

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024 – 2025

MERCER
UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

MACON | SAVANNAH | COLUMBUS | VALDOSTA

medicine.mercer.edu

Student Handbook and Program Manuals 2024 – 2025

<https://medicine.mercer.edu/student-services/handbook/>

Entire handbook reviewed and revised June 2024 AAH

Students must read the Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM) Student Handbook and the Program Manual and acknowledge their understanding of the contents prior to beginning classes at the School of Medicine*.

The Mercer University Student Handbook, the School of Medicine Student Handbook, and the Program Manuals set forth the major policies and procedures affecting students. Because the University is a dynamic institution, changes are inevitable. This handbook will be revised as new policies and procedures are adopted. The latest edition will supersede all former editions. A majority of student policies and resources can be found in the Mercer University Student Handbook and the University Catalog found at <https://medicine.mercer.edu/student-services/handbook/>. The School of Medicine has additional information and policies that pertain to specific student populations that can be found in the MUSM Student Handbook and the Program Manuals also found at <https://medicine.mercer.edu/student-services/handbook/>. These resources, when taken as a whole, provide students with a basic understanding of the rights and responsibilities of Mercer students.

Students are encouraged to review these documents and to contact the Office of Student Affairs on their campus if they have any questions. Online copies will contain the most up-to-date versions of policies and supersede any printed copies should any discrepancies exist. These documents may be provided in an alternative format upon request. The provisions of the Mercer University Student Handbook supersede collegiate and campus policies and procedures.

Wherever the University has chosen to adopt policies and principles similar to or incorporating portions of statements of the American Association of University Professors or other external bodies, the University reserves the right to interpret such policies or principles for itself and is not bound by external interpretations.

All provisions, regulations, degree programs, and course listings in effect when the Student Handbook went to press and/or are posted on the website are subject to revision by the appropriate governing bodies of MUSM. Students pursuing degree programs when such changes are instituted are expected to comply with the revisions that relate to their programs. It should be understood that the statements in this handbook are for informational purposes only and should not be construed as the basis of a contract between MUSM and the student. Though the provisions of this handbook will ordinarily be applied as stated, MUSM reserves the right to change any provisions contained herein, including, but not limited to, academic requirements for graduation, without notice to individual students. Students are responsible for knowing all regulations and procedures required by MUSM and the advanced degree program being pursued. In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception granted because of ignorance of the regulation or of the assertion that the student was not informed by the advisor or other authority. Students should consult frequently with school deans, chairs, or directors as appropriate regarding current degree requirements.

MUSM is a member of the Association of American Medical Colleges with full accreditation awarded by Liaison Committee on Medical Education. It is the purpose of the University to adhere to all the rules and regulations, course offerings, and financial charges as announced in the catalog or in other publications. The University, nevertheless, hereby gives notice that it reserves the right to withdraw any subject, to change its rules affecting the admission and retention of students or the granting of credit or degrees, or to alter its fees and other charges, whenever such changes are adjudged desirable or necessary. Attendance at Mercer University is a privilege, which may be forfeited by any student whose conduct is adjudged as not being in harmony with the traditions, the policies, and the regulations of the University.

**A copy of the acknowledgement form will be provided to each student upon matriculation to the School of Medicine.*

Receipt of Student Handbook and Program Manual Form

<https://medicine.mercer.edu/student-services/handbook/>

I, the undersigned, am in receipt of the **Mercer University School of Medicine Student Handbook** and will abide by the Student Code of Conduct and all of the policies and procedures provided therein. .

I further acknowledge that each program of the School of Medicine will have policies and curricular expectations described in the **program manual** and I further agree to abide by the policies and procedures provided therein.

I further acknowledge that I must abide by all policies found in the **Mercer University Student Handbook**.

Print Name

Signature

Date

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CONTACT INFORMATION

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

MERCER POLICE EMERGENCIES | All Campuses/Macon | 478-301-2911

STUDENT CRISIS LINE | All Campuses | 888-291-5802

CONTACT PERSON	TITLE	CAMPUS	PHONE NUMBER
DEAN'S OFFICE			
Jean R. Sumner, M.D.	Dean	All Campuses	478-301-4022
Don Nakayama, M.D.	Senior Associate Dean	Columbus	706-223-5165
Ed Grimsley, M.D.	Senior Associate Dean	Macon	478-301-5819
David Baxter, M.D.	Senior Associate Dean	Savannah	912-721-8184
Joe Hayes, M.D.	Associate Dean	Valdosta	229-259-4249
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS musm_academic_records@mercer.edu			
Stephanie Beavers, M.D.	Senior Associate Dean	All Campuses/Macon	478-301-5861
Elizabeth Rhodes, D.M.D.	Associate Dean	Columbus	706-223-5223
Lisa Bauman, MD	Associate Dean	Savannah	921-721-8215
Gretchen Bentz, Ph.D.	Associate Dean	Macon	478-301-4013
Torri Jackson, EdD	Director, Academic Achievement	Savannah	912-721-8147
Charon Austin	Academic Success Counselor	Columbus	706-223-5184
Misty Cline	Academic Success Counselor	Macon	478-301-4108
STUDENT AFFAIRS musmstudentaffairs@mercer.edu			
Alice House, M.D.	Senior Associate Dean	All Campuses	706-223-5179
Katey Hughes, Ph.D.	Associate Dean	Columbus	706-223-5232
Candi Nobles-James, M.D.	Associate Dean	Macon	478-301-2531
Jane Kirkpatrick, M.D.	Associate Dean	Savannah	912-721-8146
ADMISSIONS musmadmissions@mercer.edu			
Rick McCann, Ph.D.	Associate Dean	All Campuses/Macon	478-301-4066
Katey Hughes, Ph.D.	Director	Columbus	706-223-5232
Jane Kirkpatrick, M.D.	Director	Savannah	912-721-8146
STUDENT FINANCIAL PLANNING financialaid-l@med.mercer.edu			
Susan Lumsden	Director	All Campuses/Macon	478-301-2539
REGISTRAR musmregistrar@mercer.edu			
Priscilla Hicks	Registrar	All Campuses/Macon	478-301-4053
SPECIAL PROGRAMS Rural Health Scholarships			
Terri Walker	Director	All Campuses/Macon	478-301-4190
WELLNESS			
Kim Meeks	Director of Wellness	All Campuses/Macon	478-301-2519
AIMSS			
Andrew Benesh, Ph.D, LMFT	Faculty Advisor	All Campuses	478-301-4078
OFFICES & SERVICES			
Access & Accommodation (All Campuses)	478-301-2532	Medical Library (Macon)	478-301-4056
Barnes & Noble Bookstore (All Campuses)	478-301-2945	Medical Library (Savannah)	912-721-8224
Mercer IT Help Desk (All Campuses)	478-301-2922	Medical Library (Columbus)	706-223-5193
Campus Health Center (All Campuses)	478-301-2696	Mercer University Online Directory	

GENERAL INFORMATION

Accreditation

Mercer University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call (404) 679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Mercer University.

The School of Medicine is accredited by two accrediting bodies. The Doctor of Medicine is accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). LCME is jointly sponsored by the Association of American Medical Colleges and the Council on Medical Education of the American Medical Association. The Marriage and Family Therapy Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Marriage and Family Therapy Education, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

For the most current information on Mercer University's accrediting bodies, please refer to the program catalogs or visit <http://oie.mercer.edu/accreditations/accred-list/>.

Federal Disclosure Requirements

Mercer University's Federal Disclosure Requirements are available at <http://disclosure.mercer.edu/>. This report contains the following information:

- Campus Security: Jeanne Clery Disclosure for Campus Security, campus crime statistics, Campus Sex Crime Prevention Act, and fire safety
- Campus Emergency Procedures
- Drug and Alcohol Policies
- Financial Assistance and Cost of Attendance Information
- Health and Safety Information: Immunization and Missing Persons Information
- Institutional Information: accreditation, characteristics of students, degree programs, degree program improvement plans, disability support services, FERPA information, retention and graduation rates, peer-to-peer file sharing, post-graduate employment information, readmission of veterans, transfer of credit, withdrawal procedures, voter registration, and satisfactory progress standards

Paper copies of these reports are available upon request. Please contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness by mailing inquiries to:

Office of Institutional Effectiveness
Mercer University
1501 Mercer University Drive
Macon, GA 31207

GENERAL INFORMATION

Vision, Mission and Values

VISION

The grand challenges of rural health are resolved through education, research, and community engagement.

MISSION

To educate physicians and health professionals to meet the primary care and health care needs of rural and medically underserved areas in Georgia.

VALUES

- **Integrity:** Honesty. Professionalism. Accountability.
- **Respect:** Empathy. Civility. Transparency.
- **Excellence:** Service. Quality. Commitment.
- **Diversity:** Inclusive. Welcoming. Fair.
- **Collaboration:** Three Campuses. One School Community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Our academic support facilitates student success.
- Service is our mindset and orientation.
- Community impact is our outcome.
- Meeting the health and medical needs of rural and medically underserved Georgia is our purpose

GENERAL INFORMATION

Books and Supplies

The Barnes & Nobles College Bookstore (located on the Macon Campus) stocks textbooks and supplies. Store hours are can be found at mercer-macon.bncollege.com. Books and supplies can also be ordered online through the College Bookstore or through other vendors.

Cell Phone Policy

All students are asked to exercise courteous use of cell phones while in class or on clinical duties. Mobile phones can be disruptive in a number of ways and their use should not be abused. Ringtones must be turned off while in class, clinic or hospital, and if on, phones must be in vibrate mode. If there is a need to check for and/or receive a call (sick family member and similar needs), the student must inform the preceptor in advance that the student may need to excuse him/herself to take an important call. Students should refrain from text messaging or using the Internet in the office unless the preceptor has given permission (i.e. looking up medical information for patient care, etc.).

Clinical Campus Information

CLINICAL CAMPUSES

- **Macon:** Atrium Navicent Health and Piedmont Macon Medical Center
- **Savannah:** HCA Memorial Health University Medical Center (MHUMC)
- **Columbus:** Piedmont Columbus Regional Midtown and St. Francis Hospital
- **Valdosta:** South Georgia Medical Center

The clinical campus is defined as the campus at which the student intends to spend the majority of their clinical experience in Year 3. Orientation and administrative services will occur on the clinical campus. If there is availability in curricular components, students are allowed to move between the clinical campuses in Year 3 and Year 4. In addition to the main and affiliated campuses, students may request to complete their senior elective requirements in a wide variety of geographic and clinical settings. Please refer to the Senior Electives Catalogue for the procedures and guidelines governing senior elective selections.

Transfer students are not accepted into the curriculum after the start of Year 3 and will be assigned to a clinical campus at the time of their acceptance.

STUDENT LOUNGES

Student lounges are available on all clinical campuses for MUSM and visiting students doing rotations through MUSM. Mailboxes, lockers, computer access, printing, copying, and fax machines are available in the lounges or nearby.

- **Macon:** The student lounge at Atrium Navicent Health is located on the first floor of the West Tower. The student lounge at Navicent is locked and accessible by identification badge, which is swiped at the door. The lounge at Piedmont Macon Medical Center is located in the main hospital building on the west end of the first floor.
- **Savannah:** The student lounge at MHUMC is located on the first floor near the pharmacy.
- **Columbus:** The student lounge at Piedmont Columbus Regional is located in the resident call tower. The student lounge at St Francis Hospital is located on the first floor across from the surgery waiting area.
- **Valdosta:** The student lounge at South Georgia Medical Center is located on the third floor in the GME area.

It is the students' collective responsibility to keep the lounges clean. General housekeeping is provided, but individuals are responsible for cleaning up after themselves.

Because the lounges are common areas, personal responsibility and respect for others should always be practiced. Disruptive behavior, profanity, unprofessional conduct, and any type of harassment in the lounge area are not tolerated.

GENERAL INFORMATION

PAGERS

Pagers are provided for students on the clinical campuses through the student coordinator's office on each campus.

Year 3 students are provided a pager and are expected to have their pager turned on and respond to pages promptly during assigned duty hours on weekdays, and during assigned call periods at night and on weekends.

Some Year 4 students are assigned pagers during some sub-internships and are expected to respond to pages during these rotations.

LOCKERS

Lockers are available to secure belongings in the lounges at Atrium Navicent Health, Piedmont Macon Medical Center, HCA Memorial, Piedmont Midtown Medical Center, and at St. Francis Hospital. Students must provide their own lock.

CALL ROOMS

- **Macon:** Individual call rooms are available at Navicent in the student lounge. Housekeeping service is provided each afternoon. Personal belongings should not be left in rooms after mid-morning or housekeeping services may be omitted. Individual call rooms are available at Piedmont Macon Medical Center on the first floor of the main hospital. Night call is not in use at HCA Coliseum in Macon.
- **Savannah:** Call rooms are available on the HCA Memorial campus. The Internal Medicine Clerkship (fourth floor) and Obstetrics and Gynecology Clerkship (third floor) provide separate call rooms for students at HCA Memorial. There are also four call beds available in the student lounge, which are reserved for students on trauma call.
- **Columbus:** Call rooms are available at Piedmont Columbus Regional Midtown and St. Francis Hospital. Available call rooms are all security controlled with locked access. Night call is not in use at St. Francis Hospital.
- **Valdosta:** Call rooms are available at South Georgia Medical Center. Available call rooms are all security controlled with locked access.

COMPUTER ACCESS

Use of the computer equipment at any clinical campus is subject to the rules governing computer access at that site and requires signed usage agreements and access codes. Please see the campus student coordinator at the specific site for more information and a copy of computer access rules.

Official Communication

Upon matriculation, students are assigned an email address. **This Mercer email address should be used for all official communication and students are expected to check it daily.** The University and MUSM will use the Mercer email for any official correspondence to students. In the event of an emergency, Mercer will utilize multiple methods, including emergency text phone messaging and email to notify students.

Housing Information

The Office of Student Affairs maintains a housing list of local apartments/houses. You may contact the office at musmstudentaffairs@mercer.edu to inquire about housing availability at any time.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Library

The Skelton Medical Libraries are physically located on the Macon, Savannah, and Columbus campuses, with an annex on the Valdosta campus, and serve all MUSM faculty, residents, staff, and students. The libraries provide resources and services, both physically and virtually, to meet the research, educational, patient care, and information needs of MUSM affiliates.

The library provides a collection of print and electronic resources such as biomedical books, journals, databases, and various special collections. The library also provides models, charts, skeletons, and bone boxes. Faculty and students can access the library's electronic resources on campus or remotely.

A full range of services are provided by library faculty and staff. Librarians strive to embed links within the study guides to take students to the electronic access of their readings whenever possible. Reference services are offered weekdays in person, via phone, or email. Classes and workshops on a variety of technologies and topics are taught and available on request for individuals, groups, and classes.

Librarians are available to help faculty and students in their scholarly activities, including but not limited to: literature searching; document delivery and interlibrary loan; finding appropriate journals to publish in; author instructions; citation management tools.

Study space is available on all campuses. All preclinical campuses house anatomical models for use by students.

Parking

MACON – MERCER UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

Your vehicle must be registered with the University to aid in proper identification. Parking regulations on the city streets surrounding the campus are strictly enforced by the Macon Police Department, while the Campus Police Department imposes only those traffic regulations, which are necessary to the function of the University and the safety of the members of its community. Students are required to register their vehicles annually during fall class registration. Students must park only in designated lots according to their parking sticker and in clearly defined parking spaces. The Mercer University main campus has gated entry that requires ID badge swipe for entry before 7 a.m. or after 6 p.m.

MACON – CLINICAL SITES

Parking stickers are required for Navicent. Students must park in the designated parking area on the top floor of the green parking deck, which is located on Hemlock Street across from the main entrance. Parking on other floors of the green deck is NOT permitted. A citation will be issued and/or parking privileges revoked if you park in prohibited areas. Parking stickers are issued through Navicent Police. The medical student coordinator can provide the proper forms and assistance. Parking at Piedmont Macon Medical Center is in the designated visitor parking spots.

SAVANNAH – HCA MEMORIAL CAMPUS

Parking is permitted at MHUMC in any employee-designated parking area. Parking stickers are required and are issued through MHUMC security. The medical student coordinator can provide the proper forms and assistance.

COLUMBUS – CLINICAL SITES AND SCHOOL OFFICES

Parking at St. Francis Hospital will be in a lots B, E and F. Parking at Piedmont Columbus Regional Midtown will be in a designated medical education lot. Parking at the Bradley Center will be in any open parking areas on property. Parking at the Medical Education Building is in the adjacent parking lot.

VALDOSTA – SOUTH GEORGIA MEDICAL CENTER

Parking at South Georgia Medical Center will be in any open parking area not otherwise designated.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ALL OTHER CAMPUS AND CLINICAL SITES

Parking is available at all clinical sites and is site specific. Students should ensure that all regulations surrounding parking are followed at each location through which they rotate.

Security

Mercer University places a high priority on keeping its campuses safe for its students, employees, and visitors. The University bans the use or carriage of weapons on any of its campuses. The Mercer Police Department in Macon has the primary responsibility for the security of the campuses. The Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council certify all Mercer Police Officers as having met the qualifications and training requirements for Police Officers in Georgia. Mercer Police Officers are authorized to exercise law enforcement powers, including the power of arrest on all campuses.

Students, employees, and campus visitors are subject to all federal, state, local, and campus regulations. Mercer police officers may arrest individuals suspected of campus crimes or may detain such individuals for arrest by the local police.

The Mercer Police Department in Macon is a service-oriented department. Officers are available 24 hours/day, 365 days/year. Officers will provide escorts at night as a safety measure upon request. In the event of an emergency, a text alert will be sent out from the Mercer Police to registered cell phones warning staff/faculty and students of measures to take.

All crimes and emergencies should be reported to Mercer Police regardless of the campus or clinical site where it occurred.

MACON

- **Medical Education Building (and all associated School of Medicine buildings):** all disturbances in or around the Medical Education Building on the Mercer Campus should be reported to Mercer Police at 478-301-2970. Campus Security is located at 1765 Winship Street, and also functions as the University's lost and found.
- **Atrium Navicent Health:** all disturbances in or around the hospital should be reported to their security at 478-633-1491.
- **Piedmont Macon Medical Center:** all disturbances in or around Piedmont Macon Medical Center should be reported to their security at 478-765-7000.
- **All Locations:** all incidents should also be reported to Mercer Police at 478-301-2970 to ensure proper reporting for federal disclosure requirements.

SAVANNAH

- **Medical Education Building:** all disturbances in or around the Medical Education Building on the Savannah Campus should be reported to MHUMC Security at 912-350-8600.
- **Memorial Health University Medical Center:** all disturbances in or around Memorial University Medical Center should be reported to MHUMC Security at 912-350-8600.
- **All Locations:** all incidents should also be reported to Mercer Police at 478-301-2970 to ensure proper reporting for federal disclosure requirements.

COLUMBUS

- **Medical Education Building:** all disturbances in or around the Medical Education Building on the Columbus Campus should be reported to 706-225-3205.
- **Piedmont Midtown Medical Center:** all disturbances in or around Piedmont Midtown Medical Center should be reported to their security at 706-571-1470.
- **St. Francis Hospital:** all disturbances in or around the hospital should be reported to their security at 706-596-4000.
- **All Locations:** all incidents should be reported to Mercer Police at 478-301-2970 to ensure proper reporting for federal disclosure requirements.

GENERAL INFORMATION

VALDOSTA

- **South Georgia Medical Center:** all disturbances in or around the hospital should be reported to their security at 229-259-4030.
- **All Locations:** all incidents should be reported to Mercer Police at 478-301-2970 to ensure proper reporting for federal disclosure requirements.

