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Introduction

The provisions of this handbook do not constitute a contract, expressed or implied, between any applicant, student, faculty member, or staff employee and Sam Houston State University, including the College of Osteopathic Medicine, or the Texas State University System. In the event of conflict between the provisions of this handbook and the Texas State University System Rules and Regulations, the latter shall govern.

Overview of SHSU-COM

Mission

The mission of Sam Houston State University College of Osteopathic Medicine (SHSU-COM) is to prepare students for the degree of Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine with an emphasis toward primary care and rural practice, to develop culturally aware, diverse, and compassionate physicians, who follow osteopathic principles, that are prepared for graduate medical education, and will serve the people of Texas with professionalism and patient-centered care. (Created: January 16, 2017; Revised: March 9, 2018; July 5, 2018)

A significant part of the mission of the COM is to increase the physician workforce in the eastern region of Texas and to increase access to primary care. The COM will accomplish this by recruiting qualified applicants from areas to which they would likely want to return and establish their practice.

Goals

The goals of SHSU-COM are to:

• Recruit candidates nationally while targeting underserved communities in the SHSU-COM service region.
• Include qualified candidates from underrepresented populations with a focus on East Texas in the selection pool.
• Demonstrate academic excellence.
• Develop an orientation toward primary care and service to the community.
• Instill a need for life-long learning.
• Imprint the philosophy of holistic care of the individual and the principles of osteopathic practice.
• Prepare students for graduation and residency training.

Objectives

The objectives of SHSU-COM are to:

• Provide an excellent academic experience based on early clinical training and an integrated curriculum taught by highly-skilled and experienced lecturers and clinicians.
• Reinforce the quality of the academic experience through biomedical and clinical research.
• Collaborate with Sam Houston State University (SHSU) faculty wherever possible.
• Create opportunities with clinical and community partners.
• Facilitate the success of our students through recognition of their achievements and preparation for GME.

The Seven Osteopathic Core Competencies for Medical Students

The Seven Osteopathic Core Competencies for Medical Students and the Healthy People Curriculum Task Force’s Clinical Prevention and Population Health Curriculum Framework, as prepared by the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine in conjunction with all U.S. Osteopathic Medical Schools, include:

I. Osteopathic Principles and Practices
II. Medical Knowledge
III. Patient Care
IV. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
V. Professionalism
VI. Practice-Based Learning and Improvement
VII. Systems Based Practice

Detailed descriptions of each, including sub-competencies, may be found at
https://www.aacom.org/docs/default-source/core competencies/corecompetencyreport2012.pdf?sfvrsn=4

Responsibilities and Technical Standards

Responsibilities

An osteopathic physician must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations
and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. In order to perform the activities described below, candidates for
the DO degree must be able to:

- Quickly, accurately, and consistently learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data;
- Facilitate the attainment of optimum care and safety; and
- Students at SHSU-COM must:
  - Exhibit high moral and behavioral standards reflecting the position and status of an osteopathic
    physician; and
  - Demonstrate respect for individuals and groups irrespective of race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual
    orientation, gender, gender identity, national origin, age or disabilities, and religion.

Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of SHSU-COM to select administrative personnel, faculty and staff, and students irrespective of
race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, national origin, age or disabilities, and
religion.

Academic Credentials

To be considered for admission to any program offered by the SHSU, a student must possess the academic
credentials and professional attributes deemed essential by the respective program admission's committee for
selection to the program.

Technical Standards

Every student of the SHSU-COM is expected to possess those intellectual, ethical, physical, and emotional
capabilities required to undertake the full curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence required by the
faculty. The SHSU-COM has adopted the following technical standards with due consideration for the safety and
well-being of the patients for whom its graduates will eventually care for.

- **Observation & Visual Integration** Students shall have sufficient visual capabilities to observe
demonstrations, experiments, and laboratory exercises in the basic and clinical sciences, as well as
proper evaluation and treatment integration in order to assess asymmetry, range of motion, and tissue
color and texture changes.
- **Communication** Students shall be able to speak, hear and observe patients in order to elicit information,
examine patients, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive nonverbal
communication.
• **Motor Function** Students shall have sufficient motor function to execute movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients.

• **Strength and Mobility** Students shall provide medical treatments, such as osteopathic manipulative medicine and cardiopulmonary resuscitation, often require upright posture with sufficient upper & lower extremity and overall body strength and mobility. Individuals with disabilities who have significant limitations in these areas may require evaluation to determine if they are otherwise qualified, with or without reasonable accommodation.

• **Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities** Students shall be able to concentrate, analyze and interpret data, and make decisions within areas in which there is a reasonable amount of visual and auditory distraction. They must perform these functions under a time limitation and do so under a reasonable amount of stress.

• **Behavioral and Social Attributes** Students shall possess the emotional health required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, and promptly complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients with the ability to develop mature, sensitive and effective professional relationships with patients.

• **Participation in Osteopathic Clinical Courses**
  Active participation in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine and Clinical Medicine skills training sessions are a requirement. During these sessions, it is imperative that students examine each other. This type of learning requires active participation where students palpate and will experience palpation by their peers and instructors of all genders to enhance the development of their own palpatory skills.


Accreditation

Process and Approval

**Policy on Student Complaints Regarding Institutional Compliance with Accreditation Standards**

The Dean of the SHSU-COM, or other designated COM officials, will address the expressed informal concerns of students regarding institutional compliance in accordance with the COCA COM Continuing Accreditation Standards (July 2017) and COCA Policies and Procedures (July 2018). Under most circumstances, a response to those concerns will be made in writing. If the complaints have merit, the Dean or designated institutional official will institute documented changes in institutional policy or procedures to bring the SHSU-COM into compliance with COCA accreditation standards and COCA policies and procedures. Formal complaints filed through the COCA Secretary will be in accordance with COCA Accreditation Standards and COCA Policies and Procedures. All records of the proceedings regarding receipt, adjudication and resolution of student formal and informal complaints in these matters will be maintained in the Office of the Dean.

**Students Rights & Responsibilities in Reviewing Standards & Policies of Accreditation**

Students have the right to review the standards and policies for accreditation of the institution as published by the COCA. Copies of accreditation standards and procedures will be available online through the Office of the Dean of the COM. Individual students or their class representatives may register formal or informal concerns or complaints regarding the compliance of the institution with accreditation standards or procedures as published by the COCA. Informal concerns should be addressed to the Dean of the SHSU-COM, preferably in writing.
Formal concerns or complaints should be filed in accordance with the policies and procedures of the COCA described in *Accreditation of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine: COM Policies and Procedures*. These concerns must be in writing, signed and should be addressed to the COCA Secretary Josh Prober (Interim), 142 E. Ontario St. Chicago, IL 60611-2864, jprober@osteopathic.org, 312-202-8124.

Clerkship
Students in Years 3 and 4 should refer to the SHSU-COM Clerkship Manual for additional policies, procedures and resources.

General Information

SHSU-COM Honor Code
The SHSU-COM Honor Code will be developed by students as a set of ethical principles governing the SHSU-COM community based on ideals that define what constitutes honorable behavior within the SHSU-COM community. Students are expected to maintain good moral character throughout their medical school career by adhering to the ethical and professionalism standards set forth in this handbook.

Student Code of Conduct
The Student Code of Conduct is detailed in the *SHSU Student Guidelines*, which is distributed by the SHSU Division of Student Services.

Reporting Misconduct
The Dean of Students' Office receives reports of student misconduct by other students, faculty, staff and administrators. If you have witnessed a violation of the SHSU Code of Student Conduct or you wish to report suspicious activity involving social or academic misconduct, please contact the Dean of Students' Office at (936) 294-1785, or via email at doso@shsu.edu, or by filling out an *Incident Report Form* found at https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?SamHoustonStateUniv&layout_id=1.

Holidays
For pre-clerkship years, students should reference the SHSU-COM academic calendar for designated religious and national holidays. There are no designated religious or national holidays approved by SHSU-COM during clerkship.

Vacations and Breaks
For pre-clerkship years, students should reference the SHSU-COM academic calendar for designated breaks. Pre-clerkship SHSU-COM breaks do not apply to clerkship years.

Students in good academic standing are assigned four (4) weeks of vacation during their first six months fourth year clerkships. Students are encouraged to use this time to schedule residency interviews.

