Tuberculosis (TB) Screening Information

All healthcare students are required to complete and submit the Queensland Health Tuberculosis Risk Assessment Form for Students. This is a self-assessment form (completed by yourself) to be submitted for verification by the IRT.

Why do I need this risk assessment?

Students with undiagnosed active TB may pose a significant risk, particularly to vulnerable patients such as young children and immune-suppressed persons. Some people are at increased risk of developing tuberculosis (have latent TB) because they have spent significant time in overseas countries with a high incidence of TB, have been in direct contact with a person with active TB, or have been exposed to TB infection as a result of their work. Further information is available on the Queensland Health TB Fact Sheet.

What if I need further testing?

It is expected that you will follow the guidance on the TB Risk Assessment Form for Students and seek appropriate testing and/or treatment if you identify as having signs of active TB or a TB exposure risk history (may have latent TB). The form should be taken with you to any appointments.

If you identify as having an increased risk of TB, there are two options for TB screening:

1. **Contact a Queensland tuberculosis service** which provides free medical assessment and screening. The Mantoux TB skin test (TST) requires two x 30 minute appointments on two separate days that occur 48-72 hours apart. There may be long waiting times for screening so it is best to organise an appointment as early as possible. The closest TB service is the Metro South Clinical Tuberculosis Service, Princess Alexandra Hospital Campus, via Cornwall Street, Woolloongabba, Brisbane.

2. **Your medical practitioner can order an Interferon Gamma Release Immunoassay (IGRA)/QuantiFERON®-TB Gold blood test at a Private Pathologist which will cost approximately $60 (not refundable via Medicare or Overseas Student Health Cover). The advantages of the IGRA test are that it can be done immediately, the result will be available within a short time and it only requires one visit to a pathology collection centre for the blood sample to be taken.

What if my test result indicates I have a latent TB infection?

A latent TB infection won’t prevent you from going on placement as long as you can provide a clear chest x-ray and are not suffering any symptoms suggestive of pulmonary TB. Latent infection cannot be spread to other people, and in the majority of cases the immune system controls the progression and the TB disease will not develop.

It remains crucial you follow up with a doctor at a Queensland Health TB service for follow up. You may need a referral from a Medical Practitioner (GP) if your test was done overseas or elsewhere. Tuberculosis can be treated, and the purpose of the follow up is to ensure that persons at greater risk of developing active tuberculosis receive the essential information for support and to mitigate any potential future health issues.

If your TB results indicate a latent infection, please upload the report or letter from your follow up appointment as soon as it is available to you and within four months of commencing your UQ program.

NOTE: It can take up to three months for an appointment with a specialist at the Queensland Tuberculosis Service. Please ensure you make your appointment as soon as possible.

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HSW Division

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