

SCHOOL OF OPTOMETRY POLICY

Date Revised: 12/1/2024

Responsible Party: Student Affairs

Contact(s): Connie Wright, Director of Student Affairs

Policy and Procedures: Management of Student Records

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all student records for the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), including the UAB School of Optometry (UABSO), are maintained, stored, and accessed in a secure, accurate, and compliant manner consistent with institutional policies, federal regulations, and accreditation requirements established by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE).

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All UABSO students enrolled in the professional optometry program.
- All faculty and staff within UAB and the UAB School of Optometry with access to student records.
- All student records whether digital or printed.

Policy Statement

UAB and UABSO are committed to safeguarding the content of student records through secure storage, controlled access, and professional handling. Records are maintained within centralized electronic database, Banner, and physical storage locations, with access limited to authorized personnel only. The maintenance of records must comply with university policy, federal regulations including FERPA, and ACOE accreditation standards.

Procedures for Record Management

Digital Record Storage

All official academic and administrative student records are maintained within the University's centralized Student Information System, Banner. Access to Banner is restricted through role based permissions assigned by University IT and departmental leadership. Electronic transmission of student enrollment data, grade submissions, and academic updates to the UAB Registrar is conducted through secure electronic systems maintained by the University.

Physical Record Storage

Printed copies of relevant student documents (e.g., signed forms, correspondence, or required hard-copy documentation) are stored by the Office of Student Affairs. All physical student records are kept in locked filing cabinets located within the Office of Student Affairs. Keys to filing cabinets and offices are limited to authorized personnel only, as designated by the Office of Student Affairs leadership.

Registrar Responsibilities

The University Registrar is the official custodian of all academic records for UAB, including students enrolled in the UAB School of Optometry. UABSO also has a registrar who is included in management of all academic records.

The University Registrar and/or the UABSO registrar oversees:

- Official maintenance of academic transcripts
- Verification of enrollment
- Processing of grade reports
- Archival and retention of student records according to institutional and federal guidelines

The Registrar's Office is responsible for issuing all official academic transcripts. Academic data transmitted to the Registrar from UABSO must be complete, accurate, and submitted through secure, university-approved electronic systems.

Record Retention and Security

Digital and physical records must be retained according to UAB's official records retention schedule and applicable state and federal laws.

All records—electronic or printed—must be protected from unauthorized access, alteration, loss, or destruction.

Staff are required to complete FERPA training and comply with all confidentiality requirements. Disposal of outdated records must occur through secure means (e.g., digital deletion, shredding of physical documents).

Compliance and Monitoring

Department leaders and the Registrar's Office will periodically review this policy to ensure compliance with ACOE standards, institutional policy, and federal regulations.

Audits may be conducted by internal or external reviewers to ensure proper recordkeeping practices.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action consistent with university policies.

Revision and Review

This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis.