



# STUDENT HANDBOOK

The UAB School of Optometry is committed to understand, preserve, restore, and enhance vision, eye health, and quality of life.

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## UABSO DIRECTORY

Dial “0” when you are on campus to obtain a campus phone number. You may also look up a phone number online at [www.uab.edu](http://www.uab.edu), look under “Quick links” for the Directory.

UAB General Information	Campus Directory	<a href="http://www.uab.edu/phonebook">http://www.uab.edu/phonebook</a>	934-4011
<b>UAB CONTACTS</b>			
Financial Aid	Jennifer Abell	<a href="mailto:Jmm8915@uab.edu">Jmm8915@uab.edu</a>	934-8223
Student Account Services	Financial Affairs	<a href="mailto:FA-Studacct@uab.edu">FA-Studacct@uab.edu</a>	934-3570
Student Health	Taylor Stewart	<a href="mailto:taylormendola@uabmc.edu">taylormendola@uabmc.edu</a>	975-7751
Student Dental Health			934-5234
Transportation Services	Parking Permits	<a href="mailto:transportation@uab.edu">transportation@uab.edu</a>	934-3513
UAB Police	Public Safety /Security	<a href="mailto:UABPD-PoliceDept@mail.ad.uab.edu">UABPD-PoliceDept@mail.ad.uab.edu</a>	934-4460
UAB Registrar’s Office	Academic Records	<a href="mailto:registrar@uab.edu">registrar@uab.edu</a>	934-8222
UAB Eye Care	UABSO Clinic	<a href="http://hello@uabeyecare.com">hello@uabeyecare.com</a>	975-2020
<b>UABSO CONTACTS</b>			
<b>OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS</b>			
Dr. Gerald Simon	Associate Dean	<a href="mailto:gsimonod@uab.edu">gsimonod@uab.edu</a>	975-0739
Connie Wright	Director	<a href="mailto:csewell@uab.edu">csewell@uab.edu</a>	975-0739
Jakobe Perry	Program Manager	<a href="mailto:perryjm@uab.edu">perryjm@uab.edu</a>	975-0739
<b>EXTERNSHIP OFFICE</b>			
Dr. Candice Turner	Associate Professor	<a href="mailto:citurner@uab.edu">citurner@uab.edu</a>	
Cynthia Perry	Consultant	<a href="mailto:cmdbb11@uab.edu">cmdbb11@uab.edu</a>	934-2624
<b>DEAN’S OFFICE</b>			
Cindy Weise	Executive Assistant	<a href="mailto:cawaise@uab.edu">cawaise@uab.edu</a>	975-9935
<b>DEVELOPMENT OFFICE</b>			
Sommer Thompson	Senior Director	<a href="mailto:sommer.thompson@uab.edu">sommer.thompson@uab.edu</a>	934-9838
<b>ALUMNI AFFAIRS OFFICE</b>			
Amy Drinkard	Program Manager II	<a href="mailto:amyrie@uab.edu">amyrie@uab.edu</a>	975-9931
<b>INFORMATION SERVICES</b>			
	AskIT	<a href="mailto:Askit@uab.edu">Askit@uab.edu</a>	996-5555

## STUDENT INFORMATION

- **Student Mailboxes** are located in the student lounge on the first floor.
- Mail will be placed in your mailboxes and must be checked at least once per day. The mail will be distributed throughout the day. Campus and U.S. mail will be delivered once a day. **Students are not allowed in the first-floor mailroom.**

- A telephone is available in the lounge for local calls. You can dial “9” to make off-campus local calls.
- There are refrigerators and microwaves located in the lounge on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. It is the responsibility of the student organization members to keep the refrigerators and microwaves clean. Please see the monthly assignment list on the refrigerator. Paper towels are provided to cover your food while using the microwave.
- The **Student Computers** are located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor in the student lounge.
- **Student Absence Forms:** Can be obtained online at <http://www.uab.edu/optometry/home/student-resources>
- **Clinic Student Absence Request Forms:** Can be obtained from the clinic administration office.
- **Emergency Loan Forms:** Can be obtained online at <http://www.uab.edu/optometry/home/student-resources>. Upon completion of the Emergency Loan Request Form, return the form to the Office of Student Affairs.
- **Loan Deferments, Insurance Forms, or Verification of Enrollment Letters: Requests** should be made in writing to the Office of Student Affairs-no verbal requests will be accepted. Please include the name of the company, the company’s address, contact person’s name, and the email address for the company. Please leave any official forms to be completed with your written request. Make sure that you have completed all sections. When the original form or letter has been sent, a copy will be placed in your mailbox for your records.
- **Notary Public:** Please see Dena Clemons in clinic administration on the ground floor for this service. Most local banks will be able to notarize a form for a small fee.
- **Transcripts:** Official and unofficial transcripts must be requested online through BlazerNET or at the One Stop Office.
- **Student Emergency:** If a student is injured or becomes ill, the contact information entered in BlazerNet will be used to notify the emergency contact. Therefore, at least two-family contacts should be entered into BlazerNet.
- **Family Emergency:** If you are listed as the “emergency contact” for any of your family members, it is important that you supply their work or school with your personal and direct contact information as well as that contact information of local family members (or close friends) that can handle an emergency in your absence.

## STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

All students participating in student eye care mission trips must complete a student eye care mission release agreement. This form can be found at <http://www.uab.edu/optometry/home/student-resources>

## **AAO - American Academy of Optometry UABSO Student Chapter**

The American Academy of Optometry UABSO Student Chapter began in July 2010. Membership in the organization is open to any student from 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> year. The focus of the chapter is to educate its members on topics related to the Academy and to make the transition from graduate to Fellow of the Academy easier.

## **AOSA - American Optometric Student Association**

This organization serves as the UABSO student branch of the American Optometric Association. Students are automatically members when they enroll at the UABSO. The membership fee is paid by the School so that there is no out-of-pocket expense for the student. Major student activities include the student bowl, Optometry Meeting, fall mixers and general body meetings. In addition, we also work with the Alabama Optometric Association attending board meetings and volunteering to help as needed.

## **BSK - Beta Sigma Kappa International Optometric Honor Society**

The purposes of the Society are to stimulate scientific attainment, academic excellence and the ethical practice of optometry. A student must maintain a GPA of 3.5 at the conclusion of each school year. The BSK organization gives members a certificate that is suitable for framing. Members of BSK wear honor cords during the Doctoral Convocation and Hooding Ceremony and their names are listed in the graduation program.

## **Gold Key International Optometric Society**

The purpose of the Gold Key is to recognize upper-class students who have demonstrated outstanding professional and ethical attitudes through leadership in their class, college and profession. All second, third and fourth year students are potential candidates for membership. However, no more than 8 students per class can join. Applications are sent out to everyone in the 2nd and 3rd year classes in January or February. New members are selected by the current members. Although it is not GPA based, the student must be in good academic standing. Not all 8 spots need to be used if the members do not feel as if there are enough qualified applicants. If all 8 spots are not filled the remaining spots will be offered the next year.

## **SVOSH - Student Volunteers in Optometric Service to Humanity**

SVOSH is a charitable organization dedicated to providing vision care to people in the United States and abroad who would not otherwise receive care. Activities include collecting used eyeglasses and participating in vision screenings in underdeveloped countries and the U.S. Members work hard to raise money year-round to fund their annual trip to a third-world nation. You will acquire skills that will benefit you in your professional education on these trips. The work prior to and during the trip is challenging but rewarding. The group usually allots time for sightseeing while abroad, after they complete the scheduled days of mission work.

## **FCO - Fellowship of Christian Optometrists**

A nondenominational Christian organization designed to provide fellowship to optometrists and students. Activities include bi-weekly luncheon devotionals, social activities, and service projects which include helping those in need, (Jessie's Place, Angel Tree, Operation Christmas Child) and providing vision screenings in the U.S. and abroad. There are no fees for student membership.

## **NOSA -The National Optometric Student Association**

NOSA is the student branch of the National Optometric Association. The NOSA is dedicated to increasing minority representation in the field of optometry. Members participate in community health fairs by doing vision screenings, speaking to local high schools and community groups, assisting the office of student affairs with recruiting activities, and sponsoring luncheon seminars featuring minority optometrists. This group also works hard throughout the year to raise money to attend the national convention of the NOA/NOSA. Past conventions have been held in Florida, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Jamaica.

## **OWNS - Ocular Wellness and Nutrition Society**

The Ocular Wellness and Nutrition Society serves as a liaison in educating, guiding, and advising the optometric community at UABSO with information regarding the role of nutritional support as it relates to eye health and vision.

## **Private Practice Club**

The Club of Private Practice Management exists to provide students with information and opportunities regarding private practice optometry and to aid in the transition from student to doctor. The club aims to explore the rewards, challenges, and opportunities of private practice through guest speakers, events, and workshops.

## **Spectrum Club**

The Spectrum Club focuses on outreach to the LGBTQ community regarding the importance of ocular health and routine eye examinations. The club also aims to educate professionals within the field of optometry on contemporary health issues within the LGBTQ community. The club features guest speakers, volunteer opportunities such as vision screenings, and an inclusive educational environment for all interested in expanding cultural awareness.

## **Sports Vision Club**

The Sports Vision Club is a student organization dedicated to learning about the various ways that optometrists can assist in improving the ocular health and visual performance of athletes, as well as managing ocular problems related to common sports injuries, such as concussions.

## **Student Affairs Student Ambassadors**

This organization consists of an elite group of optometry students who promote a positive image of the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry (UABSO) through its interactions with prospective students, current students, alumni, and other constituents.

## **SGA - Student Government Association**

This organization serves as the student government. There is no out-of-pocket expense for the students for this organization. Major student activities include homecoming events, , Eye Ball in the spring, general body

meetings, and other school wide events throughout the year. In addition, we provide feedback to the student affairs team on student body needs.

## THE COMPUTER AND E-MAIL

### UABSO Executive Committee - Student use of email addresses

The committee concluded that the UAB email account established for each student will be the only account used for official communications with students. Students should not expect UABSO faculty, staff, or administration to use any other email accounts. **Students can direct their UAB account to forward communications to any other email server of the student's choosing, but under these circumstances the School of Optometry cannot be responsible for any lost or misdirected emails. E-mail must be checked by the student at least once per day.**

**What is the best way to communicate with faculty and staff?** Email

**If you have a problem with your email account, who should you contact?** Contact AskIT at [askit@uab.edu](mailto:askit@uab.edu) or 205-996-5555

**Should I open an email with an address beginning with “GRP-so”?** Yes, these e-mails are sent to a specific class or the entire student body and contain important information. It is the best way for the staff and faculty to communicate with student groups.

#### DON'T:

- Ignore e-mails sent to everyone
- Open SPAM or any suspicious e-mail
- Delete important messages, save them in a folder
- Let your e-mail box become so full that you cannot receive messages

## BLAZERNET

**Students are responsible for updating the following information in BlazerNET:**

**Address – a local mailing address is necessary and** must be updated to receive financial aid information from the university along with other important documents

**Cell and Home Phone Numbers** - faculty and staff on occasion have important information to relay to the student that requires a phone call

**Emergency Contacts**—please enter two or more emergency contacts in the event you are injured or become ill while attending school.

BlazerNET is designed for the internal UAB community providing centralized access to the information and services that students, faculty and staff need daily. A few things you will find on BlazerNET:

- Class Registration
- Grades
- Financial Aid
- Events
- Policies
- Forms
- News
- Order Transcript



## LISTER HILL LIBRARY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES

Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences is your resource for medical information:

- Connect from home to the library's resources, including full text
- Find Books and Journals in the library's catalog
- Find Journal Articles related to optometry in MEDLINE
- Get Images and Pictures you can use for class projects

There are **COPY MACHINES** available for student use at the Lister Hill Library. Please check with the Information Desk for prices on color and black and white copies.

Lister Hill hours are:

### Monday-Thursday

7:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.

### Friday

7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

### Saturday

9:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

### Sunday

12:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Lister Hill Library Information Desk: 205-975-4821

**Lister Hill Library can only be accessed with your school ID. This library is only open to students and employees of UAB and other local universities. It is also open to state health and legal professionals.**

## MEDICAL CLEARANCE

All medical clearance is processed through the UAB Student Health Services. You may contact Student Health Services with questions at 205-975-7751 or 205-975-7753.

## OPTOMETRY POLICY ON STUDENT IMMUNIZATIONS

<http://uab.edu/studenthealth/medical-clearance/dentistry-medicine-optometry>

Students matriculating or enrolled in the School of Optometry must comply with the University policy. The information on the web site is kept up to date. Students should refer to the site for details on all required immunizations.

## MANDATORY HEALTH INSURANCE

Health Insurance is required for all students enrolled in the schools of Dentistry, Health Related Professions, Medicine, Nursing and Optometry. These students will be automatically enrolled unless they sign a waiver and provide proof of coverage under another plan. This is mandatory per university policy.

