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School of Podiatric Medicine

STUDENT HANDBOOK POLICY MANUAL

POLICY

All UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine students must familiarize themselves with the SOPM Student Handbook Policy Manual and abide by its policies and procedures. Subject to change or correction, students should read the handbook at the beginning of each academic year and will attest that they received the handbook at orientation.

DISCLAIMER

This Handbook does not constitute a contract, express or implied, between UTRGV or the UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine and any current or prospective student. The UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine reserves the right to amend, add, or delete any information in this Handbook without prior notice.

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Mission & Vision

The UTRGV SOPM will foster student success by inspiring, educating, and developing a diverse, compassionate student body fully prepared for podiatric residency training, becoming dedicated podiatric physicians, research scientists, public health professionals, and educators.

We are a global leader in podiatric medicine integrating education, research, and service, inspiring and advancing the practice while transcending inter-professional and geographic boundaries.

Applicants and Students

Applicants must be U.S. Citizens or U.S. Permanent Residents.

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, School of Podiatric Medicine (SOPM) reserves the right to change without prior notice; admission, degree requirements, curriculum, modules, teaching personnel, rules, regulations, tuition, fees, and other matters in the UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) and the SOPM Student Handbook Policy Manual. This handbook does not constitute a contract, express or implied, between students or faculty members and UTRGV or UTRGV SOPM.

The guidelines in this student handbook do not create any rights greater than those in current State and Federal law.

UTRGV and UTRGV SOPM have the right to dismiss any student who does not attain and maintain academic or clinical performance or who does not exhibit the personal and professional qualifications for the practice of medicine.

History of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley & the School of Podiatric Medicine

Please visit the [UTRGV Overview and History webpage](#) for information on the history of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). In February 2019, The University of Texas System (UTS) approved the planning authority for the Doctor of Podiatric Medicine and a School of Podiatric Medicine (SOPM). In October 2020, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) officially notified the University of its approval to offer the Doctor of Podiatric Medicine degree and the UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine was founded.

Accreditation Statement

The Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME), the designated accrediting agency for colleges/schools of podiatric medicine, approved the UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine (UTRGV SOPM) eligibility application as a new school of podiatric medicine in June 2022. CPME is sponsored by the American Podiatric Medical Association and is the nationally recognized accrediting authority for podiatric medical education programs leading to the DPM (Doctorate of Podiatric Medicine) degree in the U.S. accreditation.

UTRGV SOPM has achieved candidate status as of June 9, 2022. The first cohort of students began classes on August 8, 2022. UTRGV SOPM achieved pre-accreditation status in January 2025. Full accreditation approval is anticipated prior to graduating from the inaugural Class of 2026. To achieve and maintain accreditation, a podiatric medical education program must meet CPME accreditation standards.

The achievement of pre-accreditation status does not guarantee eventual accreditation. Pre-accreditation is the category that may be granted to a new college that has achieved candidate status,

and the Council has determined that it is likely to succeed in obtaining accreditation.

Council on Podiatric Medical Education

The Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME or Council) is concerned with the continued compliance of all entities (institutions, organizations, programs, and providers) (hereinafter referred to as entity) to which it has extended accreditation, approval, and recognition. The public, the podiatric medical profession, students, residents, fellows, educators, and others are thus assured of the ongoing integrity of the entities that have been granted CPME accreditation, approval, or recognition.

Students can file a complaint with CPME by completing [CPME form 925](#). The form can be submitted by a student but must include a detailed description of the complaint and evidence of how it relates to non-compliance with a standard or a procedure that has not been followed. All individual efforts to resolve the issue or problem must have been exhausted by internally available procedures. The complaint must include the name, signature, mailing address, and telephone number, the names of all parties involved, a summary of the complaint, the specific CPME standard(s), the requirement(s), or criterion impacted by the incident, and evidence to support non-compliance.

The Council on Podiatric Medical Education
11400 Rockville Pike, Suite 220
Rockville, MD 20852
301-581-9200

[Email](#)
[Website](#)

Title IX & Equal Opportunity

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex (gender) in educational programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination based on sex (gender), including sexual harassment, sexual assault, non-consensual sexual touching, sexual exploitation, intimate partner (dating and domestic) violence, and stalking. The University provides resources and reporting options to students, faculty, and staff to address concerns related to sexual misconduct prohibited by Title IX and University policy.

UTRGV Office of Title IX and Equal Opportunity

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ESSBL 3.101
Edinburg TX 78539
Email: otixeo@utrgv.edu
Phone: (956) 665-2453
Fax: (956) 665-2275
Website: <https://www.utrgv.edu/otixeo/>

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Academic Integrity

Please refer to the [UTRGV Academic Integrity webpage](#) for guidelines on academic honesty, originality, and ethical conduct.

The Podiatric Medical Student Evaluation and Promotions Committee

The Podiatric Medical Student Evaluation and Promotions Committee (PMSEPC) is comprised of ten (10) members including two (2) alternates who will only assume voting rights in the event of a preclinical and/or clinical faculty member's absence. Membership will include two (2) elected preclinical faculty members, two (2) elected clinical faculty members, and the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs serving as an ex-officio member, with voting rights. In addition to the four (4) voting faculty members, one (1) alternate clinical faculty member and one (1) alternate preclinical faculty member will be elected by the faculty and are granted a vote in the event of an absence of either a voting clinical or preclinical faculty member, respectively. The director of student affairs (DSA) serves as non-voting ex-officio members of the committee. The PMSEPC chair is elected by PMSEPC members, with the position alternating between a preclinical faculty member and a clinical faculty member.

The PMSEPC oversees the following:

- SOPM student academic and professional performance during all four years of the curriculum
- Investigation and adjudication of formal grievances
- The recommendation of podiatric medical students for graduation
- The promotion or termination of students in the academic program; and
- The consideration of requests for leave of absence and curriculum deceleration

Any decisions made by the PMSEPC will require a 50% +1 majority vote.

Academic Grievances & Appeals

An academic grievance is a complaint regarding an academic decision or action affecting a student's academic record. Academic grievances in UTRGV SOPM may be handled by informal resolution or formal resolution.

Pre-Clinical Rotation Grievances

Informal Resolution:

A student who feels that they have an academic grievance in the pre-clinical or clinical didactic course curriculum - usually regarding an examination score or module grade - may attempt to informally resolve the concern by contacting the Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences and the module lead in writing within five (5) business days from the date the student knew or should have known of the academic concern. The Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences will facilitate the investigation with the module lead within fourteen (14) business days from receipt of the student's written communication. The Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences or designee will investigate the concern and provide the student with a written decision. The Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences or designee will investigate the concern and issue a written decision. The Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences will provide this decision within ten (10) days of reaching a determination.

Formal Resolution:

The process and procedures for formal academic grievance resolution are sequenced below. Academic grievance applies to concerns adversely influencing the student's academic status. Examples include, but

are not limited to, examination scores, module or clinical rotation grades, remediation, suspension, probation, professionalism sanctions, and dismissal.

A student must file written notice of formal grievance with the SOPM Dean and the director of student affairs (DSA) within five (5) business days from the date the student knew or should have known of the concern unless the student first pursues an informal grievance process. In that instance, the student must then file the formal grievance within five (5) business days of the written decision for the informal grievance. If the student chooses not to attempt an informal resolution of a grievance, they must file a formal written appeal not more than five (5) business days from the date the student knew or should have known of the academic concern.

The aggrieved student must meet with the SOPM Dean to ensure the factual accuracy of the basis for appeal, review the processes and procedures, and anticipate the preparation of documentation for the PMSEPC meeting. In the written appeal, the student must describe the rationale for the grievance in detail and propose a resolution. PMSEPC will investigate the grievance, meeting with the student as necessary to ensure a comprehensive review. The PMSEPC may defer a decision if more information/documentation is required to make a responsible decision and may request a face-to-face meeting with the student before rendering a decision. The PMSEPC will provide the student with a written decision within five (5) business days after the meeting.

Appeal Process for PMSEPC Decisions:

The student may file a written appeal within five (5) business days from receipt of the PMSEPC written decision only if the student can demonstrate one of the following:

- Information not available to the committee at the time of its initial decision has been made available
- The level of the sanction is grossly disproportionate to the misconduct
- The decision reflects a misapplication of policy

The appeal must specifically indicate the grounds for appeal and include sufficient information for the dean to review and decide. The student continues in the curriculum until the appeals process is exhausted unless the student's continuance poses a safety concern.

To appeal, the student must notify the SOPM Dean and the director of student affairs via email within five (5) business days and schedule an in-person meeting with the Dean to discuss the process. The student must submit a written justification for the appeal and include all documentation. Appeal materials will be compiled and submitted to the Dean. Once the appeal process is initiated, all communications regarding the matter must be directed exclusively to the Dean and the Director of Student Affairs. Failure to follow this protocol may result in the appeal being delayed or dismissed.

The following examples (including but not limited to) are not valid reasons for an appeal:

- Not liking the decision (e.g., being unhappy with a committee's ruling or feeling it was too harsh)
- Failure to understand or follow policies (e.g., missing a deadline or misinterpreting instructions)
- Personal need or desire for a specific outcome (e.g., needing a higher score to maintain a scholarship or avoid academic probation)
- Disagreement with course requirements or grading standards (e.g., believing an assignment was

weighted unfairly)

- Comparisons to other students (e.g., believing a peer received a more lenient outcome)

Upon review of the student's record and appeal portfolio, the dean may elect to:

- Take no action, allowing the PMSEPC decision to stand
- Modify the PMSEPC decision
- Make an alternate decision

The dean will provide a written final decision to the student, the director of student affairs, and the PMSEPC chair within fourteen (14) business days.

Clinical Rotation Grievances

Informal Resolution:

A student who feels that they have an academic grievance in the clinical curriculum - usually related to narrative evaluation comments, overall evaluation, an examination score, or a module grade - may attempt to informally resolve the concern by contacting Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs (ADCA) in writing within five (5) business days from the date the student knew or should have known of the academic concern. Within fourteen (14) business days from receipt of the student's written communication, the ADCA will investigate the concern, employing departmental education processes such as committee review as per departmental practice, and provide the student a written decision.

Formal Resolution:

The process and procedures for formal academic grievance are sequenced below. Clinical rotation grievance applies to concerns adversely influencing the student's academic status. Examples include, but are not limited to, examination scores, clinical rotation grades, remediation, repetition, suspension, probation, professionalism sanctions, and dismissal.

A student must file written notice of formal grievance with the associate dean of clinical affairs (ADCA) and the director of student affairs within five (5) business days from the date the student knew or should have known of the concern unless the student first pursues an informal grievance process. In that instance, the student must then file the formal grievance within five (5) business days of the written decision for the informal grievance. If the student chooses not to attempt informal resolution of a grievance, they must file a formal written appeal not more than five (5) business days from the date the student knew or should have known of the academic concern.

The aggrieved student must meet with the ADCA to ensure the factual accuracy of the basis for appeal, review the processes and procedures, and anticipate the preparation of documentation for the PMSEPC meeting. In the written appeal, the student must describe the rationale for the grievance in detail and propose a resolution. PMSEPC will investigate the grievance, meeting with the student as necessary to ensure a comprehensive review. The PMSEPC may defer a decision if more information/documentation is required to make a responsible decision and may request a face-to-face meeting with the student prior to rendering a decision. The PMSEPC will provide the student with a written decision within five (5) business days after the meeting.

Appeal Process for PMSEPC Decisions:

The student may file a written appeal within five (5) business days from receipt of the PMSEPC written

decision only if the student can demonstrate one of the following:

- Information not available to the committee at the time of its initial decision has been made available
- The level of the sanction is grossly disproportionate to the misconduct
- The decision reflects a misapplication of policy

The appeal must specifically indicate the grounds for appeal and include sufficient information for the dean to review and decide. The student continues in the curriculum until the appeals process is exhausted unless the student's continuance poses a safety concern.

To appeal, the student must notify the SOPM Dean and the director of student affairs via email within five (5) business days and schedule an in-person meeting with the Dean to discuss the process. The student must submit a written justification for the appeal and include all documentation. All appeal materials must be submitted to the SOPM Dean. Once the appeal process begins, all communication regarding the appeal must go through the Dean and the Director of Student Affairs only. Any attempt to bypass this process may jeopardize the appeal.