Emergency Preparedness
In the case of an emergency, important information can be found through *KatSafe*. To increase the success of the KatSafe notification system it is important to keep all contact information up-to-date.

Inclement Weather
The SHSU-COM is committed to the safety and security of its students, faculty, staff, and visitors. At times, severe weather may result in closures to SHSU facilities, roads, and services. When the campus is impacted due to inclement weather, notification will be sent to students directly from *KatSafe* the emergency notification system.
Students participating in clerkship rotations unless scheduled to be on campus are to follow the instructions of their preceptor at their designated clerkship rotation site with regard to inclement weather.

Grievances
A grievable action is defined by SHSU as an action that:

a. Is in violation of written campus policies or procedures, or
b. Constitutes arbitrary, capricious, or unequal application of written campus policies or procedures.

For all grievances, students may first attempt to resolve the matter by directly addressing the parties involved, if possible.

Non-Academic Grievances
Formal student complaints must be filed with the Dean of Students' Office within 30 university business days of the SHSU action creating the student’s concern by completing and submitting the SHSU Student Grievance Online Form found at https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?SamHoustonStateUniv&layout_id=2.

Academic Grievances
Academic grievances are addressed in the Academic Policies and Procedures section of the Student Handbook.
Academic Policies and Processes

Academic Calendar
Students should reference the published SHSU-COM academic calendar for an overview of the academic year. Students should reference Blackboard for details regarding specific course and clerkship events.

Attendance Guidelines
The creation of the attendance guidelines is to help define terminology and provide guidance for faculty, staff, and students where attendance is concerned. Additionally, these guidelines are meant to encourage students to attend class as there is a “moderate, positive correlation between the presence of psychosocial distress and the number of missed sessions” (Damant et al., 2016).

Osteopathic Medical Students (OMS), as future members of the profession at-large, are held to high levels of professionalism regarding items such as participation, engagement, scholarly activity, and service. The attendance guidelines are a reflection of the professional culture of SHSU-COM.

Expectations
It is the expectation of the faculty and staff of SHSU-COM that students attend all educational activities. Students should arrive on-time and be prepared to receive instruction at the predetermined class start time.

While not all educational activities are mandatory, many educational activities require the presence of all students to allow for the attainment of skills for active participation. Lack of participation could adversely affect the learning process of oneself and peers.

Each course shall have a clearly defined attendance policy set and enforced by the Course Director. As defined in SHSU Academic Policy Statement 800401 (Class Attendance), “failure to meet the attendance requirements in a course may lower grade(s), including a final course grade.” In addition to this Policy Statement, students not adhering to attendance guidelines shall be referred to the Student Promotions and Academic Progress (SPAP) committee for further review and consideration of program standing.

** Falsification of attendance, documentation, or the impersonation of another student that violates the student code of conduct (e.g., professionalism) is subject to disciplinary action by the SPAP committee. **

All absences shall be approved or denied by the Course or Clerkship Director following the Excused Absence Request (EAR) procedure documented below.

Definitions

Excused Absence
An excused, unavoidable absence may be granted at the discretion of the Course or Clerkship Director upon completion of the EAR procedure. Both scheduled and unscheduled absences may be excused if proper documentation is provided. If approval is granted, students are responsible for completing all work in missed sessions and adhering to any other requirements determined by Directors.
Unexcused Absence

An unexcused absence occurs when the student has not complied with the specific attendance and/or punctuality requirements for educational activities established by the Course or Clerkship Director. This includes an absence in the event an EAR has been denied by a Director.

Tardiness

Tardiness occurs when the student arrives after the scheduled start time for educational activities. If students suspect that they may be tardy due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., traffic), students must notify Course or Clerkship Directors in a timely manner. At their discretion, Directors may determine how and when a student may join the learning environment once instruction has begun. Repeated tardiness is unprofessional.

Leaving Early

Leaving any educational activity early without the prior permission of the Course or Clerkship Director is considered an unexcused absence unless an emergency should arise.

Student Travel

Students traveling on behalf of the SHSU-COM or SHSU are required to follow the student travel policies for approval to travel. Students that have been approved to travel by the SHSU-COM or SHSU to attend a conference or meeting shall follow the EAR procedure.

Types of Absences

All absences are classified as either Scheduled or Unscheduled, as defined by SHSU Academic Policy Statement 800401 (Class Attendance).

Scheduled Absences (still must be approved)

- Professional Meetings/Conferences
- Doctor’s Appointments/Procedures
- Residency Interviews
- Religious Holiday
- Jury Duty
- Subpoenas
- Military Requirements
- Other significant events (funeral, birth, etc.)

Unscheduled Absences

- Student illness or emergency
- Family emergency
- Injury
- Severe Weather
Excused Absence Request (EAR) Process

Requests for excused absences are submitted by completing the Student Excused Absence Request Form, along with the required supporting documentation.

Students that have extenuating circumstances that prevent them from attending, arriving on time, or require them to leave early must notify the Course or Clerkship Director prior to the scheduled start time or within 24 hours of the scheduled time.

All EAR decisions are communicated via the student’s official SHSU email.

EAR Timeline

- EAR form submitted to the course director as soon as the scheduled absence is known but at least **two (2) weeks** prior to the scheduled absence date.
  - Students that have extenuating circumstances that prevent completion of the form prior to two (2) weeks must notify their Course or Clerkship Director within 24 hours of the scheduled educational activities.
  - Course or Clerkship Directors shall have **three (3) business days** from the date of receipt to approve or deny the request.

Consequences for Continued Attendance Violations or Absences

The Course or Clerkship Director may assign students that are continually late or leave early an unexcused absence.

Any unexcused absence is considered unprofessional conduct and is subject to not meeting the SHSU-COM professionalism guidelines, potentially causing a reduction in the course grade, course failure, counseling by Student Affairs, and/or being referred to the SPAP committee.

It is understood that unusual circumstances may arise that result in an absence. Students may have one (1) unexcused absence determined by session, per course, without penalty. Upon the second unexcused absence, students are referred to the SPAP committee for unprofessional conduct by their Course or Clerkship Director.

Table: Summary of actions and consequences for absences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absences:</th>
<th>Excused</th>
<th>Unexcused</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled</td>
<td>As approved by the Course Director</td>
<td>Allowed 1 per course/clerkship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unscheduled</td>
<td>As approved by the Course Director</td>
<td>Allowed 1 per course/clerkship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students who need to take extended leave must follow the leave of absence policy.

References

Leave of Absence

A Leave of Absence (LOA) is defined as an approved leave from SHSU-COM that postpones a student’s course of academic and/or clerkship study granted for a maximum of one year from the date of approval. Students that are granted a LOA must complete the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) degree six years following matriculation.

An LOA may be granted for military commitment, jury duty, maternity/paternity leave, or circumstances covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. Students may also request or be placed on a LOA for personal, financial, or other special circumstances.

In order to return from an LOA for medical reasons students shall provide a medical clearance letter from the treating physician or other healthcare provider who is not related to the student stating they are released to return and are able to meet the applicable Technical Standards of SHSU-COM. The clearance letter must state if the student requires any accommodations upon their return. If so, the student shall be responsible for requesting such accommodations through the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities Office.

The Dean or his/her designee shall define in writing the terms and conditions of the LOA and the student’s return to SHSU-COM. The Dean has the final authority to approve the LOA but may delegate this authority. The Dean or designee may consult with faculty and staff members before granting a LOA. Students who do not comply with the conditions of their LOA may be considered for dismissal.

Leave of Absence Request Process

Students may request a leave of absence by completing the Leave of Absence Request Form, along with the required supporting documentation with submission to Educational Affairs.

Incomplete documents shall not be reviewed until all information has been received.

The LOA request decision shall be provided via SHSU email within 10 working days from the date of receipt of the complete submission.

Before approval of LOA, students are required to complete the checklist provided with the LOA form, which includes clearance from Financial Aid, Registrar, and Student Affairs.

Grading Policies

Final Grades

End-of-Course or -Clerkship grades are based upon academic performance, professional behavior, participation in class or clinical rotation, laboratory work, examinations, and other activities, as applicable to a course or clerkship rotation. In determining final grades, the proportionate weights assigned to graded components are determined by Course and Clerkship Directors. The basis upon which final grades are determined are stated in the syllabus at the start of each course and clerkship rotation.

