

Frequently Asked Questions- Vaccinations

1. What are vaccines?

Vaccines contain the same germs that cause disease that have been either killed or weakened to the point that they do not make you sick. Some vaccines contain only a part of the disease germ. A vaccine stimulates your immune system to produce antibodies, exactly like it would if you were exposed to the disease. After getting vaccinated, you develop immunity to that disease, without having to get the disease first. This is what makes vaccines such powerful medicine. Unlike most medicines, which treat or cure diseases, vaccines prevent them.

2. What are the minimum immunization requirements for MUSC students and employees?

The required immunizations are Diphtheria (DTap, Tdap, Td), Tetanus (DTap, Tdap, Td), Pertussis (Whooping Cough) (DTap, Tdap), Measles (MMR), Mumps (MMR), Rubella (MMR), Hepatitis B, Hepatitis A, and Varicella.

3. Can vaccine requirements be waived if I refuse or do not wish to be vaccinated?

No. The only way to “opt-out” of receiving the required vaccinations would be to submit the Immunization Exemption Request for Accommodation Form through the department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

4. What type of accommodations can I request to be exempt from receiving the required immunizations?

A student may request a medical accommodation or a religious accommodation.

5. What is considered grounds for filing a medical exemption?

A medical exemption must indicate a specific period of time in which the student cannot receive specific vaccinations due to a medical condition. Healthcare providers who submit medical exemptions for mandatory vaccinations must ensure that the information submitted is accurate and verifiable.

6. What should be included in an acceptable religious exemption?

A religious exemption is not the same as a philosophical, moral, or conscientious exemption. A religious exemption accommodation request does not need to be notarized nor does it need to be signed by a religious leader. A religious exemption must identify your sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance.

7. When should I apply for services?

Immediately, the interactive process can take up to 4 weeks.

8. How do I apply for accommodations?

You must complete the Immunization Exemption Request for Accommodation Form.

9. Where can I find the Immunization Exemption Request for Accommodation Form?

The form can be found on the MUSC website at

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MedicalUnivofSC&layout_id=13

10. Where should my required documentation be submitted?

Your documentation should be submitted to the Department of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion attention Stephanie Price, Director of Equity, EEO and University Accessibility Services.

11. I have been diagnosed with a disorder/condition. Will I automatically be granted accommodations?

A diagnosis alone does not qualify you for accommodations. You must have documentation of the existence of a condition that substantially limits a major life activity.

12. Do I have to provide medical documentation?

Yes, you will need to provide medical verification of the medical reason that prevents you from receiving the required immunizations. This documentation is only required if you are requesting a medical exemption. Your qualified (must be qualified to make the reported diagnosis) healthcare provider will need to complete the required sections on the Immunization Exemption Request for Accommodation Form.

13. Is there a deadline for submitting medical exemption accommodation documentation?

In order for you to receive an approved accommodation at the start of the academic year, students are encouraged to submit all their documentation well in advance. If an approved medical or religious accommodation is not on file at the start of the school year, a student may not be able to start classes depending on certain circumstances.

14. Am I required to apply for a medical and/or religious exemption accommodation annually?

No. You will only need to reapply for accommodations if (1.) your circumstances change or (2.) if you need accommodations in a different academic setting not previously approved.

15. When would a student need to be excluded from attending MUSC?

There are two situations in which a student would be excluded from attending MUSC:

1. Non-compliance with vaccine requirements: A student must comply with vaccination requirements by the time, he/she commences enrollment at MUSC unless the student has an approved immunization exemption accommodations request on file.
2. In the event of an outbreak: In the event that the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control determines either that an outbreak or threatened outbreak of disease or other public health immunization emergency exists, all students with approved accommodations to be exempt from the immunization requirements will be excluding from attending MUSC until the outbreak or threatened outbreak is over.

16. Are serology titers acceptable as laboratory evidence of immunity in lieu of completing a vaccination series?

Laboratory evidence of protective immunity will be accepted as evidence of immunization if a student cannot produce a documented history of immunization. The tests used to document immunity must be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for this purpose and performed by a laboratory that is CLIA certified. The reference ranges and interpretation

must be included with the laboratory results and the documentation must be placed in the student's record. Borderline, equivocal and negative titers necessitate vaccination/re-vaccination.

17. What happens after my accommodation documentation is approved?

The Director of Equity, EEO and University Accessibility Services will coordinate with your college's ADA Liaison who will work with your faculty members to implement your approved accommodations.

18. Can I receive accommodations without providing any documentation?

No. You will need to complete the Request for Accommodations Form and have your qualified license healthcare provider complete the Medical Verification Form along with supporting documentation.