The following examples (including but not limited to) are not valid reasons for an appeal:

- Not liking the decision (e.g., being unhappy with a committee's ruling or feeling it was too harsh)
- Failure to understand or follow policies (e.g., missing a deadline or misinterpreting instructions)
- Personal need or desire for a specific outcome (e.g., needing a higher score to maintain a scholarship or avoid academic probation)
- Disagreement with course requirements or grading standards (e.g., believing an assignment was weighted unfairly)
- Comparisons to other students (e.g., believing a peer received a more lenient outcome)

Upon review of the student's record and appeal portfolio, the dean may elect to:

- Take no action, allowing the PMSEPC decision to stand
- Modify the PMSEPC decision
- Make an alternate decision

The dean will provide a written final decision to the student, the director of student affairs, and the PMSEPC chair within fourteen (14) business days.

Academic Dishonesty

In line with the Student Standards of Conduct, the SOPM considers academic dishonesty to be a serious and potentially career-ending action for its student body. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the SOPM's mission, and violations constitute a serious offense against the entire academic community and the profession. Academic dishonesty is defined as an act of obtaining or attempting to present academic work through fraudulent or deceptive means in order to obtain credit for this work.

The SOPM/PMSEPC uses the [UTRGV Academic Integrity Violation Sanctioning Guidelines](#) as a reference during the sanctioning process, though it is not restricted to these guidelines. Academic dishonesty violations fall under Category Four Violations.

Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person without giving

sufficient credit, taking an examination for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

1. Cheating

Cheating is the following or attempting to do the following:

- Failure to observe the expressed procedures of an academic exercise, but not limited to:
- Unauthorized use of commercial “research” services such as term papers.
- Providing information to others without the instructor’s permission or allowing the opportunity for others to obtain information that provides that recipient with an advantage on an exam or assignment, including, but not limited to, duplication in any format of exams or quizzes.
- Unauthorized communication with a fellow student during a quiz or exam.
- Copying material from another student’s quiz or exam.
- Permitting another student to copy from a quiz or exam.
- Permitting another person to take a quiz, exam, or similar evaluation in lieu of the enrolled student.
- Using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids (textbooks, notes, data, images, formulas, dictionaries, calculators, etc.) in any academic exercise or exam.
- Unauthorized collaboration in providing or requesting assistance, such as sharing information on an academic exercise or exam through cell phones, texting, or similar mobile technology.
- Using computer and word processing systems to gain access to, alter, and/or use unauthorized information.
- Altering a graded exam or assignment and requesting that it be regraded. Submission of altered work after grading shall be considered academically dishonest, including but not limited to changing answers after an exam or assignment has been returned or submitting another’s exam as one’s own to gain credit.

2. Fabrication

Falsification or invention of any information in an academic exercise, including but not limited to:

- Fabricating or altering data to support research.
- Presenting results from research that was not performed — submitting material for lab assignments, class projects, or other assignments that is wholly or partially falsified, invented, or otherwise does not represent work accomplished or undertaken by the student. Crediting source material that was not directly used for research.
- Falsification, alteration, or misrepresentation of official or unofficial records or documents, including but not limited to academic transcripts, academic documentation, letters of recommendation, and admissions applications or related documents.

3. Fraud, Misrepresentation, Lying

Intentionally making an untrue statement or deceiving individuals, including but not limited to:

- Providing an excuse for an absence, tardiness, or late assignment with the intent to deceive the instructor, staff, or the school.
- Checking into SOPM classes, labs, centers, or other resources with the intent to deceive the instructor, staff, or the school.

- Using another student's identification card in a class, lab, center, or other SOPM resource.
- Resubmission of past work as new, unique, or novel to a class when the work had been previously submitted.

4. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one's own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one's own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program, module, or degree requirement.

The presentation of the author's words, images, or ideas as if they were the student's own, including but not limited to:

- Stealing the written, oral, artistic, or original works or efforts of others and presenting them as one's own.
- The submission of material, whether in part or whole, authored by another person or source (the internet, book, journal, etc.), whether that material is paraphrased, translated, or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form without properly acknowledging the source. It is the student's responsibility to cite all sources.
- The submission of material edited, in part or whole, by another person that results in the loss of the student's original voice or ideas (while an editor or tutor may advise the student, the final submitted material must be the work of the student, not that of the editor or tutor).
- Translating all or any part of the material from another language and presenting it as if it were the student's original work.
- Unauthorized transfer and use of another person's computer file or any other electronic/technical product as the student's own.
- Unauthorized use of another person's data in completing a computer or an academic exercise.

5. Multiple Submissions

Resubmission of a work that has already received credit with identical or similar content in another module without the written consent of the present instructor or submission of work with identical or similar content in concurrent modules without the written consent of all instructors involved.

6. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty

Assisting another student to commit an act of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to:

- Taking a quiz, exam, or similar evaluation in place of another person.
- Allowing one student to copy from another.
- Attending a module posing as another student who is officially registered for that module.
- Providing material or other information (solutions to homework, project, or assignments, copy of an exam, exam key, or any test information) to another student with knowledge that such assistance could be used to violate any other sections of this policy.

7. Distribution or Use of Notes or Recordings

Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on classes without the express written permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by publishing class notes (restriction on unauthorized use applies to all information distributed or in any way displayed for use in relation to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet or via any other media).

8. Academic Sabotage

Deliberately impeding the academic progress of others, including but not limited to:

- Intentionally destroying or obstructing another student's work.
- Stealing or defacing books, journals, or other library or university materials.
- Altering computer files that contain data, reports, or assignments belonging to another student.
- Removing posted or reserved material or otherwise preventing other students' access to such material.

9. Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to violate any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing or distributing the contents of an exam.

10. Misrepresenting facts for academic advantage to UTRGV or an agent of UTRGV. This includes providing false grades or resumes; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual; and providing false or misleading information in an effort to injure another student academically or financially.

11. Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies significantly impact students' learning journeys and the development of their critical thinking abilities. These emerging technologies offer new opportunities for exploration and learning. However, it is essential to uphold academic integrity within coursework. Specifically, the use of AI tools, including generative AI, for completing assignments related to Team-Based Learning (TBL), Problem-Based Learning (PBL), and open-book quizzes is strictly prohibited. Utilizing AI in these contexts will be considered a violation of academic honesty and will be addressed in accordance with UTRGV Student Rights and Responsibilities policies. For information about AI and its application in education, resources are available at [UTRGV Center for Online Learning and Teaching Technology website](#).

Students are expected to maintain professional and ethical standards. Additionally, they are expected to take appropriate action, such as informing a supervisor or administrator, if they observe peers or colleagues acting unprofessionally or unethically. Students, staff, and faculty are required to report any

suspected cases of academic dishonesty or violations of the student code of conduct to the UTRGV Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities via [Vaqueros Report It](#).

The UTRGV Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities will investigate reports by reviewing the student's work, discussing the matter with the relevant faculty or staff and potentially other involved students or personnel, and meeting with the identified student to review the issue.

The UTRGV Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities will summarize its findings in writing and provide them to the SOPM Dean and the director of student affairs (DSA). These findings will then be shared with the PMSEPC.

Appeals Process for all PMSEPC Decisions:

The student may file a written appeal within five (5) business days from receipt of the PMSEPC written decision only if the student can demonstrate one of the following:

- Information not available to the committee at the time of its initial decision has been made available
- The level of the sanction is grossly disproportionate to the misconduct
- The decision reflects a misapplication of policy

The appeal must specifically indicate the grounds for appeal and include sufficient information for the dean to review and decide. The student continues in the curriculum until the appeals process is exhausted unless the student's continuance poses a safety concern.

To appeal, the student must notify the SOPM Dean and the director of student affairs via email within five (5) business days and schedule an in-person meeting with the Dean to discuss the process. The student must submit a written justification for the appeal and include all documentation. All appeal materials must be submitted to the Dean. Once the appeal process begins, all communication regarding the appeal must go through the Dean and the Director of Student Affairs only. Any attempt to bypass this process may jeopardize the appeal.

The following examples (including but not limited to) are not valid reasons for an appeal:

- Not liking the decision (e.g., being unhappy with a committee's ruling or feeling it was too harsh)
- Failure to understand or follow policies (e.g., missing a deadline or misinterpreting instructions)
- Personal need or desire for a specific outcome (e.g., needing a higher score to maintain a scholarship or avoid academic probation)
- Disagreement with course requirements or grading standards (e.g., believing an assignment was weighted unfairly)
- Comparisons to other students (e.g., believing a peer received a more lenient outcome)

Upon review of the student's record and appeal portfolio, the dean may elect to:

- Take no action, allowing the PMSEPC decision to stand
- Modify the PMSEPC decision
- Make an alternate decision

The dean will provide a written final decision to the student, the DSA, and the PMSEPC chair within fourteen (14) business days.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence (LOA) is defined as three consecutive weeks or more away from the curriculum. Students should be aware that they must complete all module requirements within six years from the

time of matriculation to receive the DPM degree. After matriculation to SOPM, a student may not arbitrarily cease registration without notice.

Non-Academic LOA:

A student in good academic standing (passing all modules) may request a non-academic LOA, defined as a temporary period of non-enrollment or suspension of studies, for which an approved time limit has been set and a specific date of return established. An LOA may be either voluntary or involuntary, as described below:

- A student seeking a leave of absence (LOA) due to medical, personal, financial, administrative, or non-emergent reasons must submit a written petition via email to the SOPM Dean and the director of student affairs (DSA). The petition should clearly state the reasons for the requested LOA. The Dean will forward the petition to the chair of PMSEPC for a committee decision. Students cannot request a non-emergent LOA within 30 calendar days of the end of the term or after three-quarters of a module has been completed.
- If a student initiates a leave of absence (LOA) before completing a module or clinical rotation, they will receive a grade of "withdrawn." While on an approved LOA, the student remains matriculated but is not registered for any modules in the SOPM curriculum. The PMSEPC may impose academic conditions on any LOA. All LOAs count toward the six-year timeframe for completing the SOPM curriculum. Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the PMSEPC.
- Taking an LOA in the middle of a term may require the student to repeat the academic year.

To be reinstated into the curriculum after any absence, students must submit a written petition to the Dean and DSA. Petitions will be forwarded to the Chair of PMSEPC for reinstatement.

To extend a leave of absence, a new written request must be submitted to the Dean and DSA. This request will detail the reason for the extension, the additional leave time sought, the revised proposed date of return, and the intention to resume studies towards completing the DPM degree at SOPM. After PMSEPC reaches a decision, the request must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar.

The total time taken for LOAs (whether a single leave or multiple leaves) may not exceed two years during the entire period of enrollment at the SOPM. The PMSEPC will dismiss a student whose absences exceed two years.

A student who has been dismissed because of an absence of more than two years and wishes to return to the SOPM must reapply for admission. The SOPM Admissions Committee decides readmission, which is not guaranteed.

Academic LOA:

Please refer to page 22 for Academic LOA policies regarding academic deficiencies under promotions.

Withdrawal

Voluntary Withdrawal:

A student who wishes to leave the program permanently should prepare the request via email to withdraw in consultation with the SOPM Dean and director of student affairs (DSA). The request must include the reason(s) for withdrawal and a statement that the student understands that withdrawal is voluntary and permanent. The withdrawal is effective when the form is signed and **received** by the Office of the Registrar.

Involuntary Withdrawal/Dismissal:

The PMSEPC may determine that a student be dismissed in the following cases:

- Failure to remediate deficiencies
- An accumulation of narrative evaluations indicating serious gaps in knowledge and clinical skills and/or inadequate integration of the content of the curriculum
- A specific academic deficiency (e.g., an important clinical skill has not been mastered)
- Failing performance on APMLE Part 1 of the National Board of Podiatric Medical Examination after three attempts. A letter of dismissal will be sent from the SOPM Dean.
- Failure to assume appropriate professional responsibility
- Failure to meet professional standards, including those of demeanor and conduct; and,
- A violation of the University Handbook of Operating Procedures or SOPM policies or procedures

Probation, Suspension, & Dismissal

Students who are facing probation, suspension, or dismissal decisions are required to appear before the PMSEPC in person.

