

**Sam Houston State University  
College of Osteopathic Medicine  
SHSU-COM**



**Sam Houston State University**

**Student Handbook  
AY 2023-2024**

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*Note: It is a student's responsibility to read this handbook, be knowledgeable of its contents, and comply with the standards set forth herein.*

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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.

Additional information regarding the academic program, academic calendar, admission and registration procedures, tuition and fees, degree requirements, services available to students, and faculty and administrative officers of Sam Houston State University can be found in the current [graduate and professional catalog](#). Additional resources pertaining to the educational mission of Sam Houston State University and student conduct include Sam Houston State University's [Academic Policy Manual](#) and the Dean of Students' Office [Student Guidelines](#).

## Overview of SHSU-COM

### Mission

The mission of the Sam Houston State University (SHSU) 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.

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 or gender expression, veteran status, national origin or ancestry, age or disabilities, and religion.

#### Academic Credentials

To be considered for admission to any program offered by 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 cared for by its graduates.

- **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, which often require upright posture with sufficient upper and 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.

Access the *Educational Council on Osteopathic Principles* document at: [https://www.aacom.org/docs/default-source/publications/aacom-ecop-technical-standards-2009.pdf?sfvrsn=1d226197\\_0](https://www.aacom.org/docs/default-source/publications/aacom-ecop-technical-standards-2009.pdf?sfvrsn=1d226197_0) for more information about technical standards.

## Accreditation

### Process and Approval

SHSU-COM has been approved to recruit, matriculate, teach, and graduate students in the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) program by the following entities:

- The Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) – the AOA’s accreditation body as codified in 34 CFR §602, ensuring that all COMs have met or exceed the Commission’s Standards for educational quality;
- The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) – the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states; and
- The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board – a Texas agency that oversees all public post-secondary education in the state.

The College was codified through Texas House Bill 2867 (effective March 29, 2019), which allows access to residency funding and other resources relevant to Texas medical schools. Texas Senate Bill 1563 was passed by the legislature and signed by the governor on May 19, 2023 providing the college access to formula funding. Like all new COMs, SHSU-COM is currently in “Pre-Accreditation” status with COCA until the first cohort graduates in 2024. For more information on COCA accreditation, please visit <https://osteopathic.org/accreditation/>.

### **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 current COCA COM Continuing Accreditation Standards. 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 Assessment, Evaluation, and Accreditation of SHSU-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 submitted directly to the COCA by contacting the American Osteopathic Association (AOA)/ Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA), 142 E. Ontario St., Chicago, IL 60611, at [predoc@osteopathic.org](mailto:predoc@osteopathic.org) or (312) 202-8174.

The COCA Policies and Procedures can be found at <https://osteopathic.org/accreditation/standards/>.

### **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](mailto:doso@shsu.edu), or by filling out an **Incident Report Form** found at [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?SamHoustonStateUniv&layout\\_id=1](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. Attendance requirements on clinical services during religious or national holidays are at the discretion of the preceptor and/or training facility in compliance with federal law.

### 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 are assigned four (4) weeks of vacation during their first six months of fourth year clerkships. Students are encouraged to use this time to schedule residency interviews. Vacation time may be rescheduled and used if extra time is needed to prepare for NBOME exams.

### 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 SHSU policies or procedures, or
- b. Constitutes arbitrary, capricious, or unequal application of written SHSU 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](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?SamHoustonStateUniv&layout_id=2). Business days as used in this handbook shall mean Monday through Friday, unless such day has been recognized by SHSU as a holiday.

You may report discrimination or sexual misconduct to the [Office of Equity and Title IX](#) at any time. The SHSU Nondiscrimination Policy and TSUS Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures may be referenced at the Dean of Students Guidelines page (<https://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/guidelines/student-guidelines>).

### Academic Grievances

Academic grievances are addressed in the *Academic Policies and Processes* 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/Tardy Request (EATR) procedure documented below.

### Definitions

#### Excused Absence

An excused, unavoidable absence may be granted at the discretion of the Course Director or Clerkship Director upon completion of the EATR 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 EATR 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, which may be grounds for disciplinary action.