Final Grade Appeals Process

The Course or Clerkship Director is the primary authority with respect to grades.

A student wishing to appeal a final grade should first attempt to resolve the matter by meeting with the Course or Clerkship Director. Students not satisfied after attempting such resolution should follow the process outlined in the Academic Grievances and Appeals section.
Examination Procedures and Policies

Examinations

Examinations shall take place at the date and time specified on the course or clerkship syllabus. Changes to the examination schedule are at the discretion of the Course or Clerkship Director and shall be communicated to students in a timely fashion.

All examinations are administered in accordance with the SHSU and SHSU-COM policies.

Missed Examinations

Missing examinations or arriving late is strongly discouraged. Students missing an examination or arriving late should follow the procedure located in the Attendance Guidelines section of the Student Handbook. Notification by email, voice mail, or other means other than by the Excused Absence Request (EAR) Process will not be honored.

Procedures for a missed examination during a clerkship rotation will be outlined in the clerkship handbook and syllabus.

Make-up Examinations

Make-up examinations are allowed only when an excused absence has been granted through the Excused Absence Request (EAR) Process. Students who miss a course examination without an approved absence or documented illness will not be permitted to take a make-up exam and will receive a zero (0%) as the grade for the examination.

All make-up examinations are authorized by the Course or Clerkship Director or Coordinator. The format and scheduling of the makeup examination will be the prerogative of the Director or Coordinator. Make-up exams may be scheduled prior to or after a regularly scheduled exam. Make-up exams can be written, oral, short-answer, essay, or other means, as determined by the Director. Students have a right to appeal a Director’s decision using the processes defined in the Academic Grievances and Appeals section of the Student Handbook.

The procedure for making-up a missed examination during a clerkship rotation will be outlined in the clerkship handbook and syllabus.

Students may take a maximum of two (2) make-up exams in a semester, or three (3) in one year, without penalty. Any additional make-up exams will result in a reduction of 10% of the total number of raw points on the exam.

Procedures Due to an Unexpected Event

If a student is absent from an examination for unexpected medical reasons, the Course or Clerkship Director may require that the student subsequently present to the Course or Clerkship Director a written confirmation of his/her illness. The written confirmation must be from a treating physician or other healthcare provider who is not related to the student. The written confirmation should state that the student was "too ill to attend on the day of the exam" and specify the date that the student is to return to class.

If the student is medically unable to contact the Director or Coordinator prior to the examination, a family member/friend/caregiver/hospital personnel can contact the Director on behalf of the student.
Excuses must be submitted to the Course or Clerkship Director through the EAR Process. If the absence is unexcused, a grade of zero (0%) will be recorded for that examination.

**Procedures Due to a Conflicting Event**

A student may be excused from an examination for a reason other than an emergency or unexpected reason (e.g., to attend a scientific or medical meeting, have a significant family issue, etc.) only upon prior approval through the *Excused Absence Request (EAR) Process*. Documentation for excused absences will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Requests based on an excused absence, including observance of a religious holy day must be submitted to the Course Director at least 10 days before the date of the regularly scheduled exam.

The Course Director or Coordinator shall, in his/her sole discretion approve or disapprove such requests and shall notify the student of the decision via SHSU-COM e-mail. If permission is granted, the time, date, and location of the makeup exam will be stated in the SHSU-COM email. If permission is denied, the reasons for the denial will be stated in the letter or SHSU-COM email.

**Post-Examination Feedback and Review**

Students are not permitted to share the exam questions in any format (verbal, electronic, in writing) at any time. Recording or sharing examination questions is considered academic dishonesty.

Students will not receive grades or other performance indicators at the time of the examination.

Summary information, such as psychometric analyses and individualized scores and strength-opportunity reports, shall be provided in a timely manner after examinations. Post-examination reviews *may* be conducted at the discretion of Course or Clerkship Directors to provide aggregate performance information by discipline, topic, or objective, but shall not disclose specific examination questions.

Students who require remediation shall be provided with an opportunity to review their examination outcomes with an Academic Success Specialist specifically to assess whether patterns of performance can be utilized to improve future performance.

Performance on clinical, performance, or practical examinations may be reviewed at the discretion of the Course or Clerkship Director.

**Test Administration**

The *Test Administration* policy and related procedures were created to maintain a secure, standardized, and fair testing environment for all students. The policy applies to, but is not limited to, written examinations, practical examinations, Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs), Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Achievement Test (COMAT) examinations taken during clerkship rotations, and board prep simulated examinations.

If a device is required to take an examination, students are responsible for the device. Students must ensure that their device is in good working order. All device functions, such as adequate storage, network connectivity, and sufficient battery power, are the sole responsibility of the student. In cases of unexpected technology issues or malfunctions during an exam, students may be given a loaner device. No additional time will be given as compensation for technology issues or malfunctions.
Students may receive additional instructions regarding examination devices from the Course or Clerkship Director, or from Educational Affairs.

**Personal belongings**
- Students are provided lockers to place their personal belongings.
- Students are only allowed to bring into the testing environment a computer, its charging device, non-electronic ear plugs, and an SHSU ID.
- No other items shall be permitted in the testing environment, which includes, but is not limited to, all other electronic devices (e.g., e-watches, e-glasses, e-buds, tablets, iPods, calculators, and cell phones), pencils, pens, paper, notes, notebooks, notepads, books, reference materials, briefcases, backpacks, book bags, coats, hoodies, blankets, bags, purses, caps, hats, coats, keys, and fobs.
- Course and Clerkship Directors may make special exceptions if a particular item (e.g., a calculator) is utilized during the examination.

**Food and drink**
- Food and drinks are not permitted in the testing environment.
- Chewing gum is not allowed.
- A spill proof container of water, unwrapped cough drops, and tissues may be permitted only with the explicit consent of the Course or Clerkship Director prior to the start of the examination.

**Examination Time**
- Students must be in their seats and ready to start at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start time.
- Students who arrive after the scheduled examination time will not be permitted to take the exam and will be counted absent. Students who are absent must follow the Attendance Guidelines section of the Student Handbook.
- Students must complete their examination in the allotted time as scheduled.

**Attire**
- Students are to wear the appropriate professional attire per the Student Handbook.
- Students are not permitted to wear white coats unless required by the Course or Clerkship Director.

**Examination Materials**
- A sheet of paper and pen or pencil may be provided, per the Course Director’s discretion. If scratch paper is provided, it must be signed and returned at the end of the examination.

**Talking**
- Students may not talk in the testing environment during or after the examination.
- Students in need of assistance must raise their hand and quietly wait for assistance.

**Use of Restrooms**
- Students who need to use the restroom during the examination must sign a restroom break log before leaving and upon returning to the testing environment.
- Only one student may leave the testing environment at a time.
• Students taking a restroom break will be escorted to and from the restroom.
• No additional time shall be added to the examination period to compensate for restroom breaks.
• Due to special nature of practical examinations and OSCEs, restroom breaks are not allowed.

Assigned Seating

• Course and Clerkship Directors may implement assignment of seats. Students will be notified ahead of time if assigned seating will occur.

Questions during examinations

• Proctors will not answer questions regarding examination content.
• Proctors shall instruct the examinee to answer the question to the best of her/his ability with the information provided in the examination.
• When the testing platform provides an opportunity for students to comment on individual questions, students may use this resource to make comments, otherwise students should use provided scratch paper to make comments on specific questions.
• Challenges on specific examination questions must be submitted via the testing platform or in writing prior to the end of the scheduled examination session. Post-examination challenges are not accepted.
• Students must notify a proctor if comments or challenges are being submitted in writing prior to leaving the testing environment.

Accommodations

• Testing accommodations must be indicated on a Classroom Accommodation Form (CAF) issued by the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD).
• Making the necessary arrangements for testing accommodations is a responsibility shared by the student, the Course or Clerkship director, and SSD prior to the scheduled examination.

Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will result in a referral to the SPAP committee.

Promotion, Remediation, Probation, Graduation, and Dismissal

Student Promotion and Academic Progress (SPAP) Committee

The Student Promotion and Academic Progress (SPAP) committee shall maintain a continuing evaluation of the academic and professional progress of each student. Recommendations and options for actions include remediation, probation, dismissal, and promotion, including the recommendation for graduation.