## MANDATORY HIPAA TRAINING

Optometry students must complete online HIPAA training (<https://www.uab.edu/compliance/education-and-training/hipaa-training-for-students>) during orientation prior to beginning optometry school.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

**WBHM (90.3 FM) is the official source for university closings.** All faculty, staff, and students should monitor WBHM for current and accurate information. WBHM will repeatedly broadcast the status of the University every 10 to 30 minutes until the situation has eased. WBHM broadcasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**One** of the following announcements will be released:

- The University of Alabama at Birmingham will remain open, classes will be held as scheduled
- UAB is closed (for the day/until noon, etc.) except for the hospital and emergency personnel.
- Any patients who have appointments today should confirm the appointments by telephone prior to traveling to UAB. UAB personnel should contact their supervisors for further information

Stay tuned to this station for updates

In a situation where the University is not officially closed, students experiencing problems (flooding or impassible roads, etc.) should report in the following manner:

- Didactic Courses: E-mail your professors and copy Student Affairs
- Clinic Assignments: If you are scheduled for the clinic, follow the procedure delineated in the Clinic Manual.

Remember – our first priority is your safety. Students remember to keep the phone numbers you need at home or look them up on the UAB website in the UAB Electronic Phonebook.

## CLASS ATTENDANCE

During your undergraduate education it may have been permissible to miss class without any adverse effect on grades or learning. However, you will find that the curriculum for the professional program is more demanding and requires more time management and class/lab participation. Regardless of whether the instructor includes class attendance as part of the course syllabus, school policy requires that you attend class. If for any reason you have an emergency (illness, family crisis, etc.) that necessitates being out of school, please notify your instructors by e-mail of the courses you will miss and copy the Office of Student Affairs. It is particularly important that the appropriate faculty or staff be notified prior to scheduled examinations.

## POLICY ON STUDENT ABSENCES

It is anticipated that students enrolled in the School of Optometry will attend all lectures and laboratories. Course instructors are responsible for monitoring classroom attendance.

### NON-CLINIC ABSENCES

#### AUTHORIZED ABSENCES

##### **ABSENCES DUE TO PERSONAL EMERGENCIES:**

In this category are absences due to illness, accident, death, legal or financial crisis.

##### **ABSENCES DUE TO APPROVED STUDENT PROJECTS, PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS AND OTHER SPECIAL ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES:**

In this category are absences to attend annual meetings of optometric professional organizations such as the AOA, AAO, ARVO, AOSA, and SECO. Some meetings will involve cancellation of all classes and others not. The academic schedule should be consulted for each meeting. When not specifically canceled, absences will require make-up.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **ABSENCES DUE TO PERSONAL EMERGENCIES:**

Such absences will be considered on an individual basis, but generally not approved for personal business. Unexplained, unauthorized or excessive absences may result in disciplinary action. Notification to appropriate faculty by e-mail and specify (1) reason for absence, (2) estimated length of absence, (3) assigned clinic responsibilities, and (4) phone # during period of absence.

### **ABSENCES FOR STUDENT PROJECT, ETC.:**

Permission must be obtained from instructors whose class will be missed by completing a Student Absence Request Form. Lecture and lab courses must have at least two weeks' advanced notice.

**STUDENT ABSENCE REQUEST FORM for didactic courses can be found at**

<http://www.uab.edu/optometry/home/student-resources>

## **CLINIC ABSENCES**

Please note that the clinic has their own policy regarding student absences—scheduled and emergency absences.

## **OPTOMETRY LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY**

On rare occasions, a student may request a temporary leave of absence from the professional program. A leave of absence may be granted for personal or medical reasons. A personal leave may be granted if a student in good academic standing encounters circumstances that significantly hamper academic or clinical progress. The student's academic standing refers to both recent performance (i.e. whether on academic probation) and performance in the current academic term. A medical leave may be granted if a student has a significant health issue (such as serious illness, hospitalization, surgery/recuperation, pregnancy, maternity leave, etc.) that requires extended time for healing, treatment, or recovery. For a personal leave of absence, the minimum duration is one academic term. The maximum duration of a personal or medical leave of absence is one year. If a student requires more than one year away from the professional program, this will be considered a withdrawal.

The intent of a leave of absence is to provide the student with a temporary departure from the program, while maintaining his or her status and position within the curriculum. The student considering a leave of absence should discuss his or her situation with the Director of Student Affairs prior to making a formal request.

### **Procedure for Requesting a Leave of Absence**

To request a leave of absence, the student must submit the following to the Director of Student Affairs:

- A written request detailing the circumstances involved and the duration of the anticipated leave.

- In the case of a medical leave, a letter from the student's physician supporting the need for and duration of the leave. At the end of the leave period, another physician letter will be required confirming that the student is able to return to the professional program.
- If the duration of the requested leave is less than one year, a written proposal of how the student intends to make up the missed classes, laboratories, and/or clinic assignments. This proposal will be reviewed by appropriate administration and may be modified to comply with the policies and requirements of the professional program (see below). The Associate Dean for Student Affairs must approve the final plan.

### **Academic Progression and Leave of Absence**

A leave of absence is a temporary suspension of all academic and clinical activities in the optometry professional program. As such, a leave of absence may jeopardize forward progress in the professional curriculum and delay expected graduation. It is the policy of the UAB School of Optometry that progression in the professional program may not be possible if significant absence is incurred due to leave, according to the following conditions:

- If a leave of absence precludes attendance in didactic (classroom) courses for less than or equal to 25% in any given term, continuation in these courses will occur only with the approval of the Director of Student Affairs, after consultation with the involved course instructors. If allowed to continue, the student will be responsible for making up all assignments and activities missed during the leave.
- If a leave of absence precludes attendance in didactic (classroom) courses for more than 25% of any given term, continuation in those courses will not occur, and the student will receive a "W" (withdraw) grade for the involved courses. The student will be permitted to re-enter the courses in good standing at the next available offering of the course.
- If a leave of absence precludes any attendance in clinical courses, the student will be permitted to make up equivalent clinical experiences only with approval of the appropriate Clinic Service Directors, with final approval by the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs. The student should meet with each Clinic Service Director to develop a written plan that satisfies the requirements of the particular clinic. If an approved plan is not possible, the student will re-enter the clinical courses at the beginning of the next available offering of the courses.

## **REFUND POLICY**

Tuition for the term will be refunded if withdrawal occurs prior to the second week of a term. Fifty percent of tuition will be refunded if withdrawal occurs between week two and week four of the term. No refund of tuition will be made for withdrawals after the fourth week of a term.

## **STUDENT GRIEVANCE, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND APPEALS**

### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

**Informal Complaint Procedure:** Student complaints should be resolved on an informal basis without the filing of a formal grievance.

1. A student has 10 business days from the date of the incident being grieved to resolve their complaint informally by approaching their instructor, department chair or any other staff or faculty member directly involved in the grieved incident.

- When this process does not result in a resolution of the grievance, the student may proceed to the formal grievance procedure.

*Note: The complaint will not be processed if the 10-day period has passed.*

**Formal Complaint Procedure:** When a student cannot resolve their complaint informally, they may use the formal grievance procedure.

- Within 15 business days of the incident being grieved, the student must file a formal grievance in the Office of Student Affairs using the Student Grievance Form accompanied by the Informal Complaint Remedy/Outcome Form and supporting documentation.
- If the grievance is against the Director of Student Affairs or an individual faculty member, the student shall file the grievance in the Office of the Department of Optometry and Vision Science Chairman.
- The Director of Student Affairs or the Department Chairman, will investigate the matter and supply a written response to the student within 15 business days.
- If the grieved incident involves possible unlawful harassment, discrimination or retaliation for reporting unlawful harassment/discrimination, the investigation will be handled by the University Office of Student Affairs as directed by the University policy.
- If the grieved incident is closely related to an incident being processed through the disciplinary procedure, the disciplinary procedure will take precedence, and the grievance will not be processed until the disciplinary procedure has run its course.

**Appeal of Staff Response:** If a student is unsatisfied with the response from the Director of Student Affairs and/or the Chairman of the Department of Optometry and Vision Science, the student may appeal the decision to the Dean.

- A student must file a written appeal within 5 business days of receiving the response from the Director of Student Affairs and/or the Chairman of the Department of Optometry and Vision Science.
- The appeal will be decided based entirely on documents provided by the student and the administration; therefore, the student must ensure that he has provided all relevant documents with his appeal.
- At the Dean's sole discretion, grievance appeals may be held in one of the following two ways:
  - The Dean may review the information provided by the student and administration and make the final decision; or
  - The Dean may appoint a cross-functional committee to make the final decision.
- Whichever process is chosen by the Dean, the decision of the grievance appeal is final. Retaliation against a student for filing a grievance is strictly prohibited.

## ACADEMIC POLICY FOR THE FIRST PROFESSIONAL DEGREE PROGRAM (Doctor of Optometry)

**Approval Date: 09/12/23**

**This version of the policy supersedes all prior versions.**

### Grading System

All School of Optometry courses (didactic and clinical) will use the following letter grades and corresponding

percentages:

- A 90-100%**
- B 80-89%**
- C 70-79%**
- F below 70%<sup>1</sup>**
- P Pass**
- I Incomplete**

The temporary notation of “I” may be reported at the discretion of the instructor to indicate that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course but, due to unforeseen circumstances, has been unable to finish all course requirements. An incomplete is given when the student, for nonacademic reasons beyond his/her control, is unable to complete course requirements. This notation should not be used unless there is reasonable certainty that the requirements will be completed during the subsequent academic term, since at the end of that term the Incomplete automatically changes to an F.

In highly unusual circumstances the student may request an extension of the time to complete the requirements. This request must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs prior to when the grade automatically changes to an F. The approval of the instructor, the Professional Program Academic and Honor Council (PPAHC), the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and Dean of the School of Optometry may be required.

- W Withdraw**
- WP Withdraw Passing**
- WF Withdraw Failing**
- AU Audit**
- P/F grading policy will be determined by the instructor**

The grade point average is calculated by dividing the total number of quality points attained by the total number of semester hours attempted. The number of quality points attained for each course is determined by multiplying the earned quality points by the semester hour value of the course.

<sup>1</sup> In addition to other course criteria as set by the course director/instructor.

## Academic Term

The academic year consists of the following terms: Fall A, Fall B, Fall, Spring A, Spring B, Spring, Summer I, Summer II, and Summer. The academic year begins in the fall and ends after summer term at which time, promotion to the next sequential year occurs.

## Program Length

Students are expected to complete the professional optometry program in four academic years. Due to extenuating circumstances, including repeating a year, and other restrictions of academic probation, students may require more than four academic years to complete the program. The maximum time allowed to complete the professional program is six years (**72 months**) from the date of a student’s beginning of classes. In highly unusual circumstances, the student may request an extension of the time to complete the professional program. This request must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs followed by approval by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and Dean of the School of Optometry are all required.

## Promotion/Graduation

Students who have an annual and cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or greater, without rounding, who have successfully completed all courses within an academic year, and who have a satisfactory record of professional conduct will be promoted to the succeeding year or will be eligible to graduate from the professional program if in the final year. In order to progress from the spring semester to the summer semester, prerequisites require that each student has successfully completed all courses in the professional program curriculum up to and including the spring semester, unless otherwise required by the Professional Program Academic and Honor Council (PPAHC). Each course in the program must be successfully completed in order for a student to receive the O.D. degree. Demonstration of acceptable professional standards and ethical values, as defined by the UABSO Code of Ethics and the document entitled [Basic Competency for Entry-Level Optometrists](#), are required for graduation.

## Enrollment Status

A student's enrollment status may change after the failure of a course or clinic. Academic leave may be necessary in order to repeat the course when it is next offered. The PPAHC may recommend a clinical technician position in the interim to prevent the loss of clinical skills during leave period. Please see the School of Optometry Leave of Absence Policy in the Student Handbook for more information regarding enrollment status and withdrawals.

## Professional Program Academic and Honor Council

The Professional Program Academic and Honor Council (PPAHC) is charged with monitoring the academic status of students enrolled in the UABSO and enforcing the School of Optometry's Academic Integrity Code. The PPAHC will meet on a regular basis, as needed, primarily at the end of each academic term. The PPAHC will review grades, performance of students on academic probation, material from course directors regarding failures in their courses and student documentation pertaining to a failure of a course (only after the student has been informed of the failure by the course director). The course director should communicate the failure of his/her course to the student by the date on which grades are due for that term. The course director will advise students of the method by which a course failure will be communicated. The course director shall also provide written notice of a course failure to the PPAHC chairperson, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and the Director of Student Affairs, by the date on which grades are due for that term, absent extenuating circumstances.