### 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

If you plan to travel on behalf of SHSU-COM, you must email [COMStudentTravel@shsu.edu](mailto:COMStudentTravel@shsu.edu) to make administration aware of your plans. If you want to apply for travel funding, you must follow additional steps (see "To Apply for Travel Funding").

SHSU-COM may sponsor off-campus activities that require medical student travel. To be considered for a travel award, the applicant must be an osteopathic medical student in good academic standing currently enrolled at SHSU-COM and must be traveling to represent SHSU-COM in national student leadership roles, to present research at conferences (see also "Research Guidelines"), and/or to engage in specific advocacy or other efforts sponsored by faculty such as DO Day, AAO Convocation, etc.

Professional development including leadership/specialty training will not be considered for travel funding. If a proposed trip is for a student organization, the requestor should contact Student Affairs to inquire about possible alternative funding opportunities.

### To Apply for Travel Funding

For consideration for travel funding, email [COMStudentTravel@shsu.edu](mailto:COMStudentTravel@shsu.edu) to obtain the COM Student Travel Pre-Application. Complete the pre-application and return it to [COMStudentTravel@shsu.edu](mailto:COMStudentTravel@shsu.edu).

Please note: submitting the Pre-Application does not guarantee funding. This is the initial step for a travel request to determine eligibility, available funding, and evaluation.

The Pre-application deadlines are April 30th for Summer travel, September 9th for Fall travel, and January 16th for Spring travel.

### Review and Award Process

Once the Pre-Application is reviewed, the requestor will be notified regarding the status. Those requests that are awarded will receive a Student Travel Award Initiation Form. The Student Travel Award Initiation Form must be submitted to [COMStudentTravel@shsu.edu](mailto:COMStudentTravel@shsu.edu) a minimum of 45 days prior to travel.

Travel awards will be limited to a maximum of one travel award per student per academic year except when travel is required by a student's national leadership role.

The maximum amount for each travel award is \$1200. SHSU-COM follows the Sam Houston State University [Finance & Operations Policy FO-TR-08 Student Travel Policy](#).

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 EATR 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/Tardy Request (EATR) Process

Requests for excused absences are submitted by completing the [Student Excused Absence/Tardy Request Form](#), along with the required supporting documentation. This request form is located in your student Blackboard organization under General Resources.

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 but not less than 24 hours of the scheduled time.

All EATR decisions are communicated via the student's official SHSU email.

### EATR Timeline

- EATR form submitted to the course director or clerkship director as soon as the scheduled absence is known but not less than **two (2) weeks** prior to the scheduled absence date.
  - Students with extenuating circumstances that prevent completion of the form at least two (2) weeks prior to scheduled absence 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, and/or being referred to the SPAP committee. Please see the university attendance policy: [800401 Class Attendance \(shsu.edu\)](https://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/800401%20Class%20Attendance.pdf) <https://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/800401%20Class%20Attendance.pdf>

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

### References

Damant, R., Rourke, L., Wilson, B., Lewis, M., Schutz, D., Harley, D., & Stobart, K. (2016, June 02). *Medical school attendance is significantly lower in preclinical students who are experiencing psychological distress*. Retrieved from <https://www.mededpublish.org/manuscripts/351>

### 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 their 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 dismissed.

### **Leave of Absence Request Process**

Students may request a leave of absence (LOA) by completing and submitting the Leave of Absence Request Form and supporting documentation to Educational Affairs. Students should meet with the director of Medical Student Affairs to initiate this process.

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

The LOA request decision shall be provided via SHSU email within ten (10) business 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.

### **Types of Leave**

#### **1. Voluntary (Student-Initiated) Leave of Absence**

A Voluntary (Student-Initiated) Leave of Absence (LOA) is a request by a student to discontinue coursework. An LOA may be granted for extenuating circumstances, which may include, but are not limited to, military commitment, jury duty, or maternity/paternity leave.

#### **Personal Leave of Absence**

A student in good academic standing may, at any time, request a Personal LOA for a specified period of time not to exceed one year. This type of LOA may be requested in order to take time for research, clinical work at another site without academic credit, or other types of academic enrichment.

