STATE requirements while clinical coordinators manage the CLINICAL requirements.

For help with CLINICAL requirements, please contact your [Clinical Coordinator](#).

HOW TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS

Step 1 – Create a profile on the CastleBranch platform.

- To create your profile, go to: <https://mycb.castlebranch.com>.
- Enter the package code that you received in an email from MCPHS University Student Immunization Compliance Office into the "Place Order" space, and hit "Go." On the next screen, check to see that the listed program matches the program you are enrolled in.
- You will then be directed to enter information such as your full name, date of birth, and MCPHS Student ID number. (Please do not include the letter "m" before your 7 digit number.) Then proceed through the steps to complete the online order process.
- Payment: At the end of the order process, you will be prompted to enter your Visa or MasterCard information to pay the one-time registration fee. The fee is approximately \$50 depending on the program you are enrolled

in. Money orders are also accepted but will result in an additional \$10 fee and additional turn-around-time.

After you create your "MyCB" profile, you will see your "To-Do List" that includes your state and MCPHS Immunization Policy requirements under "State Requirements." Students going on clinical rotations will see their additional requirements under "Clinical Requirements," and sometimes "Immunizations – Additional" if more immunizations are required by the clinical site.

Step 2 – Collect your immunization records.

The best resources for your immunization records are 1) your primary care provider (PCP); 2) your pediatrician; and 3) [your state's immunization information system](#) (IIS). An IIS is a statewide immunization registry that doctors and public health clinics use to save and update vaccination records.

We strongly recommend that you make an appointment with your PCP as soon as possible. If you do not have access to your PCP for an appointment, then you must make an appointment with a clinic or other health care provider. Show them the MCPHS immunization policy requirements for your program and ask them to compare your existing immunization record with these requirements. Your PCP or healthcare provider can then provide medical advice and/or services to bring your record into compliance with all the requirements before the start of the academic term.

If you have few or no immunization records, remember, the requirements ask for proof of immunity and not proof of immunization. This means many, but not all, of the requirements can be met by the results of lab tests or titers that prove immunity that are generally available at most clinics. See FAQ #19 below for further information about lab tests and titers and consult with your PCP or healthcare provider. Tests and titers to show immunity to COVID-19 are not accepted.

Step 3 – See that your records comply with CastleBranch's Acceptable Documentation standards.

Show your PCP or healthcare provider the Acceptable Documentation standards to be sure your records meet the specifications. Your records must include your first and last name on each page for approval. If your name is missing from *any* page, the record will be rejected. If any blank pages are submitted, these do not need to include your name. Records that do not meet the Acceptable Documentation standards will be rejected by CastleBranch.

In case your records do not meet the Acceptable Documentation standard for any reason (such as for being **illegible**, or in a **foreign language**, etc.), then you should ask your PCP or healthcare provider to fill out one of the [MCPHS Immunization Forms](#) (Form A or Form B, depending on whether you have Clinical Requirements). When properly filled out and signed by a physician, these forms can be uploaded to your MyCB To-Do List as an official immunization record for review by CastleBranch staff. Remember – the MCPHS form might not list all your requirements and you may need to supplement it with additional records.

Step 4 – Upload to your MyCB To-Do List.

CastleBranch allows photographs or .pdf files of your records to be uploaded to your To-Do List. Make sure that the scans or photos are clearly legible and not out of focus because illegible documents will be rejected. If your record consists of multiple pages, then scan the entire document as a multi-page .pdf file because single pages of a longer document are considered incomplete and will be rejected. You must upload a file to each tab for review. In other words, if you have a multi-page record that lists five of your program's requirements, then you must upload that file to each corresponding requirement's tab in your To-Do List.

Step 5 – Monitor your email account for messages from CastleBranch.

Specially trained CastleBranch staff will review your uploaded records for compliance with the requirements and standards. Your order will show as "In Process" until the record is reviewed. CastleBranch will notify by email if a record is not approved and marked "Rejected." The reason for the rejection will be provided in the email, or you will find it in MyCB. You must take action to address the problem.

* Note that once you've completed all the requirements on your To-Do list, then you will have relatively little to do with immunization records during your experience at MCPHS. You may have to give the subject some attention if you are in a program that requires an annual TB test, or if a requirement changes, or if one of your vaccinations expire, prompting the need for a booster.

Questions?