Probation:

Probationary status (probation) may be imposed by the PMSEPC under various circumstances, particularly when there are significant concerns that failure to address deficiencies could lead to dismissal from the School of Podiatric Medicine DPM program. Upon notification of probationary status, the student will receive a remedial action plan outlining specific performance requirements set by the PMSEPC. Successfully completing the remedial work typically ends the probationary status upon the PMSEPC's recommendation. However, the probationary notation will be retained in the student's internal PMSEPC file and remain part of their permanent record at SOPM.

Suspension:

The PMSEPC may conclude that the student should be suspended from the UTRGV SOPM for a period of time.

Reinstatement to the UTRGV SOPM is contingent upon the completion of all requirements stipulated under the suspension. PMSEPC shall review the circumstances surrounding the suspension and potential reinstatement, decide whether the terms and conditions of the suspension have been met, decide whether the student possesses the potential to pursue the DPM degree successfully, and recommend whether the student should be reinstated.

Dismissal:

The PMSEPC may determine that a student be dismissed in the following cases:

- Failure to remediate deficiencies
- An accumulation of narrative evaluations indicating serious gaps in knowledge and clinical skills and/or inadequate integration of the content of the curriculum
- A specific academic deficiency (e.g., an important clinical skill has not been mastered)
- Failure to assume appropriate professional responsibility
- Failure to meet professional standards, including those of demeanor and conduct; and
- A violation of University regulations, policies, or procedures

Failure to pass the APMLE Part 1 of the NBPME licensing examinations on the third attempt leads to an automatic dismissal from the School of Podiatric Medicine.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for all PMSB modules, lower extremity anatomy, and the mandatory educational activities listed below. Repeated unexcused absences and tardiness are viewed seriously and may suggest a lack of commitment to the professional standards expected of a student physician. Persistent professionalism issues related to unexcused absences or tardiness will be reviewed by the SOPM Dean and director of student affairs (DSA). If not resolved, these issues may be referred to the Podiatric Medical School Evaluation and Promotions Committee (PMSEPC) for further evaluation.

Mandatory Educational Activities:

- Problem-based learning (PBL), team-based learning (TBL), clinical skills, case wrap-ups, journal clubs, and interprofessional education sessions that bring either health care professionals or health professions students together.
- Flipped classroom sessions
- Sessions with patient participants and/or their families
- Laboratory sessions
- Quizzes and formative and summative examinations
- All required clinical rotations and electives
- Accreditation-mandated training (e.g., financial aid)
- Any other academic assignments as deemed necessary
-

Lectures in Years One and Two are recorded (***except for reviews***).

Module leads, clinical rotation directors, or their designated representatives are responsible for recording and maintaining attendance and tardiness records for all educational activities. Students found in violation of attendance or tardiness policies within the pre-clinical modules will be referred to the Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences. For clinical rotations, the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs (ADCA) will address the issue with the student and determine appropriate actions.

While lectures are recorded for the purpose of review, they are not a substitute for attendance.

Students are expected to be present for all scheduled classes, as in-person participation is essential for engagement, interactive learning, and professional development.

First and Second Year Excused Absence Form

To request an excused absence, students must follow the full protocol **in person** using original (wet) signatures. **Email submissions or drop-offs will not be accepted**, and any requests that bypass the proper steps will not be approved.

Steps to Follow:

- **Step 1: Notify Appropriate Parties**
Email the Chair of the Department and the Director of Student Affairs to inform them of the intended absence so faculty can be properly notified.
- **Step 2: Complete the Excused Absence Form**
Fill out the official Excused Absence Form, clearly indicating the reason for the absence and attaching any necessary documentation.
- **Step 3: Meet with the Module Lead**
Present the form to the Module Lead, who will review the request, determine if the absence is justified, outline any required make-up work, and sign the form. The Module Lead will also communicate recommendations to the Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences.
- **Step 4: Meet with the Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences**

Schedule an in-person meeting with the Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences, who will complete the final review and sign the form.

- **Step 5: Submit to Student Affairs**

After obtaining all signatures, submit the completed form in person to the Office of Student Affairs.

Additional Information:

Acceptable reasons for an excused absence include medical issues, educational or scholarly activities, bereavement, religious observance, military service, or emergencies. Students selecting “Emergency” or “Other” must include a brief explanation. All signatures must be original (wet), and any requests made outside of this process will not be accepted.

First- and second-year students should not contact the Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences directly without speaking with the module leads or expect urgent requests to be approved without following the proper channels. This structured process ensures professionalism, fairness, and timely academic follow-up.

Third- and Fourth-Year Excused Absence Form

Students in their clinical years must complete the excused absence process **in person** using original (wet) signatures. Due to the hands-on nature of clinical education, students may only be approved for up to **two days of leave**.

Steps to Follow:

- **Step 1: Notify Clinical Leadership**

Email the Office of Clinical Affairs to inform them of the requested absence. This serves as the initial notice and allows for coordination within the clinical team and the preceptors.

- **Step 2: Complete the Excused Absence Form**

Indicate the reason for the absence on the form and provide a clear explanation. Attach any necessary documentation.

- **Step 3: Obtain Required Signatures**

- First, obtain a signature from your clinical instructor or preceptor.
- Then, obtain final approval and signature from the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs or their designee.

- **Step 4: Submit the Form**

After both signatures are secured, submit the completed form in person to the Office of Student Affairs.

Additional Information:

Acceptable reasons for excused absences include medical issues, professional or scholarly educational activities, bereavement (immediate family only), religious observance, military service, conferences, emergencies, or other significant circumstances. For absences of **five days or more** due to medical, religious, emergency, or military reasons, students must complete a separate form for each five-day period and submit the request directly to the **Office of Clinical Affairs**. This in-person process ensures accountability and safeguards the integrity of each student’s clinical education and rotation schedule.

Grades & Class Rank

Pre-Clinical Rotation Grades

Module grades for PMS 1 and PMS 2 are based on an **Honors, High Pass, Pass, and Fail** system. Each module provides students with its School of Podiatric Medicine Curriculum Committee (SPMCC)-approved grading rubric.

Pass/Fail Grading System (Pre-Clinical Years)

Achievement of at least 70% in module grades for PMS 1 and PMS 2 will be considered passing. All grades below 70% will be considered failing.

- 90-100% = Honors (4.0)
- 80-89.99% = High Pass (3.5)
- 70-79.99% = Pass (2.5)
- 0-69.99% = Fail (1.0)

At the end of each pre-clinical year (not including PMMD 8600), a grade point average will be calculated using a 4.0 scale to assist SOPM students with post-graduate residency education placement. Averaging the students' numerical grade point equivalent earned for all modules for Years 1 and 2. UTRGV is developing a system for GPA calculations, which will be available yearly, at least manually, by AY 2025-2026 until full automation is implemented. GPA should be available at the end of each preclinical year and accessible to students, as it will be used for Dean's List and annual ranking.

Academic Credit Hour and Workload Overview:

The UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine (SOPM) follows a credit hour and student workload policy consistent with institutional, state, and federal standards to ensure academic quality, student well-being, and compliance with accreditation requirements.

Credit Hour Definition:

Each credit hour represents 45 total hours of student engagement, including 15 contact instructional hours and 30 hours of preparation, review, and assessment. Credit hours are assigned based on course/module length, content, and learning outcomes across all instructional modalities (e.g., lectures, labs, clinical rotations, online/hybrid instruction).

Workload Overview

Pre-Clinical Years (Years 1–2):

- Maximum of 40 scheduled instructional hours per week.
- May extend to 44 hours with approval from the Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences.
- Each module provides 15 instructional hours per credit hour, totaling 45 hours of total student effort per credit.

Clinical Years (Years 3–4):

- Each clinical rotation equals 4 semester credit hour equivalents (SCH).
- Students may spend up to 60 contact hours per week on rotation duties.
- Duty hour limits include:
 - 80-hour weekly maximum, including on-call.
 - 10-hour minimum rest period between scheduled duty periods.
 - 24-hour maximum continuous on-site shift.
 - One day off in every seven, averaged over four weeks.
 - Call no more than every third night.

Students must track duty hours weekly using the learning management system. Concerns about excessive workload or violations should be reported to clinical coordinators, Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs, or through the SOPM Professionalism Portal. **Full policy details are included in the following appendices: Appendix 4.8 SOPM Academic Workload, Appendix 4.13 UTRGV Course Credit Hour Policy, and Appendix 4.14 UTRGV Credit Hour Policy**

Ranking:

Class rank is based on didactic and pre-clinical modules as determined by the required coursework table and will be calculated every year. Class rank is not posted on the official transcript but is included in the Podiatric Medical Student Performance Evaluation and used as part of the determination for the Pi Delta National Honor Society. The class ranking places students in numerical rank order.

The Dean's List will be calculated yearly and awarded to 1st and 2nd year students with a 3.5 or higher GPA.

The grading and ranking systems for clinical rotation years are outlined in Section 3 of this handbook.

Promotions

To advance to the next academic year, podiatric medical students must fulfill all requirements of the current year and adhere to University and SOPM standards satisfactorily.

Graduation from UTRGV SOPM requires:

- Successful completion of pre-clinical rotation requirements in years one and two,
- Successful completion of clinical rotations in years three and four,
- Passing scores on APMLE Part 1,
- Passing OSCE in years three and four,
- Demonstrating essential professionalism expected of physicians,
- Adhering satisfactorily to all UTRGV and SOPM standards. All requirements must be met within six years from matriculation.

Student academic and behavioral performances are equally evaluated. Students are expected to demonstrate honesty, conscientiousness, respectfulness, and reliability in their assignments. Their conduct toward colleagues, faculty, staff, patients, and others must align with the professional standards expected of podiatric medical professionals.

The PMSEPC holds primary responsibility for recommending graduation only for candidates who have met all graduation requirements and demonstrated appropriate professional conduct. The committee oversees the academic progress and professional development of each student throughout the four-year podiatric medical education program.

The PMSEPC reviews information provided by module and clinical rotation directors, the students, academic advisors/program coordinators, academic records, and other relevant data. Recommendations regarding promotion or remediation adhere to the guidelines outlined in this handbook.

Promotion to Year Three:

Students who have met all academic standards for completion of the Year One and Two modules are eligible for promotion to Year Three and may prepare to sit for The National Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners APMLE Part 1 Exam.

Academic Performance Deficiencies:

If a student's advancement or academic performance is in question, they must be notified that their case will be discussed at the PMSEPC meeting. The student must appear before the PMSEPC in person and submit written documents for the committee's review.

Students must inform the PMSEPC of any extenuating circumstances that may affect their academic performance and professional behavior. If no additional information is provided, the PMSEPC will base its decision on the available information at that time. The PMSEPC reserves the right to request consultations or assessments, including medical evaluations, for students experiencing issues that impact their academic performance. Specific meeting rules, if applicable, will be communicated to the student in advance.

Students facing probation or dismissal decisions must appear in person before the PMSEPC.

Examinations

The Department Chair and Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences are responsible for the oversight and administration of computer-based examinations for the SOPM and for establishing examination protocols.

Assessment Scheduling and Rescheduling Policy:

The Department Chair, Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences, and/or the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs, oversee all aspects of assessment scheduling and administration. This includes, but is not limited to, examinations, quizzes, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), and shelf exams throughout the four-year academic program.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Faculty and Module Leads** are responsible for the structure and format of all assessments. They develop the content, ensuring alignment with curricular objectives.
- **The Department Chair, Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences and/or Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs** assume responsibility for the distribution, administration, and adherence to testing guidelines and requirements once assessments are submitted by faculty.
- **Scheduling of Assessments:** Before the academic calendar is published, the Department Chair, Modules Leads, and Faculty are responsible for scheduling all assessments. Once finalized and made available to students, assessment dates and times are firmly established, and changes are strongly discouraged.

Assessment Rescheduling Process

In extenuating circumstances, the Department Chair has the authority to approve changes to the assessment schedule. However, the following process must be strictly followed:

1. Written Request Submission

- a. Any faculty member or student requesting a change to an assessment date or time must submit a formal written request to the Department Chair.