For any F grade issued, the course director will provide the PPAHC with a written summary of the student's performance with a recommendation to the PPAHC. If an F grade is received in a clinical course, the course director may ask the instructor(s) assigned to the student for input when drafting the summary and recommendation. Factors used to determine the appropriate course of action for the management of an F grade include, but are not limited to, the following: overall course performance, current and past academic performance, attendance, demonstrated efforts toward self-help and documented special circumstances that may have contributed to poor performance, such as personal or family illness. If a student believes that extenuating circumstances contributed to a failing grade, an appeal letter documenting such factors should be submitted to the Chairperson of the PPAHC, prior to the committee meeting. All students with their academic status under review by the PPAHC will be invited to present their case in person or via Zoom at the PPAHC meeting when the case is discussed.

In the event that a member of the PPAHC is the course instructor who issued a failing grade, the member will recuse himself/herself and will refrain from voting on the committee recommendation for that student.

The PPAHC will make a ruling by vote regarding the promotion, probationary status, course repetition, course remediation and/or dismissal of the student. The course instructor who assigned the F grade will not move forward with his/her recommendation or re-examine the student, until after the PPAHC has evaluated the student's overall performance and determined the appropriate action, absent extenuating circumstances.

Any decisions involving academic actions will be conveyed to the student by the Office of Student Affairs. An attempt will be made to notify the student in person, but if this cannot be accomplished in a timely manner, the student may be notified by telephone, UAB e-mail or certified mail. The contact information for the student will be taken from Banner, the University's student database.

## Repeating a Failed Course

All didactic and clinical courses for which an F grade is assigned must be repeated successfully in order for a student to progress in the professional program or to receive the O.D. degree. Based on the course director's written summary and ruling of the PPAHC, a failed course may be repeated, at the discretion of the course director, by either:

1. enrolling in the course when it is next offered

Students required to enroll in the course when it is next offered may be given the option to take an adjusted schedule of courses during the year before the failed course is repeated. Courses allowed will be those that do not require the failed course as a prerequisite, and that are deemed by the PPAHC to be in the best interest of the student. Adjusted schedules may be allowed. When a student is away from the program for a semester or more, additional customized requirements may be recommended by the PPAHC, including but not limited to repeating courses, auditing courses, remediation and examination.

or

2. completing an alternate repeat course in place of the original course

### Didactic Courses

The requirements of the alternate repeat course may include, but are not limited to self-study, written assignments, periodic meetings, re-testing, and/or assignments designed to improve understanding of course content.

### Clinic Courses

In some cases, the course director may recommend an alternate repeat clinical course in place of a failed clinic course. If this is offered, the alternate repeat course may include, but is not limited to: patient care assignments with faculty observation/supervision of specific techniques or conditions, case reviews, written assignments, periodic meetings and/or other activities designed to improve clinical performance.

If the course director offers an alternate repeat course, he/she will usually serve as the course director and will determine the course requirements, grading and scheduling of the course. The course director may also suggest an alternate appropriate course outside of the school to the PPAHC chair or Associate Dean for Student Affairs. Additional provisions may be suggested by the PPAHC in consultation with the course director who assigned the original F grade. The grading scale used for the alternate repeat course should be identical to that



of the course failed. A course syllabus specific to this course will be provided to the student by the course director. Special courses that are created for these purposes for a specific student will be given a new course grade and extra tuition may be applied. The assigned course director/instructor(s) for alternate repeat courses will provide the course syllabus and regular feedback regarding the student's performance in the course to the PPAHC, which will review the performance and make further recommendations, as appropriate. Due to the complexity of an adjusted schedule, a student who has failed a course will not always be eligible to enroll in the next sequential academic term.

When a student successfully repeats a failed course, he or she will receive a grade and course credit for the repeated course, based on the repeat course requirements. The F grade from the course failed will remain on the student's transcript, and both grades will be used in all grade point average calculations. Repeat/alternate repeat courses could significantly delay progression in the program and the graduation date. When a repeat course is failed, the student will receive an F grade and will be subject to dismissal from the program. In cases of extenuating circumstances, the PPAHC may allow a student to remediate a repeat course F grade while on academic performance probation.

## Remediation

### Mid-Semester Remediation

Remediation may occur in a course when an instructor has recognized deficiencies that can be corrected within the term. The course director may design a program, in addition to the original course, in order to address deficiencies.

### Post-Semester Remediation

Students failing a course at the end of the academic term may be allowed to complete a remediation course as outlined in the course syllabus and consistent with the academic policy and at the recommendation of the PPAHC. Students enrolling in a remediation course will be issued an "incomplete" until the requirements of the remediation are finished. The remediation course will be designed by the course director/instructor with guidance from the PPAHC to retest the student's deficient skills and/or allow the student to demonstrate mastery or proficiency of the course content. The remediation course should be limited in scope and not intended to retest the entire course content. Requirements for passage of the remediation course must be clearly outlined by the course director and shared with the student and the PPAHC.

Didactic Remediation: Remediation may include, but is not limited to self-study, written assignments, periodic meetings, re-testing, and/or assignments designed to improve understanding of course content.

Clinic Remediation: Remediation may include, but is not limited to patient care assignments, with faculty observation/supervision of specific techniques or conditions, care reviews, written assignments, periodic meetings, and/or other activities designed to improve clinical performance.

The duration of the remediation course cannot extend beyond the first two weeks of the subsequent semester. Students successfully completing the remediation course before the end of the second week of the subsequent semester will be issued a passing grade for the previously incomplete course. Students failing the remediation will be issued a failing grade for the original course and subject to the consequences of course failure outlined in the Academic Policy. Student failure or passage of the remediation course will be

communicated to the PPAHC within 5 days. Due to the complexity of such special programs and schedules, students may not always be eligible to enroll in the next sequential academic term, and remediation could delay progression in the program and/or a student's graduation date. The need for remediation may prevent the student from attending an externship program. If a student who is on academic performance probation fails a remediation course, he/she may be subject to dismissal from the program.

## Repeating an Academic Year

Circumstances that can subject a student to repeating all or part of an academic year include but are not limited to:

- One F grade while on academic performance probation, regardless of GPA.
- Annual GPA below 2.0 at the end of the summer term.

Students repeating an academic year may be required to repeat all courses in that academic year in which a C grade or less was originally earned, as well as any other courses which the PPAHC feels are in the best interest of the student. When a student is away from the program for a semester or more, additional customized requirements may be recommended by the PPAHC, including but not limited to repeating courses, auditing courses, remediation and examination. In the event that a curricular change has created a relocation of a course to a different academic year, efforts will be made to allow the student to take the course at an alternate time. Other curricular recommendations may be made by the PPAHC. The length of academic probation for students repeating an academic year will be determined by the PPAHC. Repeating an academic year will delay progression in the program and the graduation date.

## Academic Probation

### **Academic Performance Probation**

Circumstances resulting in academic performance probation include, but are not limited to:

- One F grade, regardless of GPA
- GPA below 2.0

Academic performance probation is a warning to the student that he/she must show substantial improvement to avoid repetition of the year or dismissal from the professional program. While on academic performance probation, a student will not be allowed to hold leadership positions in his/her class, the school, university, or other organizations supported by, or in association with, UABSO. Participation in extracurricular activities associated with the UABSO may be limited. This may include, but is not limited to, participation in class, school and university activities, state, regional and national organization meetings, conferences, and school-sponsored mission trips. Fourth year students may not be permitted to participate in externship rotations while on academic performance probation, unless they are repeating the fourth year and the PPAHC feel that externships are within the best interest of academic development of the student. This may delay the student's graduation date. The PPAHC will recommend the length of academic performance probation based on individual circumstances.

When a student is placed on academic performance probation, they will meet periodically with a faculty mentor during the probation period. The role of the mentor is to provide encouragement and guidance to the student. The mentor will not be held accountable for the success or failure of the student. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all requirements are met for the successful completion of the professional program.

### **Academic Conduct Probation**

Academic conduct probation can be applied as a result of violations of the [UABSO Academic Integrity Code](#). Academic conduct probation is a warning to the student that he/she must maintain an acceptable level of conduct in UABSO and the university community in order to avoid repetition of a course or a year or dismissal from the professional program. While on academic conduct probation, a student will not be allowed to hold leadership positions or participate in any extracurricular activities supported by, or in association with, the UABSO. This may include, but is not limited to, participation in class, school and university leadership positions, state, regional and national organization meetings, conferences, and school-sponsored mission trips. A student may be judged unacceptable for promotion or be dismissed when the student has displayed repeated lack of professionalism with respect to the management of patients or in interactions with other students, staff, or the faculty. These factors, among others, may be treated equally in importance with other academic standards in that they reflect the developing capacity to deliver a high standard of health service.

### **Dismissal from the Program**

A recommendation for dismissal from the program may be made by the PPAHC if sufficient evidence exists to indicate that a student will not be able to correct past academic deficiencies or to meet the standards described in the document entitled [Basic Competency for Entry-Level Optometrist](#) within the time period allowed to complete the professional optometry program. Once a student has been dismissed from the program, future requests for readmission to the UAB School of Optometry will not be considered.

Academic circumstances that can subject a student to dismissal from the professional program include, but are not limited to:

- Two or more F grades in the same term, regardless of GPA or academic probationary status
- One or more F grades received while repeating all or part of an academic year
- A failing grade while on academic performance probation
- A failing grade and subsequent failure of an alternate repeat course

Note that if the PPAHC stated in writing, in a previous term review, that any additional F, even in a non-repeat course, will bring dismissal from the program, the recommendation of the PPAHC will automatically be for dismissal.

### **Auditing**

The PPAHC may recommend that a student audit one or more courses previously taken in addition to repeating a failed course or academic year. [Audit Approval Forms](#), obtained from the Office of Student Affairs, must be completed for each course which was recommended to be audited. A student who is permitted by an instructor to audit a course must officially register for that course through the Banner system and must notify the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Director of Student Affairs, the PPAHC Chair, and the course director/instructor at least 45 days before the course begins. Students who are auditing a course will participate in the same activities and will have the same course requirements as students officially enrolled in the course, unless otherwise specified by the course director; however, he/she will not receive an official grade for the course. Tuition will be applied for audits.

In special cases, course directors have the discretion to allow UAB students or faculty to attend, but not officially audit, portions of a course provided it does not lead to a diminished academic experience for those who are enrolled and provided that all other students and faculty interested in attending are given equal consideration.

## Academic Status

Good Academic Standing - A student not on academic probation with a grade point average of at least 2.0 is in good academic standing at UAB School of Optometry.

## Grade Appeal/Review

Students may appeal a grade in a course if they feel one of the following applies:

- The grading was not in accordance with published course grading policy.
- Inconsistencies were made in application of evaluation standards among students.
- An error occurred in determining or assigning the grade
- The grading was arbitrary or capricious.
- The grading was affected by illegal discrimination.

The student should seek resolution using the following steps:

1. Clarification should be sought from the course director/instructor in an attempt to resolve the disagreement without further appeal. This step must be completed as soon as possible but no later than 5 days from the date of notice from the course director or the release of the course grade in the BlazerNET/Banner system, whichever is earlier.
2. If the matter is not resolved by consultation with the course director, the student may submit a written appeal to the PPAHC. This must be accomplished as soon as possible, but no later than 5 days after meeting with the course director. The written appeal must state the basis for the grade appeal. The PPAHC will consult with the student and course director/instructor and review relevant evidence as needed. The PPAHC will decide for or against the appeal.
3. If the PPAHC's decision is to deny the appeal, the student may make a written appeal to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The appeal is an opportunity to present either a challenge to the procedures followed or to offer newly discovered evidence that could affect the outcome. This appeal must be received by the Associate Dean as soon as possible but no later than 5 days from the date of notice of the decision from the PPAHC. The Associate Dean will review the matter with the PPAHC Chair, the course director/instructor, and the student, in addition to any other relevant evidence, as necessary, and will decide whether to grant or deny the appeal. The appellant is reminded that an appeal to the Associate Dean is not intended to provide a forum in which to reiterate the same facts or arguments previously considered by the PPAHC.

In the event that a grade appeal is not settled before the beginning of the next academic term, the student should register for the next term and attend all classes until otherwise notified by the Office of Student Affairs.

