

Infectious Diseases Procedures

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The University of Western Sydney recognises that individuals employed or studying at the University may come into contact with an infectious disease, and therefore realise that procedures are required in relation to infectious diseases. Infectious diseases are those conditions that are modifiable under the *Public Health Act and Regulation 1991* and include conditions that are blood borne, such as HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis and those which are air borne, such as legionella and tuberculosis.
- 1.2 The University is also required to comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* in relation to ensuring people's health and safety regarding infectious diseases.
- 1.3 State and Federal anti-discrimination legislation also requires UWS to provide an environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and vilification and this is particularly relevant in relation to persons in the University community who have an infectious disease.

2. Aims

- 2.1 The University has a duty to provide and maintain a healthy and safe environment for all staff, students and others working at or visiting UWS sites and to minimise the risk to anyone in the University community of contracting an infectious disease. The University is also committed to supporting and protecting students, staff and others who have an infectious disease from discrimination, harassment or vilification.

3. Duty of Care

- 3.1 Staff and students with an infectious disease also have a duty of care towards other members of the University community so that the risk of transmission of any infection is minimised.
- 3.2 In the prevention of unlawful discrimination a duty of care continues to exist for individuals to minimize the exposure to risk of infection to themselves or others. If information is obtained by the University that

could expose staff or students to risk of infection the University will take prompt action.

4. Prevention of Transmission

4.1 The University seeks to reduce the risk of exposure to infectious diseases and minimise the likelihood of transmission of infection. The majority of occupational and educational situations within the university pose little risk of transmission. Nonetheless the University adopts Universal Precautions in that primarily blood and blood products and all body substances are treated as potentially infectious. Universal Precautions involves the routine use of safe work practices and protective barriers to minimise the spread of infectious diseases.

5. Immunisation

5.1 Immunisation is available for some infectious diseases. Staff and students are referred to the immunisation requirements of specific professional areas, which are considered to be within the high-risk categories.

6. Non-discrimination practices

6.1 The University will provide an environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and vilification of any student or staff member who has an infectious disease.

6.2 UWS will:

- (i) Not tolerate discrimination, harassment or vilification against staff, students and others working at or
- (ii) Visiting UWS sites who have an infectious disease;
- (iii) Inform staff and students of their responsibilities under these procedures;
- (iv) Provide reasonable adjustments where required;
- (v) Provide education programs aimed at preventing discrimination, harassment and vilification; and
- (vi) Provide grievance handling procedures.

7. Confidentiality

7.1 The University recognises that individuals have a right to privacy and confidentiality regarding their personal information. The university will ensure that processes are in place to safeguard this privacy.

7.2 UWS will:

- (i) Ensure that personnel and medical records, and other documents which may include information on infectious disease status, such as superannuation and insurance, are kept strictly confidential and in a secure place;
- (ii) Ensure that written consent from the person with the infectious disease is obtained before disclosure of any identified information to other persons.

8. Risk Control Program

8.1 The risk of exposure to infection and strategies for control vary in different settings and are determined by the nature of the contact with infectious agents. There are two aspects to risk control, these being:

(i) Preventative.

This includes assessment of the level of risk and the development of safe working practices irrespective of the setting; and

(ii) Reactive.

This requires immediate action and follow up, such as the required reporting to Occupational Health and Safety Co-ordinator.

8.2 Academic and administrative units will include in their Occupational Health and Safety management systems elements related to risk control of infectious diseases.

9. Education

9.1 UWS will promote informed awareness, tolerance and understanding by students, staff and others of the issues and concerns in relation to infectious diseases. The University believes that better education will assist in the reduction of the transmission of these diseases and will provide a supportive environment for people with infectious diseases.

UWS will ensure that information relating to infectious diseases is widely distributed and well publicised throughout the UWS community.

10. Responsibility

10.1 Vice-Chancellor and University President:

Has ultimate responsibility to ensure that UWS meets its legislative requirements.

10.2 Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Member Presidents:

Are responsible for implementing the Infectious Diseases Procedures.

10.3 Heads of academic and administrative units:

Are responsible for developing and implementing the infectious diseases risk control program and non-discriminatory requirements of these procedures.

10.4 Supervisors:

Are responsible for ensuring compliance with procedures from the risk control program; monitoring the effectiveness of procedures, ensuring that staff and students have access to relevant information; and reporting relevant information to heads of units.

10.5 All staff, students and others:

Working at or visiting UWS sites and UWS staff or students working at other premises in relation to UWS work or study are expected to follow safe work practice instructions and to act in a manner which does not place others at risk of contracting infectious diseases.

10.6 OHS&R Unit:

Are responsible for providing specialist advice and assistance in the development and implementation of these procedures.

10.7 Social Justice Unit:

Are responsible for providing specialist advice and assistance on discrimination, vilification and confidentiality issues.

11 Acknowledgements

(i) *University of Newcastle Infection Control Policy*