Good Academic Standing

Per SHSU Academic Policy Statement 910312 (Academic Probation, Suspension, and Termination), students are considered to be in good academic standing when they have passed all courses/blocks/rotations in the curriculum to date and demonstrate competency in professionalism as defined by the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM).

For the purposes of co-curricular activities, leadership roles, travel, and student research, it is understood that first semester osteopathic medical students will not have generated an academic standing but have not fallen out of Good Academic Standing and may engage in these events.
Falling outside of the Good Academic Standing excludes students from participating in any extracurricular or co-curricular activities associated with SHSU. This includes but is not limited to leadership roles (student government, student organizations, student ambassadors, etc.), and program-related student travel.

Students should be aware that failure to maintain Good Academic Standing puts students at risk for being dismissed from the program, and non-compliance may also affect non-academic items like financial aid eligibility. Students not in Good Academic Standing are required to meet with the Office of Medical Student Affairs, housed within Educational Affairs, to establish a student success plan. Students actively engaged in ongoing research will need the permission of their research advisor and the SPAP committee to continue.

Remediation

A passing grade in each course is required for the purposes of academic progression and eventual awarding of the DO degree. All failures must be successfully remediated in order to qualify for promotion and graduation.

As soon as a failing grade for the course is official (i.e., reported to the Sam Houston State SHSU Registrar) the student must meet with the course director to arrange a plan for course remediation. The requirements for remediation and the nature of the re-evaluation examination shall be established by the course director. Any remediation plan shall include time for the student to prepare for re-evaluation examination(s), as determined by the course director. Dates for re-evaluation shall be determined for each course by the course director.

Successfully remediated courses shall be reported as passed with remediation (PR) to the Sam Houston State SHSU Registrar. It should be understood that successfully remediating a failed class does not change the fact that it was failed.

The student’s academic advisor and Medical Student Affairs shall be notified of the failure and students are strongly urged to take advantage of the advisor’s knowledge and insights as well as support and resources in Medical Student Affairs to facilitate academic progress.

For students repeating an academic year, the expectation is that they shall pass all courses by the end of the next repeated academic year. In most cases, failure of a course or clerkship while repeating an academic year shall result in dismissal.

Students are expected to complete the requirements for the DO degree in no longer than six (6) years, not counting any leave of absence or time spent pursuing additional research experiences or degrees, such as MPH or PhD. Students who are unable or deemed unlikely to be able to complete requirements within this time frame may be reviewed by the SPAP committee for further action.

Professionalism is an integral part of the curriculum and is considered to be a component of all courses/clerkships. Failure of the professionalism domain shall be considered sufficient reason to fail an entire course/clerkship, regardless of performance on assessments. The SPAP committee shall review students’ professional behavior in and out of class and retains the right to invoke appropriate disciplinary measures for breeches, up to and including dismissal.

Probation

A student shall be placed on academic probation if a student fails any block/course or clerkship. A student may also be placed on probation for professionalism or ethical concerns. The SPAP committee shall determine when a student should be removed from probation. A student shall be removed from probation after all deficiencies
have been remediated, and the SPAP committee determines that the student continues to meet academic, professional and ethical expectations. The SPAP committee shall make a deliberate decision in each individual case as to when the student may come off probation. A student may remain on probation for longer than an academic year if concerns persist about their professional or academic progress.

All students placed on probation for any reason shall be notified of such in writing. The notification shall also contain an indication of the minimum amount of time and the conditions necessary for consideration of their removal from probation.

While on probation, a student is expected to attend all classes and activities, unless precluded by a bona fide emergency, or unless the absence is approved in advance. A student must document any absence from a major assessment or required activity due to illness or other event listed as an unscheduled absence. Except for required electives in the curriculum, no electives are permitted while a student is on academic probation without approval of the SPAP committee. Exceptions may be made for electives, which do not interfere with required curriculum or remedial work, such as a summer preceptorship. While on probation, students may not hold an elected office in student organizations, nor represent the COM or SHSU at meetings. The student may not participate in activities that would entail absence from required classes.

Students should be aware that Texas Medical Board another medical licensing boards may require disclosure of being placed on probation during medical school when applying for a license.

Promotion and Graduation

The SPAP committee is responsible for promoting students and recommending candidates for graduation. In order to be promoted from one year to the next, students must satisfactorily complete all the required course work, meet all financial obligations to the college, and exhibit professional conduct and ethical behavior. To be promoted to the clinical years, a student must satisfactorily complete all the requirements in the pre-clerkship curriculum in Years 1 and 2 and taken the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX-USA) Level 1.

A passing grade in all required courses and clerkships must be achieved in order to receive the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) degree. Passage of COMLEX-USA Level 1, COMLEX-USA Level 2-PE and COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE is required for graduation.

SPAP Committee Appeals Process

Students have the right to appeal decisions of the SPAP committee taken against a student for academic, professional, or ethical reasons, failure to fully meet an academic requirement, or unprofessional conduct by filing a written appeal to the Dean within five (5) business days of the date of notification. The appeal must include the student’s basis for appeal. Specific procedures for a dismissal or an academic failure are outlined below and in academic regulations. Students may also appeal other adverse decisions such as probation, repeating a year, etc. The Dean shall consider these appeals on a case-by-case basis and may appoint an ad hoc committee to hear the appeal, if warranted, and shall make a decision after considering the recommendation of the ad hoc appeal committee. The decision of the Dean is final.

Dismissal

A student who demonstrates academic deficiency, personal irresponsibility, unprofessional, or unethical behavior may be dismissed. A student may be evaluated at any time for continuation or dismissal. Students who
demonstrate repeated marginal performance or failures on coursework or clerkships may be considered for dismissal.

Students wishing to reenter after being dismissed must make formal application through the Admissions Committee. The Admissions Committee shall consider such reaplication and make its recommendation to the Dean. If the Dean’s decision is favorable, the SPAP committee shall recommend to the Dean the curricular placement of applicants for readmission. The respective committees may request the re-applicant to provide any relevant information they deem necessary for their decision process.

**Dismissal Appeals Process**

Students may appeal a decision for dismissal by following the process outlined in SHSU Academic Policy Statement 910312 (Academic Probation, Suspension, and Termination).
Academic Honor Code

Academic Integrity

Sam Houston State University and the COM “expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom” (SHSU Academic Policy Statement 810213 (Procedures in Cases of Academic Dishonesty)). Additionally, the study of Osteopathic Medicine guides students to the provision of professional and compassionate patient care and inter-professional teamwork in addition to an understanding and application of Osteopathic Principles and Practices, and not simply the passage of examinations.

Academic Dishonesty

Individuals who are found guilty of academic dishonesty, which includes, but is not limited to, cheating; plagiarism; collusion; and the abuse of resource materials, are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. A student may not be promoted or graduated until an allegation of academic dishonesty has been resolved.

Academic Dishonesty Disciplinary and Appeals Processes

All academic dishonesty cases are first considered and reviewed by a faculty member. Per SHSU Academic Policy Statement 810213 (Procedures in Cases of Academic Dishonesty), if the faculty member believes that an academic penalty is necessary, he/she may assign a penalty but must notify the student in writing of his/her right to appeal to the Course or Clerkship Director, the SPAP committee, the Dean and, eventually, to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (whose decision shall be final).

Academic Grievances and Appeals

Academic Grievances

Per SHSU Academic Policy Statement 900823 (Academic Grievance Procedures for Students), academic grievances include disputes over:

a. Course and/or assignment grades, except cases of academic dishonesty
b. Unauthorized class absences or tardiness
c. An instructor’s alleged unprofessional conduct related to academic matters
d. Withdrawal or suspension of privileges related to degree-required clinical rotation, internships, or other clinical service delivery in professional degree programs.

A student with an academic grievance should first attempt to resolve the matter by directly addressing faculty in a professional manner.

Academic Grievances Appeals Process

Students have a right to appeal academic grievances to the Course or Clerkship Director, the COM’s Academic Review Panel, the Dean and, eventually, to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (whose decision shall be final) according to the procedures outlined in SHSU Academic Policy Statement 900823 (Academic Grievance Procedures for Students).

Academic Standing

Good Academic Standing
Per SHSU Academic Policy Statement 910312 (Academic Probation, Suspension, and Termination), students are considered to be in good academic standing when they have passed all courses/blocks/rotations in the curriculum to date and demonstrate competency in professionalism as defined by SHSU-COM policy and the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM).