## Academic Appeal

If a student believes there is reasonable cause to request an appeal of a decision by the PPAHC, regarding the status of probation or other required actions, such as remediation, repetition of a course or year, or dismissal from the program, the student must address a written appeal to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, stating the basis for the appeal as soon as possible, but no later than 5 days from the date of the notification of the academic actions. The Associate Dean will review the matter with the PPAHC Chair, the course director/instructor and the student, in addition to any other relevant evidence, as necessary, and will decide whether or not to uphold the decision of the PPAHC. The objective of the Associate Dean in the case of an appeal will be to ensure that the applicable process was followed, and the decision reached is supported

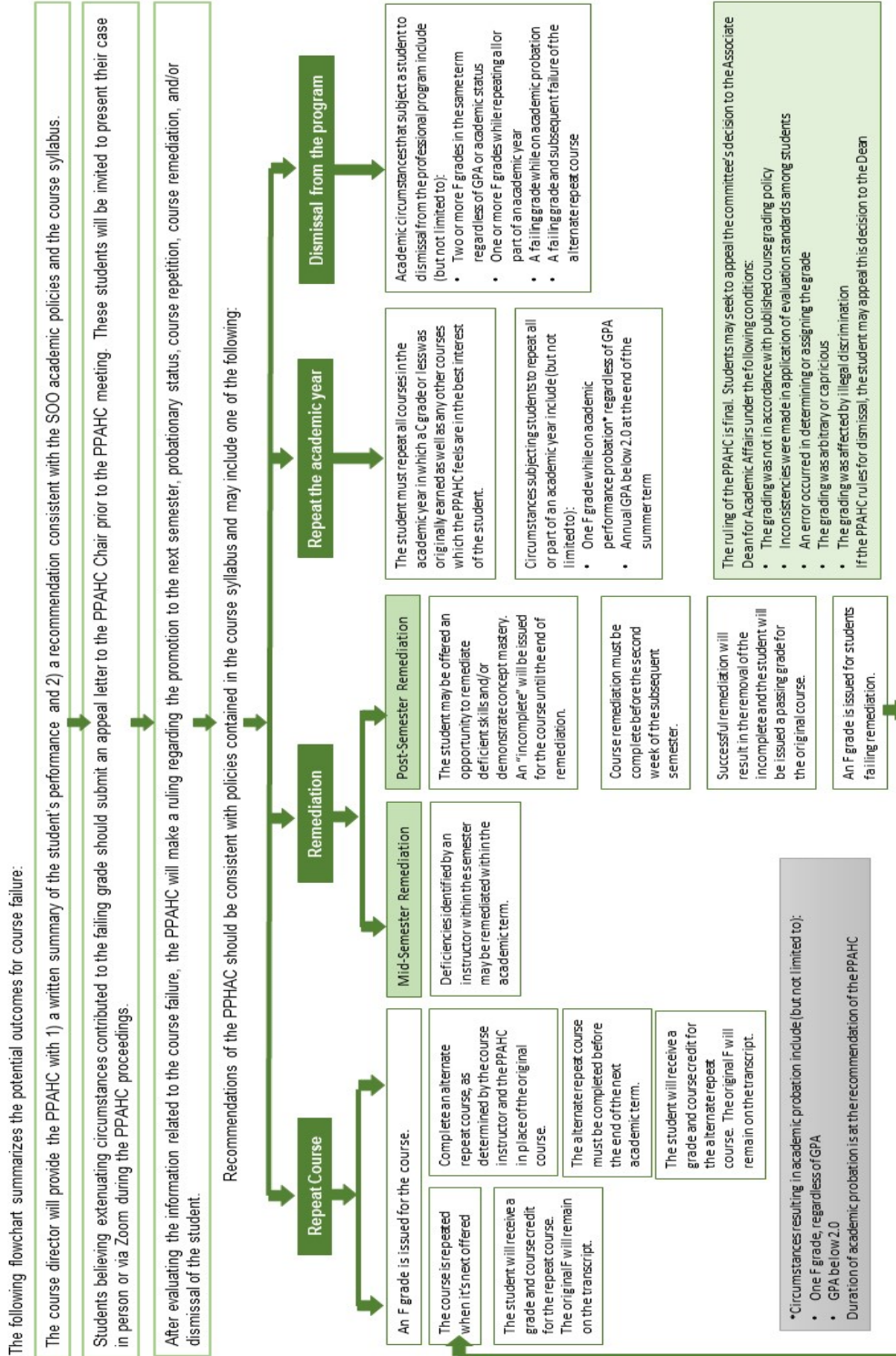
by the facts. The appellant is reminded that an appeal to the Associate Dean is not intended to provide a forum in which to reiterate the same facts or arguments previously considered by the PPAHC. The appeal is an opportunity to present either a challenge to the procedures followed or to offer newly discovered evidence that could affect the outcome. The final appeal will be to the Dean of the School of Optometry.

In the event that an academic status appeal is not settled before the beginning of the next academic term, the student should register for the next term and attend all classes until otherwise notified by the Office of Student Affairs.

These guidelines may be revised periodically. In the event that a policy change has occurred during a term within which a grade was issued, or during a year in which an academic status was determined, the academic decisions will be governed by the version of the Academic Policy that is most favorable to the student.

# Appendix

## Professional Program Academic Policy Flow Chart



## THE UAB SCHOOL OF OPTOMETRY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

*The essence of the Academic Integrity Code and its Code of Ethics is that we will not engage in unethical behavior, nor will we tolerate it in others.*

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*The essence of the academic Integrity Code and its Code of Ethics is that we will not engage in unethical behavior, nor will we tolerate it in others.*

**Approval Date: 09/12/23**

**This version of the policy supersedes all prior versions.**

### Definitions

- Academic Integrity Code – This document describes the Honor System and includes the Code of Ethics as well as the processes for handling alleged violations.
- Code of Ethics – The code contained within the Academic Integrity Code that delineates ethical behavior.
- Honor Pledge – A pledge affirming that the signee has read, understands and agrees to adhere to the Academic Integrity Code and its Code of Ethics.

### Section I. Preamble

The UAB School of Optometry Academic Integrity Code is based on the principle that all members of the academic community maintain the highest ethical and professional standards. These principles apply to all student work, whether in-person or virtual, and work conducted in labs, internships/externships, or clinical assignments. Ethics and professional standards serve to maintain the integrity of the educational enterprise and of the profession and protect patients through ensuring conscientious patient care. The essence of the Academic Integrity Code is that we will not engage in unethical behavior, nor will we tolerate it in others.

### Section II. Responsibilities of Students and Faculty

Articulating and maintaining high standards of ethical behavior is a task that is shared by students, faculty, and staff. The faculty and administration are responsible for the integrity of the educational program and shall support the Academic Integrity Code in order to foster the highest standards of professional behavior.

Each person signing the Honor Pledge is bound to abide by the Academic Integrity Code and to follow the policies and procedures outlined in this document. Students are expected to comply with the Academic Integrity Code in all academic and professional activities.

Students, faculty, residents, and staff are required to report breaches of the Code of Ethics when they are observed. Such responsibility is necessary to maintain the high standards of the School of Optometry. Examples of specific conduct either expected or prohibited are described below in the Code of Ethics but are not intended to limit the scope of what might be considered misconduct. The spirit of ethical behavior is the guiding principle. Failure to report misconduct is also a violation of the Code of Ethics.

Faculty members bear the responsibility for clearly expressing the rules governing assignments and examinations and for conducting examinations or other evaluative processes in a manner that discourages cheating. Faculty and designated exam proctors must be willing to participate in this process if this Code of Ethics is to be effective

### **Section III. Code of Ethics**

While this Code of Ethics can in no way be exhaustive, it is intended as a guide to ethical behavior among students. The Academic Integrity Code requires students to act honorably while enrolled at the UAB School of Optometry and includes coursework that is offered in online, blended or web-enhanced environments or as a homework assignment. University students are expected to abide by the core values of honor and integrity set forth in UAB's creed, The Blazer Way which states "I hold myself accountable to represent our unique community with honor and integrity." All students are expected to be familiar with the Academic Integrity Code and abide by it. The Code of Ethics prohibits the following conduct, and any violation of the Code of Ethics is considered academic misconduct:

#### **Conduct Related to Coursework**

- a. Cheating  
Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, including but not limited to materials, information, study aids, the work of others, or electronic device-related information, any of which have not been approved by the instructor, as well as unauthorized assistance from third parties including a commercial service or engaging another person (whether paid or unpaid); sharing answers for either a take-home or in-class exams unless specifically and explicitly allowed.
- b. Facilitation  
Assisting, knowingly helping, supporting, conspiring, or colluding with others to engage in any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to two or more students that work together to produce individually submitted work without permission of the appropriate faculty member.
- c. Plagiarism  
Claiming as your own ideas, words, data, computer programs, creative compositions, artwork, etc., done by someone or something else. Examples include improper citation of referenced works, the use of commercially available scholarly papers, the use of artificial intelligence, failure to cite sources, or copying another person's ideas.



- d. Self-Plagiarism  
Resubmitting your own previously submitted work without proper citation and permission from the current instructor to whom the original work was subsequently submitted.
- e. Fabrication  
Presenting as genuine any invented or falsified citation, data, or material.
- f. Falsification/Misrepresentation  
Falsifying, altering, or incorrectly defining the contents of documents or other materials related to academic matters, including work substantially done for one class as work done for another without receiving prior approval from the instructor, work pertaining to schedules, prerequisites, and transcripts, or misrepresenting facts about oneself for the purpose of obtaining an academic advantage or for the purpose of academically injuring another student.
- g. Students are responsible for maintaining possession of their audience response system “clicker.” If students are registered as present for a class by the audience response system, or other attendance monitoring system, but are in fact not in class, or have left class without permission, this is a violation of the Code of Ethics. Students should therefore keep their audience response clicker secure; these devices should not be given to other students. Possession of devices registered to other students is considered a violation of the Code of Ethics.

### **Conduct Affecting Property**

- a. Every student shall refrain from taking, damaging, or destroying property belonging to the university or to faculty, staff, students, or visitors.
- b. Students will respect the supplies provided by the School and will prevent needless and reckless waste of resources.
- c. Students will make reasonable efforts to keep equipment and property in proper working order; students should report equipment problems appropriately.

### **Conduct Affecting Patients**

- a. Students will act in a way that puts the well-being of patients as the highest priority and will refrain from irresponsible, willful or negligent behavior in the delivery of patient care.
- b. In accordance with CDC guidelines, students, faculty, and staff are expected to follow health recommendations in order to keep the UAB community safe. This may include wearing face masks while in patient care settings or reporting symptoms or testing status. Please visit the [UAB United website](#) for the most up to date information.
- c. It is also important stay current with Student Health guidelines for required immunizations and dashboard for vaccination status.
- d. Every student shall refrain from falsifying patient records and from willfully violating established clinic policy. Every student is expected to comply with all clinic policies and procedures, including applicable university, federal, and state laws and regulations at all times. Students involved in research projects are likewise expected to maintain scientific integrity and to comply with all university, federal, state, and school regulations, policies and laws.
- e. Students will respect the privacy of patients and will not discuss protected information unless it is medically appropriate. Students will be compliant with HIPAA regulations.
- f. Students will treat patients with respect, compassion and understanding.
- g. Students will treat patients in a timely manner.
- h. Students will adhere to the clinical dress code and acceptable standards of

- personal care.
- i. Students will satisfy the requirements for infection control and protect the safety of patients in the clinic.
- j. Students will not use any substance that could impair their abilities while engaged in patient care.
- k. Students will not treat patients outside of School approved settings or without the supervision of faculty or an officially appointed, licensed practitioner. The practice of optometry is defined in [Title 34, Chapter 22](#) of the Code of Alabama. Students who see patients outside of School provisions may be guilty of a crime punishable by Alabama law.

### **Conduct Affecting the School or University**

- a. Students will strive to uphold an atmosphere of academic purpose, including freedom of speech, the opportunity to explore ideas, and the chance to improve oneself through education.
- b. Students will be respectful to their classmates and faculty regarding attendance at lectures, timeliness, classroom demeanor, and being responsive to the requests of the lecturer.
- c. Students will participate in assigned activities and will attend all lectures and other assignments such as clinics and rotations as required by course syllabi. Students will adhere to all University policies and procedures. This includes appropriate use of the internet and Information Technology resources.

## **Section IV. The Professional Program Academic and Honor Council**

The Professional Program Academic and Honor Council (PPAHC) is charged with monitoring the academic status of students enrolled in UABSO and enforcing UABSO's Academic Integrity Code. The PPAHC shall be composed of seven faculty members and two students. The Dean may appoint an *ad hoc* PPAHC faculty member or student to replace any representative who cannot serve for a given hearing. The PPAHC Chair acts as the Director of Academic Integrity. The Director of Student Affairs is appointed by the Dean as the Academic Integrity Coordinator and serves as a non-voting procedural advisor to the PPAHC Chair.

A quorum of the PPAHC will be 6 members, at least 3 of which must be faculty members including the Chair. If the alleged incident is clinical in nature, at least two of the faculty present must have clinical assignments.

The duties of the Chair include convening the PPAHC, presiding over hearings, and communicating with the administration of the School on behalf of the PPAHC.

All persons participating in PPAHC proceedings in any capacity shall refrain from discussing information pertaining to a case with anyone not directly involved with the case, unless necessary for the investigation or if instructed by the Chair of the PPAHC.

If members of the PPAHC are witnesses to an event, or have brought charges against a student, they may not serve on the Council for that case. Council members should recuse themselves from any case if they feel there may be any conflicts of interest or lack of impartiality. An accused student may also petition the Director of Student Affairs to have a PPAHC member dismissed from the proceedings if a perceived conflict of interest exists.

