

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



Questions, concerns, or inquiries about the CastleBranch/MyCB To-Do List and clinical requirements should be directed to the CastleBranch Help Desk at [888.723.4263](tel:888.723.4263)

Questions related to the program or clinical experience can be answered by the Program Administrator. A list of the program administrators is available on the [website](#) under **Program Contacts for Student Questions**.

COVID VACCINATIONS and COVID BOOSTER VACCINE - ALL STUDENTS

(Q) Is the COVID vaccine required?

(A) ALL STUDENTS coming to either the Toledo Campus or Youngstown location or participating in any clinical activity (online or face-to-face students) must be vaccinated against COVID-19 (read more [here](#)). This requirement applies to all Mercy College students enrolled in ground-based and/or hybrid programs of study, as well as any Mercy College students who participate in any in-person clinical activity. Mercy College students who are enrolled in a **fully online** program and will not have an in-person clinical component during the course of their program are currently exempt.

At this time, BSMH has declared that it will consider vaccine exemptions for students, based on **sincerely held religious beliefs or medical contraindication supported by documentation from a medical professional**. Exemption request forms are located under the **Resources** tab. Completed requests should be sent to Exemptions@mercycollege.edu. Questions regarding COVID-19 vaccinations should be sent [here](#).

Clinical students will demonstrate compliance with this requirement in CastleBranch. **Non-clinical** students should submit proof of vaccination or exemption by email from their Mercy College email to COVIDcompliance@mercycollege.edu. Proof of vaccination includes a picture or scan of the front and back of the COVID-19 vaccination card. Proof of exemption includes the formal exemption letter issued by Mercy College of Ohio's Compliance and Risk Management Office

The College will make a reasonable attempt to find alternate clinical placements for students seeking exemptions or extensions, but it is at the discretion of clinical sites whether students are permitted to participate in clinical experiences. Exemptions are subject to approval by each clinical or practicum site each semester. **If exemptions are denied, it will prevent placement in clinical experiences and progression in the academic program.**

(Q) Is the COVID booster required? Why does CastleBranch keep asking me about the booster?

(A) Currently, students are NOT REQUIRED to have the COVID-19 Booster, but CastleBranch will show the *question about whether you've received the booster* as a requirement because Mercy College is required to track booster information for reporting purposes.

- Students who have received a COVID-19 booster will upload the official documentation of the booster (must include the date and the vaccine manufacturer information).
- Students who have NOT received the COVID-19 booster must simply answer "no." The question will repopulate after 180 days.
- DO NOT upload your original vaccination information to the booster requirement. We only need documentation of the booster if you've had it, otherwise you will answer "no" to the question.

(Q) I've answered "no, I haven't had the COVID booster." Why does CastleBranch keep making me answer the booster question?

(A) Answering "no" to the booster will accept the response and reset it for 180 days. Mercy College is required to maintain current data for reporting purposes.

Office: Compliance and Risk Management

Date: 1/16/23

Information for All Clinical Students

COVID SELF-REPORT FORM – ALL STUDENTS

(Q) Do I need to fill out the *COVID Self-Report* form?

(A) Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, Mercy College of Ohio has implemented enhanced precautions for all students, faculty, and staff. It is imperative that the entire college community works together to keep our campus as safe as possible. Please be aware that all precautions are subject to change.

During this time any student that meets the following criteria must submit a [Covid Self-Report Form](#) and notify the student health nurse, Brenda Mullan, at Brenda.Mullan@mercycollege.edu.

- Any international travel **if not fully vaccinated**
 - Currently, international travel places individuals at a higher risk for contracting COVID-19. Please be aware that all international travel by individuals not fully vaccinated needs to be reported to the student health nurse. Mercy College of Ohio is closely watching the CDC, ODH, and the Ohio Governor's recommendations.
 - **Per current CDC guidance, students who travel to or from China or Hong Kong must present a negative Covid test upon return to the United States.**
- Any potential exposure to someone with a known case of COVID-19
- If you are diagnosed or suspected of having COVID-19
- If you exhibit any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever or Chills, Cough, Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing, Fatigue, Muscle or Body Aches, Headache, New Loss of Taste or Smell, Sore Throat, Congestion or Runny Nose, Nausea, Vomiting, or Diarrhea
- **If you are unsure if you need to report, please reach out to the student health nurse for further clarification.**
- **Masking policies for vaccinated students on campus will be dictated by the level of risk assigned to the county by the CDC and communicated to students through the student newsletter. All those who are not vaccinated under the exemption policy must continue to wear masks.**

CLINICAL REQUIREMENTS – Getting Started

(Q) *I'm overwhelmed - I don't know where to start!*

(A.1.) Share the *Health Screening and Clearance* form (under **Clinical Requirements Information** on the [website](#)) with the health care provider to get started. Titers (blood tests) showing proof of immunity are required for students in all programs other than certificate programs (proof of vaccination is acceptable for certificate program students unless the clinical site requires titers). The health care provider will determine any additional screening that must be completed.