ALL OTHER CAMPUS AND CLINICAL SITES

All disturbances in or around any clinical training site should be reported to the local facility security or local law enforcement officers. All incidents should also be reported to Mercer Police at 478-301-2970 to ensure proper reporting for federal disclosure requirements.

Office of Academic Affairs

The Office of Academic Affairs oversees all aspects of the MD Program curriculum including development, revision, quality, delivery, and outcomes. This work is largely done through the direction of the deans for Academic Affairs on each campus and through the faculty-driven committees and sub-committees of Academic Affairs and the respective programs within the medical school. Student membership is provided on many of these committees.

Each academic program within the medical school is responsible for the management and oversight of their respective curriculum. Students are advised to reference their specific program of study manual for further details on the academic policies affecting them.

Academic Success

The Academic Success Counselors, in the Office of Academic Achievement, work with all students in the School of Medicine. In collaboration with the Office of Academic Affairs, the students in the MD Program attend a series of group sessions held during the Bears Prepare Sessions and participate in one-on-one counseling sessions, which include developing study strategies, improving test-taking techniques, and developing time management habits, which can improve student performance in the classroom and life. Students in the MD Program may be referred to the Academic Success Counselor for additional academic assistance. Additional academic assistance may include Peer Tutors or assignment to a Preclinical Faculty Advisor.

Students in any program at the School of Medicine can request a meeting with an Academic Success Counselor to discuss their individual academic needs.

Office of Student Affairs

The Office of Student Affairs oversees many of the support services required by students during the course of their graduate curriculum.

1. Student Affairs:

- a. **Student Financial Planning:** oversees applications for financial aid, applications for scholarships, awarding of financial aid, and education on budgeting, loan repayment, and financial security.
- b. **Registrar:** oversees student registration, student enrollment, issuance of transcripts, issuance of certification of attendance as needed, and certification of students for graduation.
- c. **Student Support:** the Office of Student Affairs provides general student support for all students in the School of Medicine providing general mentorship and advising.
- d. **MD Program Support:** the Office of Student Affairs provides the following support to students in the MD Program
 - i. **Academic Advising:** oversees a comprehensive academic advising program that includes the oversight of the Bear Buddies (Near Peer Mentoring Program), an annual individual career counseling/academic advising session with the Dean of Student Affairs, group sessions held each semester of years 1, 2, and 3 during Bears Prepare Sessions to help ensure that students are successfully advancing on the path to residency, and work closely with the Office of Academic Affairs and the academic success counselors to individually counsel students in need of additional academic assistance.
 - ii. **Career Counseling:** oversees a comprehensive career counseling program that includes an annual individual career counseling/academic advising session with the Dean of Student Affairs and group sessions held each semester of years 1, 2, and 3 during Bears Prepare Sessions to help ensure that students choose a career that is best suited for them and their life goals.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- iii. **Bears Prepare Sessions:** designs, develops, and implements a session held each semester of years 1, 2, and 3 to include sessions on ethics/professionalism, career counseling, academic advising/counseling, wellness, student affairs topics (Title IX, needle sticks, technical standards, MSPE, CV, residency interviews, emergency preparedness, active shooter preparation, alcohol and drug use, etc.), financial planning, and other topics as needed.
- iv. **Residency Preparedness:** helps ensure students are prepared to complete the residency application cycle by being the contact person for the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS), the Visiting Student Learning Opportunity service (VSLO), ResidencyCAS, and the National Residency Match Program (NRMP). Ensure the students have appropriate information on writing a CV, gathering LORs, applying to away rotations, writing their personal statement, applying to residency programs, interviewing skills, and creating a ROL through the individual and group sessions offered as well as emails targeted to supply information at strategic times throughout their four years at MUSM.
- v. **MSPE:** The Dean of Student Affairs on the student's clinical campus writes the MSPE with assistance from the student for the noteworthy characteristics. All letters are written in full compliance with the AAMC Guidelines. Students review their letter before it is released through ERAS and they have the right to ask another Dean of Student Affairs to write it.

2. Student Health Services:

- a. **General Health:** helps ensure general health services available across all campuses of MUSM that are provided by health care providers that are not involved in the academic evaluation of the student.
 - b. **Mental Health:** helps ensure mental health services available across all campuses of MUSM that are provided by mental health care providers that are not involved in the academic evaluation of the student.
 - c. **Health Care Policies:** oversees student health compliance in accordance with University policy, AAMC policy, and other agencies to include hospital partners. The Campus Health Center is the repository for student health records and informs the Office of Student Affairs of the compliance status of students.
 - d. **Insurance:** oversees the policies governing insurance coverage for students to include student health insurance, medical malpractice insurance (provided to each MD student at no cost to the student), and disability insurance (provided to each MD student at no cost to the student).
 - e. **Immunizations:** oversees the requirements for immunizations and works with the Campus Health Center to ensure all students complete all requirements at the time of admission and annually.
 - f. **Needle Sticks:** works with Academic Affairs to provide needle stick prevention education, serves as the contact in case of injury, and serves as the liaison to ensure medical bills are handled at no cost to the student.
 - g. **Wellness:** designs, develops, and implements a comprehensive wellness program to include sessions covering financial, physical, emotional, spiritual, academic, professional, and financial wellness.
 - h. **Crisis Prevention:** the deans of Student Affairs are available to meet with students in the event of a crisis, to help prevent a crisis, and to facilitate assistance from other agencies as needed by the student.
3. **Student Government:** oversees the student government, serves as a mentor and resource for the student government, and attends the student council meetings.
4. **Student Organizations:**
- a. **School Sponsored Groups:** offers administrative support for all school sponsored student interest groups.
 - b. **Medical Honor Societies:** serves as the point person for several medical honor societies and offers administrative assistance to include the Gold Humanism Honor Society, Alpha Omega Alpha, and Phi Kappa Phi.
5. **Student Research, Grants, and Travel:** assists students applying for monetary aid for travel related to research. Assists in the completion of grant proposals for students.
6. **Student Scholarships and Honors:** assists students applying for grants and scholarships that require a letter of recommendation from the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
7. **Housing Information:** serves as clearing house for housing information.
8. **Surveys:** oversees the administration of AAMC Matriculation Survey, the AAMC Y2Q survey, the AAMC Graduation Survey, and the Needle Stick Survey for graduating seniors.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

9. **Orientations:** responsible for design, development, and implementation of Year 1 orientation and Transfer Student orientation. Assists Academic Affairs in Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4 orientations.
10. **White Coat Ceremony:** plans and implements the White Coat Ceremony that welcomes the student into the medical profession.
11. **Match Day/Honors Ceremonies:-** plans and implements the Match Day Ceremony and Honors Day Ceremony.
12. **Hooding:** plans and implements the Hooding Ceremony.
13. **Graduation:** assists in the planning of graduation and organizes the rehearsal for the graduating students.
14. **SAPC:** the Deans of Student Affairs serve as ex-officio members of the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee. As such, the Deans of Student Affairs prepare students to meet with these committees and advocate on the student's behalf.
15. **Honor Council:** the Deans of Student Affairs serve as administrative support for the Honor Council.
16. **Accommodations:** the Deans of Student Affairs works with the University Access Office to facilitate accommodations for all students of the school of medicine.

Office of Student Financial Planning

Financial aid is available to eligible students in all degree programs on all campuses to help reduce the cost of education (tuition, fees and living expenses). Personnel in the MUSM Financial Planning Office are available to help students explore the financial aid resources available to meet their individual needs. Completion of the Free Application for Federal Aid (FAFSA) is required annually in order to qualify for federal, state and institutional programs. Detailed information regarding the various programs may be obtained on the MUSM website at <http://medicine.mercer.edu/student-services/financial-aid/>. Please contact the Financial Planning Office at financialaid-1@med.mercer.edu if you need assistance.

Because debt management is so important to students and graduates, the Financial Planning Office conducts financial literacy sessions to provide important information about budgeting, credit, financial resources, loan terms, repayment options, etc. to help students plan their borrowing and loan repayment. Attendance at these sessions is MANDATORY for all students who have outstanding student loan balances. In addition, personnel in the Financial Planning Office are available for individual counseling sessions. Contact the Financial Planning Office at financialaid-1@med.mercer.edu.

Office of the Registrar

Located in the first floor's dean's suite on the Macon Campus, the Office of the Registrar serves students in all programs on all campuses in various capacities. The Registrar is in charge of student registration, enrollment, issuance of transcripts, and certification of students for graduation. Priscilla Hicks serves as Registrar for the School of Medicine and may be contacted at 478-301-5173. Registrar staff are available on each campus and can be reached at musmregistrar@mercer.edu.

Academic Advising

Academic Advising is offered through a comprehensive academic advising program designed to help ensure that students are successfully advancing on the path to graduation and residency. The program is designed, implemented, and overseen by the Office of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Affairs works closely with the Office of Academic Affairs and their academic success counselors who individually counsel students preemptively and when in need of additional academic assistance. It is a multifaceted program that includes the Bear Buddies (Near Peer Mentoring), individual career counseling and academic advising sessions, and group sessions in career counseling and academic advising through the Bears Prepare Sessions.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Bear Buddies (Near Peer Mentoring): students receive and provide mentorship in their assigned Bear Buddies Groups. Sessions are held in each semester of years 1, 2, and 3 for a minimum of six sessions. These sessions are designed to provide students with resources and mentorship strategically placed in their curricular path to optimize assistance. Bear Buddies Groups provide a forum for students to develop mentoring skills as they mentor underclassmen.

Individual Career Counseling and Academic Advising Sessions: the Deans of Student Affairs meet with each student for an annual individual career counseling/academic advising session. These sessions are designed to get to know the student, understand the social and personal issues they face, review their academic records, explore their individual career goals, assist them with finding research and service activities needed to achieve their goals, identify elective rotations, identify mentors in their chosen specialty, and assist with any obstacles to obtaining their goals.

- **First Year Sessions:** meet annually with students late in Block 1
- **Second Year Sessions:** meet annually with students early in Block 4
- **Third Year Sessions:** meet annually with students in Semester 1 of Year 3
- **Fourth Year Sessions:** meet annually with students in Semester 2 of Year 3

Additional sessions are held as needed by the student. Students are free to meet with any dean of Student Affairs on any campus by request.

Bears Prepare Sessions: the Office of Student Affairs designs, implements and facilitates a series of group sessions held each semester of years 1, 2, and 3 for a total of six sessions. This longitudinal series provides a wide range of topics to ensure that students are prepared to be successful in medical school and as they prepare for residency while limiting their time away from their studies. Sessions include: academic advising, ethics/professionalism, career counseling, financial planning, wellness, and other topics covered by student affairs.

Academic Success Counselor: MUSM Academic Success Counselors are an enhancement and addition to the academic advising and mentorship already provided to year 1 and year 2 students. These counselors are located on all preclinical campuses and continue to serve all students during all four years of their medical school training.

All students, regardless of academic status, are encouraged to meet with counselors to discuss learning strategies, learning style, and academic needs. The Academic Success Counselors provide a longitudinal series of group sessions during the Bears Prepare Sessions designed to optimize study skills, USMLE Step study, and general academic success.

Career Counseling

Career Counseling is offered through a comprehensive career counseling program designed to help ensure that students are successfully advancing on the path to residency. The program is designed, implemented, and overseen by the Office of Student Affairs and is based on the AAMC Careers in Medicine program. It is a multifaceted program which includes the Bear Buddies (Near Peer Mentoring), individual career counseling and academic advising sessions, and group sessions held each semester of years 1, 2, and 3 during Bears Prepare Sessions to help ensure that students choose a career that is best suited for them and their life goals.

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STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

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Student Health Services

CAMPUS HEALTH CENTER

The Campus Health Center (CHC) provides health services for all Mercer students, regardless of insurance coverage. Care can be provided regardless of a student's location via telehealth to ensure the provision of easily accessible healthcare for all students. CHC is considered the primary healthcare provider for students that have the school insurance. Students who have this insurance must contact the CHC if appointments or referrals are needed prior to seeking other medical attention unless after hours or in cases of emergency. Students on the Savannah and Columbus campus do not need to call the SHC prior to seeking medical attention as they are more than 50 miles from the Macon campus but should insure that they check with their insurance provider to find an in-network provider. The CHC provides many services including health care for acute illnesses and injuries, immunizations, women's health, health education and various physical exams. Some students may be referred, depending on the illness/injury, at the discretion of the Campus Health Center staff. The CHC can be reached at 478-301-2696.

All students of the School of Medicine utilize the student health services located on the Macon campus for oversight of immunization and physical examination documentation. Additionally, students on **any campus** can access the SHC and arrange for a **telemedicine** visit by calling 478-301-2696 for a tele-visit with a Macon provider or 678-547-6130 for a tele-visit with an Atlanta provider. The student will not be responsible for the co-pay regardless of insurance carrier and should consider utilizing this service for urgent care visits due to convenience and ease of scheduling an appointment.

Returning patients can now schedule appointments on-line by visiting their patient portal or the Campus Health website. More on Campus Health and the services available to all students can be found at: campushealth.mercer.edu/macon/.

Campus Health does NOT provide free access to Tuberculosis testing, immunizations (including required titers), or other laboratory tests and charges the student's insurance for these services. Students will be responsible for non-covered costs for these services regardless of the type of insurance held by the student or their campus affiliation.

Students on the Macon campus should use the CHC, which is located inside the Field House at 1327 Stadium Drive (Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.). Students may present to the nearest emergency room for after hours emergencies.

Students on the Savannah campus are served by Savii Health located at 340 Eisenhower Drive Suite 1200, which is 2.3 miles from the medical school campus. The office is open Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

They are also served by South Coast Medical Group located at 1326 Eisenhower Drive, which is 1.6 miles from the medical school campus. South Coast is a multi-specialty group with over 120 healthcare professionals. The office is open Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.; and Sunday, 12 p.m. – 4 p.m. Students may present to the nearest emergency room for after hours emergencies.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Students on the Columbus campus are served by Mercer Medicine Harris County located at 138 N College Street in Hamilton, Georgia (Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.) or by Piedmont Urgent Care – Uptown located at 101 13th Street, Suite 200 (Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. ; Saturday – Sunday, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.) Students may present to the nearest emergency room for after hours emergencies.

Students on the Valdosta campus are served by Valdosta Family Medicine Associates located at 2412 N Oak Street in Valdosta, Georgia. The office is open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. with limited weekend hours. Students may present to the nearest emergency room for after hours emergencies.

All students of the School of Medicine are responsible for the costs of medical care not covered by their medical insurance.

Clinical care shall not be rendered by clinicians who will evaluate the academic performance of students seeking care. Clinicians who have rendered care to students will be required to disclose this information if asked to complete an academic evaluation and that evaluation will be excluded from the student’s record. Additionally, students may report any potential conflict of interest that arises from the physician-student relationship to Academic Records. At no time will students seeking care be examined by fellow students that may be rotating through a clinician’s office nor do students complete clinical rotations at the CHC.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mercer University faculty and staff recognize that mental health concerns can impact academic performance and interfere with daily life activities. Because stress is a normal part of the educational experience, learning to manage stress effectively is crucial to your well-being and overall success. It is not uncommon for students to experience heightened levels of stress, insecurity and in some cases anxiety and depression while attending medical and graduate school. Under such circumstances it is a sign of strength for a person to seek help. In recognition of this, MUSM provides a limited number of confidential psychology and counseling services at no charge to the student. Once these limits are reached then the student is responsible for the costs of mental health services not covered by their medical insurance. If experiencing academic difficulties resulting from stress please also notify your faculty member or academic advisor for academic assistance, as needed.

In order to protect confidential student health information, MUSM provides psychology care providers at sites separate from the teaching environment.

The following resources are available to students:

- **All Students:** Counseling and Psychological Services, 478-301-2862
CAPS can provide support if you’re feeling anxious, overwhelmed, depressed, lost or are struggling with personal issues. Please call or visit the (CAPS) Counseling and Psychological Services, 478-301-2862. CAPS can provide support if you’re feeling anxious, overwhelmed, depressed, lost or are struggling with personal issues. Please call or visit the [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) website for more information. These services are free and confidential, and support non-traditional, graduate, and undergraduate students.
Students may access CAPS at the location of their academic program: **MACON** – Counseling Center (formerly the Honors House), 478-301-2862; **ATLANTA** – 215 Sheffield Student Center, 678-547-6060. Students at other campuses can contact CAPS to arrange a telehealth visit.
Same Day Solution Sessions can be scheduled through CAPS on the Macon Campus or via telehealth from any campus by calling 478-301-2862.
Emergency Care can be provided by the on-call therapist during regular business hours by calling 478-301-2862 and after hours by calling the Mercer Police (on the Macon campus) at 478-301-4357.
The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline can be accessed by calling 988, texting 988, or at [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org).
- **Macon (All Students):** Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), 478-301-2862
Limit of four in-person visits per academic year at no charge to the student.
- **Savannah (All MD Students):** Robbins, Corse and Associates, 912-665-6989
Limit of four in-person visits per academic year at no charge to the student.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- **Columbus (All MD Students):** Pastoral Institute, 706-649-6500
Limit of four in-person visits per academic year at no charge to the student.
- **Valdosta (All MD Students):** Joel Morgan, MD, Valdosta Psychiatric Associates, 229-244-4200
Limit of four in-person visits per academic year at no charge to the student.

The Deans of Student Affairs are available at all times if the student prefers.

- **Macon:** Dr. Candi Nobles-James, 478-301-2531 (daytime), 478-228-7678 (after hours)
- **Savannah:** Dr. Jane Kirkpatrick, 912-721-8146 (daytime), 828-429-1131 (after hours)
- **Columbus:** Dr. Kathleen Hughes, 706-223-5232 (daytime), 352-281-0985 (after hours)
- **School-wide:** Dr. Alice House, 706-223-5179 (daytime), 478-258-1573 (after hours)

Feel free to call any dean regardless of your campus affiliation.

If you believe you are in need of emergency care, call 911 or report to the nearest hospital emergency room or may call or text **988** to reach the National Suicide & Crisis Line.

CRISIS SUPPORT LINE: 1-888-291-5802

At MUSM, we have established a Crisis Support Line to help our students who may be experiencing a physical or mental health crisis across all of our campuses and programs. It is available 24 hours/day, 365 days/year. You can call the 24-hour Crisis Support Line at **1-888-291-5802** for any urgent medical or mental health issue.

Students on any campus that are in crisis are instructed to call this toll-free number and they will be connected directly with a medical provider (e.g. MD or NP) who will assess the student's immediate needs. The provider will then connect the student with resources available on their specific campus or in their local community (e.g. local urgent care clinic, CAPS, etc.).

Within 48 hours of accessing the Crisis Support Line, the student will be contacted directly by a medical provider from Campus Health to ensure that the appropriate course of action was taken to maximize the student's wellbeing.

Information about personal problems with substance abuse shared in a student-initiated request for assistance or shared with a personal therapist, whether a Mercer employee or not, will be treated as confidential information and will not be used in retention and/or promotion decisions

POLICY ON HIV/ HBV OR HCV (AND EMERGING NOVEL VECTORS) INFECTED PERSONS

The Medical School policy on HIV/HBV OR HCV-infected persons is to protect infected individuals from discrimination, to insure confidentiality of sensitive information, and to protect uninfected individuals from infection, according to the latest scientific knowledge about transmission.