#### **Medical Leave of Absence**

A student in good academic standing may request a Medical LOA. Students granted a LOA for medical reasons may be required to have a licensed physician, approved by the Dean, certify in writing that the student is able to resume their studies before returning to classes.

#### **Parental Leave of Absence: Maternal, Paternal, Adoptive, etc.**

Students may request Parental LOA to fulfill parental responsibilities.

#### **Military Leave of Absence**

Students called to active duty must notify the Office of Medical Student Affairs promptly and provide a copy of their orders for a Military LOA. Students who take leave under these circumstances may receive special consideration regarding obligations and requirements.

## 2. **Administrative Leave of Absence**

An Administrative Leave of Absence (LOA) is a mandatory LOA imposed by the Dean due to an identified reason. During an administrative leave, the student is required to follow the prescribed instructions and requirements associated with the leave and, if applicable, complete rehabilitation or treatment for the reason that precipitated the necessity for the leave.

### **Communication and Involvement with SHSU-COM During a Leave of Absence**

- Students are required to check their school email.
  - A student who is on a LOA is required to communicate at least every two (2) months with the Office of Medical Student Affairs for the duration of the leave. This communication shall be initiated by the student and must occur during the first week of every other month, starting with the month following the onset of the leave.
- Students cannot be members of or serve in elected or leadership positions within student government or officially recognized student organizations.
- Students cannot participate in research activities with the COM.
- Students cannot serve as a representative of the COM
- Students cannot make use of University resources or services unless explicitly specified in their LOA terms and conditions.

### **Academic Standing and Return from Leave of Absence**

If the Dean imposes an Administrative LOA or grants a Voluntary (Student-Initiated) LOA, and the student is in good academic standing, the student may resume the program at the end of the leave as indicated in the terms and conditions. Students in good academic standing may request to audit courses, but this will be approved on a case-by-case basis. Students must adhere to the terms and conditions provided in writing for the LOA.

If the dean imposes an Administrative Leave of Absence or grants a Voluntary (Student-Initiated) LOA, and the student is not in good standing, is under review for a disciplinary action, or has a disciplinary action imposed on them, the student shall not resume the program without review by the Student Promotions and Academic Progress Committee (SPAP). Upon completion of its review, the SPAP will make a recommendation to the Dean as to whether the student may resume the program.

### **Auditing**

Auditing a course during Years 1 and 2 is typically not permitted. Requests to audit a course shall be initiated by the student and follow SHSU guidelines for auditing. Completed requests do not guarantee approval and will be reviewed by the SHSU-COM Dean's Office on a case-by-case basis prior to making a recommendation to the SHSU Registrar.

## 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.

### Course Grades, Remediation, and Class Rank

Course grades are determined according to methods outlined in course syllabi. Initial course grades are recorded by the SHSU Registrar as either 'Honors' (H), 'Pass' (P), or 'Subject to Remediation' (SR).

Students who are subject to remediation are automatically placed on probation. Course grades after remediation are replaced by the SHSU Registrar with either 'Pass with Remediation' (PR) or 'Fail' (F). Upon successful remediation, probation status is reviewed by the SPAP. Although a student may return to good academic standing and be removed from academic probation, the student's transcript will continue to reflect the status of academic probation for the applicable term(s). Students who are not successful in remediation are reviewed by the SPAP to determine whether they are required to repeat the entire academic year or be dismissed. Students repeating an academic year will have all passing grades (i.e., H, P, and PR) for all courses in the academic year replaced by the SHSU Registrar with 'Pass, No Credit' (PN) prior to repeating the academic year.

At any point, a course grade may be recorded as 'No Grade' (NG) or 'Withdrawn' (W) according to procedures and definitions set forth by the SHSU Registrar.

### Class Rank

For the SHSU-COM DO program, students shall be ranked after all pre-clerkship courses have been completed, including any remediation, and final grades assigned in Banner. Pre-clerkship courses have four (4) official final grades in Banner (Honors, Pass, Pass with Remediation, and Fail) plus an unofficial performance "state" (Pass the Retest, or Remediation #1). An average course performance (ACP) can be obtained by weighting individual course performance by course credit hours, then dividing the sum of weighted products by the number of pre-clerkship credit hours completed.