All questions about:

- technical issues (such as with logging in to CastleBranch or uploading file, etc.), and
- your immunization requirement status, rejections, or renewals

must be directed to the CastleBranch Customer Experience Team at (888) 723-4263. Student Support Representatives are available to assist you from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EST Monday through Friday. You can also go to your MyCB profile during these times, click on "Contact Us," click on the student tab and "Live Chat" to chat online with a CastleBranch rep.

Most, if not all, of your questions about MCPHS immunization requirements will be answered by reading the FAQs below, and by referring to the [MCPHS Immunization Policy](#). If you have questions that are not addressed below, then for:

- **State Requirements** – email the MCPHS University Student Immunization Compliance Office at immunization@mcphs.edu or call 617 735-1105;
- **Clinical Requirements** – contact your [Clinical Coordinator](#); and for
- **COVID-19 Requirements** – Visit the [COVID-19 Information Center](#)

Immunization Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why do I have to provide proof of immunization or immunity to MCPHS?

State law and MCPHS University policy require that you and all students receive certain vaccinations in order to protect the health and safety of others with whom you and they will come in contact. You must report your records because you are required to verify compliance with MCPHS' Immunization Policy, and MCPHS must comply with its enforcement obligations under Massachusetts and New Hampshire law.

2. Where can I find MCPHS's immunization policy?

For your convenience, MCPHS's immunization policy is available on the University's website, in the MCPHS Catalog and the MCPHS Student Handbook.

3. Why do I have to be compliant with the immunization policy by the first day of the semester?

MCPHS must monitor the immunization compliance of approximately 7,000 students and has decided for administrative reasons that the deadline for compliance is:

- **August 1**—Fall Admitted Students
- **December 1**—Spring Admitted Students
- **April 1** — Summer Admitted Students

After the deadline and up until the first day of classes, we will work with students seeking extensions who are able to show proof of an appointment confirmation. Students who are not compliant risk being administratively withdrawn from the University.

4. How do I report my immunizations to MCPHS?

MCPHS utilizes a secure online document management system operated by CastleBranch, which is a company that works with schools nationwide, to track student immunization compliance. Every student attending MCPHS for the first time must establish and maintain a password-protected account with CastleBranch regarding his or her immunization compliance.

5. Where do I go to obtain my proof of immunity or immunization records?

The best resources for your immunization records are:

- 1) primary care provider (PCP);
- 2) your pediatrician; and
- 3) your state's [immunization information system](#) (IIS). An IIS is a statewide immunization registry that doctors and public health clinics use to save and update vaccination records.

If you are unable to do this, many hospitals, clinics and pharmacies provide medical advice regarding immunizations and proof of immunity. It is up to you to identify a health care provider or facility that provides these services. For your convenience, there is a list of pharmacies near the three MCPHS campuses at the end of this document. MCPHS recommends that students call ahead to ensure the pharmacy / healthcare provider / clinic provides the services that you need.

6. Do I have to use CastleBranch to report my proof of immunity or immunization records to MCPHS? Can I send my records directly to MCPHS?

Do **not** mail, fax, email or otherwise deliver your health records to MCPHS. The University will **not** transfer them to CastleBranch. In order to be in compliance, you must create a profile with CastleBranch and submit your records directly to your MyCB profile.

7. Why do I have to pay CastleBranch a fee to establish my profile?

CastleBranch is a secure platform where students can show proof of immunity and allows the University to track and monitor immunization compliance. There is a one-time fee associated with CastleBranch to maintain each student's account. This is a one-time reduced payment that MCPHS and CastleBranch agreed on when they first partnered together, and it is not included in the tuition because the price can vary depending on your program and campus. Your account will remain available to you with online access both during and after your tenure as a student at MCPHS.

8. How do I establish my password-protected account with CastleBranch in order to report my records?

The MCPHS Immunization Office will send an email to either your personal email address and/or to your @stu.mcphs.edu email address containing a "package code" specific to your MCPHS academic program, e.g., pharmacy, nursing, physical therapy, etc. Once you enter your package code into the CastleBranch program and establish your account, you will have access to a description of all of your immunization requirements as well as the steps to upload the required documentation to CastleBranch.

9. Who will have access to my password-protected account?

You, professionals at CastleBranch who review the information you submit in order to ascertain if what you have submitted is adequate evidence of compliance, and authorized officials at MCPHS who are required to monitor student compliance.