1. The Dean has appointed Dr. Jeffrey Stephens (stephens_j@mercer.edu, 478-301-5830) as a monitor of risk, education, personnel practices, and clinical care. Any concerns in this area should be reported to the campus specific Associate Deans of Student Affairs who shall refer to Dr. Stephens. He shall report to the dean any perceived problems relative to AIDS or HIV, HBV or HCV-infection. Dr. Stephens shall determine if the institution is meeting the responsibility of informing all personnel of needed measures of personal protection in the workplace and provide information to persons seeking it about the availability of testing and counseling.
2. Any modification of the clinical training or privileges of HIV/HBV or HCV-infected medical students, residents, or faculty/staff shall be determined in each case individually. The dean shall appoint an ad hoc committee for each case to make recommendations for the particular situation.
3. No discrimination will be permitted against HIV/HBV or HCV-infected persons in employment, education, or the use of public facilities. The dean shall take action to prevent or correct any discrimination.
4. Information relative to HIV/HBV or HCV status shall be kept confidential and only persons with a need to know shall have access to such information. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) will be followed and all persons receiving information will have been trained on HIPAA guidelines and agree to follow those regulations. Violations of this shall be considered unprofessional conduct and subject to the penalties of such.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

5. No mandatory testing shall be done unless it is clearly necessary to prevent a risk to uninfected persons.

PREGNANCY AND ACCESS TO THE ANATOMY LAB

1. Medical students who are pregnant or who are considering pregnancy are advised to consult with their Associate Dean of Student Affairs before beginning or continuing the sequence of anatomy laboratory exercises.
2. If a student expects to be pregnant during lab rotations, the Office of Student Affairs will contact Alan Baca, Assistant VP of Environmental Health and Safety at 478-301-2544. He will provide the latest SDS information concerning the potential risks of exposure to the embalming compounds, e.g., formaldehyde and phenol as used in the Gross Anatomy Lab. Student Affairs will also alert the lead faculty for the anatomy lab on the student's campus. Students experiencing pregnancy should also contact the Title IX Office at 478-301-2788.
3. The student will be instructed on potential filter devices that can be used to remove these chemicals from the air and that can be fitted to the student. A filtration device and its correct fitting will be provided at MUSM's expense.
4. The student should then consult her primary care or obstetric physician and discuss the SDS information, the use of the filtration device, and any concerns related to participation in the laboratory experience.
5. Alternative sessions can be provided through the Office of Academic Affairs, if needed, to allow the student to progress in the curriculum without penalty.

MANAGEMENT OF INFECTIOUS AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDOUS EXPOSURES

Prevention Education

Medical students will receive training on risk prevention and proper exposure minimization. This training will occur with the review of OSHA modules and when students learn universal precaution techniques. Health system specific training is completed during Year 3 orientation.

Post-Exposure Care and Treatment

Medical students exposed to an infectious or environmental hazard will notify the Office of Student Affairs and report immediately to the closest health care facility, which will likely be one of MUSM's clinical affiliates. Medical evaluations, procedures, medications, vaccines, and follow-up resulting from this exposure will be made available at no cost to the medical student. The Office of Student Affairs will cover the cost of all medical treatment not covered by the student's medical insurance.

Impact on Medical Student Educational Activities

If an exposure of infectious and environmental disease or a subsequent disability impedes the educational progression of a student, the Dean of Academic Affairs will be notified and accommodations will be made to allow the student to make up missed educational opportunities in a timely manner. If exposure presents a continued threat to student health or to patient care, alternative educational experiences will be developed, as possible, to meet the educational objectives of MUSM while minimizing the risk to both the student and the patients.

Visiting Students

Visiting students are required to follow the policies of MUSM and its clinical affiliates. The acknowledgement of completion of training materials is required for all visiting students prior to undertaking any educational activities. Visiting MD students should follow these guidelines, and any costs of initial blood tests and initial medications that are not covered by their student insurance will be covered through the Office of Student Affairs.

Post-Exposure Procedure for Faculty, Staff, & Students

Response guidelines for exposure to human infectious and other environmental hazards apply to needle sticks, or other contaminated sharp instruments, and injuries and exposures from splashes, spills, or other releases of human blood and/or body fluids. Prompt initial management of employees or students with blood and/or body fluid exposures is required to minimize the risks of harm to the individual and to provide an opportunity for prophylactic treatment against HIV, HBV, HCV, and tetanus, as well as to establish baseline serological evaluation in the event that future medical or legal action is required. Medical evaluations, procedures, medications, vaccines, and follow up resulting from this exposure will be made available at no cost to the medical student.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Guidelines to Follow after a Potential Exposure Incident

After a needle stick or sharps injury or exposure to blood or other body fluid immediately follow these steps.

1. Administer First Aid
 - a. **Contaminated wound:** Wash the injured area with soap & water.
 - b. **Contaminated intact skin:** Wash the area with soap & water.
 - c. **Contaminated eyes:** Gently rinse the eyes while open with saline or water.
 - d. **Contaminated mouth:** Rinse mouth with water multiple times.
2. Report to an approved healthcare provider without delay
 - a. If possible, provide or have a colleague provide a verbal notification to:
 - i. Supervising faculty, dean's office, or Office of Student Affairs (students).
 - ii. Department chair or dean's office (faculty), or immediate supervisor (staff).
 - b. A recommended healthcare provider should be consulted. The affected party should be evaluated by an authorized treating facility immediately after exposure to blood or body fluids to ensure appropriate medical management and prompt initiation of any recommended medication within four hours, post-exposure. In most cases this will be in the emergency department or an urgent care center.

At all times one should adhere to Infectious and environmental hazard policy in effect at the hospital/clinic where the injury occurred. If an injury occurs in a physician's office or while on an away rotation, then follow the protocol for the nearest regional hospital/clinic. Discuss treatment options with appropriate physician on call at site.

The costs of blood tests and medications that are not covered by the MUSM MD student's insurance will be covered through the Office of Student Affairs.

Please forward any bills related to a possible exposure for M.D. students to:

Associate Dean of Student Affairs
Mercer University School of Medicine
1501 Mercer University Drive
Macon, GA 31207

If student learning activities are interrupted, the student will contact the Dean of Student Affairs. The Dean will communicate with the Office of Academic Affairs regarding absence, make up of work, and a future action plan.

Long-term effects of conditions resulting from a student exposure injury are addressed in the Leave of Absence Policies and the Health Care Policies found in this handbook.

After receiving treatment, you must report the exposure as soon as possible and complete requested documentation (forms obtained through the Office of Student Affairs) for the following officials:

Students

- Student Affairs Office
- Mercer Police – Complete the 1st report of injury as soon as possible

Faculty & Staff

- Department Chair or Dean's Office (Faculty), or Immediate Supervisor (Staff)
- Mercer Police – Complete the 1st report of injury as soon as possible

Blood Testing (Consent is required.)

- Mercer Faculty, Staff, and/or Student: HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.
- Source, if possible: HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Follow-up Action (Faculty, Staff, & Students)

- Complete all procedures prescribed by the attending physician and staff (faculty, staff, & students).
- Provide all requested information to personal insurance representative (students).
- Coordinate communication with supervising faculty, dean's office, or Office of Student Affairs.
- Provide all requested information to Mercer's Workers' Compensation Plan Administrator (faculty & staff).
- Coordinate communication with department chair, dean's office, or immediate supervisor.

The Office of Student Affairs will conduct a needle stick survey near the time of graduation for MD program students. The findings of the survey and trends shall be included in the annual report to the Executive Council and will be communicated to the Year 3 Committee. The Year 3 Committee shall review the information and report any subsequent action to the CDSC and the CIC.

Additional information on bloodborne pathogen exposures can be found at the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/guidelines.html>.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

Health Insurance

Mercer University **requires** that all Macon, Atlanta, Savannah and Columbus Campus students provide proof of health insurance coverage **each semester**. If you do not currently have health insurance, it is imperative that you acquire coverage before the beginning of your studies at Mercer.

Students are automatically charged by the University for health insurance every time they register for classes. Those students who already have health care coverage through other sources may have this charge removed from their account. This charge can be removed by completing the online waiver form before the end of the waiver period. To complete the waiver process, go to <https://bursar.mercer.edu/studentinsurance/>. Students must complete the waiver before the stated deadline. Failure to complete this form before the deadline will result in insurance being purchased for you and charged to your account. For more information on student health insurance, please contact Core Management Resources at <https://studentplan.corehealthbenefits.com/merc> or by calling 888-741-2673.

Disability Insurance

There is disability insurance provided by the School of Medicine to MD students through MedPlus Advantage at no cost to the student. You can learn more at medplusadvantage.com.

Malpractice Insurance

When students participate in clinical experiences that are approved as part of their program training or organized by the School of Medicine then they will be covered by MUSM's malpractice insurance policy. Mercer University School of Medicine will not sponsor or facilitate any extracurricular clinical patient care or shadowing activities independently arranged by a student and physician (or other healthcare professional) at any formal or informal clinical site (including hospitals, clinics, medical practices, vaccine drives or other volunteer events, etc.) either within or external to MUSM's network of affiliated clinical sites. MUSM will not prohibit students from participating in these activities; however, participation must be arranged by and is the responsibility of the student, sponsoring healthcare professional, and facility involved. MUSM students must not advertise themselves as agents of Mercer University or the School of Medicine while engaging in these activities, i.e. students must not wear their MUSM white coats, identification, or other MUSM gear. The professional liability insurance provided to the medical students by MUSM will not cover student participation in these extracurricular clinical patient care or shadowing activities. The Malpractice Insurance does cover activities in the curriculum as well as extracurricular clinical, research and volunteer activities which are approved and sponsored by MUSM. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to MUSM's Office of Student Affairs.

IMMUNIZATION AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATION POLICY

All immunization documentation must be signed by a health care official and sent to the Mercer University Campus Health Center or entered into their immunization portal. If not completed, your ability to register for classes at MUSM will be hindered. If you have questions regarding the immunization policy or forms, call the Mercer Campus Health Center at 478-301-2696.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Do not assume that childhood immunizations are adequate; requirements have changed during the past several years. Medical facilities in the U.S. and in other countries are required to keep records of vaccinations. Additional sources of immunization information include doctors' offices, health departments, and schools. Students should make copies of the completed health form and submit to the Campus Health Center and keep the originals for their own files. Do not rely on health care providers, family members, or other colleges to mail the forms.

Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR): All students born after 1956 must provide a statement of immunization against measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), giving the month, day, and year of immunization. A statement of "up to date" is not sufficient. Two doses of measles (rubeola) vaccine, two doses of mumps vaccine, and one dose of rubella are required. You must have been at least 12 months old when the first measles dose was received.

If a student is unable to provide dates of immunization to measles, mumps, and rubella, he or she may document immunity by blood test (quantitative titer), at the student's expense. If this testing shows no immunity to measles, mumps, or rubella, the student may register following documentation of the first dose of MMR, with the second to follow in 30 days, if required.

Tuberculosis (TB) Testing for Tuberculosis (PPD or QuantiFERON Gold/T Spot) within the past 12 months is required of all new, clinical students. If using TST then 2 annual tests or a 2-step test must be documented. All MD students are required to have a Tuberculosis test at the beginning of each academic year. Students should be tested regardless of prior BCG vaccination. Any student with a history of a positive PPD will be required to provide a report of a normal chest x-ray or a current negative QuantiFERON Gold/T Spot to be eligible to register. A physician must evaluate and clear all individuals with a positive Tuberculosis test.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Health science students enrolled in all Mercer University programs are required to be fully vaccinated or have an approved exemption by the University by the first day of class in order to participate or continue in their program. Please note that some clinical placements do not accept religious exemptions (MD Program can't accept any exemption due to an inability to provide clinical placements for those students who are not vaccinated).

Additional Requirements for MD Students

Students enrolled in the MD Program will also need to provide documentation of up-to-date immunization for the following immunizations as well as a physical examination statement of good health at the time of matriculation and at the beginning of the clinical curriculum:

- **DTaP** (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)
- **Hepatitis B**
- **Varicella** (Chicken Pox)
- **Annual TB Testing** (After Admission)
- Many clinical sites require **annual influenza immunization**

Students who don't comply with immunization and physical exam requirements will be prevented from registering.

The need for re-immunization or other changes to the protocol will be determined in consultation with an infectious disease physician or the Campus Health Center physician.

The School of Medicine Immunization Form (based on the AAMC Universal Form) is required and must be signed by a physician or other health care provider and stamped with the provider's name and address. The GRITs record, if available, should be submitted.

All records are housed in the Campus Health Center.

Students **MUST** keep a photocopy of all completed forms, a copy of the GRITs record, a copy of immunization records, and any titers for their personal records.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Exemption Policy

Exemption requests should be submitted to the Campus Health Center. Exemptions from compliance with the immunization policy include:

1. Religious exemption, written on letterhead stationery, signed by a religious official and notarized.
2. Medical exemption, written on office stationery, and signed by a health care provider. The letter should state the reason for the exemption, and whether the exemption is permanent or temporary.

WELLNESS

MUSM recognizes that the challenges and stresses associated with attending medical school can be overwhelming at times. In order to ensure the best possible health and wellness of our students, we provide wellness education and activities as well as support student generated wellness events.

Program Description

The Student Wellness Program is designed to help MUSM students achieve and maintain optimal wellbeing. The Wellness Program addresses five specific aspects of student well-being, including physical, emotional, spiritual, academic/professional and financial. The Wellness program provides a monthly Wellness Connection column in the Student Newsletter on topics chosen and authored by students. Additionally, the Wellness Program offers monthly Wellness Lunch and Learns on such topics as resiliency, grounding skills, coping with loss of a loved one, and other student or faculty driven topics.

Wellness is not simply the absence of illness, but rather the state of being in good health, especially as an actively pursued goal. At MUSM, we believe wellness is an important goal for each of our students and we strive to nurture positive health behaviors to not only benefit students while they are in graduate or professional school, but throughout their lives and careers.

Medical and graduate education mark a pivotal period in the life of students and it is vitally important to ensure that both professional and personal growth is being nurtured during this time. When students experience intense academic pressure, many are inclined to give up all other activities that compete with academics — even activities of great personal importance. However, an essential aspect of becoming a professional is learning to take care of one's own health and maintaining an appropriate work-life balance. Taking care of oneself allows one to perform optimally in both their personal and professional endeavors.

The primary mission of this program is to develop and implement practices that improve the wellness of all students in the medical school through collaboration with various campus resources, including student health and counseling/psychological services.

The **Student Wellness Committee** will consist of volunteer student wellness chairs and AIMSS representatives from each program within MUSM as well as the Wellness Director, The Dean and Associate Deans of Student Affairs, and the Associate Director of Student Affairs, who together will develop and implement the various programs throughout the year. Additionally, the student representatives on the Wellness Committee will serve as liaisons between the student body and the Wellness Program as a way to ensure that the wants and needs of our student interests in wellness are being met.



STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Goals

MUSM's Wellness Program is designed with specific goals to address the many needs of our diverse student body. The goals for this program are clearly outlined below.

1. Promote the overall health and wellbeing of students in the areas of physical wellness, emotional wellness, spiritual wellness, financial wellness, and academic and professional wellness.
2. Facilitate student learning of lifelong healthy habits and the potential impact of these behaviors.
3. Foster professional development/identity of our students to include positive health behaviors.
4. Model positive health behaviors that students can then incorporate in their future careers.

Dimensions of Wellness

Mercer University School of Medicine's Wellness Program promotes five dimensions of wellness including Physical, Emotional, Spiritual, Academic & Professional, and Financial. The goal is to strive for balance in each dimension.

- **Physical Wellness:** This dimension of wellness is focused on freedom from illness, disease and the need for medications as well as the ability to function and regularly participate safely in a variety of activities. This area of wellness also includes maintaining a balanced natural diet and regular sleeping habits. An important aspect of physical wellness is developing a physical fitness routine that is maintainable without access to a gym or specialized equipment in order to ensure a lifelong commitment to fitness.
- **Emotional Wellness:** This dimension of wellness will help bring awareness to one's feelings and learning how to express one's emotions constructively. Students will have opportunities to learn about stress reduction, self-care, and the development of inner strength. An important aspect of emotional wellness is developing good communication skills and cultivating a support network of caring friends, family members and colleagues.
- **Spiritual Wellness:** This dimension of wellness will focus on helping our students reflect on the meaning of events in life and developing a strong sense of purpose. Students will have opportunities to connect with their faith, beliefs, values, ethics, principles and morals in meaningful ways.
- **Academic & Professional Wellness:** This area of wellness is to help our students in preparing and making use of their skills and talents in order to gain purpose, happiness and enrichment in their professional lives. The development of occupational satisfaction and wellness is related to one's attitude about their work.
- **Financial Wellness:** This area of wellness is to help our students obtain a state of financial well-being where they experience minimal financial stress, learn how to establish a strong financial foundation (e.g. minimize debt, budget etc.) and assist them in creating a plan that puts them on track to meet their future financial goals.

AID FOR THE IMPAIRED MEDICAL SCHOOL STUDENT AT MERCER (AIMSS)

Mercer University is required by federal law to be a drug-free workplace (Drug-Free Workplace Act). Furthermore, University policy is that illegal possession or use of intoxicants/drugs on University premises is cause for immediate termination for employees. Graduate (and Medical) Students are held to the same standard with regards to possession or use of drugs. Students may be expelled for use or possession of illegal drugs on University premises or other places where they fulfill requirements of the School's educational programs.

Notwithstanding the above, it is recognized that personal involvement in substance abuse is a complex matter. Students who believe they have such problems are urged to seek medical advice and treatment, either on their own or through the Office of Student Affairs.

The Office of Student Affairs is a specific contact point where students can receive information about the evaluation and treatment possibilities, both within the School and outside the School.

Information about personal problems with substance abuse shared in a student-initiated request for assistance or shared with a personal therapist, whether a Mercer employee or not, will be treated as confidential information and will not be used in retention and/or promotion decisions. However, when student problems are identified by the School and when evaluation and treatment are components of a School/student approved plan of action, it is expected that the student will permit the therapist to report whether or not the student is participating in the approved plan. The therapist's judgment will not be sought regarding the student's suitability to practice medicine, nor will completion of a treatment plan or failure to complete a treatment plan be the sole reason for a retention or promotion decision.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Signs of Emotional Illness or Chemical Dependency

The following are signs of emotional illness or chemical dependency. The list is not necessarily comprehensive. It is intended to assist anyone in identifying students with potential difficulties.

- Change in personality, dressing habits or neatness
- Excessive irritability, anger beyond control
- Mental confusion, drowsiness, inattention to work, loud, inappropriate euphoria
- Appearance of being depressed, sad, withdrawn
- Unsteady gait, slurred speech, alcohol on breath

General Goals of the AIMSS Program:

1. To provide compassionate assistance to impaired students before they are irreversibly harmed.
2. To provide help in a way that protects the rights of impaired students to receive treatment in strictest confidence.
3. To assure that recovered students are able to continue their medical education without stigma or penalty.
4. To protect others from the harm that impaired students may cause.
5. Prevent future cases of impairment through school-wide interventions.

What Is Impairment?

Most medical students experience medical education as stressful, and most deal with the rigorous demands and pressures of school using healthy coping mechanisms. However, some students do not adapt successfully to these stresses and instead withdraw and isolate themselves, and/or engage in the inappropriate use of alcohol and drugs. When these maladaptive coping techniques are relied upon repeatedly, a student may become impaired. We define an impaired medical student as one whose behavior violates the accepted standards of the medical profession.

The AIMSS Program at MUSM

The AIMSS program will be administered by the AIMSS Council. The AIMSS Council will consist of a minimum of 23 students and a minimum of four faculty members. Two students from each MD class which are elected by their peers, one student from each graduate program which is selected by their peers, the deans of student affairs who serve ex-officio, and the faculty advisor who is appointed by the Dean shall compose the Council. Members should be chosen for their integrity, maturity, and discretion. Once elected, these students remain as their class representatives for the remainder of their time at MUSM, unless replaced by class vote. The AIMSS Council is co-chaired by one medical student and one professional member, both being elected by the membership of the Council. The Director of Wellness shall also serve on the AIMSS Council as an ex-officio member.