Through AY 2023-24, the following course performance points will be used:

- Honors = 4 points
- Pass = 3 points



- Pass with Retest (Remediation #1) = 2 points
- Pass with Remediation (Remediation #2) = 1 point
- Fail = 0 points

ACPs calculated after all pre-clerkship courses have been completed will be used to rank each cohort by quintiles. For example, the 1st quintile contains approximately 20% of the lowest performing students, and the 5th quintile contains approximately 20% of the highest performing students. No other class ranking distinction will be made for pre-clerkship course performance.

Final class ranks will be disclosed to SHSU-COM students during Year 3, recorded by the SHSU Registrar, and may be indicated on transcripts and in Medical Student Performance Evaluations (MSPEs) for residency applications.

## 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/Tardy Request (EATR) Process* will *not* be honored.

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

### Make-up Examinations

Make-up examinations are allowed only when an excused absence has been granted through the *Excused Absence/Tardy Request (EATR) 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/Clerkship Director or the Phase II Lead. The format and scheduling of the makeup examination will be the prerogative of the Course/Clerkship Director or Phase II Lead. 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 or Phase II Lead. Students have a right to appeal a 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 manual 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 through the EATR 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/Tardy Request (EATR) 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 at least 10 days before the date of the regularly scheduled exam.

The Course Director or Clerkship Director 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 a Learning 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 immediate testing environment, which includes, but is not limited to, all other electronic devices (e.g., smart-watches, smart-glasses, ear-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 is not permitted in the testing environment.
- Chewing gum is not allowed.
- A spill-proof drinking container, unwrapped cough drops or hard candy, and tissues are permitted.

**Examination Time**

- Students shall 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 only be permitted to take the exam upon the consent of the Course Director. 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 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 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 be escorted by a faculty proctor.
- 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 unless an accommodation has been provided through the SHSU services for students with disabilities.

### **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 their 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.
- 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 and will not be allowed to hold an officer position in an SHSU-COM sponsored student organization.

Falling outside of 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 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 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 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.

Each single degree DO student shall complete the requirements for the DO degree within 150% of the standard time to achieve the degree (six (6) years following matriculation). The completion time of six (6) years includes time spent on leave of absence, pursuing research activities, etc. 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**

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 up to and including dismissal, failure to adhere to standards of professionalism or ethical conduct.

### **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, ethical, 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 the Texas Medical Board and other medical licensing boards may require disclosure of a student's probation status during medical school when applying for a license.

### **SHSU-COM Transcript**

Academic Standing is noted on the transcript at the end of each term. This includes good standing and academic probation. Students who are placed on probation may view academic standing online via their unofficial transcript, and they will receive a letter from the Dean. While a student may return to good academic standing and be removed from academic probation, the student's transcript will continue to reflect the status of academic probation for the applicable term(s). The Dean will notify the student once the student returns to good academic standing.

### **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 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, 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, or 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 reapplication 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, they may assign a penalty but must notify the student in writing of their 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' academic probation continues until all course/block/rotation failures or professionalism concerns are successfully remediated. Probationary status is updated on the transcript following the subsequent semester; however, this status will still be reflected on the transcript for the semester(s) it was in effect. 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 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.

Please refer to [nbome.org](http://nbome.org) for the most up-to-date testing information. 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. Failure of COMLEX-USA Level 1 may result in a delay of graduation and an extension of the academic schedule to complete all required rotations.

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

- Must retake COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination before they start their first core clinical rotation. In this case, they will likely have to use their four-week vacation during their third year.

If a SHSU-COM student fails COMLEX-USA Level 1 examination on the second attempt, they:

- Will be 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, they:

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

If a SHSU-COM student fails the COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE examination on the first attempt, they:

- Will be allowed to finish the current rotation.
- Will be withdrawn from the next rotation.
- Must retake the COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE 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 rotation during their fourth year to make up the missed rotation if it has not already been used

If a SHSU-COM student fails the COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE on the second attempt, they:

- Will be allowed to finish the current rotation.
- Must meet with the Student Promotion and Academic Progress Committee.
- Will be withdrawn from the next rotation and may not resume clerkship rotations until achieving a passing score on COMLEX-USA Level 2-CE.
- 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-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 must be currently enrolled and in good academic standing or in their first semester of medical school. Students not currently enrolled and on a break between semesters (e.g., summer/winter/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.