2. Review and Preliminary Approval

- a. The Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences and/or the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs may approve or deny the request or may choose to seek student input via a class vote.

3. Departmental Consultation

- a. Before initiating a student vote, the Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences and/or the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs will consult with the Department Chair and Module Leads to determine if there are any objections to the proposed change.

4. Student Vote (if applicable)

- a. If no objections are raised by faculty or leadership, the Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical

- Sciences and/or the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs will conduct a student vote.
- b. A 100% unanimous vote from the class is required for the rescheduling request to be approved.

This policy applies uniformly to all assessments, including quizzes, examinations, OSCEs, and shelf exams across all four years of the academic program.

By adhering to this policy, the institution ensures fairness, consistency, and accountability in the administration of all assessments, while maintaining the integrity of the academic schedule.

Testing Procedures

The SOPM would like to provide you with essential information regarding our examination procedures to ensure a smooth, fair, and secure examination process. Below are the guidelines you must follow during examinations, including bathroom breaks, accessing and downloading exams, and protocols for personal belongings:

1. Bathroom Policy:

We understand that restroom breaks may be necessary during examinations. However, to maintain fairness and security, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Scheduled Breaks:** For examinations lasting more than 90 minutes, you may request a restroom break by raising your hand. A proctor will escort you to the restroom. Only one individual will be allowed to go at a time. We encourage you to use the restroom before the exam starts.
- **Exams Under 90 Minutes:** No restroom breaks will be allowed for exams lasting less than 90 minutes. In cases of emergency, immediately inform the proctor for assistance.
- **Time Management:** Time will continue to count down during restroom breaks, so it is advised that you manage your time effectively to complete the exam within the allotted period.

2. Exam Access and Download:

To ensure the examination process runs smoothly, please follow these steps:

- **Log In Early:** It is recommended that you log into the examination platform at least 10 minutes before the scheduled exam time. This allows time to resolve any technical issues and ensures a timely start.
- **Downloading the Exam:** Once logged in, locate your examination and download it promptly. Verify that the exam opens correctly. If you experience any issues, inform a proctor immediately.
- **Uploading the Exam:** Upon completion of the exam, you may need to re-establish your internet connection before uploading. Please verify the upload process and notify the proctor only if issues persist.

3. Personal Belongings and Exam Room Protocol:

- **Storage of Personal Items:** All personal belongings must be securely stored in lockers or vehicles. A designated bin will be provided for cell phones, keys, and smartwatches. Any other personal items are strictly prohibited in the exam room.
- **After Completing the Exam:** Once you finish the exam, ensure that you upload it, close your testing laptop, and leave the testing materials on your desk.
- **Prompt Stowing of Belongings:** For exams scheduled after lectures, please stow your belongings promptly to allow your peers to do the same in a timely manner.
- **Privacy Screens:** You are required to maintain the privacy screen in place throughout the

examination process. Do not remove the screen prior to or during the exam. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in a grade of zero and an investigation by Student Rights and Responsibilities.

4. Cell Phones and Electronic Devices:

- **Use of Electronic Devices:** Cell phones, smartwatches, and other electronic devices are strictly prohibited during examinations. Any use or unauthorized communication during the exam will result in a violation of academic integrity policies.
- **Security of Devices:** As mentioned, please store your phones, smartwatches, and keys in your bag or a designated bin before entering the examination room.

5. Compliance and Integrity:

Please remember that these policies are designed to maintain the integrity and security of our examination process. Any violation of these guidelines will be subject to the academic integrity policies of the institution.

Mock APMLE exam

To help you prepare for **Mock APMLE exam**, we have outlined important policies and procedures. Familiarizing yourself with the following details will ensure you are well-prepared and meet all requirements for the examination.

What to Bring to the Test Site:

- **Arrival Time:** Arrive at least 30 minutes before your scheduled exam time. This ensures that there is ample time for check-in and identity verification.
- **Identification:** You must present a valid, non-expired form of government-issued identification (e.g., driver's license, state-issued ID card, passport, or military identification card).

***Important Note:** Failure to present valid identification will be treated as a missed appointment.

- Your ID must include:
 - A current photo and signature.
 - A name that matches the one in your academic records and the Authorization to Test (ATT), including any designations such as "Jr." or "III."
- If the proctor questions your ID, a second form of ID (such as a valid military ID, citizenship card, or driver's license without a photo) may be requested.

1. Test Site Regulations

To ensure a fair and secure examination environment for all students, the following regulations will be enforced at the test center:

- **Biometric-enabled Assessments:**
 - For security, biometrics will be used to record the date and time you enter and exit the exam room.
 - If you leave the exam room during the exam, you must sign out/in on the log and will lose exam time.
- **Reference Materials:**
 - No reference materials, dictionaries, books, papers, or study materials are allowed.
 - Bringing or using any unauthorized materials will result in disqualification from the exam, and your answers will not be scored.
- **Electronic Equipment:**
 - Cell phones, cameras, tape recorders, smart watches, and EarPods must be turned off

and stored outside the testing room

- You will not be allowed to use any electronic devices or phones during breaks.

- **Personal Items:**

- Watches, outerwear (e.g., jackets), purses, briefcases, and other personal items are not permitted in the testing room.
- Pocket items such as wallets, keys, and other small belongings must be stored in a locker.
- **Note:** Eyeglasses and jewelry will be inspected for hidden recording devices during check-in and after breaks.

- **Prohibited Jewelry:**

- Only wedding and engagement rings are permitted.
- Other jewelry, including hair accessories, ties, bowties, and cufflinks, may be subject to inspection and could be prohibited in the testing room.

- **Violation of Security Protocols:**

- Any violation, such as bringing prohibited items, engaging in misconduct, or disruptive behavior, will result in termination of your exam.
- Confiscation of prohibited devices may also occur.

- **Food and Beverages:**

- Eating, drinking, or using tobacco during the exam is prohibited.

- **Guests/Visitors:**

- Only individuals scheduled for the exam are allowed in the test center.
- No guests or family members may accompany you.

Misconduct or Disruptive Behavior:

- **Examples of misconduct include:**

- Giving or receiving help.
- Impersonation or taking test materials from the exam room.
- Using rude or offensive language.
- Delaying or disrupting the testing process.

- **Behavior Towards Staff:**

- Any form of abusive behavior towards test center staff may result in an **SOPM Early Concern Note** and potential dismissal from the exam.

If Questions Arise During the Exam:

- If you encounter a problem with your computer or have a technical issue, raise your hand to alert the proctor.
- Proctors **cannot** answer questions related to the test content. If you are unsure of a question, answer to the best of your ability.

National Exams:

Students are expected to successfully complete each examination within the specified deadlines. Enrollment in SOPM is mandatory for registering and taking APMLE Parts 1 and 2, as well as Part 2 of Clinical Skills Patient Encounter (CSPE), if given. Students must submit their APMLE examination applications with sufficient time to receive dean approval.

Students facing circumstances preventing them from taking or retaking APMLE Parts 1 and 2 or CSPE (Final 4th Year OSCE) within the designated timeframe must submit a written petition to the director of student affairs (DSA), Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs, and PMSEPC for review and determination.

For APMLE Part 1: Students must take the first administration of the exam at the start of Year Three. Delaying APMLE Part 1 until after this time will result in referral to the PMSEPC. Failing APMLE Part 1 on the initial attempt will also prompt referral to the PMSEPC, with a comprehensive academic record review required. The Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences will notify the PMSEPC committee in writing of those students who failed within five (5) business days of the release of scores. Failing to pass APMLE Part 1 after the third attempt will lead to automatic dismissal from SOPM.

For APMLE Part 2: Students must take APMLE Part 2 in January of the year of graduation. To ensure timely residency program participation, any student unable to achieve a passing score on APMLE Part 2 Written and CSPE, if given, before the National CASPR rank order list submission deadline, will be withdrawn from the residency match by the Office of Clinical Affairs. At the discretion of the DSA and the ADCA, such students will be allowed to walk with their class at commencement. Failure to pass the APMLE Part 2 or the CSPE (Final 4th Year OSCE), if given, after the third attempt (per exam) will result in automatic dismissal from the SOPM.

SOLE (Supporting Opportunities for Learning and Excellence)

The SOLE programs are intended for students who fail the APMLE Part 1 exam in their third year. Extenuating circumstances (usually due to hospitalization) that prevent the student from attempting the exam in July will be heard by the PMSEPC.

APMLE Outcome – July	Action Following Score Report
Pass	Promote
Fail	SOLE 1 program
APMLE Outcome – October	
Pass	Continue clinical rotations
Fail	Removed from clinical rotations and transitioned to SOLE 2 program

SOLE 1 – August to October of third year

Students taking APMLE Part 1 in July will begin rotations in August. Once scores are released, those who do not pass will be notified by the Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences and enrolled in **SOLE 1**, a non-credit course designed to provide additional academic support for the October retake of APMLE Part 1 in addition to their clinical rotations.

Outcome: Upon successful completion of APMLE Part 1, students will be promoted out of the SOLE 1 program. Those who do not successfully pass will transition into the SOLE 2 program and be removed from clinical rotations to focus entirely on boards preparation.

SOLE 2 – October to June of third year

- **Auditing:** Access to Year 1 and Year 2 modules.
- **Materials:** Full access to lectures and resources via Panopto and the LMS.
- **Tutoring:** Tailored sessions with peer tutors and/or external consultants.
- **Board Review:** Mandatory participation in the school-sponsored board review module.
- **Assessments:** Content-specific evaluations to reinforce board exam readiness.
- **Mock Board Exams:** Full-length practice exams, including a midpoint assessment to track progress.

Steps to Success

1. **Complete** the Podiatric Medical Student Academic Success Plan overview.
2. **Submit** the completed plan to the academic advisor at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting.
3. **Meet** with the academic advisor to develop a monthly Individualized Assessment Plan (IAP) based on clinical and study expectations.
4. **Review** the IAP for feasibility, with feedback from one pre-clinical and one clinical faculty member of your choosing.
5. **Establish** a success threshold with your academic advisor to set a measurable metric for progress. If performance falls below this threshold, the PMSEPC will review your progress and determine if an academic LOA is necessary.
6. **Report** progress monthly to the PMSEPC, with updates presented by your academic advisor to ensure accountability and adherence to the IAP.

This structured approach ensures that students receive the guidance, resources, and support needed to successfully pass APMLE Part 1 and continue their education.

Remediation

Module leads and the Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences or the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs for clinical education, are responsible for monitoring student progress within their respective modules and must promptly inform the UTRGV SOPM department chair of any student at risk of failing. If a student fails a module, the module lead(s) will develop a remediation plan and submit it to the Department Chair within two weeks of the initial posting of the failing grade (F).

The Podiatric Medical Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (PMSEPC) monitors student progress throughout the podiatric medical education program. Advancement to the next academic year requires the successful completion of all academic requirements.

Definitions and Consequences of Failing to Meet Academic Standards and Requirements in Preclinical and Clinical Curriculum:

- **Passing Score:** For pre-clinical modules, students must achieve a minimum score of **70%** to pass a module. A score of 69.9% or below constitutes a failing grade and requires remediation. **No retests are offered.**
- **Academic Deficiency:** Earning a failing grade **below 70%** at the end of a module or clinical rotation is considered an academic deficiency. The SOPM grading policy stipulates that grades will not be rounded up; therefore, a score of 69.999% or below is considered a failing grade.
- **For clinical didactic modules:**
 - Final grades for each module are determined through a comprehensive review of multiple performance components. These include: preceptor evaluations of clinical performance, performance on the clinical shelf examination if applicable, professionalism and adherence to site expectations, and timely submission of all required documentation including logs and student evaluation of the clinical experience.
 - If multiple areas of “does not meet expectations” are marked on a student’s clinical evaluation, this will prompt a formal review by the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs (ADCA) or their designee. This review will include consultation with the preceptor and a holistic evaluation of all available documentation. The focus of this review is not solely on the pass/fail outcome, but rather on ensuring the student receives constructive feedback regarding their clinical performance and areas for growth. The ADCA will make

the final determination regarding the passing or failing of the rotation.