Essential Elements of the AIMSS Program

- **Prevention:** Some students will recognize that they are coping poorly with stress and seek assistance before impairment occurs. The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs can provide resources and facilitate referral for students in such circumstances. Both student and professional members of the AIMSS Council will augment those resources and provide information and assistance to students in seeking help when stresses are becoming unmanageable.
- **Assistance to the Impaired Student:** The AIMSS Program will have a unique responsibility at Mercer University School of Medicine; that is, where students are identified as impaired by others, but do not seek assistance. In this circumstance the AIMSS Program will take responsibility for Identification, Early Interaction, and Early Referral to the Office of Students Affairs which shall arrange appropriate treatment and follow-up.
- **Identification of Impaired Students:** Research suggests that as many as eight percent of medical students may become impaired during their years of training. Most of these students will not voluntarily seek help, but their impairment may be detected by classmates, friends, faculty, or staff. In this event, the reporting student/faculty member will relate the details of the situation to the appropriate class AIMSS representatives.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- **Early Interaction:** The Early Interaction process of the AIMSS program involves meeting with the impaired student to discuss the impairment in a helpful and supportive way. The interaction will be conducted in an informal fashion between the representative and the student. The purpose of this interaction is to provide support and to review resources available to the student. The representative should relay the findings of this meeting to the faculty advisor or can report them directly to the Sr. Associate Dean of Student Affairs. The faculty advisor and Sr. Associate Dean of Student Affairs shall review the facts of the situation. Based upon their review, they may decide that further steps are unnecessary, or that it is appropriate to refer to the Office of Student Affairs for early referral.
- **Early Referral:** The faculty advisor shall refer the student to the student affairs dean on their campus who will assume an advocacy role for the impaired student, and help him/her choose a physician (from a list approved by the Composite State Medical Board of Georgia) who will perform an evaluation or refer them to the GA Professionals Health Program.
- **Monitoring:** The student's dean of student affairs will refer the student to the GA Professionals Health Program, which will monitor the progress of the impaired student and will be responsible for ensuring compliance of the student with the treatment process.
- **Cost of Treatment:** A student participating in the AIMSS Program may seek treatment from any approved physician. Payment will be met by the student's individual health plan (insurance is required of all students enrolled at Mercer University School of Medicine). For hospital and other residential treatment programs, there may be substantial cost to the student.
- **Families of Impaired Students:** Families can be an important part of a medical student's development into a competent and responsible physician. Students' spouses and families will be integrated into the evaluation and treatment process where indicated (through the GA Professionals Health Program).
- **Failure of Treatment:** In the event that a student is unsuccessful in treatment, if the student has failed to comply with the treatment program, or it appears that recovery continues to be compromised, the Georgia Professionals Health Program shall notify the dean of student affairs to make a plan for further action. Final disposition of the case, including dismissal of the student, is a judgment that resides with the Dean of the School of Medicine.
- **Advocacy for the Student:** Where treatment is successful, the Office of Student Affairs will vigorously assist the student in assuring that previous impairment will not adversely affect educational and career opportunities.
- **Confidentiality:** The issue of confidentiality is **CRUCIAL** and of the **UTMOST IMPORTANCE**. The success of the AIMSS program depends on student trust and confidence; a breach of confidentiality would compromise these attitudes, rendering the AIMSS program ineffective and unimportant. AIMSS is designed to protect both the impaired student, and those who find it necessary to report an impaired colleague or peer. At no time during the treatment process will any uninvolved individual know of a student's impairment.

Student Government and Organizations

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

The Student Council of the MD Program at Mercer University School of Medicine is the organization that shall study matters of importance to students and submit recommendations expressing the student viewpoint to the faculty and the administration. They work with the faculty and administration to implement the recommendations and improve the problem areas identified. Oversight is provided by the Deans of Student Affairs. The council manages the funds allocated to them by the Office of Student Affairs to provide support for student organizations and for travel for student research. They meet monthly, and meetings are open to all students of MUSM. For more information on the student council, please contact the Office of Student Affairs.

- **Student Council/Class Officers:** Each class elects a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer, per campus, as well as other class representatives as described in the Student Council By-laws.
- **Student Council Steering Committee:** Class officers, SC president, and the associate deans of Student Affairs make up the Student Council Steering Committee and meet monthly. This committee aims to bring issues of concern to the administration's attention and serve as a learning resource for underclassmen as upperclassmen can share information pertinent to know as they progress through the curriculum.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- **Faculty Committees:** There are opportunities for students to participate on various faculty committees. Chairs of committees contact the Student Council, which chooses student representatives. The membership of faculty committees changes each summer; thus, student representatives usually serve at the beginning of an academic year.

MERCER SPONSORED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

MUSM has a wide variety of student organizations that are sponsored by the school and align with the mission of the school. For a current list, please contact the Office of Student Affairs.

- **Organization Registration:** Before a student group can be recognized and use campus facilities, members are required to apply for recognition as an officially sponsored student group of Mercer University School of Medicine. An outline of the structure of the organization including names of officers, bylaws, its purpose, any affiliation with a national organization, and a commitment by the organization to abide by laws and institutional policies must be submitted per the instructions in the policy and procedure manual of the Student Council.
- **Event Registration:** All events organized by students must be approved through the Office of Student Affairs by the completion of the *Request To Host An Event Form* which can be obtained from the Office of Student Affairs.

Student Volunteer Activities

Students are encouraged to participate in activities in the community such as Habitat for Humanity, volunteer medical clinics, community health fairs, blood and bone marrow drives, and projects with local charitable organizations.

With significant involvement in these types of activities, and the creation of an individual project designed to help the community, the Distinction in Service to the Community (DISC) Award is given to senior MD program students. Examples of DISC projects and requirements can be found on the DISC Canvas Course or by contacting the Office of Student Affairs.

Student Research Activities

Students involved in research and scholarly activities must abide by the MUSM Medical Student Research, Scholarship, and Publication Policy ensuring integrity in research, adherence to all regulations, and appropriate mentoring by a MUSM faculty member.

The complete MUSM Medical Student Research, Scholarship, and Publication Policy and the MUSM Student Request to Participate in Research form can be found on the Medical Student Research Canvas page.

Student Research Travel Policy

There are two parts to the process for travel for MD students: 1. request authorization for student travel to present scholarly work through the Office of Academic Affairs, and 2. requesting authorization for reimbursement for travel through the Student Council and the Office of Student Affairs.

Requests to miss class time must be made at least four (4) weeks in advance. At the time a request for travel is submitted, a list of students planning to present at a meeting will be given to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for approval and to ensure that each student is in good academic standing before he/she can receive MUSM's support. A request submitted for absence does not guarantee permission to miss required components of the curriculum.

When requesting reimbursement from the student government budget for travel, all expense receipts (lodging, food, transportation, and registration) must be kept and turned in to the Office of Student Affairs along with a completed travel expense voucher upon return that is signed by the treasurer of the student council.

The University requires that all receipts are originals and that they are itemized. For example, if you turn in a receipt from a restaurant, it is not adequate to have the credit card receipt, only; you must also have a receipt that shows details of the ordered food/beverage. Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Students must turn in all expense reports, receipts, and travel documents prior to the established deadlines each fiscal year. Students who submit documentation after these deadlines will not be reimbursed.

Funding offered through the Office of the Provost of the University will be managed through the Office of Student Affairs and receipts and requests should be submitted to that office.

Graduation Requirements

In addition to meeting all academic requirements for the student's program, in the spring of the year of expected graduation, the student will be required to attend an exit interview session conducted by the Student Financial Planning Office. All graduates who have received federal loans during medical school must attend this session.

Graduation applications will be sent to each student by the registrar. Completed applications should be returned to the registrar at musmregistrar@mercer.edu.

In early spring of the year of expected graduation, caps and gowns will be ordered. Students will be notified by the Registrar's Office when the electronic form is available to order graduation paraphernalia.

The bursar and the MUSM library will also clear students for graduation. Any outstanding tuition, fees, and parking tickets must be taken care of with the bursar and with the MUSM library prior to graduation.

Graduation Participation for Students with Incomplete Requirements

Students who have not completed all requirements for graduation, but can reasonably be expected to meet all requirements in accordance to their program requirements, will be allowed to participate in their class graduation ceremony. Actual awarding of the diploma will occur following successful completion of all requirements. Participation in the graduation ceremony neither implies that the degree will be awarded nor that the student has fulfilled all requirements to receive the degree.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE POLICIES

Some policies are currently undergoing revision and the most recent version on the website should be followed.

Policies of the University govern all students of the University regardless of their School or Program affiliation. All University policies as noted below can be found in the Mercer University Student Handbook at <https://provost.mercer.edu/handbooks/>.

- Accreditation
- Federal Disclosure Requirements
- Mission
- Academic Integrity
- ACCESS and Accommodation
- Anti-Hazing
- Attendance
- Bicycle, Rollerblade, and Skateboard Policy
- Cell Phones and Pagers
- Children and Guests
- Communication, Official
- Community of Respect
- Conduct, Off Campus Behavior
- Conduct, University Student Code of Conduct
- Crime, Awareness and Campus Security
- Crime, Campus Statistics
- Crime, Reporting Crimes and Emergencies
- Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Drug Free Workplace and Campus Program
- Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Firearms, Weapons, Fireworks/Explosives
- Grievance Policies and Procedures
- Health and Welfare of Students, Mental and Physical
- Health Insurance
- Honor System
- Housing without Active Enrollment
- Immunization
- Information Technology
- Intellectual Property
- International Students
- Minors Policy
- Missing Student Policy
- Motorized Vehicle
- Parking and Traffic Regulations
- Religious Observance
- Rights of Students
- Rights Pertaining to Educational Records
- Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals
- Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination
- Tobacco and Smoke Free Environment
- Voter Registration Requirements of the Higher Education Amendments
- Withdrawals, Administrative or Medical

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

Some policies may be revised after publication of this Handbook. The current version is found on the website at <https://provost.mercer.edu/handbooks>.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity at Mercer University is preserved and promoted through the Honor System. The Honor System demands of each student the responsibility for honesty and assumes the responsibility that each student will report any violations of the Honor Code. Each student is personally responsible for knowing the rights and obligations as set forth in the Honor System and expected to cooperate completely and participate fully in the Honor System.

Cheating includes using artificial intelligence (AI) tools without authorization by the faculty.

Fabrication includes attributions, quotations, citations, or other academic references to sources that do not exist. Examples include but are not limited to non-existent sources cited or generated by AI tools.

Procedures related to honor systems and academic integrity are outlined in the University Student Handbook and in the MUSM Student Handbook and can be found on the Provost's website at <https://provost.mercer.edu/handbooks>.

ACCESS and Accommodations/Technical Standards

ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Mercer University is committed to making all of its programs, services, and activities fully accessible to all students. Students requesting accommodations for a diagnosed physical, medical (chronic health condition), psychological or learning disability, and temporary injuries must first self-identify by applying for accommodations with the Office of Access and Accommodation. Student requests are reviewed on an individual case-by-case basis after the submission of application, documentation and completion of an interview in the order received. Please be aware that accommodations are not retroactive in nature.

The Office of Access and Accommodation for students also offers voter registration information and assistance.

HOW TO APPLY FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

Students requesting accommodations must complete the verification process as outlined:

Verification Process

1. Students disclose a disability by completing the online application requesting accommodations found at <http://access.mercer.edu/students/new/>.
2. Students submit documentation from a qualified provider to assist in gathering documentation you may download our disability verification form and have your treating professional complete. Healthcare providers must note specifically what accommodations are needed for both the classroom and the clinical environment.
3. Meet with the director/coordinator for MUSM (MD students) or the University (graduate students) to discuss experiences, needs, and requested accommodations.
4. Following the review of all information meet with director/coordinator to discuss approval of accommodations (accepting accommodations and acknowledging policies and procedures), how the accommodations work, and the process to implement in the learning environment and the testing environment. Meetings with the director may be in-person or virtual via Zoom.

Each semester approved students must request their approved accommodations by logging into "Accommodate" and completing a semester request for accommodation forms. Student must meet with faculty/coordinators following the delivery of the accommodation form to discuss the implementation of the accommodations.

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

CHANGE OF ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS

At any time students may request a change of accommodations by logging into their “Accommodate” account and submit a new accommodation request. Students will identify the requested accommodation and provide a description of the need related to their disability. Following the submitted request the Office of Access will review the request and documentation on file. Please know that additional discussions with the student may be requested as well as additional documentation and accommodations are not provided retroactively.

Please know that depending on the time of year requests may take longer to review due to the volume of students applying. Students should contact the Access Office as early as possible (ideally just after acceptance) to begin that process.

APPEAL OF ACCOMMODATION DECISION

Students can appeal the decision of accommodations from the Office of Access through an appeal to the Dean of Student Affairs. An appeal should be submitted in writing and include requested accommodation and description of the need as it relates to the students disability.

REPORT PHYSICAL ACCESS BARRIERS

Report any problems for physical access, such as non-working elevators, to the Office of Access and Accommodation immediately. Students who believe they have been discriminated against or denied access to a program or service because of a disability should contact the Office of Access and Accommodation. Further information on policies, procedures and documentation requirements may be obtained by contacting the Director of Access and Accommodation at 478-301-2810. MUSM students may contact the Dean of Student Affairs at 478-301-2531. Additional information including disability grievance procedures may be found at <http://access.mercer.edu>.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR THE MD PROGRAM

The MD degree is a broad undifferentiated degree attesting to general knowledge in medicine and the basic skills required for the practice of medicine. Essential abilities and characteristics required for completion of the MD degree consist of certain minimum physical and cognitive abilities and sufficient mental and emotional stability to assure that candidates for admission, promotion, and graduation are able to complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of medical training.

MUSM intends for its graduates to become competent and compassionate physicians who are capable of entering residency training (graduate medical education) and meeting all requirements for medical licensure. The avowed intention of an individual student to practice only a narrow part of clinical medicine or to pursue a non-clinical career does not alter the requirement that all medical students take and achieve competence in the full curriculum required by the faculty. Graduates of medical school must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. Since the treatment of patients is an essential part of the educational program, MUSM must act to protect the health and safety of patients.

The Admissions Committee of Mercer University School of Medicine acknowledges Section 504 of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and asserts that the ability to meet certain essential technical standards with or without reasonable accommodations must be present in the prospective candidates. Disclosure of a disability is voluntary; however, applicants who want to request accommodations during the admissions process should contact the Mercer University School of Medicine Office of Student Affairs.

All students must review the Technical Standards at the time of admission and at the beginning of the preclinical years. The Technical Standard Student Review Acknowledgement form must be completed and submitted to the Office of Student Affairs.

A candidate for the M.D. degree must have aptitude, abilities, and skills in five areas: Observation; Communication; Motor; Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative; and Behavioral/Social. Technological compensation can be made for some disabilities in certain areas but a candidate must be able to perform in an independent manner.

The full technical standards can be found in the the School of Medicine Catalog at <https://medicine.mercer.edu/student-affairs-and-services/registrars-office/>.

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

Community of Respect

Mercer University strives to be a community of respect where everyone is held in mutual high regard. Because every human being is created in the image of God, each person deserves to be treated with respect and civility. Standards of conduct are based on the values of mutual respect:

Respect for Academic Integrity

We value a community that encourages an academic atmosphere. We believe that honesty is important to learning.

Respect for Other Persons

We value the worth of every individual in the community and we respect the dignity of each member in the community. We take responsibility for the consideration of the rights of others.

Respect for the University Community

We value showing respect for the rights and property of others. We take responsibility to act to maintain University property.

Respect for Community Authority

We acknowledge and value our privileges and rights as members of the University community. We take responsibility for acting to uphold community standards.

Every student consents to the following Honor Code upon entering Mercer University:

“I pledge to hold myself to the highest standards of academic integrity while at Mercer University. I further pledge that I will hold my peers to these standards by reporting any violations I observe and that I will foster a spirit of honesty in the University’s academic environment.”

In addition, each student is personally responsible for knowing the rights and obligations as set forth in the Honor System, printed in The Lair (University Student Handbook).

Conduct, Off Campus Behavior

Mercer University and its members are subject to all local, state, and federal laws and statutes. Alleged violations of local laws and statutes, which occur on or off campus, are subject to internal University investigation, review, and action, in addition to any action by proper civil authorities. Each student is individually responsible for being informed of the law. Ignorance of federal, state, or local laws will not be accepted as an excuse for prohibited behaviors.

All students residing on or off campus, including study abroad and international students, are expected to comply with University regulations set forth in the Mercer University Student Handbook. Alleged violations of University regulations that occur on or off campus may be investigated and appropriate action taken without regard to the status of any civil or criminal proceeding.

Conduct, University Student Code of Conduct

Please see full policy in the University Handbook at <https://provost.mercer.edu/resources/handbooks/>.

The University’s Student Code of Conduct applies to all students on all campuses, and students are expected to be aware of and conduct themselves in a manner that is in compliance with the full version detailed in Mercer University Student Handbook. This code covers, but is not limited to, drugs and alcohol, sexual misconduct, destruction of property, media misuse, and violation of published University regulations. Disciplinary policies found in the University Student Handbook supersede and complement any student conduct policies and procedures used by the M.D. degree and graduate programs within the Medical School. MD program-specific regulations and policies (including professional standards) will remain enforceable by medical school committees that include the Honor Council, the Student Professionalism Committee, and the Student Appraisal and Promotion Committee.

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

The Student Code of Conduct applies to all University students in settings, which includes, but is not limited to, study abroad, international travel, online, and off-campus educational opportunities. The Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) may modify non-substantive procedures in the effort to adjudicate violations.

Student organizations will be held responsible for the behavior of their members, alumni, or guests, when their actions evolve from or are in any way related to their association with activities of the organization on or off campus. Student organizations may be adjudicated in addition to any charges levied against the individual members. Student organizations that condone or encourage behavior that violates University or state regulations may be held responsible for such violations. See Non-academic Misconduct Process for Student Organizations.

The Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) has the authority to notify the person listed as the student's emergency contact (or other appropriate person) in cases of emergency or life-threatening incidents.

The Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) may order any student or organization to cease and desist from any activity adjudged to be disruptive to the University. If the student or organization fails to cease and desist from such activity, the Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) may immediately suspend the student or organization pending a conduct hearing. Student organizations should refer to the "Non-Academic Misconduct Process for Student Organizations".

Conflict of Interest Policy

For Interactions With Industry Partners

It is the policy of the Mercer University School of Medicine that interactions with industry should be conducted so as to avoid or minimize conflicts of interest. When conflicts of interest do arise they must be addressed appropriately, as described herein.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for interactions with industry representatives for medical staff, faculty, staff, students, and trainees of the Mercer University School of Medicine.

Adherence to this policy is required for all employees of the institution, whether full/part time, and for all students. It is strongly encouraged that all faculty members, all volunteer faculty members, and all trainees affiliated with MUSM adhere to this policy regardless of clinical site or regulations at other clinical sites.

Faculty and trainees also participate in interactions with industry off campus and in scholarly publications. Many aspects of these interactions are positive and important for promoting the educational, clinical and research missions of the medical school. However, these interactions must be ethical and cannot create conflicts of interest that could endanger patient safety, data integrity, the integrity of our education and training programs, or the reputation of either the faculty member or the institution.

The full policy can be viewed in the Policy Manual housed in the Office of the Dean.

For Potential Conflicts Between Faculty and Learners

Occasionally students or faculty may be concerned that relational circumstances would impact the ability to receive or provide a fair and unbiased assessment. These conflicts of interests include but are not limited to: a familial relationship, a present or former doctor/patient relationship, a prior social relationship, etc. To address these concerns MUSM has created a conflict of interest policy for potential conflicts between faculty and learners.