10. Do the records I submit to CastleBranch have to be in English?

Yes. All records submitted to CastleBranch **must** be in English. Students are responsible for having their records translated into English **prior** to submitting them to CastleBranch. Records submitted in a language other than English will **not** be considered by CastleBranch for compliance. To assist you, ask your PCP or healthcare provider to fill out one of the MCPHS Immunization Forms (Form A or Form B, depending on whether you have Clinical Requirements). When properly filled out and signed by a health care practitioner such as an MD, PA or NP, these forms can be uploaded to your MyCB To-Do List as an official immunization record for review by CastleBranch staff. Remember – the MCPHS form might not list all your requirements and you may need to supplement it with additional records.

11. What do I do if I am unable for some reason to complete my CastleBranch To-Do List STATE requirements before the first day of the semester?

You should make every effort to complete your STATE requirements before the start of the semester. If your STATE requirements are not complete on the first day of the semester, you risk being administratively withdrawn from the University. However, if you are unable to obtain complete and acceptable records prior to the start of the semester, you should arrange to obtain these as soon as you arrive at school and email the Immunization Office a screenshot of your appointment for an extension. Again, it is up to you to identify a place or a service where you can seek medical advice regarding proof of immunity. Many hospitals, clinics and pharmacies provide these services. Again, non-compliant students risk being administratively withdrawn from the University. (See the list the end of these FAQ's for a list of health care providers in the vicinity of MCPHS campuses.)

12. If I was admitted to MCPHS in the weeks just before the start of the semester and did not have time to complete my CastleBranch To-Do List requirements before arriving at school, will I be penalized?

You should make every effort to complete your STATE requirements before the start of the semester. If your STATE requirements are not complete on the first day of the semester, you risk being administratively withdrawn from the University. However, if you are unable to obtain complete and acceptable records prior to the start of the semester, you should arrange to obtain these as soon as you arrive at school and email the Immunization Office a screenshot of your appointment for an extension. Again, it is up to you to identify a place or a service where you can seek medical advice regarding proof of immunity. Many hospitals, clinics and pharmacies provide these services. Again, non-compliant students risk being administratively withdrawn from the University. (See the list the

end of these FAQ's for a list of health care providers in the vicinity of MCPHS campuses.)

13. I submitted proof of a vaccination to CastleBranch and it was rejected. Why?

If one of your submissions has been rejected, CastleBranch will have provided you with an explanation of why it was rejected in an email to you. You will also find the explanation for the rejection by signing into your MyCB profile. For example, your document is too fuzzy to read, or your full name is missing, or your upload was not successful. There are many reasons why submitted proof of immunity or immunization record might be rejected.

14. Do I have to upload my records to CastleBranch?

Yes, CastleBranch is the platform by which you show proof of immunity by vaccine record, titer report, or other medical document to all your immunization requirements.

15. What do I do if CastleBranch rejects one of my records?

If a record was rejected by the CastleBranch review team, you must check the reason (see FAQ #13 above) and take the necessary steps to correct the problem. When you have resolved the issue with your record, go to the requirement in your MyCB, and you will see the option to upload new documentation and follow the instructions just like the first time you submitted to that requirement. You do not have to contact the CastleBranch Customer Experience Team to replace a rejected record.

16. Do I have to get a flu shot?

Not all students are required to get a flu shot. Please read the MCPHS Immunization Policy carefully to determine if you are in a program that requires it. However, MCPHS encourages all its students to obtain a flu shot as soon as they become available. There are many widely advertised opportunities to receive the flu vaccine when that vaccine becomes available each fall.

17. What do I do if I can't get a flu shot before the first day of the semester?

If you have a requirement for an annual influenza vaccination, you must receive a flu shot annually during the flu season as soon and upload the record to your [CLINICAL](#) section by September 15. You must also document this annually in your CastleBranch account by submitting the written confirmation that you will receive when you get your flu shot. You will not be penalized on the first day of classes if you have not yet gotten a flu shot if the flu vaccine is not yet available. There are many widely advertised opportunities to receive the flu vaccine when that vaccine becomes available in the fall.

18. I submitted proof of my flu shot from last year but CastleBranch rejected it. Why?

Each year the flu shot is specifically formulated in anticipation of the influenza virus types and subtypes predicted to be prevalent during a particular flu season. Therefore, if your program requires a flu vaccine, you must get the new flu vaccine each year when it becomes available sometime in the fall.