- **Remediation:** Remediation is a three-week study period after failing a module, allowing a second attempt at a cumulative exam. Students collaborate with the module lead to create a study plan and attend regular check-ins based on the material. Depending on the timing of the failed module, remediation will take place either during the December holiday break or immediately after the final module in the spring.
- **Impact of Remediation:** Successfully remediating a module or clinical rotation does not remove the academic deficiency from the academic record.
- **Remediation Grade Cap:** The highest grade a student can earn for a remediated module is 70% for modules or a Pass for clinical rotations, regardless of performance on the remediation assessment.

Module or Clinical Rotation Outcome	Remediation Eligibility	Remediation Timing	Action Following Remediation of Module
All modules or clinical rotations passed	N/A	N/A	N/A
One module or clinical rotation academic deficiency	Yes, eligible for remediation	PMSEPC-recommended schedule	Pass: Promote and continue with curriculum Fail: Repeat academic year
Two total academic deficiencies (any combination of module or rotation)	Two simultaneous academic deficiencies: Not eligible for remediation Two non-simultaneous academic deficiencies at different phases of the academic year: Yes, eligible for remediation per PMSEPC requirements	PMSEPC-recommended schedule	Repeat academic year Pass both: Promote and continue with the curriculum Fail either of the two: Repeat academic year
Three total deficiencies (any combination of module or rotation)	No remediation. Dismissal	N/A	N/A

PMSEPC decisions regarding promotion to the next academic year or recommendation for graduation from SOPM are contingent upon the successful remediation of all academic deficiencies and the fulfillment of all academic requirements.

Students will not be permitted to voluntarily withdraw from the SOPM while academic dismissal proceedings are in progress. Students who have been dismissed will not be eligible for readmission.

Clinical Rotation Remediation

A failed rotation will result in the student having to present to the Podiatric Medicine Student Evaluation and Promotions Committee (PMSEPC) to determine if the student is eligible for remediation. If granted, the student will be informed on how to remediate the failed rotation.

A student who leaves a rotation without the preceptor's permission or is asked to leave by the preceptor or hospital director will be considered to have failed the rotation.

Year 3:

To pass a third-year clinical rotation, a student must pass all the components of the clinical rotation (as defined in the clinical rotation syllabus).

If a student receives a failing grade in a clinical rotation, the student and the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs (ADCA) will meet within one week of receiving notice to discuss the student's performance. The student may be asked to present to the Podiatric Medical Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (PMSEPC). PMSEPC may recommend a remediation plan as outlined above.

If a student fails the End of Clinical Rotation Written Examination (Shelf exam) but performs at a satisfactory level in all other aspects of the clinical rotation, the student will have the opportunity to retake that exam once.

If a student fails a clinical rotation retake exam, the student receives a grade of "Fail" in the clinical rotation and will be required to repeat the clinical rotation. A student who is repeating a clinical rotation must complete all components and requirements for the clinical rotation regardless of whether the student completed those components during the initial attempt at the clinical rotation; previous work cannot be resubmitted.

If a student fails a third-year clinical rotation for reasons other than, or in addition to, failure of the written examination, the student will receive a "Fail" and may be required to present to PMSEPC for determination. Failure of rotation may result in dismissal from the program. A student repeating a clinical rotation due to a failing grade will do so during the next clinical rotation block after their scheduled third-year clinical rotations are completed. Time allocated for the June elective in the 3rd year shall be used to repeat the clinical rotation. The student cannot be promoted to the fourth year until all third-year clinical rotations are passed. Implications for repeating a clinical rotation include, but are not limited to, cancellation of a scheduled 4th year clerkship rotation, delayed graduation, and an additional year of podiatric medical school.

Students must achieve an overall grade of 70% to pass the third-year didactic module. If the student fails the third-year objective structured clinical examination (OSCE), they must meet with the module lead (s) to create a remediation plan, following the same process as in the pre-clinical years (described above).

Year 4:

A student who fails a fourth-year clinical rotation is required to present to PMSEPC for review. They may participate in the graduation ceremony but must repeat the rotation afterward. The diploma will be withheld until all clinical requirements are met, at which point the SOPM will grant it, allowing the student to begin their matched residency. Failure may result in delayed graduation and extended time in the program.

The final objective structured clinical exam (OSCE) for year 4 is administered prior to graduation. **Failure of the final OSCE may result in the student not being eligible to graduate and start residency.** This exam is designed to assess proficiency in podiatric clinical tasks essential for entering residency, similar to the previously offered Clinical Skills Patient Encounter (CSPE) component of AMPLE Part 2.

A student who fails the final 4th year OSCE, must undergo a three-week study period under the module lead's supervision before retaking the OSCE exam in week four. A passing score of at least 70% is

required. Failure to pass the second attempt results in a failed grade, making the student ineligible for graduation.

The student will be asked to appear before the PMSEPC to determine whether they will take a leave of absence or face dismissal. If granted a leave of absence, the student must complete the required remediation steps outlined below.

The PMSEPC will consider the student's four-year academic performance. Students who are granted a leave of absence will be required to retake the Clinical Skills 1 module with the first-year cohort during the next academic year. The student will be allowed to take the final OSCE with the fourth-year cohort in the spring of the same academic year. Failure to pass the Year 4 final OSCE for the third time will result in dismissal from the program.

In the case that a student will be allowed to walk during the commencement ceremony prior to completing outstanding credit hours, the UTRGV SOPM Registrar's Office will communicate with the student's residency program regarding the timing of granting the diploma.

Student Feedback & Evaluations

SOPM students must engage in all evaluation activities related to their educational experiences and learning environment. Students are expected to abide by the **Faculty and Learner Professionalism Statement** signed at the beginning of each year when evaluating faculty, staff, fellow students, administration, and UTRGV SOPM.

The information students provide on evaluations is confidential. However, the Department Chair, Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences and/or Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs or their designated representatives can track and monitor completion of surveys and identify students who submit unprofessional responses. Evaluation data will be used exclusively to enhance the quality of the educational experience and learning environment at SOPM. Student responses will be anonymized and reported only in aggregate form, ensuring individual responses are not shared with anyone, including module leads, faculty, facilitators, attendings, residents, interns, faculty advisors, mentors, etc. SOPM will provide students with reports detailing how their feedback has contributed to or led to improvements.

Graduation

Candidates for graduation must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 18 years of age at the time the degree is awarded.
- Satisfactorily fulfill all academic requirements of the four-year podiatricmedical education program with satisfactory (passing level) performance within six years.
- Comply with all necessary legal and financial requirements.
- Abide by federal, state, and local statutes and ordinances, both on and off campus.
- Follow the Student Code of Conduct established by [The University of Texas System Board of Regents' Rules and Regulations, Rule 50101](#), [The UTRGV Student Conduct and Discipline procedure, STU 02-100](#), and SOPM prescribed Attributes of Professionalism.
- Pass the AMPLE Part 1 within three attempts.
- Pass the 4th year OSCE
- Be recommended by the PMSEPC for graduation and receipt of the DPM degree.

In the fourth year, each student's record undergoes review by the Department Chair and the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs to verify successful completion of all academic requirements and demonstration of essential professionalism for physicians. Following this review, the Chair and the ADCA submit their

findings and recommendations to the PMSEPC for approval.

Students must ensure they fulfill all module requirements within six years of matriculation to obtain the DPM degree. The final recommendation on graduation is made by PMSEPC, approved by the dean of SOPM, and certified by the UTRGV president.

Degrees will be awarded annually on commencement day in the spring. Students who complete their degree requirements earlier in the year will have their degrees awarded on the subsequent commencement day. They may request a Certification of Completion from the Office of the Registrar, if needed prior to the actual graduation date.

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Clinical Rotation and Clerkship Overview

Clinical rotations and clerkships are four-week blocks. Students are assigned to various clinical sites and work under the supervision of designated residents and SOPM faculty. During clinical rotations and modules, students are expected to participate in all required clinical and didactic activities. Examples include direct patient care, patient rounds, patient documentation, case conferences, clinical lectures, and required workshops. Students are expected to assume increasing levels of responsibility and accountability for patient care, as appropriate, under the adequate supervision of residents and SOPM faculty.

In their fourth year, podiatric medical students have the opportunity to complete domestic extramural rotations at CPME accredited institutions. Students apply for the clerkships through the American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine (AACPM) National DPM Clerkship website. Student plans for extramural rotations must be discussed with the student's faculty advisor before enrollment to ensure selections are appropriate.

Required Clinical Experiences and Procedures (RCEP)

The SOPM utilizes the Typhon system to monitor and document the completion of required clinical experiences in the medical education program and remedies any identified gaps. Students can access a customized training video at this link: [Typhon](#). Click the hyperlink and use password "typhon123" to watch the student training video.

During the student transition to the third year, and at the start of each clinical rotation, students are informed of the expectations for Required Clinical Experiences and Procedures (RCEP) during the clinical rotation.

Students must record their individual experiences in the Typhon application and their physical logbook (Student Clerkship Patient Log Form) but must NOT record any patient-specific identifying information (name, date of birth, medical record number, protected health information, etc.)

During the midpoint of each clinical rotation, students meet with the clinical coordinator to assess their progress in completing the RCEP experience logs in both the Typhon application and in physical logbooks, ensuring they are on target to meet the RCEP requirements by the end of the clinical rotation. Students on rotation outside of the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) do not need to meet with the clinical coordinator.

The clinical coordinator will inform both students and supervising faculty of any pending RCEPs. If a student has not met the RCEP requirements by Monday of the last week of the clinical rotation, an alternative learning experience will be arranged for the student to complete by the last Wednesday of the clinical rotation. These alternatives, approved by the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs, may encompass computer-based, case-based learning, clinical simulation, or additional clinical experience.

Before the last Wednesday of the clinical rotation, students must satisfactorily enter the clinical rotation RCEPs in the Typhon application and uploaded their signed logbooks to successfully pass the clinical rotation. A grade will be documented as an Incomplete (I) until successful RCEP completion, which must be done by the Friday of the next clinical rotation. Once documented as an acceptable experience (alternate condition or procedure), the grade for the module can be recorded.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the experience and procedural information are properly documented and maintained in Typhon and are available to the clinical coordinator and the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs (ADCA). Students are expected to document their clinical encounters **daily**. If a student is unable to complete any RCEP, they must report the issue to the supervising faculty/physician and clinical coordinator.

Duty Hours

During clinical rotations, students are expected to be involved in activities related to healthcare delivery. Time needed to adequately meet responsibilities will vary depending on rotation and may include overnight calls. Students are expected to abide by the following duty hour restrictions.

Duty hours refer to all clinical and academic activities related to clinical education, i.e., patient care (both inpatient and outpatient), administrative duties related to patient care, the provision for transfer of patient care, time spent in-house during call activities and scheduled academic activities such as conferences. Duty hours do not include reading and preparation time spent away from the work site.

This policy ensures an appropriate balance between formal learning and service. Duty hours must be limited to 80 hours per week, averaged over four weeks inclusive of all in-house call activities, and adhere to the following:

- Students must be scheduled for a minimum of one day free of duty every week when averaged over four weeks.
- Scheduled duty periods for students must not exceed 16 hours.
- Students are required to have no less than eight hours free of duty between scheduled duty periods, while the typical time between duty periods should be 10 hours.
- Exceptions may be granted for up to 10 percent or a maximum of 88 hours, to individual clinical rotations when based on sound educational rationale.

Students must be instructed on how to use the duty hour tracking system, Typhon, to enter their duty, conference, and on-call hours. Students must inform academic coordinators or clinical coordinators if faculty/teachers require students to work past duty hour limitations. Students may also inform the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs (ADCA). Students may also anonymously report through the SOPM Professionalism Portal by accessing the [Student Reporting Form](#), which can be found on the UTRGV SOPM webpage under the "[About](#)" and "[Professionalism](#)" sections. Monthly reports on duty hour status are available for clinical coordinators, academic coordinators, and the ADCA to review. After reviewing these reports, the ADCA may discuss the findings with the academic or clinical coordinators and students before taking any action. If there are unresolved duty hour violations, the ADCA will investigate and report them to the Dean. In case of policy violations, progressive actions will be taken to address recurring issues as follows:

1. Upon the first violation, the preceptor will be formally notified of the breach, followed by a discussion to clarify expectations and ensure understanding of the student workload policy. The preceptor will be given an opportunity to correct the issue and comply with guidelines.
2. For a second violation, the student(s) will be removed from the preceptor's rotation, and the suitability of the site for clinical training will be reassessed.
3. Persistent violations or significant breaches affecting student well-being or education will result in the permanent discontinuation of the preceptor's rotation site, and the preceptor will be ineligible for future student training programs.