Potential conflicts of interest will be evaluated by the Office of Academic Affairs in collaboration with the Office of Student Affairs, and necessary actions will be taken to resolve the concern with the best interest of the learner in mind.

The full policy can be viewed by contacting the Office of Academic Affairs.

Criminal Background Check Policy

All applicants provisionally accepted to the M.D. program at MUSM will have to undergo a criminal background check (CBC) and release the results to MUSM. The CBC is facilitated by the Association of American Medical Colleges and performed by Certiphi Screening Inc. Information about this screening can be found at the link below:

<https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/criminal-background-check-service/>

Provisionally accepted applicants are advised to review, download and save a copy of the CBC report they receive from Certiphi Screening Inc., for their own records.

Students are able to view and download their background investigation report through the Certiphi Screening website (above) for up to a year. After one year, it will change to an expired status and students can access this information by contacting the Consumer Care Department by calling 888-495-8476 or visiting <https://consumercare.certiphi.com/>.

The results of this background check will be reviewed by the Criminal Background Check (CBC) Committee at MUSM, consisting of the Associate Deans of Admissions and the Associate Deans of Student Affairs on all MUSM Campuses. The CBC Committee reserves the right to make inquiries to the provisionally accepted applicant with regard to concerns originating from observations on the applicant's CBC result.

The CBC Committee may, on the basis of any concerns that arise from review of results of the background check, make a recommendation to the Dean to rescind the offer of admission to the applicant, after discussion of these concerns with the Dean and legal counsel.

Results of background checks will be retained on file in the Office of Student Affairs until the student's graduation. Any student with a positive background check is notified that he or she should be aware of results and disclosing of them in future applications for training or licensure.

Subsequent to their full acceptance and matriculation in the M.D. program at MUSM, it becomes the **student's responsibility** to furnish their copy of the CBC result to any hospital or practice site that may require this information during the course of the medical school curriculum.

If an updated CBC is required by a hospital or practice site as part of its consideration of an application from a MUSM student to engage in curricular experiences in that or those sites, it will be the student's responsibility to authorize, procure, and release the results to the hospital or practice site that requests this information in a timely manner. The costs of these background checks shall be the student's responsibility.

MUSM reserves the right to obtain additional Criminal Background Checks on enrolled students, in addition to the CBC procured at the time the applicant was first accepted into the M.D. program. Students that have positive background checks with new discoveries during their enrollment in medical school will be notified of the findings, and these findings may need discussion with the Dean/Associate Dean of Student Affairs on the corresponding campus, and may be referred to the Student Professionalism Committee.

Dress Code and Identification Badges

SCOPE

This policy applies to all faculty, staff, and students in the School of Medicine.

POLICY

As a training facility for healthcare professionals and graduate students, the School of Medicine adheres to a dress code policy that is appropriate for working conditions (classroom, laboratory, clinical settings, and standardized patient encounters) and that reflects professionalism in dealing with faculty, staff, patients, and the public. For this reason, all students, staff, and faculty must adhere to the guidelines stated in this policy. Reasonable accommodations will be made for religious beliefs related to attire whenever possible.

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

DEFINITIONS

- **Business Casual:** Dress pants or skirt/dress (not shorter than 1 inch above the knee), dress shirt (no sleeveless shirts), tie with tie clip (ties are optional but may be required in many clinical settings), belt (if the shirt is tucked in and pants have belt loops), dress shoes (no open toes or sandals allowed in the clinical setting), and dress socks or hosiery (required in all clinical settings). Business casual should be worn in all clinical settings (including medical practice and any time one is representing the School like tours, admissions interviews, or ambassador activities).
- **Casual:** Casual pants like cargo pants, jeans, or scrub pants (leggings and yoga pants are sports attire) or skirts/dresses (no shorter than 1 inch above the knee), casual shirt like a polo, t-shirt, or scrub top (no sleeveless shirts), and casual shoes (open toes and sandals allowed but may not be permitted in certain situations like the anatomy lab).
- **Sport:** Sport pants like sweat pants, shorts, or exercise pants; casual shirts like t-shirts (no sleeveless shirts); and casual shoes. Sports attire can be worn when students are studying, taking tests, or engaging in activities where this style would be appropriate. This attire should never be worn to class or clinic. Leggings and yoga pants are not considered pants and should only be worn in settings where sports attire is allowed and only with a shirt that is long enough to cover the leggings/yoga pants in a modest fashion.

PROCEDURE

General:

- All articles of clothing must be clean and in satisfactory condition without rips and tears.
- Clothing should not be offensive, distracting, or hazardous.
- Dressing more formally than the guidelines is allowed.
- Many students will have patient care responsibilities (simulated or live) and must adhere to the clinical guidelines in some situations, beginning with matriculation to School.
- In the clinical setting, the attire should be business casual.
- In a clinical setting, hair should be kept clean and neatly styled. Facial hair shall be neat, clean, and appropriately trimmed. Hair color should be of a natural human shade. Longer hair should always be tied back or put up.
- In a clinical setting, nails should be trimmed, neat, clean, and filed not to be sharp.
- In a clinical setting, jewelry is an accessory and, as such, should not be an interference, distraction, or safety hazard. Jewelry may not be worn on any visibly pierced body part except ears. Earrings shall be limited to small studs.
- In a clinical setting, tattoos and/or body art must not be visible or covered to the extent possible while involved in patient care activities.
- Hospital scrubs must not be worn outside of the hospital for any reason.
- In clinical and laboratory settings, there may be additional regulations that must be followed.
- The attire should be casual in the classroom setting (small group, large group, lectures).
- Nothing in these guidelines is intended to limit a school of medicine community member's gender expression.
- A Mercer University Photo ID is to be worn at all times while at the medical school or in any clinical setting. Identification badges should be worn in accordance with the policies of the medical institution sponsoring rotations which may require additional badges to be worn.

Classroom:

- The expected dress for the students in the classroom (including small groups, large groups, lectures, and simulation lab) is casual dress. Personal scrubs are allowed, but hospital scrubs should not be worn outside the hospital.

Laboratory:

- The expected dress for faculty, staff, and students in the laboratory is casual dress with closed shoes. Personal scrubs are allowed, but hospital scrubs should not be worn outside the hospital. Additional protective gear and other restrictions are required in the laboratory setting.

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

Clinical Situations (including clinical skills and standardized patient encounters):

- The expected dress for the students in the clinical setting is business casual. Scrubs and tennis shoes in a clinical setting are only allowed by the attending and in certain situations such as the operating or delivery room.

IDENTIFICATION

All School of Medicine Students, faculty, and staff are required to have Mercer University Identification Cards (Bearcards). Cards will be issued as a part of orientation and may be a physical card or electronic (on phone). Students will need a physical ID card for most clinical settings. ID badges issued by clinical sites must be worn at all times on the Macon, Savannah, Columbus, and Valdosta clinical campuses and when participating in learning activities at other locations. The ID badge must be issued by the clinical campus at which the activity is taking place (i.e., a Navicent badge is not acceptable at MUMC).

Repeated violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages by students is prohibited on campus and at University sponsored events. Public intoxication, consumption, or display of alcoholic liquors, wines, or beer on campus is prohibited. Use or possession of illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia is also prohibited.

Mercer University shares the widespread national concern with the serious threat to health, safety, and welfare posed by the unlawful use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol, especially in the workplace and on college campuses. Excessive use of alcohol and illegal drugs can cause serious health problems, and it can negatively affect the success of students in the educational and social areas of university life. For this reason, the University is adamantly opposed to alcohol and drug abuse, and the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of drugs by members of the University community. Mercer University strictly prohibits such activities. The University conducts educational programs designed to lead its students into an understanding of the problems associated with drug and alcohol abuse and to enable them to make responsible choices on personal and social levels.

In addition to abiding by the regulations prescribed by the Mercer University Student Handbook, students must abide by all local, state, and federal laws pertaining to drug and alcohol use. Violations of such laws, whether they occur on or off campus, are subject to internal University investigation, review, and action and should be reported to the Office of Student Affairs on the campus where the student resides. For more information about Mercer University's policy concerning drugs and alcohol, refer to the section titled "Drug-Free Workplace and Campus Program" in the University handbook at <http://provost.mercer.edu/handbooks/>.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

In the event of an emergency contact Mercer Police 478-301-2911, the local police 911, or the regional campus coordinator for a campus not located on the Macon or Atlanta campuses. All Mercer students are encouraged to register for emergency text messages at http://it.mercer.edu/student/Telecommunications/emergency_alert_registration.htm

Building Evacuation Instructions: When information about a threat is received in a building or facility, evacuation may be ordered by Mercer Police or local emergency response personnel.

1. When a fire alarm is activated evacuation is mandatory.
2. Do not use elevators in an evacuation.
3. Close doors as you exit.
4. All individuals should move away from the building and/or facility in danger.

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

Active Shooter Instructions: How to respond (options) if an active shooter is in your vicinity.

1. **Run:** if there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises.
2. **Hide:** if evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you.
3. **Fight:** as a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the shooter.

Lockdown (Violent Acts): Should the University experience a violent act (such as an active shooter), a lockdown of the University may be ordered by Mercer Police or the local emergency response personnel. In such a situation you should:

1. Immediately go to the closest enclosed area. If possible, choose a room without windows that has a locking door.
2. Lock and/or blockade the doors.
3. Turn out lights and draw blinds.
4. Silence your cell phone, remain quiet, and stay out of sight.
5. Wait for an “All Clear” signal or notice from Mercer Police and/or local emergency response personnel.
6. If outside during the notification, consider leaving the campus if possible.

Stay in Place (Severe Weather):

1. If possible, move to designated severe weather areas of the building.
2. Do not use elevators.
3. Avoid glass doors and windows.
4. Wait for an “all clear” signal or notice from Mercer Police and/or local emergency response personnel.

Firearms, Weapons, Fireworks/Explosives

Firearms/weapons and fireworks/explosives are not allowed on Mercer University campus or regional academic center (RAC) facilities. Firearms are only allowed when required for students who are in uniform (police, law enforcement officers, etc.) in an official duty status.

Fundraising Policy

Fundraising is defined as the collection of money through donations, sales, and/or event programming for the purposes of charitable donation or organizational budget enhancement.

All fundraising activities must be pre-approved by the Office of Student Affairs with the completion of a Request to Fundraise Form.

The purpose for which the funds will be raised must be consistent with the purpose of the recognized student organization and the Code of Student Conduct and other applicable policies of Mercer University. Further, the fundraising activity must not violate legal, tax, or corporate restraints upon the University.

No Mercer mark may be used without the prior, written authorization of Mercer University. All products bearing Mercer marks and distributed for resale or other promotional purposes are subject to the licensing policies of the University.

At no time is a seal of the University to be used for fundraising purposes.

Please consult the [Mercer University Style Guide](#) to learn more or contact MUSM’s [Marketing and Communications department](#) for further information on MUSM graphic standards.

Grievance Policies & Procedures

ACADEMIC

Students have the right to bring grievances against a faculty member or an administrator and to appeal decisions concerning academic matters. A “grievance” is typically a complaint relating to some allegedly improper action or behavior. An “appeal” is typically a request for review of a routine judgment or decision. Such matters may include, but are not limited to failure to abide by requirements described in the course syllabus, arbitrary awarding of grades, discrimination based on race, color, national origin, disability, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, age, or religion (except in limited circumstances where religious preference is both permitted by law and deemed appropriate as a matter of University policy). The full policy is found in the University Student Handbook.

NONACADEMIC

Mercer University recognizes the importance of providing an efficient procedure for a timely and fair resolution of a nonacademic grievance. Students are encouraged to use the process to resolve allegations concerning a University employee, administrative policies or procedures, or a university program. The dean of students or student affairs designee on each campus serves as a resource for students seeking assistance with grievance procedures.

Informal Resolution Procedure: Many grievances can get resolved via informal personal meetings, phone calls, or e-mails directly with the employee or office responsible for the grievance. Whenever possible, students are encouraged to exercise these avenues of communication first. However, should these avenues not rectify the grievance, or the student wishes to bypass the informal resolution process, then the formal grievance process should be implemented.

Formal Resolution Procedure: If a student wishes to file a formal grievance that is nonacademic in nature and does not already have a stated appeal or grievance process as prescribed by law or the institution, this procedure should be followed:

1. The student should submit the grievance in writing to the Senior Associate Dean of the campus on the Macon, Savannah, Columbus, or Valdosta campus corresponding to the primary location of the University employee or faculty member responsible for the action or event that forms the basis of the grievance. This statement should contain a brief statement of the grievance and the remedies sought, and be clearly labeled “Formal Grievance” for tracking purposes. A copy of the statement must also be presented to the Human Resources designee of MUSM and the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs. The grievance should be submitted to the Senior Associate Dean of the campus within ten (10) days of the action or event that forms the basis of the grievance.
2. The Senior Associate Dean of the campus will meet with the respondent to discuss the grievance within ten (10) days of receipt of the written grievance. The Senior Associate Dean of the campus will reply in writing to the student with the results of the discussion and plans for further action, if any, within ten (10) days of the meeting. A copy of this reply will be provided to the Human Resources designee of MUSM and the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs.
3. If the student is not satisfied with the results from the Senior Associate Dean of the campus and wants the grievance to be considered further, the student will have an opportunity for appeal as follows:
 - a. In the case of grievances concerning employees, policies, procedures, or programs of a nonacademic nature within School of Medicine, the student may appeal to the Dean of the school and request a meeting in order to seek a resolution. This appeal must begin within ten (10) days after the Senior Associate Dean of the campus has completed consideration of the grievance and responded in writing to the student. A written reply from the Dean indicating the results of the meeting and including further action, if any, to be taken will be sent to the student within ten (10) days after consideration of the grievance. A copy of the appeal and the response from the Dean must be provided to the Human Resources designee of MUSM and the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs.

If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Dean, the student may appeal in writing to the Provost and request a meeting. The appeal must begin within ten (10) days of the date the Dean has completed consideration of the grievance and responded in writing to the student. A written reply by the Provost indicating the results of the meeting and including further action, if any, to be taken will be sent to the student within ten (10) days after consideration of the grievance. The decision of the Provost will be the final University decision on the grievance.

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A copy of the appeal to the Provost and the Provost response will be copied to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President for Student Affairs as well as the Human Resources designee of MUSM and the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs.

Further avenues for appeal may be available as noted in the University Student Handbook.

- b. In the case of grievances concerning employees, policies, procedures, or programs of a nonacademic nature outside of the administrative organization of the School of Medicine, the student may appeal to the Vice President with responsibility for the employee's unit and request a meeting in order to seek a resolution. This appeal must begin within ten (10) days after the employee's supervisor has completed consideration of the grievance and responded in writing to the student. A written reply from the Vice President indicating the results of the meeting including further action, if any, to be taken will be sent to the student within ten (10) days after consideration of the grievance. The decision of the Vice President with responsibility for the employee's unit will be the final University decision on the grievance. A copy of the grievance and their response will be submitted to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Vice President for Student Affairs as well as the Human Resources designee of MUSM and the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs.

OTHER GRIEVANCES

A number of grievance policies/procedures that are prescribed by law, accrediting body, or organization are available:

- Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy/Title IX
- Disability Policy and Grievance Procedure <http://studentaffairs.mercer.edu/disabilityservices>
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Sexual Misconduct or Relationship Violence

Note: For all complaints that relate to the area of sexual harassment, the School of Medicine will adhere to the University Policy Concerning Sexual Harassment.

VARIATIONS

Steps outlined above may be modified on a case-by-case basis in the resolution of other kinds of complaints or harassment/abuse, as follows:

1. A complaint in which a complainant asks not to be identified until a later date (e.g. until the end of a course) will generally be honored, and the complaint will be held with no action taken until the time requested by the complainant (but in no case longer than 180 days following the alleged incident(s)). If the complainant withdraws the complaint before the designated date, no action will be taken and no records concerning the incident(s) will be kept.
2. A complainant may identify herself/himself to the Senior Associate Dean of the campus but request to remain unidentified to the person against whom the complaint is made. In such cases, the Senior Associate Dean of the campus may advise the accused that a complaint has been made against him/her without identifying the complainant. Further inquiry, investigation or action will normally be curtailed until the complainant is willing to be identified.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Commonly called the "HIPAA Law", this law is a regulatory requirement for healthcare organizations and other entities that hold medical information. The law is designed to protect patient's rights and to create the standardization of healthcare information. The law regarding healthcare payment, treatment, or healthcare operations is outlined as the Rules for Administrative Simplification.

The law became effective in 1996, but the implementation of the law began in 2002. The regulations of the HIPAA Law cover the following areas of healthcare:

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- Privacy of Health Related Information
- Standardization of Electronic Billing Transactions and Code Sets Standardization of Healthcare Identifiers
- Plan Employer (Plan Sponsor) Provider Patient
- Security of Healthcare Facilities and Healthcare Information
- Physical
- Electronic

HIPAA is a regulatory requirement, and Mercer University mandates that all health activities and health (medical) information be in compliance. All employees, staff, faculty, and **students who use, hold or come in contact with medical information need to be trained in the HIPAA Law and the Mercer HIPAA Policies and Procedures prior to contact with patients or patient information.** MUSM administration coordinates this effort for the School of Medicine.

Any questions about HIPAA or Mercer's Policies and Procedures need to be directed to the Mercer HIPAA Privacy Officer, Jim Calhoun (calhoun_j@mercer.edu; 478-301-2300).

Holidays, School of Medicine

ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-2025

UNIVERSITY HOLIDAYS

- **Labor Day** | September 2, 2024
- **Thanksgiving*** | November 28-29, 2024
- **Christmas Break**** | December 24, 2024 - January 1, 2025
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** | January 20, 2025
- **Good Friday***** | April 18, 2025
- **Memorial Day** | May 26, 2025
- **Independence Day** | July 4, 2025

MD STUDENT PROGRAM HOLIDAYS

- **Labor Day** | September 2, 2024
- **Thanksgiving*** | November 28, 2024 - December 1, 2024
- **Winter Break**** | December 14, 2024 - January 5, 2025
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** | January 20, 2025
- **Good Friday/Easter***** | April 18 - 20, 2025
- **Memorial Day** | May 26, 2025
- **Independence Day** | July 4, 2025

Students are excused from all scheduled activities during MUSM holidays. The holiday period is defined as the period beginning at 6:00 PM the day before the MUSM holiday and ending at 6:00 AM on the morning following the holiday.

**The Thanksgiving holiday will begin at 6:00 PM on the day before the MUSM holiday and will end at 6:00 AM on the Monday morning following the holiday.*

***Year IV students are required to participate in academic activities during Christmas/Winter Holiday Break according to the approved schedule that the student has selected but will not be expected to report to rotations on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.*

****The Good Friday holiday will begin at 6:00 PM on the day before the MUSM holiday and will end at 6:00 AM on the Monday morning following the holiday.*

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

Honor Codes, Mercer University School of Medicine

See *Appendix A for an Unprofessional Behavior Report*.

Graduate Students and Doctor of Medicine Students must abide by the University Honor Pledge:

I pledge myself to neither give nor receive aid during tests or for any individual assignments or papers, nor to use any information other than that allowed by the instructor. I further pledge that I will not allow to go unreported to the proper persons any violation of the Honor System and that I will give true and complete information before the Honor Committee.

All Graduate Students must adhere to the Graduate Student Honor System policies and all Doctor of Medicine Students must adhere to the Medical Student Honor System Policies.

GRADUATE STUDENT HONOR SYSTEM

This document describes policies and procedures for dealing with infractions of the Honor Code by students matriculated in **graduate programs** under the jurisdiction of the Graduate Council of Mercer University.