Students not considered in good academic standing are as follows:

- Students on Academic Probation, including students being remediated
- Students with a professionalism, ethics, or academic dishonesty violation

Students are removed from active academic probation when all course/block/rotation failures or professionalism concerns are successfully remediated. Students with a history of academic probation will be monitored and their performance reviewed by the SPAP committee on an annual basis for the remainder of their enrollment at SHSU-COM.

COMLEX-USA Examinations

All SHSU-COM students must pass COMLEX-USA Level 1, Level 2-PE, and Level 2-CE to receive a DO degree. The Dean or designee has the authority to set the eligibility of students to take COMLEX-USA examinations, and the SHSU-COM will determine the compulsory testing window for each Level. Scheduling to take COMLEX-USA examinations occurs through the NBOME portal. Students will be granted access to their NBOME portal during Year 1.

COMLEX-USA Level 1 and Level 2-CE examinations are taken at any Prometric testing center, as arranged by the student. COMLEX-USA Level 2-PE is taken at an NBOME National Center for Clinical Skills Testing, located in Philadelphia and Chicago, as arranged by the student. All expenses, including fees, travel, and lodging, related to taking COMLEX-USA examinations are the responsibility of students.

SHSU-COM COMLEX Academic Advancement Policy

Students who successfully complete all Year 2 courses are conditionally promoted to Year 3, pending a passing score on COMLEX-USA Level 1. Students must sit for the COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination prior to starting their first clerkship rotation.

If a SHSU-COM student fails COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination on the first attempt, he/she:

- Is allowed to finish the current rotation.
- Is withdrawn from the next rotation.
- Must retake COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination after four weeks of involuntary academic leave of absence to study for the second attempt, then resume with the subsequent rotation.
- Must use their four-week vacation during their third year to make up the missed rotation.
If a SHSU-COM student fails COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination on the second attempt, he/she:

- Is allowed to finish the current rotation.
- Must meet with the Student Promotion and Academic Progress (SPAP) Committee.
- May not resume clerkship rotations until achieving a passing score on COMLEX-USA Level 1.
- Will be directed to the NBOME to assure that all current NBOME policies are understood and followed.

If a SHSU-COM student fails COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination on the third attempt, he/she:

- Must meet with the Student Promotion and Academic Progress (SPAP) Committee.

If a SHSU-COM student fails COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE or 2-PE examination on the first attempt, he/she:

- Is allowed to finish the current rotation.
- Is withdrawn from the next rotation.
- Must retake COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE or 2-PE examination after four weeks of involuntary academic leave of absence to study for the second attempt, then resume with the subsequent rotation.
- Must use their four-week residency interview rotation during their third year to make up the missed rotation.

If a SHSU-COM student fails COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE or 2-PE on the second attempt, he/she:

- Is allowed to finish the current rotation.
- Must meet with the Student Promotion and Academic Progress Committee.
- Is withdrawn from the next rotation and may not resume clerkship rotations until achieving a passing score on COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE or 2-PE.
- Will be directed to the NBOME to assure that all current NBOME policies are understood and followed.

Students that are withdrawn from rotations after a second failure on the COMLEX-USA Level 1 or Level 2-PE or 2-CE may have their graduation delayed and may be placed on academic probation.

Students should be aware that the Texas Medical Board requires passage of each part of a licensure examination within three attempts (Board Rule §163.6). Students who become ineligible for a Texas Medical License may be dismissed from the SHSU-COM.

Graduation Requirements

A minimum of 45 months must elapse between the date of matriculation and graduation. Students must complete the program within 150% of the standard time (six years following matriculation).

Research Guidelines

SHSU-COM is dedicated to the advancement of evidence-based medicine. As such, an emphasis on research literacy and student scholarly activity has been embedded within the curriculum.

Student Research

Students wishing to conduct research in conjunction with SHSU faculty/staff or independently, should submit a formal request to the Research Advisory Council (RAC). Students must be in good academic standing or in their first semester of medical school to participate in research. Students must be currently enrolled. Students not currently enrolled and on a break between semesters (e.g., summer break, winter break, spring break) may still
participate in research endeavors as long as they are currently registered for the next sequence of classes and in good academic standing.

Students must follow SHSU guidelines on conducting research, which may include submitting Institutional Review Board (IRB) documents, Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training, and other requirements, as required.

**Presenting/Publishing Research**

Students submitting research projects for presentations or publications should notify the Chair of the RAC.

**Funding**

Funds for research are available through SHSU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, SHSU-COM Biomedical Sciences, and the SHSU-COM Office of Faculty Development and CME. Research funds are limited and not guaranteed. Each office has separate processes for applying for funding.

**SHSU Academic Policies and Procedures**

SHSU Academic Policies and Procedures may be accessed at [http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html](http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html)

**Student-Provided Technological Devices Policy**

Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, mobile phones and smartphones, computers, tablets and other handheld devices, audio and video players, and recording devices. While the use of electronic devices can enhance the teaching and learning experience, the absence of unnecessary distractions and interruptions are essential for an effective learning environment. Course Directors are responsible for establishing and managing electronic device policies, which may change depending on the scope and purpose of a session.

**Resignation from the Program**

Students wishing to resign from the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine program should, in accordance with Academic Policy Statement 990407, begin this process with the Registrar’s Office representative located in the COM building on the 1st floor.

Students resigning from the program may be eligible for a refund based on guidelines outlined by applicable law, including Texas Education Code, Section 54.006.

A request to resign after the census date may be considered if the student demonstrates extenuating circumstances. Such a request should be made in writing to the dean and should include appropriate documentation that will verify the extenuating circumstance. Once received, the student will be notified of the dean’s decision. The student may appeal this decision to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Provost’s decision is final.
Resources and Support

Academic Resources and Support

Academic Support Services

The Office of Medical Student Affairs provides academic support and learning resources to enhance medical students’ educational experiences and help achieve personal and academic goals. The following support services are provided to all students individually or in a group setting:

- Time management
- Stress management
- Learning styles
- Test-taking strategies
- Organizational skills
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Transition to professional school
- Preparation for licensure exams
- Study plans

Students experiencing attention or learning difficulties may be referred to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities for additional testing and evaluation. Faculty may refer students for academic support services through the SHSU Early Alert System (Campus Connect) or individual appointments may be scheduled through Campus Connect.

Peer Tutoring

The Office of Medical Student Affairs oversees the peer-tutoring program at SHSU-COM which is available to all enrolled students at no cost. The program is designed to enhance student learning and promote academic excellence. Students may request tutoring services or be referred by their course directors, a faculty member, an advisor, or by members of the Office of the Dean or Educational Affairs. All peer tutors will receive training. Tutoring availability is provided through Campus Connect.

Learning Communities

SHSU-COM has four learning communities that provide osteopathic medical students with a supportive environment for advising and mentoring. Each entering cohort is divided into one of the four learning communities created to foster relationships between students and faculty, provide community service and team building opportunities, focus on social networking, lifelong learning, peer mentoring, and including medical professionalism, ethics, educational life balance, and wellness sessions. The Office of Medical Student Affairs works with dedicated advisors comprised of faculty and staff who will serve as mentors, instructors, and career development coaches, who support the academic and professional growth of the student.

Career Counseling

SHSU-COM provides students with career preparation and guidance to choose the specialty and practice that best suits their interest talents, and abilities. In addition to the multi-layered support system provided through the Learning Communities students are provided career assessments, residency preparation, and assistance with
curriculum vitae, personal statement, mock interviews, and summer educational and research opportunities. For research, students are assigned a faculty mentor in their area of interest.

Financial Aid and Debt Management

Financial Aid

SHSU’s Office of Financial Aid provides financial aid options that help students contribute towards their educational expenses through completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) https://www.fafsa.ed.gov. Students who are interested in Financial Aid will find more information about available types of financial aid, who is eligible to apply, how and when to apply, and other information at https://www.shsu.edu/dept/financial-aid/.

Debt Management

The SHSU Student Money Management Center (SMMC) is a financial outreach and educational program that focuses on debt management. SHSU-COM students are provided financial wellness programs addressing budgeting, repayment, and financial planning. Students are also provided a personal financial coach to discuss long-term financial planning or any other financial related questions. For more information, please visit https://www.shsu.edu/dept/smmc/.