***Please see Appendix 4.8 (Student Academic Workload and Duty Hours Policy)**

Grading System for Year 3 Clinical Rotations:

A comprehensive and holistic approach for assessment and ranking will be utilized in the clerkship years. The podiatric medical student's progress to clinical competency will be evaluated and measured by how well the student can translate and apply the didactic knowledge from the pre-clinical years in the clinical setting. The clinical skills and behaviors of the developing physician will be the central focus of the assessment process during the clerkship years.

Criterion vs. Norm Referenced Evaluation:

The UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine uses a criterion-referenced evaluation system in clinical rotations, where students are assessed based on predefined standards. Students who meet these criteria can pass, regardless of their peers' performance. This contrasts with a norm-referenced system, which ranks students relative to one another and limits the number of top performers.

The final grade for the rotation will be determined on a Pass/Fail basis.

To pass the rotation, the student must meet **ALL** of the following requirements:

- Over the course of the module series, third-year students are required to demonstrate competency in a manner that meets or exceeds expectations for all student learning objectives. It is anticipated that as the third year progresses, students will complete a higher volume of objectives for each subsequent PMSB module.
- Final grades for each module are determined through a comprehensive review of multiple performance components. These include: preceptor evaluations of clinical performance, performance on the clinical shelf examination, professionalism and adherence to site expectations, and timely submission of all required documentation including logs and student evaluation of the clinical experience.
- If multiple areas of “does not meet expectations” are marked on a student’s clinical evaluation, this will prompt a formal review by the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs (ADCA) or their designee. This review will include consultation with the preceptor and a holistic evaluation of all available documentation. The focus of this review is not solely on the pass/fail outcome, but rather on ensuring the student receives constructive feedback regarding their clinical performance and areas for growth.
- If the student fails in any of the above sections, except for the shelf exam, they will be reviewed by the ADCA, who will make a determination regarding the passing or failing of the rotation.
- Score 70% or higher on the shelf exam. If the student scores below 70% on the first attempt, a retake exam is required. A score below 70% on the retake exam will result in a “Fail” grade for the rotation.

When due	Required Assignments
Every Monday	Enter time logs from the previous week in Typhon
Midway (about 2 weeks) into the rotation	Meet with preceptor for mid-point assessment and turn in assessment form to clinical coordinator. Meet with clinical coordinator for review of RCEPs.
Before the Last Friday of the rotation	Submission of the end of clerkship Evaluation of Clinical Instructor(s)
	Submission of the end of clerkship Evaluation of Clinical Site - one for every site throughout the rotation
	Submission of the end of clerkship Evaluation of Clinical Experience
Before the Last Wednesday of the rotation	Clerkship Patient Logs completed and signed logs uploaded on Typhon

**** Students are required to submit all assignments online through Typhon using their account. Click the hyperlink and use password “typhon123” to watch student training instruction video.** Module evaluations collected to assess the student experience during the rotation will help guide any necessary revisions to improve student success.

Professional Conduct:

The following outlines the conduct expected of a podiatric medical student, including but not limited to:

- Complete and submit **ALL** required onboarding materials on time for each clinical site.
- Complete all required assignments
- Meet expectations for each of the professional objectives
- Complete **ALL** exit activities on time, including returning the medical badge on the last day of the rotation.
- Attendance at all scheduled clinical rotations, orientation, workshops, and didactic conferences is mandatory. If absent, the excused absence form must be completed and submitted immediately.
- If during the course of the rotation the student fails to follow the SOPM professional conduct guidelines, it is expected the preceptor will contact the Office of Clinical Affairs at SOPM_Clerkships@utrgv.edu to discuss concerns regarding the student. The SOPM Office of Clinical Affairs will contact the student to review the issues and if appropriate recommend corrective measures. The SOPM reserves the right to make a final decision on the grade the student receives.
- Changes to the rotation schedule, instructor, or clinical site are not permitted unless approved by the Office of Clinical Affairs.

Grading System for Year 4 Clinical Rotations

**** The grading for clinical rotations in Year 4 will be on a pass/fail basis, using the same criteria as Year 3, excluding the shelf exam. Mid-point assessments are not required for rotations outside the Rio**

Grande Valley (RGV).

Grading System for Didactic Conferences:

Year 3

Grading: Final Grade Determination for Didactic Conferences (Grand-Rounds)

The grade for this course is based on the following categories:

- **Attendance** **25%**
- **Case/oral presentation** **25%**
- **Final OSCE** **50%**

Students are required to attend all grand round conferences. **Attendance is mandatory** and constitutes twenty-five percent (25%) of the course grade. Students may be excused from a conference with a note/letter from their preceptor citing the reason for the absence, due to an illness or due to an emergency. An unexcused absence will result in a zero percent (0%) grade for attendance.

Year 4

PMSB 9501- Year 4 Didactic Conferences (Grand-Rounds) Grade Determination:

- Attendance 50%
- Case Presentation 50%

Final Year 4 OSCE (CSPE) 100%

**** Grading for the Final OSCE in Year 4 will be on a Pass/Fail basis and is not included in the calculation of the overall GPA. The student will need to have a 70% raw score to receive a passing grade ("Pass"). A grade of 69.99% and below is considered a "Fail."*

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Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

The SOPM reaffirms the [UTRGV Non-Discrimination Policy Statement](#).

Honor Code

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Podiatric Medicine's Honor Code requires that medical students live honestly, advance on individual merit, and demonstrate respect for others. The SOPM subscribes to the highest Code of Professional Conduct. Our aim is professional behavior beyond reproach. We subscribe to the following points of conduct.

I will promote and maintain an honest and effective learning environment. I will:

- Do my part to ensure that the environment promotes the acquisition of knowledge and mastery of skills.
- Not tolerate harassment, flagrant disruption of the learning process, demeaning language or visual aids, disrespectful behavior, or lack of respect for life and living things.
- Exhibit the highest Code of Professional Conduct, honesty, and professionalism.

Identify and report those who exhibit academic or professional misconduct; and

- Appreciate each individual as a person of value and help maintain dignity during the learning process.

I will place primary emphasis on the health and welfare of patients. I will:

- Attain and maintain the most current knowledge in the healing arts and the skill to apply that knowledge,
- Display respect and compassion for each patient,
- Foster and preserve the trust that exists between professional and patient,
- Respect and maintain the confidentiality of the patient, and
- Let no patient in whose care I participate suffer physically or emotionally as a consequence of unprofessional behavior by myself or others.

I will conduct myself at all times in a professional manner. I will:

- Exhibit honesty, openness, and evenhandedness in dealing with others.
- Maintain my personal hygiene and appearance in such a way that it does not interfere with my ability to communicate with patients, colleagues, or the community.
- Not engage in language or behavior that is disrespectful, abusive, or insulting.
- Take responsibility for my actions, acknowledge my limitations, and ask for assistance when needed.
- Assure the welfare of others is not compromised as a result of my inadequacy or impairment.
- Not be deceitful or self-serving.
- Achieve a satisfactory balance in personal, community, and professional activities.
- Not allow personal conflicts to interfere with objectivity in relationships with colleagues or patients.
- Accommodate a fellow professional's request for my knowledge and expertise.
- Refrain from the manifestation of bias, including sexual, marital, racial, ethnic, or cultural harassment.
- Support my fellow professionals if they should falter; and
- Identify colleagues whose ability to provide care is impaired, support them in seeking rehabilitation, and help them reintegrate into the medical community.

Student Professionalism, Standards of Conduct & Ethics

Professionalism

An essential aspect of being an effective and professional physician is learning to understand and manage communication with patients, families, peers, colleagues, and others. Communication, both verbal and non-verbal, has many forms. One channel that is increasingly utilized both within and outside of medical practice is the internet, especially social media. Podiatric medical students are expected to abide by and exemplify the professional standards of physicians and the SOPM when communicating as representatives of the podiatric medical school as well as when speaking as private individuals in all environments. It is important to remember that even with safeguards, nothing is truly private on the internet, and information is generally permanently present. Physician information and actions online have significant potential to negatively impact relationships, professional careers and opportunities, and undermine public trust in the profession and podiatric medical school. Therefore, it is crucial to remember that individuals connected to UTRGV are considered representatives of the institution, even in informal situations. Consequently, SOPM students should:

- Prioritize patient privacy and confidentiality; these must be maintained in all settings, including online. Identifiable patient information must never be posted on the internet.
- Carefully consider how to develop and maintain their professional identity online; a preferred option is to have separate personal and professional online/social networking profiles. The information posted online should be accurate and appropriate, and it is suggested that students monitor and correct the information that is available online about them.
- Utilize privacy settings to safeguard personal information and be cautious about sharing information related to their podiatric medical school and professional experiences on websites and social networks.
- Carefully consider whether to interact with patients and families on the internet. These types of communications require adherence to the boundaries and guidelines of the physician/patient relationship, similar to the practices in other environments.
- Be cautious about offering medical information and advice to the public. Podiatric medical students must provide disclaimers that the information is not officially sanctioned by UTRGV.
- Maintain courteous and respectful language and tone when offering opinions about educational and clinical experiences, colleagues, and institutions; recognize and act upon their responsibility to monitor their colleagues' professional behavior by pointing out any inappropriate actions, allowing them the opportunity to rectify their behaviors, including removing inappropriate content from the internet. If the involved individuals fail to resolve the issues, podiatric medical students have a professional obligation to report them to the appropriate authorities; and,
- Respect and follow the institutional guidelines and copyright laws on which UTRGV information and material (e.g., curriculum) can be appropriately shared publicly and online and which cannot.

Standards of Conduct & Ethics

SOPM students are expected to adhere to the following principles of conduct and ethics.

A podiatric medical student:

- Shall be dedicated to providing competent medical care with compassion and respect for human dignity and rights.
- Shall uphold the standards of professionalism, be honest in all professional interactions, and strive to report physicians deficient in character or competence, or engaging in fraud or deception, to appropriate entities.

- Shall respect the law and also recognize a responsibility to seek changes in those requirements that are contrary to the best interests of the patient.
- Shall respect the rights of patients, colleagues, and other health professionals, and shall safeguard patient confidence and privacy within the constraints of the law.
- Shall continue to study, apply, and advance scientific knowledge, maintain a commitment to podiatric medical education, make relevant information available to patients, colleagues, and the public, obtain consultation, and use the talents of other health professionals when indicated.
- Shall, in the provision of appropriate patient care, except in emergencies, be free to choose whom to serve, with whom to associate, and the environment in which to provide medical care.
- Shall recognize a responsibility to participate in activities contributing to the improvement of the community and the betterment of public health.
- Shall, while caring for a patient, regard responsibility to the patient as paramount.
- Shall support access to medical care for all people.

Professionalism

Professionalism Reporting and Response Pathways & Portals

As a podiatric medical student at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Podiatric Medicine (UTRGV SOPM), you are expected to demonstrate professionalism in all interactions, whether with patients, peers, faculty, staff, or members of the broader community. SOPM is committed to promoting a culture of professional accountability through clearly defined expectations and transparent, fair procedures for reporting and responding to professionalism concerns.

To support this culture, SOPM maintains multiple reporting pathways that allow for early intervention, educational support, and, when necessary, formal disciplinary action.

1) **SOPM Professionalism Portal (Internal SOPM Process) for Students and Faculty/Staff**

All members of the UTRGV community, including students, faculty, staff, and guests, are encouraged to report concerns related to professionalism through the [SOPM Professionalism Portal](#). Reports may be submitted anonymously or with identification.

- **Who Reviews the Report:** The **Dean** and the **Director of Student Affairs (DSA)**.
- **What Happens Next:** The concern is reviewed and, if warranted, the student may be contacted for a discussion. The Dean and DSA may assign educational or remedial actions such as mentorship, reflective writing, or academic advising.
- **Primary Purpose:** Early development and support, not punishment.
- **Escalation:** Repeated or serious concerns may be referred to the **Podiatric Medical Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (PMSEPC)** for formal review.
- **Grievance Option:** Students who believe they have been reported in error may file a formal grievance or Vaqueros Report It.