19. What if I haven't completed my Hepatitis B immunization series by the first day of the semester?

If you have not completed your Hepatitis B immunization series by the first day of the semester, you will not be penalized. However, you must have begun the Hepatitis B immunization series, submitted the evidence to CastleBranch, and be scheduled to complete the series. Additionally, until you have completed the Hepatitis B series, you may be unable to participate in clinical rotations or other activities with patient contact, which may negatively impact progression in your academic program.

20. Some of the immunization requirements state that "laboratory evidence of immunity is required." What is "laboratory evidence of immunity?" What is a "titer?"

"Laboratory evidence of Immunity" requires your obtaining a record of a "titer" (or "titre"), which is a way of expressing the strength or concentration of a substance in a solution. Testing titers are done through a blood test that can identify the presence of antibodies induced by vaccinations, becoming ill and recovering from the

infection, having been exposed to the infection, or a combination of the above. If the levels are satisfactory, the person is considered to have protective antibody and is considered to be sufficiently immune to the disease. Titer tests do not distinguish between antibodies generated by vaccination and those generated by natural exposure to disease agents through infection. Most conventional medical personnel agree that when an adequate antibody titer is present, the person is considered immune. Antibody titer tests are not accepted for COVID-19.

21. What do I do if I cannot receive a required immunization because of a medical reason?

If you have a medical reason why you cannot receive a specific immunization, have your health care provider write a letter (on official letterhead with a signature) certifying that the provider has personally examined you and is of the opinion that your health would be endangered by the immunization. Then, fill out the [MCPHS Student Vaccine Exemption Request Form](#), and scan the form and the health care provider's letter into one .pdf document. Upload the file to MyCB under the requirement's tab in your To-Do List.

After you upload your request to MyCB, it will be rejected by CastleBranch because only the MCPHS Immunization Office can grant exemptions. When you receive the notice of rejection from CastleBranch, contact the MCPHS Student Immunization Compliance Office at immunization@mcphs.edu or by telephone at 617 735-1105. Your request for an exemption will then be reviewed by MCPHS and the status of your request will appear in your MyCB.

22. What do I do if I have a sincerely-held faith-based belief and for that reason I cannot receive a required immunization?

If you have a sincerely-held faith-based belief that prevents you from being administered specific vaccine(s), you may request a faith-based exemption by filling out an MCPHS Student Vaccine Exemption Request Form and uploading the file to MyCB under the requirement's tab in your To-Do List.

After you upload your request to MyCB, it will be rejected by CastleBranch because only the MCPHS University Immunization Office can grant exemptions. When you receive the notice of rejection from CastleBranch, contact the MCPHS University Student Immunization Compliance Office at immunization@mcphs.edu or by telephone at 617 735-1105. Your request for an exemption will then be reviewed by MCPHS and the status of your request will appear in your MyCB.

23. Are immunization waivers available, and if so, for which requirements?

A waiver is only available for the Meningococcal vaccine requirement. Your Meningococcal requirement in your MyCB has three tabs that you must engage with to either upload proof of immunization or submit the waiver and complete the requirement. Please note that MCPHS does not control the immunization requirements of clinical sites, which may require the Meningococcal vaccine.

24. What do I do if I don't receive an email telling me how to set up my CastleBranch account?

Please be sure to check your personal and MCPHS email accounts carefully for this information. If you have not received an email from the MCPHS Immunization Office regarding CastleBranch within two (2) weeks after your having sent in your deposit to MCPHS, then contact the MCPHS Student Immunization Compliance Office at immunization@mcphs.edu or by telephone at 617 735-1105.

Please do not contact the Immunization Office unless and until you have checked both your personal and MCPHS email inboxes, including all spam folders, for this information. Please do not call the Admission Office or the Registrar with CastleBranch account inquiries.

25. What do I do if I don't know the "package code" required to set up my CastleBranch account?

Please check your personal and MCPHS email inboxes carefully for an email from the MCPHS Immunization Office for this information, including all spam folders. After doing so, and if at least two (2) weeks have passed since you sent your deposit to MCPHS, please contact the MCPHS Immunization Office at immunization@mcphs.edu or by telephone at 617-735-1105.