Newton Gresham Library

The Newton Gresham Library serves the research needs of the SHSU Community and is located in Huntsville. The library holds over 1.3 million books, bound periodicals, and government documents and a variety of formats, including multimedia, digital collections, microforms, microfiche, phonograph records, videotape, and newspapers. Other groups of materials housed in the Newton Gresham Library include paperbacks for recreational reading, current periodical issues, new books, and a children’s literature collection. A multimedia lab, music listening room, study carrels, a small lounge area furnished with vending machines, and a copy center, including a public fax machine are provided for the convenience of students and faculty. Library holdings information may be electronically accessed through an online catalog from hundreds of library and campus computer workstations, as well as remotely via the Internet.

A team of professional librarians, support staff, and student assistants provide reference, interlibrary loan, circulation, acquisitions, and other library services to the faculty, staff and students of the SHSU, as well as to visiting scholars and off campus users. Students at the SHSU-COM have access to the library virtually or physically at both Conroe and Huntsville, for more information regarding hours of operation go to https://library.shsu.edu/ or contact the onsite SHSU-COM librarian.

Student Organizations

Medical student organizations provide students with opportunities to participate and become knowledgeable about professional associations. As the student body grows and new student organizations become of interest the Student Life Coordinator can be contacted for more information. The Osteopathic Medical Student Government (OMSG) Association is comprised of elected officers who serve as student leadership representing the student body. The purpose of OMSG is to serve as the official voice of the student body for the SHSU-COM. It discusses topics or concerns of medical students and provides solutions and a plan of action for improvement and benefit for all.
Reasonable Accommodations and Disability Services

Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of the SHSU-COM to provide equal opportunities for all applicants and students with respect to admission, financial aid, and access to education programs, services and activities, regardless of race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, national origin, age, disabilities, or religion.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and other applicable laws, the SHSU-COM provides reasonable accommodations for otherwise qualified students with verified physical, psychological and/or learning disabilities. An accommodation will not be provided if it would result in the fundamental alteration of the SHSU-COM’s programs, services or activities, or if it would impose undue financial or administrative burdens on the SHSU-COM.

The intent of this policy is to provide each student with the opportunity to excel academically, while creating an equitable environment conducive to learning. In doing so, however, SHSU-COM must maintain the integrity of its curriculum and preserve those elements deemed essential to the acquisition of knowledge in all areas of osteopathic medicine, including the demonstration of basic skills required for the practice of osteopathic medicine. For example, technology-related accommodations may be made for disabled students in some of these areas, but a candidate must be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. One or more trained intermediaries may be provided to assist the student during the educational program, but not under circumstances where the student’s judgment must be mediated by someone else’s power of selection and observation.

This policy will be administered consistently, fairly, and in a non-discriminatory manner in compliance with the ADA and all other applicable laws. All applicants receiving supplementary application material for admission will be asked to certify they have reviewed the SHSU-COM Technical Standards and the Participation in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine Laboratories requirements.

Any student accepted to SHSU-COM who believes themselves to have a mental and/or physical disability must bring this information and all supporting documentation to the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities representative.

It is the responsibility of the student to have an evaluation and tests, if any, administered and interpreted. The SHSU-COM can refer the student to a local provider for evaluation. Any charges for an evaluation or forwarding of documentation are the student’s responsibility.

Process for Requesting Accommodations

Requests for accommodations are made by the student according to the procedures outlined below. Applications may be submitted at any time during the academic year. An application for accommodations is a request for only the academic year in which it was submitted. If an accommodation is granted during the first academic year, a renewal application must be submitted the following year should the student desire continuation of the granted accommodations. Requests for accommodations must be approved in writing by SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities representative. All requests for accommodations due to a physical, psychological or learning disability must contain appropriate documentation and be directed to the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities representative. Please see http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/procedures-to-request-services.html to request services.
Student Travel, Contingency Plan & Housing
Students will be responsible for their transportation to and from their clerkship sites. Students are not considered employees of SHSU-COM are not insured for any accidents or mishaps that may occur during any traveling that is done as part of the clerkship program.

Students may be required to complete core rotations with at least one “away” clinical partner. Housing will be provided by SHSU-COM for those locations that are located greater than 75 miles from the SHSU-COM campus and not a site assigned for the entire academic year. If a student has a rotation that becomes unavailable for any reason before or during their block, the Office of Clinical Education and Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, if needed, shall work to find appropriate substitute rotation for that student. Substitute rotations may be in their region or a different region. The Office of Clinical Education actively pursues more rotations than necessary to accommodate the student cohort, to ensure excess opportunities within each region.

Some of the clerkship sites offer limited housing. This includes apartments, houses, and/or rooms in the hospital. These opportunities are typically available on a first-come first-served basis and will be facilitated through the clerkship coordinators at SHSU-COM and the clinical site. If a student has concerns related to the provided housing, he/she should immediately contact the Clerkship Coordinators.

Students who choose to participate in an elective rotation outside of a 75 mile radius will be responsible for their own housing. If the housing currently secured by SHSU-COM has not been filled with students completing CORE rotations, students may be permitted to utilize housing for elective rotations on a first-come first-served basis. This will also be facilitated through the clerkship coordinators.

SHSU Students of Concern Program
The SHSU Students of Concern Program was created to work with faculty, staff and students in identifying and addressing concerns BEFORE they reach a level involving an honor code or conduct violation. The goals of the Students of Concern (SOC) Team are:

1. To assist in the detection of a student in crisis while paying special attention to the safety and security needs of community members.
2. To offer counseling, guidance, referrals, and any other feasible type of support needed to members of the SHSU community, including their families.
3. To use the experience of crisis, when appropriate, as a teachable moment which may enhance the quality of life for all of those touched by the experience.

Students, Faculty, and Staff are strongly advised to report any type of behavior or threat of behavior that could threaten the well-being of any student and/or may materially disrupt the SHSU community by contacting the SHSU Dean of Students’ Office through the Student of Concern Information Form (https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?SamHoustonStateUniv&layout_id=5).

Once the form is received, a member of the SOC team will review the information and take appropriate action, which may or may not include contacting the student of concern, the reporter, and any others that have been identified. If you have any questions related to completing a Student of Concern Reporting Form, please call (936) 294.1785 or email doso@shsu.edu.
Guiding Principles

Professionalism

In adherence to the SHSU-COM Professionalism Policy, professionalism is central to the ethos of both the practice of medicine and conduct of research and an expression of the SHSU-COM’s commitment to patients and society. The environment of the SHSU-COM is conducive to the ongoing development of professional behaviors in osteopathic medical students, faculty, and staff at all locations and is one in which all individuals are treated with respect. This includes exposure to aspects of patient safety, cultural competency, and interprofessional collaborative practice. SHSU-COM is committed to maintaining an environment that is optimal for learning, teaching, conducting research, and providing clinical care. Professional behavior is expected of all students as they interact internally and externally as representatives of the SHSU-COM. SHSU-COM’s professionalism expectations are in alignment with the American Osteopathic Association’s Code of Ethics (https://osteopathic.org/about/leadership/aoa-governance-documents/code-of-ethics/).

Students are expected to demonstrate the following:

- Respect, compassion, and a responsiveness to the needs of patients and society that supersedes self-interest;
- Accountability to patients, the osteopathic profession, and a commitment to excellence and professional development;
- A positive attitude toward learning, which includes participation, enthusiasm, and providing meaningful feedback;
- Initiative and self-motivation by showing up prepared to learn; willingness to contribute to the learning of others;
- Reliability can be counted on to be punctual, to complete assignments;
- Accountability and willingness to accept responsibility; knows his/her limitations; willingness to seek help;
- Communicates with peers and appropriate personnel in a timely fashion when issues arise that affect attendance (e.g., accident, illness);
- Sensitivity to the patient’s culture, age, gender, gender identity, and abilities;
- Compliance with all SHSU and clinical site policies;
- Ethical behaviors when interacting with patients and health-care team members;
- An awareness of and adherence to appropriate physician-patient boundaries.

Peer Experiential Learning

Skills training sessions in the Clinical Medicine (CM) and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM) courses require that students practice examinations and selected skills on peers, or other students who are role-playing as patients. Skills include, but are not limited to: communication, physical examinations and osteopathic techniques. Guidelines and requirements regarding peer experiential learning are in each CM and OMM course syllabus.

