

## Health and Safety Services

### Procedure : HIV / AIDS infections

#### Introduction

1. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) results from infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The effect of the virus is to undermine the efficiency of the immune system. Many who acquire the virus remain healthy for years and treatment regimes are increasingly successful in limiting the progression of the disease. However, in some unfortunate cases the condition progresses to "full blown AIDS" which can present in a number of ways and which, even with new treatments, can prove fatal.
2. HIV infection is transmitted in three principal ways:
  - By unprotected penetrative sexual intercourse with an infected person (between men or between men and women)
  - By the inoculation of infected blood and possibly other body fluids (in the UK this results mainly from drug users sharing infected needles); or
  - From an infected mother to her baby before or during birth or via breastfeeding.
3. Contacts in public places, in the home, at school, at work, in the preparation of food, in sharing meals or using common facilities such as lavatories, telephones, crockery or cutlery, do not carry any identifiable risk. Normal social and employment contact with an infected person is safe for both employees and members of the public.
4. Certain jobs in the health care sector, community, laboratory, welfare, custodial, cleaning and emergency services may involve contact with infected blood or other body fluids. However, in these occupations the major risk is from other infections especially Hepatitis B and standard precautions already in use will be effective against the risk of infection from HIV. Medical, nursing staff and students who may be at risk of needle stick injury, have specific procedures in place and all Hospital Occupational Health units and A&E Departments (out of hours) are available for advice and, if appropriate, immediate treatment of these accidents. Additionally, the University Occupational Health Service is available for advice during normal working hours (see also [Guidance Note on Needlestick Injuries and Incidents Involving Human Blood or Other Body Fluids](#)).

#### Arrangements – general principles

5. The University will consider HIV/AIDS in the same way as any other long-term serious illness.
6. Everyone has a responsibility to limit the spread of HIV. The University will make sure that staff and students are well informed about HIV/AIDS.

7. It is hoped that action taken to increase knowledge about HIV/AIDS and the provision of opportunities for individuals to discuss their fears will help to counter misinformation and prejudice before problems arise.

## **Staff**

8. There will be no discrimination in recruitment and promotion procedures, nor in the provision of any benefit, facilities or services on the grounds that an existing member of staff or applicant for a post is infected with HIV. Where there is a risk to that individual or others, or where the employee is medically unfit for work, the risk will be assessed by Occupational Health Services, and cases determined on an individual basis.
9. Neither potential nor existing employees will be asked to take a test for HIV antibodies. However, new guidance from the Department of Health will require testing for HIV in those whose work involves exposure prone procedures. Otherwise normal policies for determining medical fitness on recruitment will continue to apply.
10. No person will be dismissed solely on the grounds that they have HIV infection or AIDS or because they are considered to be especially at risk. Where staff become medically unfit to perform their duties normal University procedures will apply.
11. Members of staff who become infected with HIV or who develop AIDS are not required to inform the University unless they wish to do so; however, normal rules for the certification of absence due to sickness will continue to apply as will the University's Sickness Absence Policy. The University does not wish to deter those who should seek help from coming forward and requesting it, and every reasonable step will be taken to ensure strict confidentiality when the University does hold information that a present or former employee has HIV or AIDS
12. Staff will not be redeployed to alternative duties solely because they have HIV or AIDS, unless it is in the interests of their own safety or that of others.

## **Students**

13. There will be no discrimination in the recruitment of students nor in the provision of any course, benefit, facilities or services on the grounds that an existing or prospective student is infected with HIV, except where there is risk to that individual or others, or the student is medically unfit to continue their studies.
14. New guidance from the Department of Health will require testing for HIV in those current and potential students whose course and future work involves exposure-prone procedures. Otherwise, students who become infected with HIV or who develop AIDS are not required to inform the University unless they wish to do so. The University does not wish to deter those who should seek help from coming forward and requesting it, and every reasonable step will be taken to ensure strict confidentiality when the University does hold information that a present or former student has HIV or AIDS.

## **Responsibilities**

15. Managers in charge of staff who may be at risk because of the nature of their duties must, in conjunction with their Safety Co-ordinator:
  - Assess the practical risk of work activities and adopt suitable control measures.
  - Discuss safe, practical procedures for each task and actively keep them under review.
  - Promote an awareness of risk by providing information and training.

## **Training, Education & Information**

16. Appropriate training and information will be provided at intervals, or on request, by the Staff Training and Development Unit and the Occupational Health Service. This is intended to overcome unfounded fears and prejudices, to promote good health and safety practice, to increase awareness of the necessary personal precautions and to promote awareness of this Code of Practice.
17. First-Aiders and those whose work or study involves them in dealing with human blood or tissue products will be provided with relevant specialized information.
18. Employees will be provided with training and leaflets giving guidance on safe practices where appropriate.
19. Health and safety guidelines and procedures will be reviewed as necessary to take account of any special considerations relating to HIV/AIDS.
20. The Occupational and Student Health Services are available to staff and students who wish to consult them on any matter relating to HIV/AIDS.
21. It is recognised that those with HIV/AIDS infection may require specialized forms of counselling. The University of Manchester will ensure that skilled counselling can be made available to those who may require this by liaison with specialised agencies involved.

Document control box	
Procedure title:	HIV / AIDS infections
Date approved:	September 2007
Approving body:	Board of Governors
Version:	v1.1
Supersedes:	University Code of Practice and Guidance on HIV / AIDS infections
Previous review dates:	March 2005
Next review date:	Upon significant change
Equality impact outcome	Initial screening will take place during the consultation process.
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations	Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, and relevant statutory provisions  University of Manchester Statute XII(g) University of Manchester Statute XIII, Part III to do with disciplinary procedures for members of staff General Regulations, Regulation XVII, 3(f) and 5(a) to do with misconduct of students
Related Policies:	Health & Safety Policy
Related Procedures:	A-Z of documents on specific health & safety topics, at <a href="http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs&amp;Guidance.htm">http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs&amp;Guidance.htm</a>
Related Guidance:	<a href="http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs&amp;Guidance.htm">http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs&amp;Guidance.htm</a>
Related information:	
Policy owner:	Director of Health & Safety Services (currently Dr S A Robson)
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