## **Section V. General Procedures for Suspected Violations**

## Reporting Suspected Violations

Any student, faculty, or staff member suspecting a Code of Ethics violation shall report it in writing to the faculty member in charge of the course (course director) in which the suspected violation occurred or directly to the Academic Integrity coordinator (Director of Student Affairs) or through the online reporting system ([Maxient](#)) within five working days of the discovery of the alleged incident. A course director having allegations of a Code of Ethics violation reported to them must report such allegations through [Maxient](#) within five working days of learning of the incident. In an extended absence of the Integrity coordinator, the suspected violation shall be reported to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or to the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs for violations related to clinical care, who must report the incident through the [Maxient](#) System.

Individual faculty may attempt to informally resolve an incident that occurs in or related to their course; however, every alleged violation of the Code of Ethics must be reported to the Academic Integrity Coordinator. Instructors are encouraged to discuss the suspected violation with the student(s) involved. Doing so may correct errors or misunderstandings. If an instructor determines during this preliminary discussion that no violation of the Code of Ethics occurred, the matter will then be closed, and no disciplinary record created. If the instructor determines a violation of the Code of Ethics may have occurred, the instructor will file a charge of academic misconduct via [Maxient](#) and provide all related evidence. Upon receipt of an online misconduct report, the Academic Integrity Coordinator will determine if there is “reasonable basis” to believe that academic misconduct has occurred. If not, the matter is closed, no disciplinary record is created, and the instructor is notified. If yes, the Academic Integrity Coordinator will set up a meeting with the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, the instructor, and student. The meeting can be held virtually if the parties are not available for an in-person meeting.

## Resolution Agreement

With the authorization of the Academic Integrity Coordinator, instructors may enter into a **Resolution Agreement** with a student (a) who has no prior record of academic misconduct at the University and (b) who acknowledges responsibility for academic misconduct.

Instructors who wish to enter into a Resolution Agreement with the student shall send notice of the charge of violating the Academic Integrity Code and of a proposed meeting to the student’s official University email address. If the student fails to respond to the instructor’s email within five business days, or if the student fails to attend the meeting with the instructor, the instructor shall refer the case to the Academic Integrity Coordinator for disposition, noting the student’s failure to respond.

A Resolution Agreement with the instructor acknowledges the academic misconduct, documents how the pending case should be resolved and contains the following elements:

- Date of Resolution Agreement
- Student name and Blazer ID
- Course name and section (if applicable)
- School or college where academic misconduct occurred
- Instructor name and Blazer ID
- Date of academic misconduct
- Description of the academic misconduct
- Agreed resolution and sanctions
- Statement of waiving right of further review or appeal.

The Academic Integrity Coordinator will file the signed Resolution Agreement with the student's record in Maxient. All cases resolved by a student's authorized Resolution Agreement with a referring instructor shall be final and conclusive and not subject to further review.

Sanctions in cases resolved between instructors and students may range from a written reprimand to a failing grade on an assignment or the course depending on the severity of misconduct (Section VII). Resolution Agreements, however, are not an option when the sanction is suspension or expulsion. Acceptance of responsibility by an accused student may be considered by an instructor as a mitigating factor in the sanctioning process. The student must sign the document to accept the Resolution Agreement, or it will be forwarded to the Academic Integrity Coordinator for resolution.

If the student has a prior record of academic misconduct, does not accept a *Resolution Agreement* or fails to participate in a Resolution Agreement in the allotted timeframe, the resolution of academic misconduct must be achieved through referral to the Academic Integrity Coordinator. A hold will be placed on the student's account indicating that the student cannot withdraw from the course in which the academic misconduct is alleged to have occurred until the misconduct resolution process is complete.

## Conferences

The Academic Integrity Coordinator may resolve the academic misconduct accusation in a conference with the student or refer any case to the PPAHC due to complexity, a contested case, or conflicts of interest. The Academic Integrity Coordinator must refer cases to the PPAHC if the student has been subject to a prior finding of academic misconduct or if the potential sanctions are suspension or expulsion. In any circumstance listed above, the student must be notified of charges, possible sanctions and provided a link to the Academic Integrity Code in a *Notice of Conference or Hearing* (Maxient). This notice should be provided to the student through the student's official University email address five days prior to a Conference or PPAHC hearing.

A conference is a meeting between the Coordinator and the accused student. It can be held virtually if the student or the Coordinator is not available for an in-person meeting. The Coordinator may invite the referring instructor to participate in the conference. Students, teaching assistants, and support staff who can offer information relevant to the case may be invited as participants in the conference. Findings and sanctions in a conference, if any, will be determined by the Coordinator. The standard of proof in conferences is "**preponderance of the evidence**".

### If the Coordinator determines:

- A student is not responsible for academic misconduct, the matter is closed, and no disciplinary record created.
- A student is responsible for academic misconduct, sanctions are determined in accordance with Section VIII of this Code.

If a suspected violation is not resolved through conference, the case is referred to the PPAHC for a hearing.

## Investigative Team

If a suspected violation is referred to the PPAHC by the Coordinator, the PPAHC Chair will appoint an *ad hoc* Investigative Team consisting of one student and one faculty member. Neither member of the Investigative Team shall simultaneously be a member of the PPAHC. The investigative team will conduct interviews as required and review materials pertinent to the allegation. Such materials generally include a statement from the accuser, supporting evidence, and statements from witnesses and the accused. The investigative team,

once convened, has **ten** working days to conduct its investigation. If more time is needed, the team may request an extension from the Chair of the PPAHC.

The written report of the investigative team shall include: **(1)** a statement of the allegation(s) against the accused student; **(2)** a description of the evidence and supporting documents (if available); and **(3)** the names of witnesses interviewed, including the accused, and a summary of their respective statements. The investigative team shall conduct its investigation impartially, in confidence, and shall be available to assist the PPAHC throughout any subsequent hearing. The written report shall be hand-delivered or e-mailed, in confidence, to the Chair of the PPAHC or his/her designee.

### Charges by the PPAHC

Upon receipt of the investigative report, the PPAHC shall convene to formalize a statement of the charge or to issue a statement dismissing the allegation(s) if insufficient substantiating evidence exists. The PPAHC shall provide notice of the specific charge or of the dismissal of the alleged violation to the accused student through the Maxient reporting system (official UAB e-mail) or by certified mail and to the Director of Student Affairs. The statement of the charge shall include a brief summary of the alleged violation and the evidence presented in support of the charge in sufficient detail to allow the accused the opportunity to rebut the charge and to provide notification to the accused student of their right to a hearing.

The accused student must respond to the charge in writing within **five working days**, unless granted an extension by the Chair of the PPAHC. In this written response to the PPAHC, the accused student must either: **(1)** admit the charge and formally request their right to a hearing before the PPAHC; **(2)** admit the charge and waive their right to a hearing; **(3)** deny the charge and formally request their right to a hearing before the PPAHC or **(4)** deny the charge but waive their right to a hearing.

Once notice of the specific charge has been provided to the accused student and to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the PPAHC shall set a date for the hearing, any preliminary deadline(s) for the submission of supporting documents and the names of proposed witnesses, and a statement describing briefly the subject of each witness' testimony. Rescheduling the hearing at the request of the accused or the School is within the discretion of the PPAHC and shall not be unreasonably denied. The Council shall review documentary evidence in advance of the hearing.

## Section VI. Hearings

The PPAHC must review cases of students with any prior findings of academic misconduct, all cases that may result in suspension or expulsion, or any case the Integrity Coordinator may refer due to complexity, a contested case, or conflicts of interest. The Coordinator shall be present as a non-voting procedural advisor to the chair of the hearing panel.

A hearing is intended to resolve the charge(s) and determine sanctions, if any. The Chair of the PPAHC will conduct the hearing. Both accused students and the University can present evidence, supporting witnesses, and other information pertinent to the matter under investigation. Accused students may be accompanied by one advisor of their choice at the hearing. The student must notify the PPAHC chair at least **two business days** in advance of their intent to be accompanied by an advisor and if the advisor is an attorney.

### Procedures

Although the specific procedure may vary, the hearing process shall generally include the following: (1) call to order by the Chair; (2) introduction of those present; (3) statement of the charge and possible penalties if the charge is proven; (4) presentation of the evidence and testimony in support of the charge, and questioning of witnesses; (5) presentation of evidence and testimony in opposition to the charge (rebuttal), and questioning of witnesses; (6) closing statement(s). All questioning of witnesses shall be by the PPAHC Chair unless the Council decides otherwise. The accused may question witnesses through written questions submitted to the Chair of the PPAHC who may edit or screen them for appropriateness.

Questions of relevance, the role and availability of witnesses, the use of written statements, and the timely conduct of proceedings will be determined by the PPAHC Chair. The accused student shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to be heard, to question witnesses through questions submitted to the PPAHC Chair, to rebut adverse evidence, and to make a brief closing statement. Members of the PPAHC may ask any questions at any time during the hearing and may elect to disallow or curtail testimony that is deemed to be unnecessarily redundant or not relevant to the issue(s) being heard. Except for the accused and, if invited by the accused, an advisor, all other witnesses shall be excluded from the hearing room, except when testifying. No more than one witness shall be called to testify at a time. The School or the PPAHC may request that UAB security be present at a hearing or conference. Throughout the hearing, all persons present shall conduct themselves in an orderly manner. The Chair shall be responsible for maintaining order during the hearing.

As soon as possible following the conclusion of the hearing, the PPAHC shall meet in private session to consider all of the evidence presented and shall decide on one of two outcomes. The possible outcomes are that the charge is either (1) proven by a preponderance of the evidence or (2) not proven by a preponderance of the evidence. A majority vote of a quorum of the members of the PPAHC shall be required for either outcome. The Chair of the PPAHC will generally not vote, unless the vote of the other Council members results in a tie. Following the vote, the Chair shall record the results and provide a brief narrative statement explaining the rationale for the Council's finding(s).

After notice of charges is sent through Maxient, if a student fails to attend a scheduled hearing, the PPAHC Chair will document that the student did not accept responsibility for the charge(s). All relevant evidence will then be considered by the PPAHC to resolve the case without the student. The student(s) will be notified of the case outcome and any determination of sanctions.

### **Cases Involving Multiple Students**

Cases involving multiple students will normally be heard together if more than one student is alleged to have jointly engaged in one or more acts of academic misconduct. These cases will only be combined with the written consent of the students. At the discretion of the Council, more than one accused student may be present when witnesses are called to testify if multiple accused are involved with a single incident. Students who seek a separate hearing must provide a written justification for their request to the PPAHC Chair at least **five business days** before the scheduled proceeding. If related cases are not heard jointly, the PPAHC Chair may consider all relevant statements, materials and other evidence presented at an earlier proceeding or subsequent proceeding related to the same case.

### **Outcome**

#### **If the PPAHC determines:**

- A student is not responsible for academic misconduct, the matter is closed, and no disciplinary record created.
- A student is responsible for academic misconduct, sanctions are determined in accordance with Section VIII of this Code.

After a hearing, the accused student(s) will be provided with a letter containing a statement of the findings and any sanctions imposed within five (5) business days through the Maxient reporting system.

## Section VII. Sanctions for Violations of the Academic Integrity Code

### Level One

Generally, violations resolved at this level are those that are less severe and with correspondingly less severe penalties. Examples of possible level one sanctions are included below:

1. Requirement to write and deliver an apology letter.
2. Attend an Academic Integrity workshop.
3. Requirement to attend educational or counseling programs.
4. Requirement to complete a variety of behavioral modification programs including formal courses and/or informal assignments, such as an anger management course, etc.
5. Reprimand - The student will be reprimanded in writing by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, with a copy for the student's file, of the nature of the Code of Ethics violation and warned that repetition of the wrongful conduct may cause more severe action.
6. Reduced grade on an assignment or course.
7. Failing grade – A failing grade may be given for the course, assignment, exam or evaluative process. A notation on the student's permanent academic record may also be made to indicate that a reduced or failing grade was assigned because of a Code of Ethics violation, on the judgment of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. The student may enroll to repeat a course in which an "F" has been earned, but the original course grade remains on the student's academic record. The Grade Forgiveness Policy prohibits replacement of an "F" resulting from academic misconduct.
8. Opportunity to revise/repeat – specific to the assignment in which the academic misconduct occurred.
9. Restitution – Restitution for lost, damaged, or destroyed property may be required.
10. Additional course work - Papers, additional work, counseling, etc. may be required.