(A.2.) Once you have been instructed by your program's clinical coordinator or administrator to proceed, go to the [website](#) and click on the blue bar at the top of the page "Placing CastleBranch Orders." Locate your program by scrolling through the list (programs are categorized by Certificate, Undergraduate, and Graduate). Click on the blue box next to the name of your program to view more. Note that some programs require students to complete one package (fingerprinting and background check, for instance) before purchasing the rest of the packages. **Make sure you select the links to the correct packages.** Clicking on the package code will navigate you to the CastleBranch ordering portal where you will see additional instructions.

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CLINICAL REQUIREMENTS – Getting Started, cont'd

(Q) *I don't know where my vaccination records are/my health care provider's office has closed.*

(A) Undergraduate and Graduate students are required to show proof of positive titers (blood tests).

Certificate program students may submit proof of vaccination unless the clinical site requires titers. Students unable to locate vaccination documentation must have titers drawn to determine immunity status and whether further vaccinations are required.

If a titer shows non-immune or equivocal results, the vaccination series must be repeated. For more information, refer to *Health Requirements Overview* under **Clinical Requirements Information** on the [website](#). Students without a local health care provider can refer to *Resources for Obtaining Health Requirements* under **Resources** on the [website](#) for guidance.

(Q) *I must repeat a vaccination series and I'm going to miss the deadline!*

(A) Students who must complete a vaccination series must remain up to date in the series to be considered current. CastleBranch sends reminder notifications regarding upcoming due dates and required documentation as student progresses through the series.

(Q) *I am unable to have a vaccine/complete a requirement – can I get an exemption?*

(A) Exemption request forms are located under the **Resources** tab. Completed requests should be sent to Exemptions@mercycollege.edu. Questions regarding COVID-19 vaccinations should be sent [here](#).

Please review the following information:

- *Vaccine exemptions* for **medical contraindication** must be **supported by documentation from a medical professional unrelated to the student**.
- *Vaccine exemptions* based on **sincerely held religious beliefs** must be **supported by the required documentation** to support the exemption request.
- *Due date extensions* can be requested for **temporary medical contraindication** (such as pregnancy) **when supported by medical documentation**. Due date extension requests are located under the **Resources** tab. Completed requests should be sent to Exemptions@mercycollege.edu.

Exemption requests are reviewed by the Office of Compliance and Risk Management and student will be notified via email within five (5) business days whether the exemption request has been denied, granted temporary approval, or if additional supporting documentation is required. Temporary approval is based on Bon Secours Mercy Health (BSMH) guidelines but is subject to each clinical agency's policies and/or guidelines established in the Clinical Agency Agreement. Student will be notified by the program administrator/clinical coordinator if the exemption has been granted or denied by the clinical agency to which student is assigned. **A reasonable attempt will be made to locate a clinical site that will accept the exemption request, but approval is granted by the clinical agency, not Mercy College; approval is not guaranteed; clinical placement is not guaranteed if student is unvaccinated.**

The College will make a reasonable attempt to find alternate clinical placements for students seeking exemptions or extensions, but it is at the discretion of clinical sites whether students are permitted to participate in clinical experiences. Exemptions are subject to approval by each clinical or practicum site each semester. **If exemptions are denied, it will prevent placement in clinical experiences and progression in the academic program.**

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Information for All Clinical Students

CLINICAL REQUIREMENTS – Getting Started, cont'd

(Q) How do I upload documents to my CastleBranch account?

(A) Students are responsible for uploading health requirement related documents to the clinical requirements tracker (refer to *Uploading Documents to CastleBranch* under **Resources** on the [website](#)).

Most background check/fingerprint results and drug test results will be uploaded automatically after they are processed and returned to the College or to CastleBranch. Students completing Nationwide (Daon) out-of-state FBI fingerprinting will receive their report and must upload it to CastleBranch.

(Q) How long will it take for my documents to be reviewed?

(A) Normal turnaround time is 3-5 days for documents to be reviewed and processed by CastleBranch.

(Q) Can the document review be expedited?

(A) Documents uploaded to CastleBranch within one week of the deadline are not eligible for expedited processing **except for instances such as the second or third vaccine of a series that is in process and cannot be completed early.**

(Q) My documentation has been uploaded, but is showing pending – am I compliant?

(A) Requirements are not compliant until reviewed and accepted by CastleBranch.