### **Research Ethics and Compliance**

Students must adhere to the SHSU guidelines on ethical conduct of research found in [APS 920808](#). Students must complete appropriate training through the CITI program and must complete any additional training (lab safety, biosafety) when appropriate. All research projects must have current approvals by the applicable compliance body (IRB, IBC, IACUC) or have been deemed exempt by those bodies before any research activities can take place. This applies to research at SHSU as well as research at other institutions in which SHSU students may be involved. All students engaged in research should have a faculty mentor/principal investigator (PI). Students may contact the SHSU-COM Director of Research [COMResearch@shsu.edu](mailto:COMResearch@shsu.edu) for assistance with research compliance.

## Funding

The SHSU-COM has three funding opportunities to support student research. These include the Medical Summer Scholars Program (MSSP), Student Intramural Grants, and Student Travel Awards. The MSSP program provides stipend support to students to participate in a faculty led research program during the summer of their first year. Only OMS1 students are eligible to apply to this program. The Student Intramural Grant provides up to \$5,000 in research support for student-initiated research in teams of 3-5 students. The travel awards assist students with travel costs related to the presentation of research. These funds are limited and are not guaranteed. Additional funding may be available through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) and The Graduate School at SHSU.

## Presenting Research and Travel

Students submitting research projects for presentation, publication, conferences, competition etc., should notify their faculty PI and the Director of Research at least two weeks prior to submission to request a review of the material. Templates for posters should be used and are provided to students in the CORE 7401 blackboard course. Requests for travel awards should be made at the time of submission to the conference, not after a notice of acceptance from the conference has been received. The cutoff dates for travel requests during each term are listed below.

- Fall travel Sept 9<sup>th</sup>
- Spring travel Jan 16<sup>th</sup>
- Summer travel Apr 30<sup>th</sup>

## 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>

## 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 is 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 to help them 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 preference awareness
- 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 appropriate Student Affairs liaison, who can advise them regarding testing, evaluation, and accommodations. For more information about the process to receive accommodations, please visit the [Services for Students with Disabilities website](#). Faculty may refer students for academic support services through the SHSU Early Alert System via Campus Connect,. Students may schedule individual appointments as desired 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 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 student is placed into one of the four learning communities created to foster relationships between students and faculty and to provide community service and team building opportunities. Programming is student driven and might focus on such topics as social networking, lifelong learning, peer mentoring, medical professionalism, ethics, educational life balance, and wellness. In addition, the Office of Medical Student Affairs assigns smaller groups of students withing learning communities to faculty advisors who support their academic and professional growth.

## 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 statements, mock interviews, and summer educational and research opportunities. For research, students may seek out 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 SHSU, as well as to visiting scholars and off campus users. Students at 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. For a complete list of SHSU-COM student organizations, visit [OrgLINK](#). The Osteopathic Medical Student Government (OMSG) Association (COM Student Council) 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 or gender expression, national origin, age, disabilities, veteran's status, 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 appropriate Student Affairs liaison 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 a 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 and 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. It is the intention of the COM to have every student in their assigned clerkship region for the 3rd and 4th years. However, if the site you are assigned does not have a specific core clerkship available within a certain block, the COM will work with you on identifying an alternate site. For students assigned to an alternate site for a core rotation that is beyond reasonable commuting distance (defined as a 1-hour distance under normal traffic conditions) from their assigned region, housing will be provided. Students choosing electives outside of the SHSU-COM affiliated regions will be responsible for securing their own housing. If a student has a rotation that becomes unavailable for any reason before or during their block, the Office of Clinical Education and Assistant Dean for Clinical Affairs, if needed, shall work to find an 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 Office of Clinical Education. Students who choose to participate in an elective rotation outside of the SHSU-COM affiliated regions will be responsible for their own housing. If a student has concerns related to the provided housing, they should immediately contact their Regional Clinical Coordinator.

### 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. For more information regarding the Students of Concern Program, including how to report concerns, visit <https://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/guidelines/student-guidelines>.