### Level Two

These violations are considered more severe with concomitantly more severe penalties. In the interest of protecting patients, serious clinical infractions will be dealt with in an immediate and definitive manner. The Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs may immediately suspend all clinic privileges in suspected cases until the matter is resolved. Favorable letters of recommendation will not knowingly be furnished while sanctions are in effect. No student may graduate from the UAB School of Optometry or participate in the Externship Program until pending allegations of a Code of Ethics violation have been resolved and any recommended sanctions fulfilled. Examples of possible level two sanctions are included below:

1. Removal from official School positions – Students may be removed from official School positions, such as class president, or may not have the privilege to represent the School in an official capacity.
2. Academic Conduct Probation – students determined to be guilty of an academic misconduct offense and not in good academic standing for a specified period of time.
3. Probation with restrictions - A student on probation may also have certain privileges removed, such as clinic privileges in a specialty clinic, or the privilege of attending a specific class or attendance at a professional meeting. Probation with restrictions typically extends the enrollment period required to satisfy School, graduation and accreditation requirements.
4. Academic Suspension – The student will be excluded from classes and other privileges of the School and University for a specified period of time. May or may not include suspension from non-

- academic student activities (see conduct suspension in the Student Conduct Code which supersedes academic suspension).
5. Academic Expulsion – The student will be permanently expelled from the School of Optometry and the University (see Student Conduct Code). Official written notice will be provided to the student with a copy for the student’s file. No student expelled from the School because of a Code of Ethics violation shall be eligible for readmission.
  6. Suspension of clinic privileges – Privileges may be suspended in whole or in part which may result in extended enrollment at the School.
  7. Enrollment extension - A student may be required to extend their education at the School past the traditional four-year curriculum. This allows the faculty additional time to help the student develop personal ethical and professional standards. Extensions may be for a period of months or years.

A second violation of the Code of Ethics, as determined by a PPAHC hearing, shall result in expulsion from the School of Optometry. Suspensions or expulsions for academic misconduct apply throughout the University and are not limited to the school or college where an incident may have occurred or where the student is enrolled. Suspensions and expulsions are recorded on the student transcript. A student suspended from a UAB school or college for academic misconduct will have a hold placed and will not be permitted to enroll in another UAB school without that school’s permission.

Admission of guilt does not remove the student’s right to a formal hearing or conference if sanctions recommended in the resolution agreement are not acceptable to the student or if they include suspension or expulsion.

### **Criminal or Civil Penalties**

Actions may occur which carry additional civil and criminal penalties in addition to the ones outlined in this document. Such actions may be violations of other University policies or local and federal laws. The commencement of civil or criminal action shall not prevent the School from pursuing actions as outlined in this document.

## **Section VIII. Appeals**

All cases resolved by a Conference with the Coordinator shall be final and conclusive and not subject to further review. Findings from the PPAHC of academic misconduct may be appealed to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs within **five business days** upon receipt of the notification of the findings. The appeal review will be limited to consideration of findings of fact, recommended sanctions, or any written response from the accused student citing prejudice or procedural error. The Associate Dean may uphold the panel’s findings and sanctions or may return to the PPAHC for reconsideration if determined that a significant procedural error or prejudice against the charged student by any panel member may have influenced the outcome.

The Associate Dean will provide a statement supporting or denying the appeal request to the Coordinator. If the Associate Dean elects to vacate the decision of the PPAHC, the Associate Dean shall provide a concise written statement to the accused and the PPAHC explaining the basis for such action. If the Associate Dean affirms the decision of the PPAHC, or affirms the decision with a reduced penalty, the decision shall be transmitted to the Dean, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and the PPAHC and notice to the appellant shall be provided by certified mail, hand delivery or official UAB e-mail. The student can make a final appeal of the decision to the Dean of the School of Optometry. The decision of the Dean will be communicated to the student as described above and will be final.



- After conferences or hearings, a brief written statement of the findings and sanctions imposed will be documented in a *Notice of Outcome* (Maxient). After an appeal to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs or Dean of the School, the appeal decision will be documented in a *Response to Appeal* (Maxient).
- The PPAHC chair will provide the *Notice of Outcome* or *Notice of Appeal* to:
  - student's official University email address within five business days.
  - the student's home school or college (including the Honors College and the Graduate School).
  - the Dean and/or appropriate Department Chair of the student's home school or college
  - the instructor of the course

## Section IX. Residents, Graduate and Post-Doctoral Students

Policies involving post-doctoral students are more complex due to the variety of positions and appointments which exist within the UAB School of Optometry. The in-house residents are employees of UAB and are covered under [UAB employee guidelines](#). Students who register for a Graduate degree are enrolled in the Graduate School, and Graduate School policies will apply to them. The Graduate School shall be notified of any suspected violations of this Academic Integrity Code to allow response through its internal processes that may lead up to expulsion. For dual degree graduate students whose academic misconduct occurs in one of their two schools, the procedures of the school in which the infraction occurred should be used. If neither situation exists, then students are covered by this Academic Integrity Code and Code of Ethics, but an *ad hoc* Hearing Committee will be appointed by the Dean, consisting of two post-doctoral peers and two post-doctoral faculty members. When such allegations occur, the Dean will inform students which policy applies to them based on their specific status.

## Section X. Documentation and Activity Report

Records documenting investigations and/or disciplinary actions taken against students charged with academic misconduct shall be entered into the Maxient system and will also be maintained in the Office of Student Affairs for a period of 5 years or until the student leaves the University, whichever is longer. These files are considered confidential and are not publicly accessible.

The Chair of the PPAHC will keep a written record of its activity each academic year. The activity report will include the number of allegations reported, allegations dismissed, cases plead guilty, and hearings conducted.

The Director of Student Affairs shall keep a record of all alleged violations of the Code of Ethics and a summary of the disposition of the charge.

During the school year, the Chair of the PPAHC will provide an annual report to faculty and students detailing the Code of Ethics actions of the previous year. The report will include the number and nature of alleged violations, the number of violations referred to the PPAHC for hearing, and a statement of the range of penalties imposed, without reference to personally identifiable information. This reporting function is to support an institutional culture that promotes the use of the Academic Integrity Code.

## Section XI. Implementation

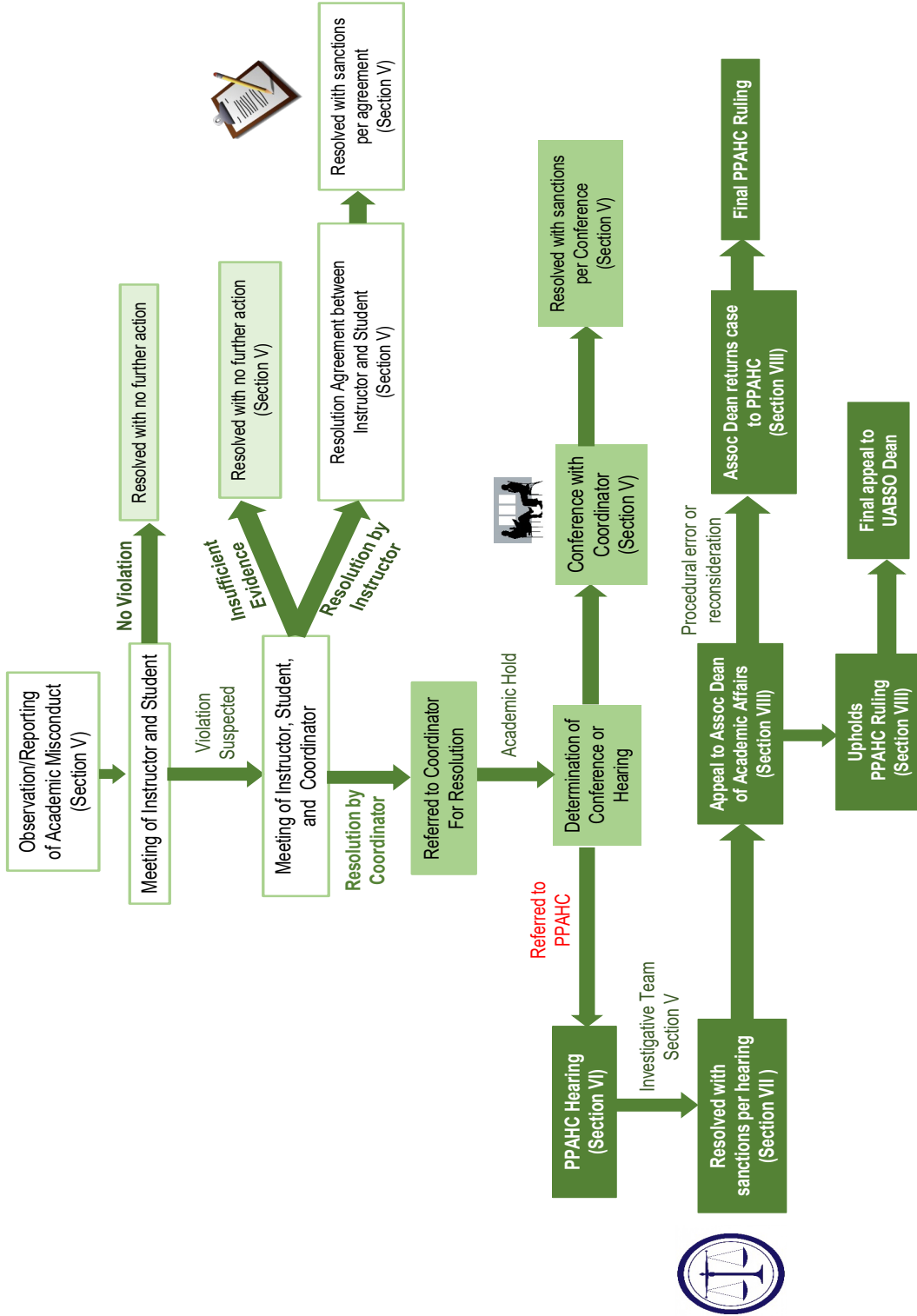
The Academic Integrity Code shall be presented to each entering class during orientation. Revisions to the Academic Integrity Code may occur frequently. The official version is available from the Office of Student Affairs and is maintained on the School web site. Infractions that occur will be governed by the official version of the Code of Ethics that is in effect at the time the infraction is reported. Each student will be responsible for reading the current Academic Integrity Code document and signing the Honor Pledge. Each student will be given an opportunity to ask questions before signing the Honor Pledge. The signed pledge becomes part of the student's permanent file.

## **Section XII. Other Resources**

Students, including post-graduate and professional, are referred to official University documents (<http://www.uab.edu/policies/Pages/default.aspx>) for additional information on topics of process and ethics.

# Academic Misconduct Flow Chart

Academic Misconduct Flow Chart



## HONOR CODE AND HONOR PLEDGE FORM

The Honor Code and Honor Pledge Form: <http://www.uab.edu/optometry/home/currentstudents>

## CLINIC STUDENT MANUAL

The clinic manual contains the clinic policies and procedures and is available on the UAB Eye Care Canvas Page.

## DRESS POLICY

All faculty, staff, residents and interns are in direct contact with patients, families, physicians, prospective students and the public at large. In such a professional environment, each individual must dress according to the school's established guidelines. The following dress policy applies at all times when working in the Henry Peters Building public areas.

- Good grooming is expected of **all personnel** in every detail. The following are prerequisites to good grooming:
  - Good personal hygiene, regular bathing, and good oral hygiene
  - A clean outfit daily
  - Hair neat, clean and professional
  - Mustaches, beards, goatees and sideburns are acceptable only if they are clean and neatly trimmed. Partially shaven facial hair is not acceptable in a patient care setting
  - Cologne, perfume, after-shave and make-up should be used in moderation

### General policy for all faculty/staff/residents/interns:

- Materials for scrubs should be of such quality that undergarments are not visible
- Adequate undergarments should always be worn
- Any jewelry or adornment should be minimal and in good taste and should not interfere with or distract from direct patient care or other workplace duties

Employee identification badge or student identification badge provided by the University is required to be worn at all times when on the clinic floor. This enables you to be readily identified. This regulation applies to faculty, staff and interns whether working or visiting in the clinic.

For more information regarding clinic attire, please refer to the clinic manual.

## REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR USE OF STATE VEHICLES

To comply with the requirements set down by UAB's Office of Risk Management, we must keep a file of information for eligibility to operate UAB cars and vans. This includes a photocopy of your current Driver's License, a statement of your agreement to abide by UAB guidelines, and your willingness to allow UABSO Clinic Administration to obtain a motor vehicle report on your driving record. The appropriate form must be completed by anyone who will be driving one of our vehicles before actually operating it.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT EXAMINATIONS

- Students will be spaced appropriately for the scheduled room. In Volker Hall, this typically means that each student has an empty seat on either side of them.
- Students are required to use a privacy screen when taking online exams.
- Students are to ensure that all books, backpacks, and other materials are on the floor and on occasion students may be asked to place these items at the back of the room against the wall.
- Cell phones should be turned off or in silent mode during the exam and are prohibited from use during the exam. If a student is expecting an emergency call, he or she should inform the proctor prior to the exam and the proctor may hold the cell phone in the front of the room.
- If the exam is not online, students will receive the appropriate number of exams. Any extra exams will be collected at the beginning of the exam.
- Announcements will be made concerning the remaining time left to complete the exam at appropriate intervals, such as 30 minutes, 15 minutes, and 5 minutes.
- At the end of the allotted time, the proctor will collect all examinations (if applicable).
- The proctor will report any suspected academic misconduct to the course director as soon as possible after the examination.