Definition of the Graduate Honor System

The Graduate Honor System is a code established, interpreted, and administered by the Graduate Council of Mercer University. It is based on the Undergraduate Honor System and draws on the traditions of integrity and academic freedom which are embodied by that system. Like that system, the aim of the Graduate Honor System is to promote complete freedom within the academic community — a freedom which is based on a trust between students and faculty.

At Mercer University, the Honor System is subscribed to by everyone enrolling in any class, whether during the regular academic year, the summer term, or evening classes. The faculty subscribes to and supports fully the Honor System. The Honor System places responsibility for honesty where it belongs and ultimately must rest, on the individual. The individual is responsible for reporting any academic dishonesty he or she may observe as well as being responsible for his or her own honesty. By placing the responsibility on the individual, each student becomes the guardian of the Honor System.

As a pledge to uphold this responsibility, each student assumes the Honor Pledge.

Graduate Honor Panel

Policies and procedures regarding graduate student infractions of the Honor Code are established by the Graduate Council of Mercer University. To this purpose, the Graduate Council shall establish and maintain a panel of members of the Graduate Faculty who are available to adjudicate cases of infractions reported to the Council. The members of this Panel may be called upon to serve as an Honors Committee to judge violations of the Honor Code and to recommend penalties for those found guilty of infractions.

Each college or school which offers graduate programs falling under the jurisdiction of the Graduate Council shall select three members of its Graduate Faculty to serve on the Honor Panel. The Honor Panel members shall serve for staggered terms so as to provide for continuity of experience.

Definitions of Violations

A violation of the Honor Code involves: (1) cheating, (2) plagiarism, (3) academic negligence, or (4) other acts of dishonesty in the area of academics and research. Perjury or willful omission of evidence during a committee hearing is also a violation.

1. **Cheating** is taking credit for work which has been done by another person. The following are some of the more common instances of cheating:
 - a. using notes, textbooks, or reference materials on a test, daily quiz, or examination unless the use of such materials is specifically permitted by the professor;
 - b. copying ideas or facts from another's papers during a test situation in or out of class;

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- c. giving or receiving facts or ideas by any means whatsoever during a test situation in or out of class;
 - d. obtaining test questions which a teacher does not release for further reference;
 - e. obtaining or giving specific information which will be on a test before the test is administered
2. **Plagiarism** is defined as the use of ideas, facts, phrases, or additional material such as maps and charts from any source without giving proper credit for such material. Any material in a paper or report which is not acknowledged is understood to be the original work of the author.
 3. **Academic negligence** is also a violation of the Honor Code. It is unacceptable conduct of a student during a testing situation. (This includes in-class tests, take-home tests, outside assignments, papers, homework, lab reports, etc.) It may include the student's failure to understand the instructor's specific instructions.
 4. **Perjury** is the falsification of testimony or other evidence presented to the Council. Willfully omitting evidence may also result in a conviction.

Procedure for Reporting Honor Code Violations

Each student is responsible for reporting any and all infractions of the Honor Code. This responsibility is accepted when he or she enrolls in Mercer University and is expected of him or her as a vital participant in the Mercer University Honor System. The system is so dependent upon this student responsibility that the shirking of this responsibility is considered a serious violation of the Honor Code. Faculty as well as students are responsible for reporting any and all infractions of the Honor Code which may come to their attention. The procedure for reporting a violation is:

1. If a student or member of the faculty knows or hears of an act of dishonesty, he or she is responsible for reporting the incident to the Dean of the academic unit. The Dean will determine whether the incident should be managed within the academic unit or forwarded to the Graduate Council. If the decision is to forward to the Council, then such notification shall be immediately made to the Chairperson of the Graduate Council.
2. The Graduate Council will select two members of the Honors Panel for an Honor Committee and request that the Dean name the remainder of the Committee by: (1) selecting two members of the Graduate Honor Panel, and (2) naming one additional member of the Graduate Faculty. The Dean will appoint one member of this group as chairperson.
3. The Chairperson of the Honors Committee will notify the accused student(s) and will serve as an investigator to determine the facts of the case. The Honors Committee will conduct the case according to the procedures described in the Mercer University Student Handbook.

Appeal Procedures

1. In the event of a conviction, the accused may request the Provost to review a finding of guilt and/or the propriety of the penalty. The request must be made in writing within four school days and should enumerate the grounds on which the appeal is based.
2. The Provost will review the request for an appeal to determine whether there are sufficient grounds to warrant reconsideration.
3. If the Provost determines that reconsideration of the conviction or penalty is appropriate, he or she should consider questioning or hearing:
 - a. the accused
 - b. any witness that the accused or the Provost wishes to question
 - c. the faculty member in whose class the violation is alleged to have occurred
 - d. any written evidence used in the Committee hearing
 - e. any records, notes or recordings kept by the Committee.
4. If after reconsideration the Provost believes that there are adequate grounds for changing the decision of the Committee, he or she may:
 - a. reverse the conviction or lower the penalty or
 - b. if additional evidence was presented after the original Honor Committee decision, refer the matter back to the Committee for its further deliberation.

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5. If the Provost determines that reconsideration of the conviction or penalty is not appropriate, the accused may appeal the finding of guilt and/or the propriety of the penalty to the President. The decision of the President shall be final.

MEDICAL STUDENT HONOR SYSTEM

Introduction

Monitoring of student honor and professional conduct comes under the aegis of both students and faculty. Alleged violations of the Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct will primarily be dealt with by the Honor Council (and occasionally, also by the University Hearing Board if violating University Student Code of Conduct). When an allegation is reported to either the chair of the Honor Council, the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs or the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs a meeting of the Deans of Student Affairs and of Academic Affairs, often in conjunction with the Director of Ethics Education, is held. Together they will decide whether the student's case should be heard by the Student Honor Council or the Student Professionalism Committee.

Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct (SCHPC)

1. I realize that upon entering medical school, I am beginning my career as a physician and I do so believing that I have sufficient strength of character to enable me to become a licensed, practicing physician of the highest caliber.
2. The health and lives of the persons committed to my charge in the future could depend on my knowledge and skills. Thus, I will strive to develop that knowledge and skill to the best of my ability.
3. I will, in behavior and speech, show respect for all patients, their families, the staff, and fellow students, regardless of their age, gender, race, national origin, religion, socio-economic status, state of health or handicap, sexual orientation, personal habits and cleanliness. I will aspire to interact with patients, their families, and visitors in a courteous and considerate manner.
4. I am committed to the concept that exemplary moral character and a strong sense of personal integrity are an integral part of professional practice. I will endeavor to maintain the highest standards of honor and ethical behavior. I understand that neither personal nor academic dishonesty can be condoned, therefore I pledge myself neither to give nor to receive aid during an individually assigned task or examination, nor to use any information other than that allowed by the faculty. I further pledge that I will endeavor never to participate in any other form of academic or clinical dishonesty nor allow to go unchecked any violation of the Code of Honor. I understand that failure to report an observed violation is a violation on my own part. I recognize that my responsibility to support the Code of Honor parallels the responsibility of the individual physician to maintain the high ethical standards of his profession by persistent efforts to eliminate unethical practices.
5. I recognize the confidentiality of medical records and the fact that these records are official and legal. Under no circumstances will I knowingly record false information or statistics.
6. I will respect the integrity of the patients with whom I deal and the confidential nature of their communications. I will not discuss cases except under appropriate professional or academic circumstances.
7. I recognize that the best physicians are those who communicate well with their patients and are thus able to obtain their confidence and trust. I will therefore maintain standards of ethical and decorous behavior. Since attire is another form of communication between the physician and others, I will maintain a professional appearance, hygiene, and demeanor with attire that is appropriate to the patient care setting.
8. I will not participate in patient care under circumstances in which I am under the influence of any substance or other conditions that impair my ability to function. I will come to the aid of a colleague whom I recognize as impaired (substance abuse or emotional disability) and, if necessary, take an active role in preventing the impaired student from being involved in patient care.
9. I will clearly identify my role as a medical student to each patient. I will not undertake any clinical procedure unless I have been judged competent or am supervised by a qualified instructor. I will not attempt to advise, prescribe, or prognosticate for the patient without appropriate consultation. I will accept the responsibility to question plans or directives for patient care when, after careful consideration, I believe such plans not to be in the best interest of the patient.

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10. I recognize that I am an important member of the health care team and I will abide by the rules and regulations and Code of Honor in all settings in which I train or work. When given responsibility for some portion of the total care of a patient, I will assume this obligation and follow it through to the full extent of my abilities. If for some reason I am unable to fulfill my obligation, I will promptly notify the physician in charge of the patient and secure a colleague who can and will assume the care of the patient. I will be punctual, reliable, conscientious, and truthful in fulfilling clinical responsibilities, never purposely falsifying information, or misrepresenting a situation.

It is further considered an infraction of the Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct to share test items for the NBME Shelf Exams and USMLE Step Exams with students or proprietary organizations.

Mechanism for Handling Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct (SCHPC) Violations

1. If a student is concerned about a fellow student's behavior as outlined in the SCHPC he/she may:
 - a. counsel with the student directly; or
 - b. report the violation to the Honor Council chair; or
 - c. discuss the matter with the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs to help decide what is the appropriate course of action to take; or
 - d. report the violation to the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs by completing an Unprofessional Behavior Report.
2. If an administrator, staff member, or faculty member is concerned about a student's behavior as outlined in the Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct he/she should counsel with the student directly or bring the matter to the attention of the Dean of Student Affairs or the Dean of Academic Affairs. The Dean of Student Affairs and the Dean of Academic Affairs in consultation with the Director of Ethics Education will attempt to resolve the situation. If resolution does not occur then the administrator, staff member or faculty member that initiated the consultation will be directed to complete an Unprofessional Behavior Report. Filing of an Unprofessional Behavior Report will cause a determination of whether the incident is further investigated by the Student Honor Council or the Student Professionalism Committee (SPC).
3. If, in any case, the Honor Council recommendation is unacceptable to the student in the case, he/she may appeal to the Student Professionalism Committee (SPC).

Summary

Decisions to admit or retain a student will be made on the basis of her/his non-academic and academic record. In order to be considered for admission or to be retained, a student must demonstrate the personal traits of honesty, integrity and regard for others. When a violation of the Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct is observed, the student or faculty observer should make an attempt to resolve the matter through direct confrontation with the student. If violations continue or an individual situation warrants, the violation will be reported to the Honor Council, to the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs, or to the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and an Unprofessional Behavior Report may be filed. Unprofessional Behavior Reports should be submitted to the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

Based on decisions of the MUSM Honor Council or the Student Professionalism Committee conveyed to the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee, and subsequent recommendation from that committee to the school's Dean, any academic or non-academic offense which violates the Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct may become part of the student's record and may be grounds for dismissal.

The Student Honor Council

1. Composition, Officers, and Their Duties

- a. The Honor Council shall be composed of two elected representatives from each campus and from each of the four medical school classes and the Deans of Student Affairs who shall serve in an advisory capacity without vote. The members of the Honor Council shall be elected annually by each class at the time of election of class officers and shall be chosen in the following manner: each freshman class shall elect a member that will serve a two-year term and each junior class shall elect a member that will a two-year term. The Council shall function from the beginning to the end of the academic year for which it is elected. Should any member be required to drop out of the Council for academic or personal reasons, the class which he/she has represented should elect a replacement as soon as possible.

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- b. One of the two-year representatives elected by the junior class shall serve as the Chair of the Council during his/her senior year and shall be chosen by the majority vote of the Council at the first meeting of the year. One of the two-year representatives elected by the junior class shall serve as the Vice-Chair during his/her senior year and shall be chosen by the majority vote of the Council at the first meeting of the year. One of the two-year representatives elected by the freshman class shall serve as the recorder of the Council during his/her sophomore year and shall be chosen by the majority vote of the Council at the first meeting of the year. Officers will thereby have had the experience of having sat on the Council for one year before taking on the duties of their representative offices.
 - c. When electing their Honor Council representatives, each class should choose students in good academic standing who demonstrate a high degree of responsibility, sound moral character, and mature judgment. Consideration should also be given to the availability of the members to serve.
 - d. The duties of the Chair of the Council shall be:
 - i. To meet with the Dean of Student Affairs, whenever there is a case of unprofessional behavior referred to the council by the DAA, or a report from a fellow student, to determine a course of action.
 - ii. To meet with the other members of the Council as early in the school year as possible and explain in detail the function of the Council and the duties of its members.
 - iii. To meet with the officers of the freshman class before their first examination and explain the Honor System.
 - iv. To arrange a time and place for meetings to be held, and to notify the other members of the Council of such meetings.
 - v. To take charge of and conduct all meetings in a timely manner with respect for individual rights and in compliance with procedures outlined in the Student Handbook.
 - vi. To determine that adequate minutes of the meetings are recorded and that all minutes, all correspondence, and any formal statements received by the Council are kept in proper order.
 - vii. To be responsible for communications between the Honor Council and the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee or the Administration of the School of Medicine, and to report to the other members of the Council on resulting matters of importance. Such communications shall include a year-end written report to the Dean to summarize the actions of the Honor Council during the school year without student names.
 - e. The Vice-Chair of the Council shall assume all of the duties of the Chair in his /her absence or the recorder in his/her absence.
 - f. The duties of the Recorder of the Council shall be:
 - i. To take and formally record adequate minutes of every meeting.
 - ii. To take charge of and record the receipt of all correspondence, any written statements, and all other official papers received by the Council.
 - iii. To file the minutes of the Council meetings and the official papers and documents in proper order in a special Honor Council file in the office of the Dean of Student Affairs.
 - iv. To code, using the special coding system, all minutes, papers and documents kept in the Honor Council files to insure anonymity of records.
 - g. When a representative of the Medical School Faculty is asked to take part in a meeting of the Council, he/she shall not be required to perform any special function, but rather shall be considered to be an advisor only.
2. *Functions of the Council*
- a. The Honor Council shall consider all cases of alleged violations of the Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct reported to it.
 - b. Meetings shall be called by the Chair of the Honor Council when an infraction of the Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct is reported. The Chair may also call meetings at any other time for a special purpose. The meeting place shall be appropriate rooms within the School of Medicine or affiliate hospital buildings.
 - c. A quorum shall consist of three of the Council's elected members.

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- d. The Council shall have the right to call students before it for the purpose of hearing testimony concerning the cases which are reported or referred to it. Students called before the Council are to be notified, in writing, of the meeting and of the nature of the accusation by a member of the Council no less than three school days prior to the meeting time. They shall be called individually and questioned in such a way as to preserve as nearly as possible the anonymity of all persons involved.
- e. Reasonably accurate and complete minutes of each meeting are to be recorded and kept in the Honor Council files. Written statements made by a person bringing a charge against a student should also be properly filed. All such documents should be codified to preserve the anonymity of the individual persons.
- f. The official and confidential file of the Honor Council shall be kept in a file in the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs. The officers of the Honor Council and the Dean of Students are the only persons having direct access to this file.

3. *Order and Nature of Proceedings*

- a. Having been apprised of a situation requiring the attention of the Honor Council, the Chair shall arrange to have the student or students involved and all others who might contribute information concerning the situation notified, in writing, as to the time and place their presence is requested at a Council meeting. This notification should occur within ten school days after the alleged violation has been reported to the Chair.
- b. When the Council has assembled, the Chair shall inform the other members of the nature of the meeting and shall read any written statement or communications received concerning the situation. The Council may then discuss the matter to determine the best approach for its resolution.
- c. Witnesses shall be called before the Council individually and with reasonable precautions for privacy. It shall be determined that each individual appearing before the Council is familiar with the rules of the Honor System.
- d. Questioning of any persons by the Council members shall be conducted in a dignified manner showing respect for the person being questioned.
- e. The accused person or persons shall be advised, in writing, of the nature of the accusation which has been brought before the Council and shall receive copies of all written documents relative to the case prior to the meeting. Should the accused person or persons desire they may write a formal statement regarding the circumstances of the event in question, describing their part in it.
- f. Legal counsel is permitted at the hearings as an observer only.
- g. If at any point before or during the proceedings of the Council it becomes evident to the Chair that the matter in question should be referred to the Student Professionalism Committee or the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee, the Chair should seek counsel from the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs who shall make the referral.
- h. When all evidence has been submitted and all testimony heard, the Council shall consider the matter thoroughly and formulate and record its findings and recommendations for disposition of the case.

3. *Action of the Council*

- a. In every instance the Council shall give written notification to the accused person or persons of its findings concerning the accusations which had been placed before it. All other parties involved in the case will be similarly notified of the Council's final disposition.
- b. The Council may take any of the following proposed dispositions in regard to the cases presented to it.
 - i. Find that the facts do not support the accusations and terminate its concern in the matter.
 - ii. Suspend its judgment on the matter because of lack of sufficient or convincing evidence. The Council may choose to notify the accused that his/her actions or behavior are not sufficiently above reproach and may recommend that he/she conduct himself/herself in a more acceptable and professional manner.
 - iii. Recommend action ranging from an official warning to dismissal, and,
 - 1. Find the accused in violation of the Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct and because of the nature of the violation dispose of the case at Council level. The Council may make recommendations to the individual regarding future conduct with respect to the Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct. The accused retains the right of appeal to the Student Professionalism Committee if he/she does not agree with the findings of the Honor Council. Or

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2. When warranted by the seriousness of the case or the number of different cases against a single individual, the Council shall present its findings on the matter, along with any recommendation for disposition it desires to make, to the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee for evaluation and appropriate action. This shall be done promptly and in a formal manner and should include any written evidence or statements, which are available. If the Council refers a case to the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee, the committee shall then be given access, automatically, to all files which the Council may have on the accused, including those concerning past violations.

4. *Procedure for Amending and Revising the Honor System*

- a. Amendments to or revision of the Honor System may be recommended by the Honor Council to the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee. If the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee approve the modification(s), it will forward the recommendation to the Executive Council for final approval.

Student Professionalism Committee

1. The faculty endorse the concept that it is desirable and feasible to discern and assess any unprofessional behavior on the part of students throughout all four years of the curriculum. It is the proper role of the faculty to assess and to attest to the professionalism and other non-cognitive qualities necessary to function as a competent physician prior to the awarding of the MD degree.
2. Students shall be evaluated by faculty for the presence of basic professional traits and behaviors as part of the written evaluation for each nodal point of the curriculum (e.g., at the end of each block of the pre-clinical program, after each clerkship in the junior year, and all required courses). In addition, a faculty member may report an incident of unprofessional behavior (examples include but in no way are limited to lying to a faculty member or cheating on an assignment) to the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs by completing an Unprofessional Behavior Report at any time.
 - a. Upon receipt of an Unprofessional Behavior Report describing a problematic behavior, the AAD will determine the severity of the unprofessional behavior in consultation with the Dean of Student Affairs and the Director of Ethics Education. For acts of less severity a course of action to remediate the issue may be determined. For acts related more directly to student issues there may be referral to the Student Honor Council. Acts found to be of an egregious nature, a referral will be made to the Student Professional Committee (SPC). If the incident is assigned to the SPC then appropriate assessment of the incident(s) will be conducted. Upon completion of the assessment, the SPC may recommend repeating the year or curricular component, dismissal from medical school or other significant performance recommendations that may affect a student's progress. Recommendations are made from the SPC to the SAPC.
 - b. If the SPC's assessment of the incident(s) is that it warrants less than dismissal of the student, it will devise a remediation and/or monitoring program, and include this as a recommendation to the SAPC. Upon completion of the remediation or monitoring period, a written report documenting the remediation experience and/or the monitored behavior shall be submitted to the AAD's office. When the SAPC is notified of a student who has failed to successfully complete a remediation/monitoring program, it will review the relevant SPC records and minutes, interview the student, and make a recommendation to the dean which may include dismissal.
 - c. Recommendations for dismissal are made to the SAPC (Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee). The SPC shall inform the SAPC when a student fails to successfully complete a remediation and/or monitoring program.
3. The composition of the SPC shall be determined by the Dean. The SPC will be comprised of the Deans of Academic Affairs; the Director of Ethics Education; the Deans of Student Affairs, ex officio; and three at large faculty members appointed by the Dean representing each of the three campuses which shall be appointed at the time of convening the meeting. The SPC will be chaired by the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. The SPC shall document all its activities appropriately.
4. Quorum will be determined by simple majority of the voting members present.
5. Nothing in this recommendation shall be construed as interfering with or replacing the function of the Student Honor Council.

Information Technology and Freedom of Expression Policy

The Mercer University Information Technology Policy (the “Policy”) contains Mercer’s philosophy and requirements governing the use of its information technology resources by students, faculty, staff, and others who have been given authorization, either explicitly or implicitly, to access those resources. Mercer University expects each member of the community to use Mercer’s information technology resources, including connections to resources external to Mercer that are made possible by Mercer University’s information technology resources, responsibly, ethically, and in compliance with the Policy, relevant laws, and all contractual obligations to third parties. The use of Mercer University’s information technology resources is a privilege. If a member of the Mercer community fails to comply with this policy or relevant laws and contractual obligations, that member’s privilege to access and use Mercer’s information technology resources may be revoked. The use of Mercer University’s information technology resources to send communications to Mercer or non-Mercer persons or entities typically identifies the sender as belonging to the Mercer University community. Each member of the community should, therefore, recognize that any such communication might reflect on how Mercer University is perceived by the Mercer community and the public at large.

By adopting the Policy, Mercer University recognizes that all members of the Mercer community are bound not only by the Policy, but also by local, state, and federal laws relating to electronic media, copyrights, privacy, and security.

Other Mercer University policies that relate to this Policy and also apply to Mercer University students, faculty, and staff (collectively, the “community”) can be found in the Mercer University Student, Faculty, and Employee Handbooks. Each member of the Mercer University community is expected to be familiar with this and all other relevant policies. The full policy can be found at http://it.mercer.edu/student/policy/it_access_and_use_policy.htm.

The Freedom of Expression Policy notes that the School of Medicine shall not make or enforce a rule subjecting a student to disciplinary sanctions solely on the basis of conduct that is speech or other communication that when engaged in outside of the School of Medicine is protected from governmental restriction by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or the Mercer University Rights of Students.

Faculty, staff, residents, and students must refrain from the use of any seal or official symbol of the School of Medicine or of Mercer University in their personal expressions as this is strictly prohibited.

Clinical faculty and students should refrain from sharing their personal political opinions with patients and are encouraged to utilize platforms available through professional societies and political action committees as noted in the American Medical Association Principles of Medical Ethics.

Learning Environment and Student Mistreatment Policy

Purpose and Scope

The purposes of this policy are to state Mercer University School of Medicine’s commitment to maintaining an environment that is conducive to student learning, to describe actions that are considered to be mistreatment of students, to list the steps for reporting mistreatment, to document the procedure for responding to mistreatment reports, and to describe the plan for dissemination of the Learning Environment and Student Mistreatment Policy to the Mercer University School of Medicine community.

Introduction

Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM), consistent with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) Accreditation Standards and Mercer University policies and procedures, fosters and maintains an educational and clinical community that promotes mutual respect and learning and enables students, faculty, residents and staff to work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Each member of the MUSM academic community is expected to treat all others, regardless of status, respectfully and courteously. Professional relations should be characterized by civility and, authority will not be abused. Abuse or misuse of authority, even if unintentional, may compromise or damage other members of the community.

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More specifically, all members of the MUSM academic community will treat each other with respect and dignity, no matter what station, degree, race, age, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, disability and/or disease state, and will extend to patients, families, teachers, other health professionals, and other learners with the same degree of respect and dignity as they would expect for themselves.

Commitment to a Positive Learning Environment

Mercer University School of Medicine strives to create a learning environment that is welcoming and safe for learners, staff, faculty, and patients. Additionally, MUSM strives to provide an environment where all members of the academic community are treated with respect and are made to feel that they belong.

A positive learning environment for learners should:

- **Treat students with respect.** Example behaviors include calling each student correctly by name, calling attention to witnessed micro-aggressions as a bystander, and apologizing for lapses in professionalism.
- **Include students in the team.** Example behaviors include assigning meaningful work to each student, listening to students during class discussions, and including students in clinical discussions.
- **Help students learn.** Example behaviors include giving timely feedback, imparting clinical knowledge, and providing learning goals and objectives at the beginning of each session, rotation, or course.
- **Provide effective and constructive feedback.** Example behaviors include giving feedback that is free of demeaning or dehumanizing components, giving feedback that includes examples of student behaviors and performance that support the evaluation, and giving suggestions for improvement in a timely manner to allow for student improvement prior to the final grade.

Description of Student Mistreatment

Mercer University School of Medicine has a responsibility to foster in all students, postgraduate trainees, faculty, and staff the development of professional and collegial attitudes. To succeed in this responsibility, MUSM must provide models of professional behaviors to build an atmosphere of mutual respect and collegiality among teachers and students. While such an environment is extremely important to the academic mission of the School of Medicine and breeches of the standards of behavior are never acceptable, it is understood that incidents of inappropriate behavior or mistreatment may occur. Such behavior should be reported and corrected. The victims and perpetrators of such behavior might include students, faculty, administrators, fellows, residents, health professionals, and staff.

Specific examples of unprofessional behavior or mistreatment, include, but are not limited to:

- Speaking insultingly or unjustifiably harshly to or about a person.
- Losing personal civility, such as shouting, using obscenities, displaying a temper, or verbally abusing other individuals.
- Speaking in disparaging ways, including attempts at humor that demeans an individual or a group.
- Using language that makes persons feel uncomfortable with respect to age, gender identity, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, appearance, or any other personal attribute.
- Asking for sexual favors or making sexually suggestive comments.
- Making belittling or humiliating comments.
- Threatening a person with physical harm.
- Physically attacking (e.g. hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing, grabbing, etc.) a person.
- Making unwanted or inappropriate physical contact.
- Requiring a student to perform personal services (e.g. shopping, babysitting)
- Requesting or requiring students to engage in inappropriate or illegal activities or unethical practices.
- Providing unfair advantages to learners (e.g. - revealing exam content to learners).
- Deliberately and repeatedly excluding a student or a group of students from reasonable learning experiences.
- Using assessments, evaluations, or training opportunities in a punitive or retaliatory manner.
- Retaliating against a student for reporting mistreatment.

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Communication and Training on the Learning Environment and Student Mistreatment Policy

Education of the medical school community concerning mistreatment serves several purposes. It promotes a positive environment for learning characterized by attitudes of mutual respect and collegiality. It informs persons who have experienced mistreatment that safe avenues for seeking redress are available. It provides awareness of mistreatment and of the School's process of responding to allegations of mistreatment.

Training on the policies and procedures surrounding the learning environment and mistreatment is provided to students, residents, faculty as follows:

- Students are made aware of the policies and procedures at orientation for each academic year and during medical student Bears Prepare sessions. Policies and procedures are accessible in the student handbook on the MUSM website and in course manuals. The NAVEX Global/EthicsPoint URL for the anonymous reporting of student mistreatment is posted on fliers in classrooms, restrooms, and call rooms along with other important numbers including the MUSM Crisis Line and contact information for the deans of student affairs. Visiting students receive this policy information as part of orientation at their clinical learning site.
- Residents are made aware of policies and procedures through their annual training for teaching provided by the Office of Academic Affairs. Residents are also provided the policies and procedures in the clerkship manuals and on the Resident and Faculty Development Training Hub.
- Faculty are made aware of the policies and procedures at new employee orientation and are provided with updated policy information in the MUSM faculty handbook, which is posted on the MUSM website. Clinical faculty are also provided with policy information on the Resident and Faculty Development Training Hub maintained by Academic Affairs.

Monitoring Learning Environment and Student Mistreatment

The School monitors the learning environment in several ways. In addition to the avenues for reporting individual concerns, the AAMC Graduation Questionnaire shall be reviewed annually and action taken on issues that arise from that survey. Additionally, each course evaluation is reviewed and monitored for issues of abuse and misuse at the conclusion of each course and a thorough survey is completed at the end of the pre-clinical curriculum and the end of the third year curriculum.

Reporting Mistreatment

Students can report mistreatment through the following mechanisms:

- Directly to the senior associate and associate deans of student affairs, who do not evaluate students in any academic program.
- Directly to the senior associate and associate deans of academic affairs.
- Directly to the confidential online reporting link via NAVEX Global/EthicsPoint.
<https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/62627/index.html>
- Directly to the Title IX Coordinator, Sharon Stellato, JD at 478-301-2788 or stellato_sl@mercer.edu.
- Through course evaluations distributed at the conclusion of each course/clerkship/rotation.

Reports of an emergent nature should not be reported through these mechanisms. Students should call 911 or local law enforcement if in immediate danger. For mental health crisis assistance, students may call the Mercer Crisis Hotline at 1-888-291-5802.

Concerns about the educational facilities or resources or about other concerns not related to the Codes of Conduct can be reported to the Suggestion Line at <https://med.mercer.edu/anon-report/>

The confidential online reporting link via NAVEX Global/ EthicsPoint allows for confidential reporting of concerns related specifically to student mistreatment.

Reports of discrimination or harassment based on race, gender identity, age, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status or disability and/or reports of physical or sexual harassment or abuse should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator.

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Mistreatment Response Protocols

Response to Student Reports

Reports submitted by students through NAVEX Global/EthicsPoint go to the Mercer University Office of Compliance and are then forwarded to the Mercer School of Medicine Office of Student Affairs. Reports that are submitted directly to the senior associate and associate deans of academic affairs or that come through course evaluations are forwarded from the Office of Academic Affairs to the Office of Student Affairs. The Senior Associate Dean or Associate Dean of Student Affairs contacts the student upon receiving a report of mistreatment or of a poor learning environment experience. The student can elect to pursue action immediately or delay action until the completion of the current course. In the case of an anonymous report, action will begin immediately. If the report involves immediate harm or retribution, then the senior associate and associate deans of student affairs reserve the right to move forward with action while maintaining the student's confidentiality.

Incidence Management

The senior associate and associate deans of student affairs in consultation with the senior associate and associate deans of academic affairs, and as appropriate the Dean or the campus deans, will review mistreatment incident reports.

- Concerns not involving immediate student harm will be addressed in a timely manner to mitigate the problem in the learning environment and prevent subsequent poor learning experiences. As appropriate, Department Chairs, MD Program Directors, Graduate Program Directors or Residency Program Directors may be consulted in providing feedback to faculty, staff or residents to influence positive changes in a constructive manner.
- Egregious acts of student mistreatment or repeated patterns of concerning behaviors by faculty, staff, residents or students will trigger a full investigation by the MUSM Dean's Office and may result in notification of the Mercer Department of Human Resources. Based on the findings of the MUSM investigation, a task force will be assembled, including members from Office of Student Affairs and others involved in the academic program (e.g.- Academic Affairs Dean, Graduate Medical Education Dean, Department Chair, Residency Program Director, Graduate Program Director) to develop an intervention to remediate faculty, resident or staff behaviors.
- Complaints involving discrimination or Title IX issues will be reported immediately to the Office of Equity and Compliance.
- Feedback to the complainant will be provided through the NAVEX Global/ EthicsPoint website.

Prolonged Medical Absence Policy

Some medical conditions may require a prolonged absence (greater than absences allowed per the attendance policy for the course but not to exceed two weeks). These absences may be excused, and a plan may be created and implemented by the Office of Academic Affairs to make up missed work. If a student is unable to return to campus as scheduled, then a leave of absence may be necessary to meet the student's needs.

Any student may request a prolonged medical absence. A written request must be submitted to the senior associate dean of academic affairs and must include supporting documentation as to the basis of the need for a request. Examples of allowable absences include personal medical conditions requiring a prolonged absence for rehabilitation, treatment, or recuperation; bereavement; or maternity/paternity absences immediately following the birth or adoption of a child (excludes all conditions covered under Title IX).

The senior associate dean of academic affairs will review the request with the student and the senior associate dean of student affairs. If the senior associate deans of academic affairs and student affairs determine the prolonged absence can be granted without a significant alteration to the curriculum, the absence will be excused with the following provisions:

- a. Senior associate deans of academic affairs and student affairs determine the absence length, not to exceed two weeks.
- b. Student may be eligible to attend certain coursework via Zoom or alternate curricular formats.
- c. Student must complete makeup assignments according to the plan that was agreed upon at the time the absence was granted.

In compliance with Title IX, the University will make adjustments/accommodations that are reasonable and responsive to a student's pregnancy status including pregnancy, recovery, or related conditions. All requests involving pregnancy, childbirth, or related health conditions should be directed to Sharon Stellato, Title IX Coordinator, at 478-301-2788 or stellato_sl@mercer.edu. The Title IX Coordinator reviews and coordinates all of MUSM's accommodation requests.

Leave of Absence Policy

MUSM has five categories of Leave of Absence:

1. Maternity/Paternity Leave of Absence
2. Child Care and Caregiver's Leave
3. Personal Leave of Absence
4. Medical Leave of Absence
5. Mandatory Medical Leave of Absence

Note: Whenever a student is granted a Leave of Absence and subsequent re-entry into MUSM, the SAPC will verify the academic status of the student at the time of re-entry.

1. **Maternity/Paternity Leave (MPLA)**

- a. **Requesting MPLA:** In compliance with Title IX, the University will make adjustments or accommodations that are reasonable and responsive to a student's pregnancy or parenting status. This includes pregnancy, recovery, or related conditions. All requests for a leave of absence that involve pregnancy, childbirth, or parenting should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator (Sharon Stellato at 478-301-2788 or stellato_sl@mercer.edu). The student shall also notify the senior associate dean of academic affairs and the senior associate dean of student affairs of the leave. The Title IX Coordinator will review and coordinate all accommodation requests with the School of Medicine. Any pregnant medical student has the right to request a medical leave of absence if she believes that her condition compromises her ability to continue effectively in the curriculum despite excused absences awarded under the Prolonged Medical Absence Policy. The Title IX Coordinator can be contacted at 478-301-2788 or stellato_sl@mercer.edu.
- b. **Conditions of Pregnancy related MPLA:** Time taken on MPLA is included in the six years allowed for completion of the requirements for graduation ("Student Academic Status: Composite Requirements). At the time a maternity/paternity leave is granted, the senior associate dean of academic affairs must review with the student the academic consequences of the leave as well as the conditions for readmission into the curriculum. The student should review the financial consequences of the leave with the student financial planning office. A student on MPLA leave is ineligible to attend or to participate in any curricular component or activity. For most cases of uncomplicated pregnancy or brief parental absence, the student can utilize the Prolonged Medical Absence Policy.
- c. **Conditions for Readmission:** Readmission into medical school following the Maternity/Paternity Leave must be requested in writing to the senior associate dean of academic affairs.

2. **Childcare and Caregiver's Leave**

- a. A student may request family and medical leave for one of the following reasons:
 - i. the birth and care of a newborn child
 - ii. to care for a newly placed child for adoption or foster care
 - ii. to care for the student's spouse, child, parent, grandparent, or other dependent (under age 18, or 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of mental or physical disability) who has a serious health condition.
- b. Students desiring such leave are required to make the request in writing to the senior associate dean of academic affairs, who may require certification by the attending physician that a serious health condition exists in the affected party. The senior associate dean of student affairs will be consulted. At the time a medical leave is granted, the senior associate dean of academic affairs must review with the student the academic consequences of the leave as well as the conditions for readmission into the curriculum. The student should review the financial consequences of the leave with the student financial planning office. A student on Child Care/Caregivers leave is ineligible to attend or to participate in any curricular component or activity.
- c. Readmission into medical school following absence related to family leave must be approved by the senior associate dean of academic affairs, and must be requested in writing.

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3. *Personal Leave of Absence*

Any student may request a personal leave of absence. A request must be submitted in writing to the senior associate dean of academic affairs. Personal Leave may be taken in the following subcategories:

1. **Research**
2. **Education** (pursuit of an additional degree)
3. **Academic** (remediation/repeat of academic requirements or prolonged USMLE preparation)
4. **Other** (personal reasons not categorized elsewhere)

The senior associate dean of academic affairs will review the request with the student and with the senior associate dean of student affairs. If the senior associate deans of academic affairs and student affairs determine that the leave is in the best interest of the student, the leave will be granted with the following provisions:

- a. The senior associate dean of academic affairs will determine the length of the leave, not to exceed the last day of the academic year in which the leave was granted.
- b. The student will be ineligible to attend or participate in any curricular component.
- c. The time accrued on leave will count toward the maximum total time to graduation within six years of matriculation at MUSM (six-year rule).
- d. The student's academic record at the time the leave was granted will be in effect at the time readmission is granted.

The student should review the financial consequences of the leave with the student financial planning office.

Readmission into medical school following absence related to personal leave must be approved by the senior associate dean of academic affairs and must be requested in writing.

4. *Medical Leave of Absence*

Any student may request a medical leave of absence. A request must be submitted in writing to the senior associate dean of academic affairs requesting the leave. The request must include supporting documentation as to the basis of the medical condition prompting the request for medical leave. A medical leave will be approved for injuries or illnesses that are directly related to participation in learning activities of MUSM. The senior associate dean of academic affairs will review the request with the student and with the senior associate dean of student affairs. If the senior associate deans of academic affairs and student affairs determine that a medical leave can be granted without a significant alteration to the curriculum, the leave will be granted with the following provisions:

- a. The senior associate dean of academic affairs will determine the length of the leave, not to exceed 12 months. The student will be ineligible to attend or participate in any curricular component.
- b. The time accrued on leave will count toward the maximum total time to graduation within six years of matriculation at MUSM (six-year rule).
- c. A waiver of the six-year rule may be allowed for those students experiencing an illness or injury directly related to participation in learning activities of MUSM.
- d. The academic record of the student at the time the leave was granted will be in effect at the time readmission is granted.

The student should review the financial consequences of the leave with the financial aid office.

Readmission Following Leave of Absence

- a. The student must request reentry to the senior associate dean of academic affairs in writing at least two weeks prior to the requested reentry date.
- b. The request for reentry must include a statement from the student's physician or health care provider indicating that the student is physically/emotionally ready for reentry, if applicable.
- c. MUSM retains the right to request a second opinion, based on evaluation of the student's record and medical records from an appropriate clinician of the school's choosing.
- d. MUSM will bear the cost of the second opinion.

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5. *Mandatory Medical Leave of Absence*

A student may be placed on a mandatory medical leave if the dean determines that the student's continuation in the curriculum represents a danger to himself/herself, patients, faculty, staff, or other students. Only the dean (or designee) may place a student on mandatory medical leave of absence. The dean reserves the right to request a complete mental and/or physical evaluation there is reason to believe that the student's behavior or health problems warrant such action. Refusal to accept the mental/physical evaluation as recommended by the dean will be considered grounds for dismissal.

Following completion of the evaluation, the dean (or designee), will review the results of the evaluation, the student's academic and professional record, and the evidence that led to invoking the mandatory medical leave of absence. The dean will determine the conditions of consideration for readmission to the curriculum.