(Q) What is a TDL Summary and where do I find it?

(A) Students may be asked to provide a CastleBranch *To-Do List (TDL) Summary* (refer to **Resources** on the [website](#)) to verify eligibility to attend clinicals. **“Compliant” is a temporary status.** The *TDL Summary* is modified whenever new documentation becomes due/is submitted/approved and the “Compliant Until” date is updated.

(Q) I have my renewal document (BLS, TB, etc.) but why can't I upload it?

(A) CastleBranch will email reminders before renewal items are due. **Space to upload renewal document will appear 21 (twenty-one) days before current document expires.**

(Q) My documents were rejected, but I don't know why.

(A) CastleBranch reviewers provide an explanation when documents are rejected, so read rejection notices carefully. Commonly rejected items include:

- TB 2-step: documentation must include testing and reading results for both arms within the one-to three-week timeframe.
- TB renewals: testing on one arm must be completed prior to the expiration date. If more than 365 days have elapsed since the previous test was administered, a new TB 2-step or blood test will be required.
- TDAP: documentation must specifically show that **TDAP** was administered.

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BACKGROUND CHECKS/FINGERPRINTING and DRUG TEST

(Q) *Do I have to pay extra for the background checks and the drug test?*

(A) Cost of the initial FBI and OHIO BCI fingerprinting, background check, and drug test are included in the price of the CastleBranch package. **Separate fees may be incurred for students completing state-specific fingerprinting requirements or special state-specific background checks.** Results from fingerprinting or drug testing done outside of the CastleBranch process are not accepted.

Verify that FULL NAME, DATE OF BIRTH, and other personal information is entered accurately, or additional fees can be incurred for corrected reports.

Some clinical sites may require updated fingerprinting and/or drug tests at student's expense.

(Q) *Can I submit background check reports or drug screen results from another source (employer, previous college, etc.)?*

(A) Only reports processed through Mercy College's CastleBranch instructions are accepted to ensure the results are current and can be vetted by the CastleBranch reviewers.

(Q) *How long does it take for fingerprint results to be returned?*

(A) Schedule the fingerprinting appointment as soon as possible after you have placed the CastleBranch order. **Normal fingerprint processing can take up to a month**, and occasionally longer. **Enter the date you have your fingerprints scanned into the fingerprint module in the CastleBranch account**, so the date can be monitored in case follow-up is required.

- a) **If Ohio BCI/FBI fingerprint reports have not been posted to CastleBranch after a month**, contact janice.bernard@mercycollege.edu with full name, Student ID, the program in which you are enrolled, and the date fingerprints were scanned so follow-up search can be done.
- b) **Out of state Nationwide (Daon/DTIS) FBI reports will be temporarily available online to the student.** Email notification will come from Daon (DTIS) stating that results are ready to be viewed. **Check Spam email folder to make sure the Daon/DTIS notification isn't missed, because the report is deleted after 30 days.**
 - (1) Students who do not see the email notification within 2-3 weeks must contact Daon (DTIS) for further assistance. If it has been 30 days or more and report has been deleted, a new fingerprint package will need to be ordered.

MISCELLANEOUS

(Q) *I already have a CastleBranch account from a previous school, why do I need to purchase a new account?*

(A) CastleBranch requirements are school-specific, therefore accounts cannot be transferred from another institution.

(Q) *I have a CastleBranch account but have changed programs, do I need to purchase a new account?*

(A) Students who begin a College Health Program and subsequently withdraw may be allowed to transfer their CastleBranch account to the new program if the original health program assessments were all completed within the past year. Contact your program administrator for more information. **Students who have been absent for more than three semesters must purchase new CastleBranch accounts.**

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Information for All Clinical Students

MISCELLANEOUS, Cont'd

(Q) *I'm a former student and I need access to my vaccination records.*

(A) Student vaccination records are kept in CastleBranch (some former students may remember the company as “Certified Background”). Mercy College began using Certified Background in Fall 2011 to monitor online student records, but the earliest accounts did not require specific official documentation such as titer lab reports. **The College does not keep any vaccination records outside of CastleBranch so there are no records for students who started programs prior to Fall 2011.**

TIP: Make sure documents are saved with a descriptive and specific name, as a copy will be saved in the *My Documents* section of the CastleBranch account. This is helpful in case documents ever need to be resubmitted or retrieved, since they will be easier to locate if named descriptively.

Access to *My Documents* is available to students even if the CastleBranch account is archived due to a lapse in enrollment or graduation (if the Medical Documents Manager “tracker” is archived, documents will be hidden from view). Please contact CastleBranch with questions or if your CastleBranch account needs to be unarchived.