2) **Early Concern Notice (Internal or External UTRGV Pathway)**

Faculty and staff may also use the [UTRGV Early Concern Notice](#) to report concerns involving student professionalism or behavioral issues. This tool allows the person reporting to recommend one of the following approaches:

- No formal action—documentation only
- Internal follow-up by the Dean or DSA with possible remediation
- Referral to the PMSEPC for adjudication
- Referral to the **UTRGV Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR)** for university-level review if necessary.

This pathway is especially useful for documenting early or minor concerns without triggering an automatic disciplinary record.

3) Formal Misconduct and Disciplinary Action

Serious violations of professionalism such as academic dishonesty, student conduct violations, title IX & equal opportunity, concerns about a student, resident life violations, complaints, or repeated violations **must** be reported directly to **UTRGV Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR)** [Vaqueros Report It form](#). SRR will conduct a formal investigation and determine whether sanctions are appropriate and forward the investigation to PMSEPC. SOPM's PMSEPC may also become involved in assessing academic impact.

Summary of Reporting Pathways Flow Chart

Type of Concern	Who Can Report	Reporting Tool	Initial Reviewers	Possible Outcomes	Permanent Record?
First-time/minor professionalism	Anyone	SOPM Professionalism Portal	Dean & DSA	Counseling, remediation, documentation	Rarely
Academic/professional concern	Faculty or staff	Early Concern Notice	Complainant, Dean/DSA	Remediation, referral to PMSEPC or SRR	Only if escalated
Serious or repeated misconduct	Anyone	Vaquero Report It (SRR)	SRR	Investigation, sanctions, PMSEPC academic review	Yes

If you are unsure how to report a concern or would like clarification about any part of this process, please reach out to the **Dean** or the **Director of Student Affairs**. These reporting options exist not only to uphold professional standards but also to support your personal and professional growth as a future healthcare provider.

Student Conduct

Podiatric medical students are required to follow the [UTRGV Student Code of Conduct](#). Any violations will be reported to the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities \(SRR\)](#) through the Vaqueros Report It system. Following SRR's investigation, the matter may be referred to the Podiatric Medical Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (PMSEPC) for review of academic standing and potential sanctions.

Student Records & Privacy

SOPM follows UTRGV's guidelines on academic records and complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which outlines student rights regarding their educational records and directory information.

Appropriate Dress

Professional Dress Guidelines:

All students at the SOPM are expected to place a high value on personal appearance by maintaining an image that inspires credibility, trust, respect, and confidence among colleagues and patients. The message communicated by dress and appearance plays a fundamental role in establishing this trust and confidence in the caregiver.

Students should consider the cultural sensitivities of their most conservative potential patients and present themselves in a manner that will earn respect, ensure trust, and foster comfort. Recent trends in clothing, body art, and body piercing may not be generally accepted by patients and should not be worn by medical students.

When students are assigned to clinical activities or participate in any SOPM official activity (i.e., special guest speakers, presentations, etc.) they should consider themselves representatives of the SOPM. Attire and behavior should promote a positive impression of the individual student, the specific module, and the institution.

In addition to the guidelines outlined below, certain departments and some affiliate clinical institutions may require alternate dress guidelines, which must be followed. These requirements typically will be included in written module materials, but if any doubt exists, it is the responsibility of the student to inquire.

General Standards of Dress:

- 1) All clothing must be clean, neat, professionally styled, and in good repair.
 Men: Slacks, jeans with no holes, and shirt, preferably with collar or t-shirts that are provided. Tie optional.
 Women: Dresses or skirts of medium length, or jeans with no holes, professional style slacks, tops or t-shirts that are provided.
- 2) Name badges identifying physician-in-training as a medical student must be worn at all times and clearly visible.
- 3) Good personal hygiene and grooming should be maintained at all times. This includes regular bathing, use of deodorant/antiperspirant, and regular dental hygiene.
- 4) Excessive use of fragrances should be avoided, as some people are sensitive to scented chemicals.
- 5) Cosmetics should be used in moderation.
- 6) Hair should be neat and clean. Hairstyle and/or color should not interfere with assigned duties or present a physical hazard to the patient, to the student, or another person.
- 7) Shoulder-length hair must be secured to avoid interference with patients and work and must be styled off the face and out of the eyes.
- 8) Facial hair must be clean, neatly groomed, and trimmed.
- 9) Fingernails should be clean and of short to medium length. Students may not have artificial/acrylic nails while providing patient care services.

Standards in the **laboratory** setting:

- 1) Students should follow the guidelines established for the classroom setting.
- 2) OSHA regulations prohibit open-toed shoes.

Standards in the **clinical** care setting:

- Refer to the Clinical Years III and IV Professional Dress Code Policy in Clinical rotation manual.

Student Insurance

All students enrolled in the SOPM are required to maintain continuous health insurance coverage that provides benefits to meet the established minimum standards.

Prior to orientation, and annually thereafter, students will be automatically enrolled in the University of Texas System Health Insurance Plan unless they show proof via waiver that their current insurance provides benefits that meet the established minimum standards. Such insurance coverage shall be maintained continuously throughout a student's attendance at the SOPM. Students are responsible for immediately notifying the SOPM Office of Student Affairs should the status of their health insurance coverage change for any reason (e.g., voluntary change in policy, non-payment, age out, etc.)

In compliance with the [University of Texas Board of Regents, Regents' Rules and Regulations, Rule 50501](#) regarding liability coverage, SOPM students are required to maintain liability insurance and are covered by the [UTRGV medical liability plan](#) only when participating in approved activities of SOPM. The University of Texas System carries a professional medical liability benefit plan for medical or dental students enrolled in a medical or dental school of the system, which covers students only when they are participating (with prior approval of such medical or dental school) in a patient care program of a duly accredited medical or dental school under the direct supervision of a faculty member of the school conducting such program. Students are billed for this coverage when their fees are assessed.

Non-Academic Grievances

The SOPM adheres to UTRGV's policies on [hazing](#) and [sexual misconduct](#). Additionally, the following behaviors are unacceptable to the SOPM:

- Physical or sexual harassment/assault.
- Discrimination or harassment based on race, gender, age, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Disparaging or demeaning comments about an individual or group.
- Loss of personal civility, including shouting, displays of temper, public or private abuse, belittling, or humiliation.
- Use of grading or other forms of evaluation in a punitive or retaliatory manner, for example, sending students on inappropriate errands.

Mistreatment, either intentional or unintentional, occurs when behavior shows disrespect for the dignity of others and unreasonably interferes with the learning process. Examples of mistreatment include public belittlement or humiliation; verbal abuse (for example, speaking to or about a person in an intimidating or bullying manner); physical harm or the threat of physical harm; requests to perform personal services; being subject to offensive sexist remarks or being subjected to unwanted sexual advances (verbal or physical); retaliation or threats of retaliation against students; discrimination or harassment based on race, religion, ethnicity, sex, age, or sexual orientation; and the use of grading or other forms of assessment in a punitive or discriminatory manner.

Podiatric medical students who feel they have been mistreated may report such perceptions to any of the following:

- Deans/director in the Office of Student Affairs
- Counseling Services
- Module and clinical rotation directors
- [UTRGV SOPM Mistreatment Form](#)

These school representatives are empowered to informally discuss a student's perceptions related to mistreatment and provide guidance. These school representatives should refer the student immediately to the director of student affairs (DSA) for further instructions.

1. **If there is an immediate risk to life or property, call UT Police: (956) 882-4911 or 911.**
2. **To report mistreatment or unprofessional behavior** as outlined in the UTRGV SOPM policy (in an academic or clinical setting), submit a report via [SOPM Student Mistreatment Form](#).
3. **To report mistreatment by staff personnel**, contact the direct supervisor or the [Office of Human Resources](#).
4. **To report sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual violence, or discrimination**, report to the [Office of Title IX & Equal Opportunity \(Title IX/AA/EO Coordinator\)](#).
5. **To report student violations of the UTRGV Student Code of Conduct, submit a report via [Vaqueros Report It](#).**

The DSA, acting as a student advocate, assumes the responsibility for formulating and facilitating the most appropriate response.

The DSA monitors the frequency at which podiatric medical student mistreatment occurs and notifies the appropriate administration members as necessary. Additionally, within each written evaluation, students have an opportunity to state if they felt mistreated. If the affirmative is reported, the student will be asked to provide a summary of the events that characterized their mistreatment. This will result in a confidential meeting with the DSA and the dean of SOPM to address the concern.

Students may also reach out to the [UTRGV Student Rights and Responsibilities. Vaqueros Report It!](#) Or the [SOPM Student Mistreatment Form](#) also provide outlets for complaints and behaviors of concern.

Immunizations

In compliance with the State of Texas Higher Education Mandatory Immunization Requirements and recommendations of the Texas Department of State Health Services Immunizations Division and Department of Health and Human Services CDC, all students must complete the required immunizations outlined below as a condition of enrollment.

- Hepatitis B
- Tuberculosis Skin Test or Blood Assay for Mycobacterium Tuberculosis Test
- Tetanus/Diphtheria/Acellular Pertussis (Tdap)
- Mumps, Measles, and Rubella (MMR)
- Meningitis
- Varicella
- Influenza
- Polio
- COVID-19 Vaccine and boosters.

Drug & Alcohol Policy

The SOPM abides by the [UTRGV Drug Free School and Communities Policy](#).

Drug Testing

All persons accepted for admission to the SOPM must have a negative urine drug result prior to matriculation. Applicants and enrolled students must undergo a yearly urine drug screening and maintain a negative result to meet the program's requirements. A positive test will result in a report to the director of student affairs (DSA) for intervention and/or possible disciplinary action. A positive test may result in the withdrawal of an offer of acceptance, or after matriculation, dismissal from the program.

Students may be required to complete additional re-screening or random drug screenings at any time. The expenses related to drug testing, re-screening, or random testing are assumed by the accepted applicant or enrolled student. Drug test results remain separate from the student's transcript.

Parking Arrangements

All students, including SOPM students, must adhere to the [UTRGV Parking rules and regulations](#).

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Student Health & Wellness

Students are encouraged to seek medical care through [UT Health RGV Student Health](#) and mental health services through the [UTRGV Counseling Center](#).

In the event of a needle stick, students will follow the [UTRGV policy](#).

Financial Aid & Scholarships

Financial Aid

The SOPM associate director of financial aid is committed to guiding students through the financial aid application process and offering one-on-one counseling on available federal, private, and institutional funding. The financial aid staff also support students in managing the costs of their medical education, navigating the financial aid process, and accessing resources to help manage expenses associated with earning a medical degree.

There are several financial aid and scholarship options available to students, such as institutional and private scholarships, as well as federal and private student loans. The main types of aid available are:

- **Scholarships:** Non-repayable awards, which may be based on merit, financial need, or other considerations.
- **Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan:** A student does not have to demonstrate financial need to receive this loan. Interest payments on this loan are not subsidized by the government. The student can make arrangements with the lender to pay the interest while they are in school or can allow the interest to capitalize, adding to the principal balance.
- **Federal Direct Graduate Plus Loan:** This loan is available to graduate students who are enrolled in an eligible program. Students must file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid form to apply for a Federal Graduate Plus Loan. This loan requires a credit check for eligibility.
- **Private Student Loans:** UTRGV SOPM does not certify private loans, nor does it have a preferred lender. Students may go to www.fastweb.com for a list of historical lenders. To assist students in the process, an enrollment verification letter may be requested through the SOPM Registrar's Office

All students who have received loans during podiatric medical school are required to attend a mandatory "Loan Exit Counseling" session. This is a federal requirement for graduation for any student who has received federal student loans for school.

Additionally, the associate director of financial aid provides students with written information about financial aid programs and services available to them through the SOPM and UTRGV.

Federal Title IV financial aid regulations require students receiving federal student aid to meet *Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)* standards to maintain eligibility for the aid. SAP standards are also required for state and institutional financial aid programs. Satisfactory academic progress is determined once a year at the end of each academic year after all final grades are posted. The three components of progress are as follows: Qualitative Assessment, Pace of Progression (Quantitative Standard), and Maximum Time Frame.