### WHAT IS A “SECURED EXAM?”

*by Adam Gordon, O.D.*

The Student Affairs Office has observed increasing confusion and controversy over the definition of a secured exam. Because of misunderstandings between students and faculty, we feel it necessary to clarify the expectations for students and faculty regarding these exams.

- A secured exam is a testing instrument that is not released to the class.
- Since well-written and validated test questions are difficult to generate, instructors may wish to use a secure exam.
- The intent is that some or all of the test questions may be reused on a continuing basis.
- The instructor should clearly indicate if secured exams are used in the course syllabus and/or on the exam itself.
- As with all exams, the instructor has an obligation to allow students to review their performance on a secure exam.
- This review of the exam may be accomplished in class, individually, or both.

**Students must understand that the content of a secure exam must not be acquired, copied or distributed without the instructor’s expressed permission.** Doing so is a direct violation of the UABSO Honor Code (Section II. A.) which governs the actions and responsibilities of students enrolled in the School of Optometry.

## GRADE POSTING AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION POLICY

University of Alabama at Birmingham—Office of the Provost

February 8, 2005

Posting grades or any other display of grades must comply with the following conditions:

1. Grades must never be posted in a format that would publicly reveal the identity of individual grade recipients.
2. Lists or grades for any work in classes or course sections with fewer than eight students must neither be publicly posted nor in any other way be made publicly available.

### Grade Distributions for Final Course Grades

Upon written requests, a final class (or course section) grade distribution (for example, total number of A's, B's, C's, etc.) will be made available for any class or course section with a final enrollment of eight or more students. However, grade distribution data must not be made available in any instance where it would be possible to identify individual grade recipients.

Approved by the Provost, Eli Capilouto

February 8, 2005

Signed copy in Dean's Office

## MANDATORY COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS

Course and Instructor Evaluations are mandatory and must be submitted by each student at the school before final exams begin. This is a requirement for all didactic and clinic courses. You will receive notification via your official UABSO e-mail address (uab.edu) that the evaluations are available for you to fill out at the web address indicated in the e-mail. You will have access to course and instructor evaluations about 1 week before your final exam for each course. You will fill out one course evaluation for each course. You will also fill out one instructor evaluation for each instructor who lectured during a course. So, for one course you may have 2-12 evaluations depending on the number of lecturers in a particular course. There will be a drop box to select **clinical** instructor evaluations for non-didactic courses.

### ISSUES THAT MAY ARISE

If you have access to evaluations for a class in which you were not registered, please do not complete or submit these evaluations. Please notify Student Affairs and give us the course name so we can keep a record of the error and remove your name from the list of students who did not submit all of their evaluations. If you do not have access to all of your evaluations, notify <mailto:mcra@uab.edu> Ms. Nakia Lee at [nakialee@uab.edu](mailto:nakialee@uab.edu) of the issue.

If you receive an e-mail notifying you of outstanding evaluations and feel that you have submitted them all please, inform the sender.

**DUE DATES**

Please submit your evaluations on or before the due date listed on your evaluations. **If you do not submit your evaluations by the due date, you will not receive a grade for the class.** If your evaluations are overdue, you will be contacted by phone and asked to submit your evaluations immediately.

Please don't procrastinate!

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

We cannot trace evaluations from the submitter. This computer program gives you total confidentiality. Because of this we cannot retract an evaluation after it is submitted. So please ensure you verify the instructor's name on each form prior to submission.

**MANDATORY**

Why are course evaluations mandatory? The school and the dean are dedicated to giving you, the student, a voice. They are also used as a tool to adjust the curriculum, etc.

**COMMENT BOX ON EVALUATIONS**

**Each evaluation has a place for comments, and we welcome specific positive and negative comments. Please use the utmost professionalism when writing comments.**

**POLICY ON ELECTIVES**

Electives are non-mandatory courses designed to provide additional learning and experience for optometry students. Electives may be didactic, laboratory, clinical or research courses (or in combination) designed by faculty and must be approved by the curriculum committee, executive committee and Dean. Because of scheduling complexities and the limitations of resources and time, not all electives can be offered to every student. As interest, faculty resources and schedules permit, students may elect to complete several electives.

Priorities. The needs of the professional curriculum must be fulfilled before any electives may be scheduled. Electives shall not be considered for any student during regularly scheduled class time.

Grading. All grades for elective courses shall be Pass/Fail and therefore will not count in the calculation of a student's GPA. A failing grade shall be placed on a student's transcript for not satisfactorily completing an elective. The customary university withdrawal process shall govern requests to drop any elective course. After 25% of a term, no withdrawal is permitted. Courses in the graduate program will provide grades according to the rules of the graduate school. Elective courses being substituted for clinic courses will use the customary clinic grading scale.

Substituting Electives for Professional Course Work. On rare occasions with prior permission from the Director of the Professional Program and Dean, optometry students who are concurrently enrolled in the graduate program may substitute an elective for a course in the professional curriculum. Ordinarily for this to occur, a review and positive recommendation from the curriculum committee to the Director and Dean must be completed.

Externship Options for Graduate Students enrolled in the O.D./M.S. Program. S All O.D./M.S. graduate

students have the option to use one of their Fourth Year Professional Program Externships to conduct M.S. level thesis research. This information will be provided to the student by the Director of the Graduate Program at the time of the student's enrollment in the O.D./ M.S. program. If a student elects to use an Externship to conduct M.S. level thesis research, the student must obtain approval from the Director of the Graduate Program. Upon approval, the Director of the Graduate Program will notify the Director of the Professional Program of the student's Externship choice.

## EXTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

During the last year at UAB students spend a portion of their year in an externship setting outside UABSO. The purpose of the Externship Program is to provide our students with a broad-based hands-on clinical experience. Externships are designed to enhance the student's preparation for professional success. During their externship rotations, students gain increased experience in optometric patient care and the diagnosis, treatment and management of ocular disease under the guidance of a practicing professional. Also, depending on the site, experience may be gained in specialty areas of optometry (such as contact lenses, low vision, pediatric and binocular vision), and in the co-management of patients. In addition to required university-based experiences, students select other externship sites in institutional, hospital-based or multidisciplinary clinics and private practice locations.

### Educational Objectives:

- To develop a high level of competence in the use of optometric techniques, instruments and problem-solving roles.
- To engender high standards of professional competence and responsibility.
- To develop the student's ability to work and communicate effectively with other health professionals and ancillary personnel for the sensitive and responsive delivery of eye care.
- To prepare students for lifelong career satisfaction.

### Learning Objectives:

- To demonstrate to the student the art of the practice of optometry as evidenced by the attending doctor/practitioner.
- To widen the student understanding of the broad spectrum of optometry practice by showing the student the clinical conditions and their interaction with each other that make up the wide variety of health conditions in the community.
- To demonstrate the use of common diagnostic and therapeutic procedures involved in the problem solving stages of the delivery of eye care.
- To demonstrate the role of the optometrist in patient education.
- To demonstrate the conscious and purposeful use and development of the doctor-patient relationship.
- To provide practical experience in the office management and business aspects of optometric practice.

The externship year is divided into three terms: Summer, Fall and Spring. The terms may be further divided into Summer 1, Summer 2, Fall 1, Fall 2, Spring 1, and Spring 2. Students have externship site requirements that must be met during their externship year. Each student must spend at least one 16-week term at the UABSO clinic. To ensure that all students receive a complete clinical experience, it is required that one of the rotations be hospital-based, institutional or in a multidisciplinary-type environment. A third rotation must be spent in a private practice environment.



There are currently three Hospital-based sites that must be staffed by UABSO externs every term. These sites are: the Birmingham Veteran's Administration Medical Center, which requires four externs per term, the Tuscaloosa Veteran's Administration Medical Center, which requires three externs per term, and the Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System (Montgomery, AL), which requires one extern per term. One additional student per site (three per term) will be designated as alternates for these sites each term but will staff the sites only if an assigned extern is unable or ineligible to participate.

All other sites are optional, but they must fulfill the site requirements outlined above. The students select sites taken from a roster of approved sites. These sites are in every southeastern state as well as other states across the nation and include multidisciplinary health centers, co-management referral centers, military hospitals, Indian Health Service facilities, and solo, partnership and group optometry and ophthalmology practices. Optional sites are assigned to students after the required sites and alternates are determined. Externship assignments are based on preceptor availability, GPA, and student preference.

**Dr. Candice Turner, Director of the Externship Program**  
**Ms. Cynthia Perry, Program Coordinator**

\* This is subject to change during the academic year.

## PARTICIPATION IN THE UABSO DOCTORAL CONVOCATION AND HOODING CEREMONY

Upon successful completion of the required courses and fulfillment of all other obligations to the University, a student will officially graduate from the School of Optometry

In addition to the official UAB graduation, the School of Optometry conducts a Doctoral Convocation and Hooding Ceremony, which is a more meaningful celebration of the completion of the professional program. This event is only for optometry graduates with their family and friends in attendance. The graduates are presented with their academic hoods and diplomas.

If a fourth year student encounters circumstances that delay their official graduation, the student may still participate in the Doctoral Convocation and Hooding Ceremony if the following conditions are met:

1. All didactic (classroom) courses are completed and passed
2. All other University requirements and obligations have been completed.

## FUNCTIONAL GUIDELINES FOR DIDACTIC AND CLINICAL OPTOMETRIC EDUCATION

To provide guidance to those considering optometry as a profession, the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) has established functional guidelines for optometric education. The ability to meet these guidelines, along with other criteria established by individual optometric institutions, is necessary for graduation from an optometric professional degree program.

One of the missions of each school and college of optometry is to produce graduates fully qualified to provide quality comprehensive eye care services to the public. To fulfill this mission, each institution must ensure that students demonstrate satisfactory knowledge and skill in the provision of optometric care. Admission

committees, therefore, consider a candidate's capacity to function effectively in the academic and clinical environments, as well as a candidate's academic qualifications and personal attributes.

The functional guidelines in optometric education require that the candidate/student possess appropriate abilities in the following areas: 1) observation; 2) communication; 3) sensory and motor coordination; 4) intellectual –conceptual, integrative and quantitative abilities; and 5) behavioral and social attributes. Each of these areas is described in this document. In any case where a student's abilities in one of these areas are compromised, he or she must demonstrate alternative means and/ or abilities to meet the functional requirements. It is expected that seeking and using such alternative means and/or abilities shall be the responsibility of the student. Upon receipt of the appropriate documentation, the school or college will be expected to provide reasonable assistance and accommodation to the student.

### **Observation Abilities**

The student must be able to acquire a defined level of required knowledge as presented through lectures, laboratories, demonstrations, patient interaction and self-study. Acquiring this body of information necessitates the functional use of visual, auditory and somatic sensation enhanced by the functional use of other sensory modalities.

Examples of these observational skills in which accurate information needs to be extracted in an efficient manner include:

Visual Abilities: (as they relate to such things as visual acuity, color vision and binocularity):

- Visualizing and reading information from papers, films, slides, video and computer displays
- Observing optical, anatomic, physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations and experiments
- Discriminating microscopic images of tissue and microorganisms
- Observing a patient and noting non-verbal signs
- Discriminating numbers, images, and patterns associated with diagnostic tests and instruments
- Visualizing specific ocular tissues in order to discern three-dimensional relationships, depth and color changes

Auditory Abilities:

- Understanding verbal presentations in lecture, laboratory and patient settings
- Recognizing and interpreting various sounds associated with laboratory experiments as well as diagnostic and therapeutic procedures

Tactile Abilities:

- Palpating the eye and related areas to determine the integrity of the underlying structures
- Palpating and feeling certain cardiovascular pulses

### **Communication Abilities**

The student must be able to communicate effectively, efficiently and sensitively with patients and their families, peers, staff, instructors and other members of the health care team. The student must be able to demonstrate established communication skills using traditional and alternative means.

Examples of required communications skills include:

- Relating effectively and sensitively to patients, conveying compassion and empathy
- Perceiving verbal and non-verbal communication such as sadness, worry, agitation and lack of comprehension from patients
- Eliciting information from patients and observing changes in mood and activity
- Communicating quickly, effectively and efficiently in oral and written English with patients and other members of the health care team
- Reading and legibly recording observations, test results and management plans accurately
- Completing assignments, patient records and correspondence accurately and in a timely manner

### **Sensory and Motor Coordination Abilities**

Students must possess the sensory and motor skills necessary to perform an eye examination, including emergency care. In general, this requires sufficient exteroception sense (touch, pain, temperature), proprioceptive sense (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis, and vibratory) and fine motor function (significant coordination and manual dexterity using arms, wrists, hands and fingers).