Provision of Medical Care

SHSU-COM full-time clinical faculty members cannot provide medical care to SHSU-COM students. Students are to refrain from requesting medical advice or from seeking medical care from full time clinical faculty members.
Students may not state or imply that they are providing medical care or entering into a physician-patient relationship when practicing clinical skills, inside or outside of a classroom setting.

**Dress Code**

The SHSU-COM student dress code is designed to promote professionalism and the culture of collegiality in the learning and work environment. Students that do not adhere to the dress code may be asked to leave a session to change. Repeat dress code violations will be reported by the appropriate Course Director and reviewed by the SPAP committee.

Students are expected to wear their ID badge at all times and dress in business casual attire unless a Course Director specifies otherwise in the syllabus. Students are expected to wear their white coat at all times unless directed otherwise (e.g., during examinations). Students are expected to be clean, well groomed, and dressed in a manner appropriate to their responsibilities.

**General Guidelines**

SHSU-COM will provide:

- Two (2) pairs of official SHSU-COM scrubs
- Two (2) official SHSU-COM student white coats
- One (1) ID badge/name tag

If replacements for these items are needed, students may buy replacement scrubs and white coats through an approved SHSU vendor listed on the SHSU-COM Medical Student Affairs website. A replacement ID Badge can be acquired through the Bearkat OneCard Office.

Recommended acceptable attire includes collared shirts, ties (optional), slacks, skirts, blouses, sweaters, and dresses. Dress shoes, low heels, or flats should be worn. Avoid open-toed shoes, flip-flops, tennis shoes, or porous shoes. Clothing should allow for an appropriate range of movement and be appropriate for a business casual environment. An example of business casual attire can be found at thebalancecareers.com.

SHSU-COM students may not wear hats, jeans, shorts, flip-flops, and athletic wear including t-shirts. In all cases, hair and nails should be clean and neatly groomed, good oral and skin hygiene adhered to, and strong fragrances/perfumes avoided.

Official SHSU-COM scrubs may be worn with an official SHSU-COM white coat and ID badge to lectures on days where students have labs that require scrubs.

**Clinical Sites**

When students visit a clinical site, they should adhere to the dress code of that site. Dress code infractions at clinical sites will be reported to the appropriate Course Director and repeat violations will be reviewed by the SPAP committee.

**Course and Faculty Evaluations**

Student evaluations of all courses, clerkships and instructors who teach in the osteopathic medical school curriculum are an important means to monitor and obtain useful information for improving the medical education program. All responses collected remain anonymous.
Completion of course and clerkship evaluations is a professional expectation for all students. Student comments should be constructive and professional in nature to assure they will be taken seriously and lead to improvement. The use of confrontational language is not considered constructive or professional and only tends to diminish the credibility of the evaluation. With this understanding, all ratings and comments are welcome. Constructive comments about individual faculty are also welcome. Students are also encouraged to offer supporting comments on a course or clerkship that was a positive learning experience for them and made the curriculum stronger.

Students are required to complete online evaluations of each course/clerkship/instructor as assigned by the provided deadline.

**Participation**

The collaborative adult learning model requires students to participate and actively engage in the learning process. Participation is not the same as attendance. Participation requires students to be actively involved in the learning process. The contribution made by the student should be related to the course content, be relevant to the class discussion, and advance shared learning. Confidentiality in the learning experiences as part of the formal curriculum is expected and should be treated as such. Shared information should never be used in a way that would jeopardize a person or organization.

**Reproduction of Materials**

All lecture videos and other course materials are available only to SHSU-COM students affiliated with a course or clerkship. At no time may students repost any course materials or share them with people unaffiliated with the course without express written permission from the Course or Clerkship Director.
Compliance and Training

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

SHSU-COM operates in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, (FERPA), as amended. Students have the right to inspect all official records which pertain to them and to challenge inaccurate or misleading information. Exceptions are parents’ financial records and confidential letters and statements placed in the record before January 1, 1975 or placed under conditions where students have signed a waiver of right of access.

All SHSU-COM student academic information is considered confidential except the following directory information available to the public: student’s name, campus and off-campus address, email address, telephone and voice mail number, photograph, major field of study, participation in SHSU activities and sports, physical and performance statistics of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, full-time or part-time status, degrees, awards, and honors, dean’s list, and most recent previous institution attended by student.

SHSU-COM Students may waive the right of nondisclosure, allowing access to their records by anyone who has a completed copy of the waiver form. The waiver form is effective through the student’s graduation or until the student designates otherwise. The student may request that directory information not be released. This must be made in writing to the Office of the Registrar within 15 days of the beginning of each term. Failure to notify the Office of the Registrar may mean that SHSU publications, such as team roster, promotional brochures, or the student directory, may include some directory information.

FERPA Complaints

Complaints regarding alleged violations of rights accorded by students by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or the regulations promulgated under may be directed in writing to:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

For more information visit the Department of Education’s Family Compliance Office at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OM/fpco/index.html

Secure Student Recordkeeping

Sam Houston State University (SHSU) protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of student records and maintains security measures to protect and back up data. SHSU complies with the Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 202, Subchapter B, Rule 202.20 and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to ensure the security, confidentiality, and integrity of student records. The University’s Academic Policy 810806, Student Educational Records, is established to assure FERPA compliance and designates types, locations, and custodians of various student records. Academic Policy 830823, Reproducing of Hard Copy of Student Academic Records, provides guidelines for the printing of hard copy student academic records. The University has established an Information Security Program that provides direction for managing and protecting the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of SHSU information technology resources.
Title IX
All SHSU-COM students are required to participate in a yearly Title IX training in order to maintain academic good standing with the SHSU-COM. Students are expected to abide by the rules and regulations outlined in this training. Any student wishing to report a Title IX incident should follow the procedures outlined on the SHSU Title IX Office website https://www.shsu.edu/titleix/incident-reporting.html.

Specialized Training
Training
SHSU-COM students receive Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Blood-borne Pathogen training during their SHSU-COM orientation. Students are required to maintain their training with annual renewals through SHSU-COM Clinical Affairs or placement sites. Training certificates will be kept on file and available for verification via Clinical Affairs.

Students wishing to engage in academic research outside of a course will be required to complete CITI training, IRB training, and may be asked to complete other trainings regarding but not limited to safety regulations, hazardous materials, and research ethics. Any training needed to complete research should be listed by the student on the Research Approval Form.
Healthcare and Insurance

Health Insurance

All students enrolled at SHSU-COM are required to show proof of health insurance annually or at the time of coverage expiration. All students must maintain health insurance coverage throughout their enrollment at SHSU-COM. Students may obtain health insurance privately or through one of the Sam Houston State SHSU student health insurance plans offered by Academic HealthPlans™, found at https://shsu.myahpcare.com. Dependent coverage is also available through the student health insurance plan. Dependent coverage payment must be paid directly to Academic HealthPlans and may not be billed to the student’s account. Students are required to submit proof of health insurance through CastleBranch for verification.

CastleBranch will verify students have insurance coverage meeting the minimum standards required by the SHSU-COM. Insurance coverage should also include coverage for an occupational injury, such as blood exposure, that might put the individual at risk for a blood borne infection (i.e., hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV). It is important for students to realize that medical expenses for care provided by hospitals affiliated with the SHSU-COM, including laboratory procedures and emergency care are the responsibility of the student and not the clinical site, SHSU-COM, or the SHSU.

Physical and Mental Health

All SHSU-COM students are encouraged to actively maintain their physical and mental health. Students are encouraged to continue healthy habits while in medical school, including regular exercise, adequate sleep, time with friends and/or family and a healthy diet. SHSU-COM provides an array of programs that focus on proactive health and wellness prevention. It is important to avoid overuse of alcohol and abuse of prescription or illicit drugs. When acute or chronic physical or mental health services are needed, SHSU-COM provides supportive opportunities for students to seek services.

Students may be seen by a physician, medical practitioner of their choosing, or may be seen at the SHSU Student Health Center. The SHSU Student Health Center is a primary care outpatient clinic located on the Huntsville campus that provides preventative care services, a women’s health clinic, laboratory testing, dental care, and pharmacy services. For more information regarding services and hours of operation please see the following link https://www.shsu.edu/dept/student-health-center/services Additional physical health services are available through community resources listed online for all students located in the following regions: Montgomery County; Nacogdoches and Lufkin; Southeast Texas; Fort Bend County; and Ennis and Corsicana.