- a. If the student does not agree to meet the conditions for readmission, the student may be encouraged to withdraw or may be dismissed from the school at the dean's discretion.
- b. If the student agrees to the terms of readmission, the dean may consider the student for readmission after successful satisfaction of those terms.
- c. If appropriate to the terms, the dean may request and review written documentation from the student's physicians and counselors to assist with reaching a judgment.
- d. If the student is readmitted to the curriculum, the dean shall determine the terms for readmission. If the student is not readmitted, the dean may recommend dismissal, recommend further conditions and terms to be met, or allow the student to withdraw, at the dean's discretion.
- e. The student will be ineligible to attend or participate in any curricular component while on leave. Further, the dean may require restriction from MUSM facilities, at his/her discretion.
- f. The time accrued on leave will count toward the maximum total time to graduation within six years of matriculation at MUSM (six-year rule).

The student should review the financial consequences of the leave with the financial aid office.

Reentry to the curriculum is not guaranteed following a mandatory medical leave of absence.

Extension of a Leave of Absence

All extensions of an approved leave of absence shall be considered in the same manner as a new request and the student shall be required to apply and be approved according to the policies listed above.

Missing Student

If a member of the University community (faculty, staff, student, parent, alumni) has reason to believe that a student is missing, that community member will refer the case immediately to the Mercer Police Department.

Mercer Police will work collaboratively with others to contact and locate the student. All reasonable efforts will be made to locate the student and determine his or her state of health and well-being. The efforts include, but are not limited to:

- Phone call to student
- Email to student through Mercer email account (or other known e-mail addresses)
- Messages through social networking websites if possible
- Contact with all professors to determine last day of attendance in each class

If the student is located through these attempts, a determination will be made regarding his or her health and well-being. If necessary, a referral to the Counseling Center, Health Services and other appropriate offices may be made at that time. The Dean of Students or Student Affairs designee or Mercer Police will also encourage the student to contact the community member who initiated the search or follow up with that person directly.

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

If the student is not located through the above measures and has been verified to be missing for more than 24 hours, then the following actions will be taken within the next 24 hours by Mercer Police:

1. Notification will be made (where and when applicable and appropriate) to the appropriate Dean of Students or Student Affairs Designee, the counseling staff, and health center staff.
2. The Police and/or Dean of Students or Student Affairs Designee will make contact with the student's emergency contact. Students should register and continually update emergency contact information on MyMercer.

Religious Observance Policy

Mercer University is respectful of the religious practices of members of the student body. Students who will be absent from class for religious observances must confer with their instructor (graduate students) or the senior associate dean of academic affairs (MD students) regarding the date of the absence at the beginning of each semester or session, or at least two (2) weeks prior to the dates of the absence. The disposition of missed assignments will be arranged between instructor/dean and student. If a mutually satisfactory solution is not reached, the right to establish a reasonable alternative is reserved by the instructor/dean. Students who feel that their academic performance will be compromised by the alternative assignment/examination timetable may appeal to the dean of the school.

Rights of Students

Community of Respect ensures certain rights of its members. The University values the following student's rights:

1. Free inquiry, expression, and assembly as long as conducted in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others.
2. Freedom from unreasonable invasion of the privacy of the individual's person, residence, papers, personal effects, and University records.
3. Right to due process and equal protection under the University's judicial system.
4. Freedom to pursue educational goals; the right to free exchange of ideas, thoughts, and viewpoints.
5. Freedom of association for students who meet the University's standards for participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

Rights Pertaining to Educational Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students at Mercer University certain rights with respect to their educational records. These rights include:

1. By Federal regulation, the right to inspect and review a student's educational records within 45 days of the day the Office of the Registrar receives a written request for access. The student should submit to the Registrar a written request that identifies the record(s) the student wishes to inspect. The Registrar will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the Registrar does not maintain the records, the student shall be advised of the correct official at the University to whom the request should be addressed.
2. MUSM commits to a 48 hour (two full business days) turn around for the student to review their records.
3. The right to request the amendment of the student's educational records if the student believes them to be inaccurate. The student may ask the University to amend a record that he/she believes is inaccurate. The student should write the Registrar, clearly identify the part of the record he/she wants changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the University decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the Registrar (or another appropriate official, if the record is maintained by another office) will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when the student is notified of the right to a hearing.

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

4. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s educational record, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A “school official” is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff position (including law enforcement personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the University has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a “legitimate educational interest” if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Another exception which permits disclosure without student consent is disclosure to officials of another school, school system, or institution of post-secondary education where a student seeks or intends to enroll. Upon the request of an institution in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, the University will forward the student’s education records to the requesting institution. Upon request, the student may obtain a copy of the record that was disclosed and have an opportunity for a hearing as provided above. As of January 3, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education’s FERPA regulations expand the circumstances under which your education records and personally identifiable information (PII) contained in such records — including your Social Security Number, grades, or other private information — may be accessed without your consent. First, the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or state and local education authorities (“Federal and State Authorities”) may allow access to your records and PII without your consent to any third party designated by a Federal or State Authority to evaluate a federal- or state-supported education program. The evaluation may relate to any program that is “principally engaged in the provision of education,” such as early childhood education and job training, as well as any program that is administered by an education agency or institution. Second, Federal and State Authorities may allow access to your education records and PII without your consent to researchers performing certain types of studies, in certain cases even when we object to or do not request such research. Federal and State Authorities must obtain certain use-restriction and data security promises from the entities that they authorize to receive your PII, but the Authorities need not maintain direct control over such entities. In addition, in connection with Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems, State Authorities may collect, compile, permanently retain, and share without your consent PII from your education records, and they may track your participation in education and other programs by linking such PII to other personal information about you that they obtain from other Federal or State data sources, including workforce development, unemployment insurance, child welfare, juvenile justice, military service, and migrant student records systems.
5. The right of a currently enrolled student to request that his/her “directory information” not be released by Mercer University. The University, at its discretion and without the written consent of the student, may release “directory information,” which includes the following items: student name, address, e-mail address, telephone number, date and place of birth, academic program, dates of attendance, degrees and honors received, most recent previous institution attended, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and photographs or video images. A student request for non-disclosure of the above items must be filed with the Office of the Registrar.
6. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Mercer University to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605.

Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid

Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress in order to receive financial aid. MUSM’s Satisfactory Academic Policy is outlined in the Catalog and online at <http://medicine.mercer.edu/student-services/financial-aid/>.

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

Mercer University is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, work and study. To that end, and in accordance with federal, state and local law and University policies, the University prohibits harassment of or discrimination against any person because of race, color, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, sex (including pregnancy, child birth or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, age, or religion (except in limited circumstances where religious preference is permitted by law), or any other protected status or characteristic as defined by law. Mercer University is also committed to providing an educational and workplace environment free from all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, gender discrimination or harassment, sexual exploitation, stalking, or retaliation.

To uphold the University's values of fostering a climate of opportunity, mutual respect, and understanding and striving for a campus that is absent of discrimination and sexual misconduct, the Office of Equity and Compliance will address and remediate reported forms of discrimination and sexual misconduct and provide policies, training, and education in an effort to prevent discrimination and sexual misconduct. You may contact the Associate Vice President of Equity and Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at 478-301-2788 or at stellato_sl@mercer.edu or learn more by visiting equityandcompliance.mercer.edu/. All Mercer University employees are required to disclose information about suspected or alleged sexual misconduct or discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator. If the Office of Equity and Compliance receives information about an incident of sexual misconduct or discrimination, they will reach out to provide information on your options, rights, and supportive measures that are available to you as a member of the Mercer University community.

Social Media Policy

In order for students, faculty, and staff to maintain a professional presence on social media sites, platforms, and networks, this policy has been created. All members of the MUSM community should adhere to these guidelines in their professional interactions as well as in all personal interactions on any and all social media sites.

Always use good judgment, accuracy and honesty in Social Media communications. Make sure that all the facts have been gathered prior to posting. Verifications beforehand are preferable to corrections and retractions afterwards. Double-check all social media use for accuracy, spelling and grammar. Errors, omissions or inappropriate language or behavior reflect poorly on the poster and MUSM and may constitute breaches of the MUSM Student Code of Conduct or other Mercer University (MU) or MUSM policies. Users should routinely monitor their own internet presence to ensure that the personal and professional information on their own sites and, to the extent possible, content posted about them by others, is accurate and appropriate.

All members of the MUSM community should be cognizant of the standards of patient privacy and confidentiality that must be maintained in all environments, including online, and must refrain from posting identifiable patient information online. In all circumstances, be respectful of others and the information that is being provided. Your comments and online behavior can be interpreted as being representative of MU, MUSM, or your classmates in general. Uphold the mission and values of MU and MUSM in your social media use. Among other things, do not use vulgar language or display language or photographs that imply disrespect for any individual or group because of age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or any other status protected by law.

Do not reveal anyone's private information. This includes tagging photos with an individual's name without his/her approval. Students are absolutely prohibited from using social media to convey a patient's photo or any patient information to include information on standardized patients or from conveying private or academic information of another student.

Always think before posting. Consider the use, value, and impact of any social media activity. Incomplete thoughts can be taken out of context. Direct others to a blog or site where there is more detail and information, where appropriate.

Encourage feedback, including two-way communication and hyperlinking, as a way to allow others to contribute content and build community.

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

Separate opinions from facts. Observations, experiences and opinions are important, but separate opinions from facts. Cite sources and link resources where appropriate

Do not present personal views as if representing an MU or MUSM representative. When expressing personal views ensure that it is clearly stated that the views are strictly personal and not representing MU, MUSM nor communicating on anyone's behalf.

When a member of the MUSM community sees content posted by colleagues that appears unprofessional they have a responsibility to bring that content to the attention of the individual, so that he or she can remove it and/or take other appropriate actions. If the behavior significantly violates professional norms and the individual does not take appropriate action to resolve the situation, the MUSM community member should report the matter to the Office of the Dean for further evaluation.

Follow all applicable local and federal laws, including copyright laws, laws relating to confidentiality, libel/slander, privacy and disclosure. Social media must not be used to promote activities that are illegal or violate the rights of others. Proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others must be followed. For additional information on copyright law, refer to the United States Copyright Office at <http://www.copyright.gov/>.

Follow all applicable MU and MUSM policies. When using social media, MUSM students must comply with all applicable MU policies and standards, including, among others, Academic Integrity Policy, Conduct: University Student Code of Conduct, Information Technology Policy, and the Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Policy. For more information, visit <https://provost.mercer.edu/handbooks/>.

Comply with the terms of service and use of any social media provider. Social media providers change these terms regularly, and it is important to remain current with such terms. In addition to the guidelines and practices set forth above, a MUSM student's responsibilities as a healthcare professional-in-training must follow standards that may be stricter than the standards for the general social media user community. Specifically and to the extent applicable, MUSM expects students and clinical faculty to be familiar with, commit to, and follow the social media use policy developed by the American Medical Association. A link to the current version is provided [here](#).

Approved by the Executive Council March 26, 2019

Tobacco and Smoke Free Environment

Mercer University is committed to the health and well-being of the members of its student body, faculty, and staff. The University not only has a vested interest in the vitality of its students and those who administer and operate the University's programs of education, research, and service, but also wishes to promote the advancement of health in general and the maintenance of a healthful environment. The University and its medical, nursing, and pharmacy and health science schools, moreover, have substantial commitments to health-related research and teaching.

The Surgeon General of the United States has determined that cigarette smoking is the largest preventable cause of illness and premature death in the United States; it is associated annually with the unnecessary deaths of thousands of Americans. Research findings now indicate that users of smokeless tobacco and non-smokers who are regularly exposed to tobacco smoke are also at increased risk.

In response to these considerations, the University has adopted as its goal that of achieving an environment as close to tobacco-free as possible. The following guidelines are designed to achieve a relatively tobacco-free environment on the Mercer campuses:

- Smoking is prohibited in all indoor locations. All buildings on all campuses are tobacco and smoke-free. This includes vapor/electronic smoking devices.
- Smoking is prohibited within 25 feet of all building entrances, air intakes, and windows.
- Residence hall public spaces (lobbies, hallways, lounges, recreation areas, restrooms) and rooms are tobacco-free.
- Use of smokeless tobacco products is prohibited in all university facilities, except in individual residence hall rooms and apartments.

It is the responsibility of each member of the Mercer community to observe this Tobacco-Free Policy and these guidelines. This policy relies on the thoughtfulness, consideration, and cooperation of smokers and non-smokers for its success.

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

Individuals who are smoking inside a building must be directed to the outdoors. Visitors must observe this Tobacco-Free Policy. Department heads, building stewards, and sponsors/hosts of University events are responsible for visitors' compliance with the University's Tobacco-Free Policy. The University expects a good faith, common sense, and courteous approach by students and employees in resolving conflicts within the requirements of this policy.

Violation of policies should be reported to Student Affairs for students and Human Resources for employees.

Urine Drug Screen Policy

The School of Medicine (MUSM) is committed to assisting members of its community in facing the challenges associated with alcohol abuse and illicit drug use. The drug testing policy provides an opportunity for early identification and intervention before consequences of drug abuse adversely impact a student's health, professional growth, and patient care. Early intervention can also provide for successful treatment without the involvement of formal disciplinary action or other sanctioning.

Background & Rationale

1. Health care providers are entrusted with the health, safety, and welfare of patients, have access to confidential and sensitive information, and operate in settings that require the exercise of good judgment and ethical behavior. Thus, assessment of a student's suitability to function in a clinical setting is imperative to promote integrity in health care.
2. Clinical facilities are increasingly required by the accreditation agency Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), to provide a drug screening for security purposes on individuals who supervise care, render treatment, and provide services within the facility.
3. Clinical rotations are an essential element in many degree programs' curricula. Increasingly, these clinical sites require drug screening before student participation at their site. Students with a positive drug screen may be barred from certain rotations and therefore unable to fulfill degree program requirements. Identification of such students prior to clinical rotations will enable appropriate assessment and indicated treatment and follow-up.
4. Atrium Navicent Health, HCA Memorial University Medical Center, Piedmont Macon Medical Center, Piedmont Columbus Regional Medical Center and St. Francis Hospital require drug screening of all employees. It is appropriate for clinical students to meet the same standards for the reasons stated above.

Policy

Drug testing is required of all MD Program students prior to matriculation at MUSM. Drug testing is also required of all MD Program students enrolled at MUSM prior to their clinical rotations. Any student may also be required to have drug testing with cause (e.g., signs of impairment witnessed under supervision or violation of the University Drug and Alcohol Policy), and students tested with cause may later be subject to random drug testing.

Procedure

1. Students will be required to undergo a comprehensive (10 Panel Test) urine drug screen within two weeks prior to matriculation, prior to attending a clinical campus, or upon request of Dean of Student Affairs when there is appropriate concern to warrant. The initial test, if positive, will trigger the reference lab to perform a confirmatory test before calling a positive result. The cost of these screens is the responsibility of the student.
2. Incoming students should get a 10 Panel Test performed at the lab of their choice and submit it to Mercer University Campus Health at studenthealthmacon@mercer.edu within 2 weeks prior to the first day of Freshman Orientation. Students will receive a general orientation via email for the routine drug-testing requirement prior to clinical duties and submit those results as instructed.

In cases of screening done for cause, the student will receive directions from the Dean of Student Affairs on the appropriate campus. Urine Drug Screen orders will be provided to each student and they will be performed per the policy of the individual campus.

SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

3. Test results are sent to a Medical Review Officer and, once confirmed, returned to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs where they become part of your confidential record in the Campus Health medical record and may be kept by the Campus hospital per the hospital policies. If a test is verified positive, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs will meet with that student and discuss the process for evaluation and treatment.
4. All students with a true positive test will be required to provide proof of a legal prescription that would result in a positive finding. A test positive for THC, regardless of whether the product was legal in the place that it was ingested or whether the product was a CBD product, is considered a positive test and the student will be required to undergo further evaluation.
5. All students with a true positive test will be required to have an evaluation by a mental health professional qualified in the assessment of addictive disorders. This individual will establish the appropriate follow-up, which could include referral to an addiction specialist for further evaluation and treatment, referral to an outside drug treatment program, or follow-up and treatment with a monitoring program. Given that an impaired student poses a risk to patient safety, non-compliance with a monitoring program or directed follow-up will require notification of the Student Affairs Dean and mandated medical leave.
6. If a student is already on a clinical rotation and evaluation or recommended treatment would interfere with their performance on that rotation, or if the evaluation indicates concerns about patient safety because of the student's impairment, then the appropriate Dean of Student Affairs will be notified and the student will be placed on medical leave. Students will be required to have an Administrative evaluation to return from leave.
7. If during or after treatment there is a question of the student's suitability for clinical work, s/he will be referred to an outside clinician for evaluation.
8. For students on clinical rotations, part of the assessment will be a report from that student's clinical preceptor regarding his/her performance (without disclosing the reason for the request). This report will be obtained by the appropriate Dean of Student Affairs and conveyed to the individual assessing the student (monitoring program or addiction specialist).
9. Students whose outside rotations require additional drug testing will also have tests performed as above. If one of these tests is positive, the rotation site must be notified and the student will not be able to participate in that clinical rotation. The appropriate Dean of Student Affairs will be notified that the student must be on medical leave and the student referred for assessment and treatment as noted above.
10. Drug screening reports will be held in strict confidence in the student's medical record unless released at a student's request or under the specific circumstances identified above.
11. Any results released to the Dean are also confidential and are subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA] regulations. For additional information: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Unprofessional Behavior Report

The purpose of the unprofessional behavior report is to enable faculty, staff, and students to document an individual incident or a recurring trend of unprofessional or unethical behavior. This report will be submitted to the dean of academic affairs who will forward a copy to the dean of students affairs and the director of ethics education. The goal of this report is to initiate further investigation into allegations of unprofessional or unethical behavior(s).

Student Name: _____

Phase or Rotation: _____

Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Description of incident: _____

Date of observed behavior: _____

Name(s) of person(s) involved: _____

Describe incident (may attach document): _____

Indicate which of the following categories of professionalism behaviors were involved. (Check all that apply)

Patient and Provider Communications

- The student inappropriately disclosed patient information
- The student made inappropriate or public remarks about fellow students, members of the health care, team and/or patients
- The student was dishonest in written or verbal communication
- The student failed to show respect for the diversity of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, or socioeconomic status of fellow students, members, of the health care team and/or patients
- The student failed to show sensitivity to the needs of the patient, the patient's family, and/or the health care team
- Other (please explain in comment section)

Comments:

Appearance, Attire

- The student fails to wear clothing that is professional in appearance (appropriate to the culture of the institution as defined by the preceptor, the site dress code, and professional norms)
- The student is not well groomed (poor bathing, malodorous, unkempt)
- The student fails to wear their name badge or white coat in appropriate situations
- Other (please explain in comment section)

Comments:

APPENDICES

Reliability, Motivation, and Responsibility

- The student is disruptive to a conducive learning atmosphere (e.g. disruptive, verbal or nonverbal cues of non-participation)
- The student does not complete assigned tasks in the given timeframe
- The student committed plagiarism or cheating
- The student does not attend required activities
- The student is late to required activities or leaves before the conclusion of the activity
- The student fails to notify appropriate persons prior to missing required activities
- Other (please explain in comment section)

Comments:

Interpersonal Relationships

- The student behaves in a manner that lacks respect, is uncooperative or is manipulative
- The student fails to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries in work and learning situations
- The student fails to show an appropriately sensitive, courteous, and/or respectful manner with fellow students, staff, faculty, and/or patients
- Other (please explain in comment section)

Comments:

Accepts Instruction and Feedback

- The student actively rebuffs, avoids change, or does not recognize own limitations
- The student does not accept constructive feedback
- The student does not maintain professional composure in stressful situations
- Other (please explain in comment section)

Comments:

- Did you provide feedback to the individual(s) named? Yes No
- Did you document the feedback? *(please attach any documentation)* Yes No
- Have you reviewed the contents of this report with the individual(s) named? Yes No

If completing electronically; please print and sign as indicated.

Faculty Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date