Examples of skill required include but are not limited to:

- Instillation of ocular pharmaceutical agents
- Insertion, removal and manipulation of contact lenses
- Assessment of blood pressure and pulse
- Removal of foreign objects from the cornea
- Simultaneous manipulation of lenses, instruments and therapeutic agents and devices
- Reasonable facility of movement
- Injections into the eye, lids or limbs

### **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities**

Problem solving, a most critical skill, is essential for optometric students and must be performed quickly, especially in emergency situations. In order to be an effective problem solver, the student must be able to accurately and efficiently utilize such abilities as measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, judgment, investigation, memory, numerical recognition and synthesis.

Examples of these abilities include being able to:

- Determine appropriate questions to be asked and clinical tests to be performed
- Identify and analyze significant findings from history, examination, and other test data
- Demonstrate good judgment and provide a reasonable assessment, diagnosis and management of patients
- Retain, recall and obtain information in an efficient manner
- Identify and communicate the limits of one's knowledge and skill

### **Behavioral and Social Attributes**

The student must possess the necessary behavioral and social attributes for the study and practice of optometry.

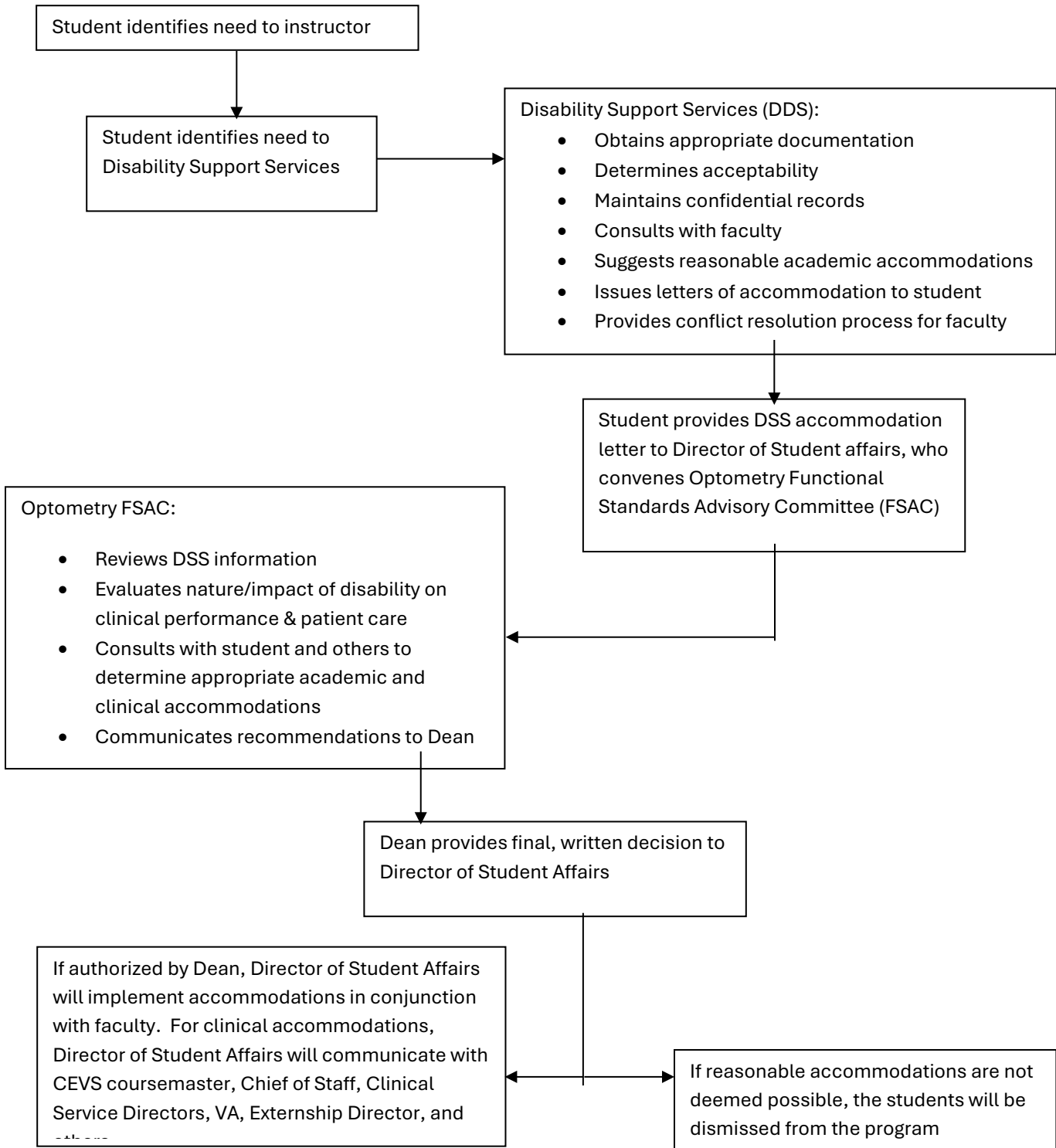
Examples of such attributes include:

- Satisfactory emotional health required for full utilization of one's intellectual ability
- High ethical standards and integrity
- An empathy with patients and concern for their welfare
- Commitment to the optometric profession and its standards
- Effective interpersonal relationships with patients, peers and instructors
- Professional demeanor
- Effective functioning under varying degrees of stress and workload
- Adaptability to changing environments and uncertainties
- Positive acceptance of suggestions and constructive criticism

Candidates with questions or concerns about how their own conditions or disabilities might affect their ability to meet these functional guidelines are encouraged to meet with an optometry school counselor prior to submitting an application.

Approved by the ASCO Board of Directors on March 20, 1998

Revised: March 31, 2009



## Basic Competency for Entry-Level Optometrists

Curriculum Committee School of Optometry

Approved June 13, 2021

### Introduction

The fundamental goal of the School of Optometry of the University of Alabama at Birmingham is to educate optometrists to serve the primary vision and eye care needs of the public. This document represents the consensus of the curriculum committee regarding the basic attributes and learning objectives necessary in achieving this goal. An appropriate curriculum is derived from these guidelines via the following learning objectives.

Entry-Level Optometrists must be capable of independent optometric practice and demonstrate the following:

- Knowledge of basic biomedical, behavioral and clinical sciences, especially as it relates to vision and the eye;
- Cognitive and motor skills; and
- Professional and ethical values.

The goals and learning objectives listed below will be modified and updated periodically to meet the evolving needs of the profession and ensure that the students are educated to meet the standards to practice at the highest scope of optometric practice in the United States. The curriculum must reflect the frequency and criticality of the conditions that the optometrist will encounter and will evolve as the scope of optometric practice evolves.

### Patient Care

Entry-level optometrists must be able to effectively determine, deliver and manage patient care treatment plans. In order to deliver effective patient care the entry-level Optometrist must be able to:

1. Render appropriate patient care decisions.
2. Ensure that all patients are treated equally irrespective of their race, ethnicity, gender identification, sexual orientation, and religion.
3. Effectively integrate the use of new technology to gather knowledge and manage information related to the care of patients in a way that protects patient confidentiality.

### Knowledge

The entry-level optometrist must be knowledgeable of basic biomedical, behavioral and clinical sciences as they relate to optics and the management and treatment of ocular conditions and pathology.

The entry-level Optometrist must have knowledge and skill in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management of:

4. Systemic conditions and processes.
  - 4.1 The normal structure and function of the body and each of its organ systems emphasizing their relationship to ocular health and vision.
  - 4.2 Systemic conditions which relate to ocular health and vision.
5. Ocular conditions and processes.
  - 5.1 The normal structure and function of the eye and the visual system.
  - 5.2 The development of the eye and the visual system.

- 5.3 The altered structure and function of the eye, ocular adnexa and the visual system.
- 5.4 Ocular disease, including but not limited to:
  - 5.4.1 Conditions of the lids and adnexa
  - 5.4.2 Ocular surface disease
  - 5.4.3 Disorders of the cornea
  - 5.4.4 Disorders of the uvea
  - 5.4.5 Conditions affecting the crystalline lens
  - 5.4.6 Retinal disease
  - 5.4.7 Disorders of the optic nerve and visual pathway
  - 5.4.8 Inflammatory conditions of the eye
  - 5.4.9 Ocular infection
- 5.5 Ocular trauma.
  
- 6. Optics and lens systems and their application to patient care.
  - 6.1 Refractive conditions
  - 6.2 Spectacle correction and design
  - 6.3 Corneal and refractive conditions managed with various contact lenses
  - 6.4 Low vision care required for the partially-sighted
  
- 7. Sensory and motor processes of ocular function and binocular vision.
  - 7.1 The sensation of the external world by the visual system
  - 7.2 Motor processes of the visual system
  - 7.3 Accommodative function and disorders
  - 7.4 Anomalies of binocular vision and strabismus
  - 7.5 Disorders of eye movement
  - 7.6 Perceptual conditions as they relate to vision
  - 7.7 Neurologic conditions impacting vision and vision perception
  
- 8. Environmental and occupational conditions and risks as they relate to ocular health and vision.
  
- 9. Public health issues as they relate to eye care.
  - 9.1 The epidemiology of systemic and ocular conditions, with a particular understanding of risk factors for conditions within the scope of practice
  - 9.2 Quantitative and qualitative methodology especially as applied to vision and its assessment
  - 9.3 Principles of human health behavior

## Clinical Skills

The entry-level optometrist must have appropriate cognitive and motor skills to effectively examine patients, and provide appropriate diagnosis, treatment, and management strategies as they relate to the care of patients. Entry-level optometrists must demonstrate proficiency and understanding of the following:

- 10. Implementation of quality clinical care of patients.
  - 10.1 Examination of patients
    - 10.1.1 Proficiency in patient examination
    - 10.1.2 Appropriate collection of accurate and reliable clinical data
  - 10.2 Evaluation of Data
    - 10.2.1 Accurate interpretation of objective data gathered
    - 10.2.2 Understanding of refractive and ocular conditions
  - 10.3 Rendering Patient Care
    - 10.3.1 Appropriate application of optometric testing to address patient needs
    - 10.3.2 Appropriate evaluation and integration of clinical data
    - 10.3.3 Application of appropriate medical management strategies through the use of pharmacologics, optical devices and other necessary treatments

- 10.3.4 Recognition and appropriate management of medical emergencies.
- 10.4 Effective documentation and communication
  - 10.4.1 Competent, accurate and thorough documentation in the medical record
  - 10.4.2 Oral and written communication with patients and their families
  - 10.4.3 Oral and written communication with other health providers, realizing Optometry's primary role in inter-professional collaborative practices

### Professional and Ethical Values

The entry-level optometrist must demonstrate appropriate professional and ethical values as this relates to patients, the profession, and the community including the following:

- 11. Personal, professional and ethical values towards people and the community.
- 12. Comprehensive approach to caring for people
  - 12.1 Address the whole patient to treat the physical, emotional and social considerations with other health care professionals including optometrists, physicians, nurses, physical therapists, psychologists, counselors and others who are committed to supporting patients and their families.
- 13. Ethical, legal and administrative issues as applied to optometry including but not limited to:
  - 13.1 Patient privacy
  - 13.2 Co-management of patients
  - 13.3 Medical errors
  - 13.4 Patient billing and coding and other practice management aspects of optometry

### Conclusion

Defining the goals and objectives of optometric education is extraordinarily important. The goals and objectives outlined in this document are designed to provide the entry-level optometrist with the necessary competencies, knowledge and skill to perform the duties of an optometrist.

## UAB STUDENT HANDBOOK

Please note that the complete UAB Student Handbook can be found on the University website at <http://catalog.uab.edu/student-handbook/>. The following list is a sample of the topics contained in the UAB Student Handbook. Please refer to the website for complete and updated information.

## Student Policies

<http://www.uab.edu/students/one-stop/policies>  
[Student Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy and Flowchart](#)

## Student Affairs

[Student Affairs](#)

[Campus Dining](#)

[Campus Recreation](#)

[Career and Professional Development](#)

[Disability Support Services](#)

[Fraternity and Sorority Life](#)

[Hill Student Center](#)

[Student Advocacy, Rights and Conduct](#)

[Student Counseling Services](#)

[Student Health Services](#)

[Student Housing and Residence Life](#)

[Student Involvement and Leadership](#)

[Student Media](#)



[Student Multicultural and Diversity Programs](#)  
[Veterans Services](#)

## Reporting Improper Conduct

<https://publicdocs.maxient.com/incidentreport.php?UnivofAlabamaBirmingham>

## Report a Student of Concern

[https://publicdocs.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofAlabamaBirmingham&layout\\_id=2](https://publicdocs.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofAlabamaBirmingham&layout_id=2)