

Augusta University

Policy Library

Document Title Requirements for Students

Policy Manager: Dean of Students

POLICY STATEMENT

Universities are at risk of disease transmission because there is a diverse population assembled in close proximity for prolonged periods of time. In cooperation with the American College Health Association guidelines (2014), Augusta University has implemented the following tuberculosis (TB) screening and surveillance policy applicable to student enrollment and continuing registration requirements:

- For *New Students* – the TB screening questionnaire must be completed no later than two weeks from the start of a student’s first academic term at Augusta University.
- For *Continuing or Returning Students* – the TB screening questionnaire must be submitted prior to registration for the next fall semester. If for any reason, a student does not attend the fall semester, they will need to submit the required documentation prior to registration for the spring or summer terms. Resubmission will again be required prior for registration for the following Fall term.

Failure to complete the questionnaire and any further required testing applicable to a particular student will result in an "immunization hold" preventing further course registration. The immunization hold will be removed only upon completion of all screening and/or testing requirements. Students will be able to register in Augusta University courses once the hold is removed. After submission of the required materials, please allow *3 business days* for the screening form to be processed and any “immunization holds” to be removed.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:

- Alumni Faculty Graduate Students Health Professional Students
 Staff Undergraduate Students Vendors/Contractors Visitors
 Other:

DEFINITIONS

- IGRA test = **Interferon- γ release assays** (IGRA) are medical tests used in the diagnosis of some infectious diseases, especially tuberculosis. There are currently two IFN- γ release assays available for the diagnosis of tuberculosis: QuantiFERON-TB Gold and T-SPOT TB, a form of ELISpot, the variant of ELISA.

Office of Legal Affairs Use Only

Executive Sponsor: VP for Enrollment and Student Affairs

Next Review: 2/2024

- QuantiFERON test (QFT) = is an interferon- γ release whole blood assay used in diagnosing *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* infection, including latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) and tuberculosis (TB) disease.

PROCESS & PROCEDURES

TESTING AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. Annual TB screening is required for all students as part of the registration process and consists of completion of the following questionnaire: <http://www.augusta.edu/shs/documents/tbscreening.pdf>
2. The questionnaire may be sent via fax, email, by mail, or delivered in person.
3. Students who answer “yes” to any question on the annual surveillance survey will need to see a medical provider and/or nurse to be screened for risk factors and may need TB treatment.
4. All continuing students need to complete the annual TB questionnaire but should only be tested if they travel back from a high risk country, when their activities place them at risk for a new infection, or are required by an academic college, school, or department. The CDC does not have evidence-based data that identifies what amount of time in a given high-risk country would constitute significant exposure.
5. Any individual whose risk factors change (i.e. spending an extensive period of time in an area of high disease prevalence) is expected to pursue due diligence and receive earlier surveillance.
6. Any individual who believes they have been in close contact (e.g., living arrangements, patient care) with someone with active pulmonary tuberculosis or has symptoms (fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, weight loss, night sweats, etc.) must notify Student Health Services immediately of this concern and be tested.

ADVANCED SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

Dependent upon the submitted response, additional medical documentation and screening may be required for some students. The immunization hold will not be lifted until all required documentation and/or treatment is complete.

TB testing of high-risk students should take place no sooner than six months prior to the start of the first semester and should be completed by the second semester registration.

Based on standard epidemiologic criteria, the screening form may indicate whether a student is in need of additional testing. If prompted by the guidance outlined in the form, a tuberculin skin test (TST) will be necessary. Alternatively, an interferon gamma release assay (IGRA) may be submitted. The two IGRA tests results accepted are the QuantiFERON-Gold or T-spot test. Students with a positive TST (where there is 10mm of induration for healthy or 5mm of induration for immuno-compromised students), or an indeterminate TST, MUST proceed to IGRA testing.

An IGRA is required as best practice of TB screening for:

- Any individual with a positive TST;
- Anyone with a past positive TST and no IGRA on record. (TSTs may represent a false positive result; i.e. test positive, but no infection or disease);
- Any individual with an indeterminate or unclear TST result; IGRAs cannot distinguish between latent infection and active tuberculosis (TB) disease. A positive IGRA result may not necessarily indicate TB infection but can also be caused by infection with non-tuberculous mycobacteria. A negative IGRA does not rule out active TB disease.

Because IGRAs are not affected by Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccination status, IGRAs are useful for evaluation of LTBI in BCG-vaccinated individuals.

An Augusta University student may submit an IGRA for compliance purposes.

DISCLOSURE AND TREATMENT REQUIREMENT

Individuals with positive IGRA tests are presumed infected and must proceed to TB disease surveillance. Individuals with positive IGRA tests who do not show symptoms of being actively sick or infectious are considered as having latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI). Surveillance at this level requires documentation of a chest x-ray showing no active pulmonary tuberculosis and a signed negative symptom testimony from a medical provider.

Any individual with either 1) a positive chest x-ray for active disease or 2) a positive symptom log must be evaluated on an individual basis by experienced medical personnel accustomed to working with TB cases.

Active tuberculosis is a reportable disease to both federal and state Public Health authorities. Individuals with active TB will not be allowed to participate in class or campus life activities. Actively sick individuals must follow any seclusion requirements made by Public Health Services, and will not be allowed to participate in campus-based activities until the Public Health Department has declared them eligible to do so.

FACILITATION

Student Health Services will assist any student who

- is uncertain about the policy or how to comply with the requirements;
- needs assistance with documentation related to this policy;
- needs additional screening [including TST or IGRA testing] performed;
- believes they may have active or latent tuberculosis infection.

- has a positive TST or IGRA, or has reason to believe they fall into a high-risk group, e.g., documented exposure to an index case of active TB, or prolonged travel to endemic areas as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or the World Health Organization.

REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
 - General information regarding TB: <https://www.cdc.gov/tb>
 - TB Testing and Diagnosis: <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/testing/default.htm>
 - Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR): Essential Components of a Tuberculosis Prevention and Control Program: Sept. 8, 1995; Vol. 44, No. RR-11. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr4411.pdf>
 - Division of Tuberculosis Elimination. Core Curriculum on Tuberculosis: What the Clinician Should Know: Chapter 1, Table 1.3. Persons at higher Risk for Exposure to and/or Infection with M. tuberculosis. 6th edition (2013). https://www.cdc.gov/tb/education/corecurr/pdf/corecurr_all.pdf
2. American College Health Association Guidelines for TB Screening and Targeted Testing of College and University Students: May 2020; https://www.acha.org/documents/resources/guidelines/ACHA_Tuberculosis_Screening_May2020.pdf

RELATED POLICIES

Immunization Policy

Student Medical Records Security and Confidentiality

APPROVED BY:

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University

Date: 2/1/2021

President, Augusta University

Date: 2/2/2021