## 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.

This expectation of professionalism extends to all domains in which status as representatives of SHSU-COM is relevant. Students should ensure their social media and other online presence reflects respect for their patients, staff, faculty, peers, and the practice of medicine. Conduct that undermines the public's confidence in the profession of osteopathic medicine fails to meet this expectation. Failure to adhere to professional standards *may* result in dismissal from the program.

Students are expected to behave in a responsible and professional manner while functioning in course/class or clerkship rotations. Failure to adhere to applicable standards of practice shall be considered cause for dismissal from course/clerkship rotations or the program. Cause for dismissal from course/clerkship rotations shall consist of, but not be limited to:

1. Any activity that is prohibited under the ethical standards and practices of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA).

2. Malicious disrespect toward instructors, supervisors, or fellow classmates; failure to follow reasonable instructions; use of profanity or verbal or physical intimidation toward others.
3. The use of fraud or deceit to obtain admission to the department, a course, a practicum, or an internship.
4. Soliciting or accepting a personal fee, monetary gift, or other form of remuneration or compensation for counseling or other services while functioning as a practicum or internship counselor-in-training.
5. Use of alcohol or other drugs to the extent that it impairs the counselor-in-training's ability to perform properly or adequately, or which may pose a threat to the welfare or safety of potential or actual clients.
6. Conviction of an offense involving the sale, possession, or consumption of a controlled substance.
7. Conviction of an offense that is a felony.
8. Conviction of an offense involving moral turpitude.
9. Conviction for a misdemeanor offense committed during the practice of any counseling activity.
10. Theft of any property belonging to a site.
11. Client abandonment.
12. Any behavior, activity, procedure, or practice that is prohibited under the state of Texas Medical Board guidelines.
13. Failure to adhere to and maintain a remediation plan.
14. Terminating a clerkship without following procedures or termination of the student by the site, site administrator, and clinical supervisor.
15. Repeated marginal performance or failures on coursework or clinicals.
16. Failure to comply with professionalism standards (see Professionalism above).

### **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 or any physician evaluating student performance 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. If there is an emergency, then the physician who provided care will be required to opt out of the evaluation process. Physicians and health-care providers employed by

SHSU-COM with primary duties providing care at the SHSU Physicians Clinic may provide care to SHSU-COM students if they do not evaluate student performance.

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 who 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. Please note the dress code on SHSU-COM campus will be observed Monday through Friday from 8am-5pm.

### 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 should contact Medical Student Affairs. 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. Do not wear 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](http://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

During clinical clerkships, students will wear clean, white jackets identifying them as students with SHSU-COM name tags and name badges provided by the clerkship facility. The student must dress in a manner that is fitting for a physician in the clinical setting (business casual). 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 Clerkship Director and repeat violations will be reviewed by the SPAP committee.

If students are on a service that requires scrubs, students will be required to wear scrubs provided by the clerkship facility or personal scrubs that meet the requirements of the facility. Do not take scrubs from the facility unless authorized to do so.

### 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 confidential.

Completion of course and clerkship evaluations is a professional expectation for all students. Student comments should be constructive and professional in nature to ensure 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/fpc/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/>

## 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 and update any required documents in CastleBranch. Training certificates will be kept on file and available for verification via the Division of Educational Affairs and the document repository in CastleBranch.

Students wishing to engage in academic research outside of a course are required to complete all trainings required for ethics and/or biosafety. These trainings are offered through the Collaborative Institutional training Initiative (CITI). Instructions on how to complete those trainings can be found through the [Compliance](#) division of the SHSU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP). Additional training on laboratory specific safety and procedures will be required when appropriate. Once trainings are complete, students may be added to the appropriate IRB/IBC/IACUC protocol, or they may begin working on a new proposal with a faculty PI. Questions regarding training and compliance should be directed toward the faculty PI and/or the SHSU-COM Director of Research [COMresearch@shsu.edu](mailto:COMresearch@shsu.edu)

## 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 Academic Healthplans for verification.

Academic Healthplans 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. Group fitness classes are scheduled each semester, subject to student interest, and can be viewed on the co-curricular calendar. SHSU-COM also provides treadmills and bikes for students on the Mezzanine level. 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 and mental health services are available through community resources listed online for all students at <https://www.shsu.edu/academics/osteopathic-medicine/about/mental-and-physical-health-resources>.