Note: The most current resources can be found online at the abovementioned community resources link.

Students away on clinical rotations who experience an emergency, such as needle stick or other immediate issues can be seen at the hospital emergency department where they are rotating.

Student Counseling

The SHSU Counseling Center provides individual, couples, or group therapy to SHSU-COM students who need help managing stress, anxiety, depression, or other issues. SHSU has confidential counseling services at the Huntsville campus and The Woodlands Center that are available to all enrolled students. Additionally, there are online, self-help, and community resources that are available.

• The Sam Houston Counseling Center is located at 1608 Ave. J on the Huntsville Campus. There is no charge for office visits. Counselors can be reached at 936-294-1720. Hours are:
o Monday, Thursday Friday 8am to 5pm
o Tuesday and Wednesday 8am to 7pm
o Website: http://www.shsu.edu/dept/counseling/

- **The Woodlands Center Community Counseling Clinic** is located at 3380 College Park Drive, room 151 at the SHSU facility on the Lone Star College Campus. The center can be reached at 936-202-5012. Hours are:
  o Monday – Thursday 4:30 – 8:00 PM
  o Website: http://www.shsu.edu/academics/woodlands-center/ (drop down at bottom of page for other campus services)

- **Additional support:**
  o **ULifeline** http://www.ulifeline.org/shsu/ 24 hour online resource for college mental health
  o **Tri- County Behavioral Healthcare** 24 hour Crisis line: 1-800-659-6994
  o **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-8255
  o **LGBTQ National Hotline:** 1-888-843-4564
  o **Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741741

SHSU-COM and COCA prohibit the provision of heath care services to students by faculty involved in their evaluations. Additionally, it is a violation of the SHSU-COM policy for students to request that faculty members provide medications or other treatments outside of a proper physician-patient relationship. Students on self-selected elective rotations, outside the purview of SHSU-COM, must plan for their health care needs at the rotation site independently.

**Immunization Requirements:**

Effective January 1, 2014 Texas state law (Senate Bill 62) requires that on the first day of class at an institution of higher education in Texas, Sam Houston State SHSU, students must provide proof of immunization OR an accepted waiver for bacterial meningitis. (If you are 22 or older this requirement does not apply to you). For more information, please go to https://www.shsu.edu/dept/student-health-center/meningitis.

**Hepatitis B:** Students must have either completed the three-part Hepatitis B vaccine series before matriculation OR have begun the series in order to have completed the series by the end of their first semester. All students must have a titer drawn to demonstrate Hepatitis B protection. If the titer is low, the student must repeat the series. If the titer is not adequate after two series, no further Hepatitis B immunization or testing need be performed.

**Influenza:** Students must receive the flu vaccine by October on an annual basis.

**Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR):** All students must provide proof of immunization for measles, mumps and rubella, show serologic proof of immunity, or be given two doses of MMR.

**Varicella (Chicken Pox):** Students must provide proof of having received 2 doses of varicella vaccine or positive serology.

**Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis (Tdap):** Students must provide proof of one dose of adult Tdap. If administered greater than 10 years prior to matriculation, Td vaccine is required.

**Tuberculosis Testing (TB):** Students must have annual TB testing, either by Mantoux Tuberculin skin test or interferon gamma release assay blood test (QuantiFERON®) and complete an annual health survey for TB.
Students who test positive will require evaluation for TB disease. Students with a history of positive skin or blood test or latent TB should complete a TB questionnaire. Converters without prior treatment should be screened with a chest x-ray and complete a course of prophylactic treatment. An annual health survey should then be competed which includes a TB symptom questionnaire. Serial chest x-rays are not recommended in the presence of a normal questionnaire.

Failure to complete immunizations and other requirements in a timely manner may result in disciplinary action and/or interruption of clinical training. Exemptions for medical and/or religious reasons will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Requirements for Matriculation
Hospital and health care facilities have policies requiring drug testing and criminal background checks for employees, students and volunteers. Some facilities provide that students who test positive for drugs, or who have certain types of information in their criminal background checks, are ineligible to train in that facility. Therefore, drug testing and criminal background checks will be required of all students prior to first year enrollment and prior to clinical rotations.

Alcohol and Drug Testing
Drug testing and background checks will be provided through CastleBranch on behalf of SHSU-COM prior to orientation and the start of clinical rotations. Results of any routine drug test will be confidentially reported to the Dean. Notice of normal drug testing and background checks will be provided to the clinical facilities. Testing must be completed prior to orientation and within 30 days preceding matriculation at a certified collection facility provided by CastleBranch. A student who does not submit to or clear a routine drug test will have their offer of acceptance withdrawn.

Random drug testing may be performed at any time. After matriculation, students who test positive on a routine drug test will be referred to a physician not affiliated with the SHSU-COM for evaluation. The physician will be designated by the SHSU-COM and the student will pay for the evaluation. Students may not continue in classes or clinical rotations until the physician evaluation has been completed and the student has been cleared by the evaluating physician to resume classes/clerkships, and a negative drug screen has been returned. Results of this evaluation will be shared with the Dean. If a student refuses evaluation or consent to share the results of this evaluation, he/she will be subject to disciplinary procedures, including dismissal.

If treatment is recommended, the student will be allowed to seek treatment and remain enrolled as a student but must be cleared by an evaluating physician and have a negative drug screen prior to resuming classes/clerkships. This may delay graduation or necessitate repeating a year, course, or clerkship. Continued monitoring after treatment or evaluation will be under the purview of the Texas Medical Association Physician Health and Rehabilitation Committee or private physician as outlined below and will not be reported to the Dean unless the impaired student refuses or is unresponsive to the appropriate treatment.

The use of illegal drugs or failure of a drug screen is considered grounds for dismissal. Any questions or concerns about routine drug testing may be shared confidentially with the Dean.

Background Checks
Prior to matriculation at SHSU-COM, all students are required to complete a criminal background check through CastleBranch. These background checks will also be utilized by the clerkship rotation sites. Therefore, students
are required to complete a new criminal background check prior to beginning clinical rotations. These background checks must meet the standards required by the Office of Clinical Affairs and be completed in May prior to the start of rotations. All background checks will be maintained and monitored through CastleBranch. Any violations found on background checks will be referred to the SHSU-COM Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs.

Needle Stick/Exposure Policy
In the case of needle stick/exposure to blood and/or bodily fluids, the following policy applies SHSU-COM students:

1. Immediately wash the area with soap and water and then apply direct pressure to stop bleeding if needed.
2. If blood or a bodily fluid has come in contact with the skin, eyes, nose, or mouth, thoroughly flush the exposed area with saline or water for a minimum of 5 minutes. If available, use the closest wash station. Remove contact lenses from eye if necessary.
3. Bodily fluids that come into contact with intact skin are NOT considered exposures.
4. Identify the source patient medical record number (MRN), physician, physician phone, and pertinent health information.
5. Immediately report the incident to your preceptor or charge nurse at your current location. The charge nurse or other clinical staff member will supervise the testing of the source patient and complete any necessary steps required by the clinical site’s exposure policy.
6. Immediately seek medical treatment, if necessary, at the nearest emergency facility. Payment of any treatment will be the student’s responsibility and charged to the student’s insurance. Students are not employees and should not be treated as such.
7. Students are to complete a Student Incident/Injury Report form and send a copy to SHSU-COM Clinical Affairs.
8. Students are to follow up with the healthcare providers at the SHSU Student Health Center following an exposure at 936-294-1805 or a provider of their choice. The providers at the SHSU Student Health Center will review any test or lab results they have been provided with the student. If necessary, the healthcare provider will refer the student to outside providers for further treatment.

The Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs shall serve as a point of contact for incidents or injuries involving students on clerkship rotations.

Malpractice Insurance Coverage Policy
Students are fully covered by SHSU-COM’s professional malpractice insurance while on all training assignments approved by the SHSU-COM. Students may participate in unique clinical opportunities outside of the regular curriculum only with prior written approval of the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs in consultation with the Dean. Students who arrange clinical rotations at their own discretion are not covered under this policy.