26. What do I do if my “package code” for CastleBranch doesn’t work or if I can’t log onto CastleBranch?

If you experience technical issues with the CastleBranch platform such as with logging on, uploading, removing documents, etc., then please contact the CastleBranch Customer Experience Team at 888.723.4263 or customerservice@castlebranch.com. Student Support Representatives will be available Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST. You can also go to your MyCB home page during these hours, click on “Contact Us,” click on the student tab and “Live Chat” to chat online with a CastleBranch representative.

If you are switching programs or are entering a graduate program, then you will need a new package code. Please contact Annie Ponterdolph, the MCPHS University Student Immunization Compliance Officer at immunization@mcphs.edu or by telephone at 617 735-1105 to receive your new code.

27. What do I do if I am unclear about how to upload my documents to CastleBranch?

For help on uploading documents to your account, please contact the Immunization Office email so we can best assist you: immunization@mcphs.edu

You can also reach out to the CastleBranch Customer Experience Team at 888.723.4263 or customerservice@castlebranch.com. Student Support Representatives will be available: Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST. Additionally, you can go to the CastleBranch.com home page during these times, click on “Contact Us,” click on the student tab and “Live Chat” to chat online with a CastleBranch representative.

28. Are my files at CastleBranchsecure?

Specific information about the security measures in place on the CastleBranch website is available at <https://discover.castlebranch.com/privacy-policy/>

29. For how long after I leave MCPHS will my online access to my CastleBranch immunization records be available?

After leaving MCPHS, you will be able to maintain access to your CastleBranch profile indefinitely. Please contact the MCPHS Student Immunization Compliance Office at immunization@mcphs.edu or by telephone at 617 735-1105 to regain access to your MyCB profile.

30. Who do I call if I have questions about the immunization policy?

First, read these FAQs, refer to the MCPHS Immunization Policy, and contact CastleBranch with any questions. Most, if not all, of your questions and issues will be resolved by doing so. If you have a matter that CastleBranch cannot address, then for:

- State Requirements – email the MCPHS Student Immunization Compliance Office at immunization@mcphs.edu or call 617 735-1105;
- Clinical Requirements – contact your [Clinical Coordinator](#); and for
- COVID-19 Requirements – read the [COVID-19 Info Center](#)

IMMUNIZATION SITES

Students should call the pharmacy or healthcare provider from whom they wish to obtain an immunization in advance to ensure that the required vaccines are administered and in stock. Additionally, students are strongly encouraged to bring a copy of their immunization records to their appointment.

BOSTON			
CVS Pharmacy 231 Massachusetts Avenue Boston, MA 02115 (617) 266-6775	CVS Pharmacy 240 Newbury Street Boston, MA 02116 (617) 236-4007	CVS Pharmacy 400 Tremont Street Boston, MA 02116 617-542-2107	Walgreens 1630 Tremont Street Roxbury Crossing Boston, MA 02120 (617) 232-5457
CVS Pharmacy 350 Longwood Avenue Boston, MA 02115 (617) 731-5753	CVS Pharmacy 587 Boylston Street Boston, MA 02116 (617) 437-8414	Walgreens 841 Boylston Street Boston, MA 02116 (617) 236-1692	Carbon Student Health 578 Huntington Avenue Boston, MA 02115 (617) 879-5220
CVS Pharmacy 1249 Boylston Street Boston, MA 02115 (617) 262-1354			
WORCESTER			
CVS Pharmacy 110 Front Street, Suite 102 Worcester, MA 01609 508-752-6001	Walgreens 220 Grafton Street Worcester, MA 01604 508-755-4196	Walgreens 320 Park Avenue Worcester, MA 01610 508-767-1732	Walgreens 937 W. Boylston Street Worcester, MA 01606 (508) 856-7901
CVS Pharmacy 256 Lincoln Street Worcester, MA 01605 508-791-2570	CVS Pharmacy 44 West Boylston Street Worcester, MA 01608 508-852-0238		
MANCHESTER			
Walgreens 227 S. Main Street Manchester, NH 03102 603-666-8538	CVS Pharmacy (Target) 100 Quality Drive Hooksett, NH 03106 (603) 621-0672	Walgreens 1298 Hooksett Road Hooksett, NH 03106 (603) 647-2846	Walgreens 258 Wallace Road Bedford, NH 03110 (603) 472-5847
Walgreens 606 Valley Street Manchester, NH 03103 603-668-7924			

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