*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 Services

The SHSU Counseling Center provides individual, couples, or group therapy to SHSU-COM students who are currently enrolled and need help managing stress, anxiety, depression, or other issues. SHSU has confidential counseling services at the Huntsville campus via the Student Counseling Center. The SHSU Student Counseling Center has multiple online self-help resources accessible on the university website to include the TAO (Therapy

Assisted Online) resource along with the We LISTEN Helpline available to students Monday-Thursday from 4-9 pm by calling 936-294-4111.

- The SHSU Student Counseling Center is located at 1608 Ave. J on the Huntsville Campus. There is no charge for office visits. Counseling services are available during normal business hours throughout the year and in between semesters, except on university designated holidays. For more information, students can call 936-294-1720 or stop by to make an appointment to speak with a counselor at the Huntsville location. Hours of operation include the following days and times:
  - Monday, Thursday, Friday 8 am to 5 pm
  - Tuesday and Wednesday 8 am to 7 pm
  - Website: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/counseling/>
- The Jack Staggs Community Counseling Clinic has two locations, one on the Huntsville campus and one at The Woodlands Center location. The Clinic is a training facility for Masters and Doctoral level students who are enrolled in a counselor education program at Sam Houston State University. Counselor education faculty supervise all counseling sessions provided by counselors-in-training. The Counseling Clinic offers counseling services to students and to the community. Services offered include adolescent counseling, couples, family, group, individual, play, and sand tray therapy.

The Community Counseling Clinic is located at SHSU, The Woodlands Center at 3380 College Park Drive, room 151 at the SHSU facility. The center can be reached at 936-202-5012. Schedules vary per semester.

Website: <https://www.shsu.edu/academics/education/counselor-education/jack-staggs-counseling-clinic.html>

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

SHSU-COM and COCA prohibit the provision of health 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 or have received the first two vaccines in the series before enrollment. Alternatively, students may have a titer drawn to demonstrate Hepatitis B protection before enrollment. 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 completed which includes a TB symptom questionnaire. Serial chest x-rays are not recommended in the presence of a normal questionnaire.

Other requirements may be added for clerkship rotations. Students should comply with all vaccinations/testing as required by the site providing the preceptorship.

Failure to complete immunizations and other requirements in a timely manner may result in disciplinary action and/or interruption of clinical training. Students are required to keep their immunizations and testing up to date and to upload the documentation into CastleBranch. 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, criminal background checks will be required of all students prior to first year enrollment and prior to clinical rotations; drug testing will be required of all students prior to clinical rotations

### Drug Testing

Drug testing will be facilitated through **CastleBranch** on behalf of SHSU-COM prior to 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. Please refer to the clerkship manual for more details regarding drug screenings during clerkships.

Random drug testing may be performed at any time. Between matriculation and clerkships, students who test positive on a 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 until the physician evaluation has been completed and the student has been cleared by the evaluating physician to resume classes, 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, they 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. This may delay graduation or necessitate repeating a year or course. 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

Background checks will be facilitated through CastleBranch on behalf of SHSU-COM prior to orientation and the start of clinical rotations. Any violations found on background checks prior to the start of clinical rotations will be referred to the SHSU-COM Assistant 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 Assistant Dean for Clinical Affairs shall serve as a point of contact for incidents or injuries involving students on clerkship rotations. Please see clerkship manual for more details.***

**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 Assistant Dean for Clinical Affairs in consultation with the Dean. Students who arrange clinical rotations at their own discretion are not covered under this policy. All rotation sites must be reported to the professional liability carrier, and it is the responsibility of the student selecting rotations to provide that information to the Office of Clinical Education.

**APPROVED BY:**

*Thomas J. Mohr D.O.*

June 26, 2023

Thomas Mohr, DO  
Dean

Date

*Ken Hendrickson*

JUNE 26, 2023

Ken Hendrickson, PhD  
Associate Provost for Community Engagement,  
Dean of The Graduate and Professional School

Date

Michael T. Stephenson, PhD.  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date