Evaluation of Eligibility

Podiatric medical students are evaluated for SAP at the end of each academic year once all grades are posted (usually in June). Students who do not meet SAP after the process is completed will automatically go into financial aid probation, and there will be *no warning period*, as per Federal regulations. Students placed on probation are not eligible for any Title IV aid, such as Direct Unsubsidized and Graduate PLUS Loans, unless a Financial Aid SAP appeal is approved.

Appeal Information

A podiatric medical student who is denied Title IV financial aid due to failure to meet satisfactory academic progress (SAP) standards may appeal this decision by completing a financial aid SAP appeal form and submitting it, along with supporting documentation, to the SOPM financial aid appeals committee.

The SOPM financial aid appeals committee is convened as needed by the SOPM director of student affairs. The committee, composed of SOPM administration and faculty, representatives from the UTRGV financial aid office, reviews submitted appeals. During the review process, the committee evaluates the student's statement and supporting documentation to determine whether the appeal should be approved, denied, or marked as pending additional documentation.

If an appeal is approved, the assistant director of financial aid will process the approval. If denied, the same procedure applies. If additional documentation is required, the student will be notified of what is needed to proceed with the appeal.

Scholarships:

The SOPM Scholarship Program is a vital financial resource that assists podiatric medical students with the cost of their medical education. Scholarships are awarded based on need, merit, or a combination of the two. Scholarships do not have to be repaid; however, students must be in "good standing" to be eligible to receive these funds, making satisfactory academic progress. Satisfactory academic progress is determined once a year at the end of each academic year; after all final grades are posted. If a student is required to repeat a year, they are not in good standing for scholarship consideration and, therefore, are ineligible to receive a scholarship for the repeated year.

Student Tuition Refund

Policy Title: Tuition Refund Policy

A. Purpose

The SOPM policy for tuition and fee refund payments to podiatric medical students is governed by [Texas Education Code Title 3, Chapter 54, Subchapter A, Section 54.0056](#), and is described below:

- Podiatric medical students who withdraw in the fall of the academic year will receive a 100% refund of tuition and fees for the second half of the year (spring) and a refund for the first half of the year (fall) based on the schedule below:
 - 100 percent prior to the first day of classes
 - 80 percent during the first five class days
 - 70 percent during the second five class days
 - 50 percent during the third five class days
 - 25 percent during the fourth five class days

B. Policy

No refunds will be made in the case of withdrawal after the fourth five-day period.

Students who withdraw during a summer term may receive a refund of tuition and applicable fees based on the following schedule:

- 100 percent prior to the first-class day
- 80 percent during the first-, second-, or third-class day
- 50 percent during the fourth, fifth, or sixth class day

No refunds will be made on the seventh-class day or thereafter.

Notice of intention to withdraw must be made in writing to the director of student affairs (DSA) and copied to the SOPM registrar and the assistant director of financial aid. The institution will terminate student services and privileges at the time of the student's withdrawal.

Accommodations

SOPM is committed to ensuring equitable access to learning opportunities while maintaining high academic and clinical standards. In addition to the provisions for accommodations, all students are required to meet the SOPM technical standards to ensure they have the essential skills and competencies needed for successful participation in the program. These technical standards outline the abilities necessary for academic and clinical performance, including but not limited to:

- **Manual Dexterity and Motor Skills:** The physical capability to perform tasks essential in a clinical environment.
- **Sensory Abilities:** Adequate visual, auditory, and tactile functions required for patient care.
- **Communication Skills:** Proficiency in verbal and written communication to interact effectively with patients and colleagues.
- **Cognitive and Behavioral Functions:** The intellectual and social skills necessary for problem-solving, critical thinking, and maintaining professional behavior.

Students who face challenges in meeting these technical requirements are encouraged to contact UTRGV Student Accessibility Services (SAS) for assistance and to discuss potential accommodations. This is in alignment with our commitment under the ADA to provide support for those with disabilities that substantially limit major life activities—including learning, sensory, psychiatric, psychological, and health functions. Temporary services may also be available for students experiencing short-term impairments due to injury or surgery.

For a comprehensive overview of these requirements, please review the [SOPM Technical Standards Form](#).

Applying for Services

New students must submit a **New Student Application** and supporting documentation through the [mySAS](#) portal using their UTRGV credentials. For assistance, contact SAS or refer to [self-guided tutorials](#).

Library Services

The SOPM utilizes the which provide full library services: reference and research services, library instruction, interlibrary loan, collection development, and a website tailored to support medical education, practice, and research. The libraries are at the forefront of medical library evolution and possess a nearly virtual (i.e., all electronic) collection. The virtual collection offers access to collection resources from both on and off-campus locations and can help reduce student expenditure on textbooks.

Likewise, the [University Library](#) plays a critical role in the commitment to academic excellence in a balanced program of teaching, research, and service. The library facilitates scholarship by securing and providing access to resources and facilities for students, faculty, and the community. Librarians actively assist academic and research programs, providing students with library use instruction both on an individual and group basis. The University Library serves as the chief information center on campus and

plays an important role as a regional information center.

Academic Advising & Support Services

Academic Advising

The SOPM maintains a comprehensive and effective academic advising system that brings together the expertise of a medical academic advisor, faculty members, module leads, clerkship and clinical rotation directors, as well as counseling and tutorial services. This system ensures that podiatric medical students receive academic counseling from individuals who are not involved in their assessment or promotion decisions.

Support Services

The UTRGV SOPM Office of Student Affairs and the Medical Academic Advising team work collaboratively with the SOPM department chair, faculty, and assessment team to monitor and coordinate academic interventions and activities for at-risk students. Additionally, UTRGV SOPM faculty play a vital role in preparing students for the APMLE Part 1 Exam. Support for students includes access to high-yield resources, study strategies, test-taking skills, personalized scheduling, time management techniques, and overall readiness for the APMLE Part 1 Exam.

Support services provided by the office include:

- Academic mentoring
- Career mentoring
- Study skills and test-taking strategies
- Peer tutoring and supplemental instruction
- Learning style and cognitive assessments
- Faculty tutoring sessions on modules
- Time management
- Stress management
- Early intervention and remediation
- Mental health counseling
- APMLE Part 1 Exam Preparations
- Referral services to other UTRGV services

All Podiatric medical students are encouraged first to discuss any academic concerns with their module leads.

Career Counseling

All SOPM students receive career guidance from a variety of sources and programs during each year of their podiatric medical education. A professional development and career counseling program is in place to:

- Offer CV workshops in collaboration with the UTRGV Career Center.
- Provide workshops and mentor meetings with doctors and residents outside of SOPM.
- Help students identify and achieve their personal and professional goals.
- Assist students in the process of transition from podiatric medical school to residency training.

Student Organizations & Committees

Podiatric medical student organizations and special interest groups provide students with opportunities to attend educational meetings and conferences sponsored by local, regional, national, and sometimes even international professional associations related to their specialty. Through this involvement,

students gain exposure to the profession and may consider becoming active student members of one or more specialty associations. The UTRGV SOPM Office of Student Affairs supports extracurricular student organizations as a valuable way for students to explore career interests.

However, to promote balance and prioritize academic success, students are encouraged to limit their leadership involvement to no more than two organizations to avoid overcommitment. Students who are no longer in good academic or professional standing may be asked to step down from leadership roles to refocus on their academic responsibilities.

Student Government

The School of Podiatric Medicine Student Government Association (SOPM SGA) plays a vital role in representing the student body at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Podiatric Medicine. It serves as the main channel for communication between students and the school's administration, focusing on enhancing student life, education, and community cohesion. Additionally, it addresses student concerns and promotes awareness of relevant issues.

Elections are a key aspect of the SOPM SGA's operations. Executive Board elections occur in spring, except for PMS1 positions, which are elected in the fall. An impartial Election Committee oversees this process, ensuring fairness. To be eligible for office, students must be full-time students and have and maintain a 3.0 GPA. All UTRGV SOPM students in good academic standing are eligible to run for positions, with specific roles designated for certain classes. This emphasizes the importance of responsibility and integrity among members, ensuring the SGA's effectiveness in serving its community. Members are generally limited to two terms, with the presidency being a notable exception. Students have the flexibility to run for one position at a time and can switch nominations or withdraw as needed.

A significant part of the election process is participation; a minimum of 50% of the student body must vote for elections to be valid. The SOPM SGA makes efforts to keep the student body informed about voting rights and procedures, extending polling if necessary to meet participation thresholds. The Election Committee also decides on the voting method, which can vary from paper ballots to online voting.

Recalls are an integral mechanism, allowing students to request a new election for a position if they gather enough support. This ensures the SGA accurately reflects student interests.

Student Travel

Students seeking travel for conferences, research presentations, or other events representing the SOPM must be in good academic standing. Specifically, students must **not** be considered as 'at risk', scoring below 70% after completing more than half (50%) of the module's assessments. If less than 50% of the module has been completed at the time of the travel request, the student's current grade will be used to assess eligibility. The Department Chair, Assistant Dean of Pre-Clinical Sciences or the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs will review the student's academic progress and determine approval for travel.

All students must obtain written permission before making any travel arrangements. Additionally, students should be aware that funding is not always available for travel expenses, and approval for travel does not guarantee financial support.

UTRGV SOPM Curriculum Committee

The SPMCC includes faculty members from both the preclinical and clinical sciences, students, and the

UTRGV SOPM administration. Membership is comprised of up to eighteen (18) members including four (4) preclinical science faculty, one (1) of whom must be an anatomist, four (4) clinical faculty members who are doctors of podiatric medicine, the Department Chair, and two representatives from each pre-clinical and clinical class as the classes matriculate. Students are ex-officio members who have a voice in the committee but do not have a vote. Student members are nominated by the SOPM Student Government Association (SGA) and approved by the dean of the SOPM. The chair, who must be a faculty member, is nominated by the committee and confirmed by the dean. This ensures faculty control of the curriculum process. The chair does not have voting authority unless there is a tie. In case of a tie, the SPMCC chair is granted a tie-breaking vote. Unless an executive session is called, SPMCC meetings are open to all faculty members. Executive sessions may only include faculty committee members and not student representatives when: 1). Discussion involves sensitive topics that may be counterproductive to the well-being of the student and faculty community; 2). Discussion involves how students are evaluated.

The UTRGV SOPM curriculum committee chair(s) and the director of student affairs (DSA) will work together with the UTRGV SOPM SGA to organize elections for class representation. It is essential that all elected representatives, both primary and alternate, meet before attending meetings focused on the topics to ensure they present a unified class perspective rather than individual viewpoints.

A student representative's term may last up to one year, with an option for re-election initiated by their peers. This allows for the confirmation or replacement of representatives based on the majority's decision in the following academic year.

Should a student representative encounter academic difficulty, identified as 'at risk' for scoring below 70% after completing more than half (50%) of the module's assessments, the module lead will notify them via email. Their participation in committee meetings will be suspended until their academic standing improves. Representatives who fail a module will lose their committee position, necessitating a new election. During such suspensions, an alternate representative will assume their duties.

Adhering to a code of conduct is crucial for participation in the SOPM Curriculum Committee, highlighting the importance of a respectful, safe, and focused academic environment. This privilege is granted to students who are not only elected by their peers and in good academic standing but also embody UTRGV's values and standards. Breaches of the code of conduct will prompt a review by the Curriculum Committee chair and the DSA, potentially leading to temporary or permanent removal from the committee, depending on the severity. Such actions emphasize the significance of personal responsibility and the influential role of student leaders in maintaining the institution's ethical standards, with temporary suspensions being assessed individually.

Council on Podiatric Medical Education

The Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME or Council) is concerned with the continued compliance of all entities (institutions, organizations, programs, and providers) (hereinafter referred to as entity) to which it has extended accreditation, approval, and recognition. The public, the podiatric medical profession, students, residents, fellows, educators, and others are thus assured of the ongoing integrity of the entities that have been granted CPME accreditation, approval, or recognition.

Students can file a complaint with CPME by completing [CPME form 925](#). The form can be submitted by a student but must include a detailed description of the complaint and evidence of how it relates to non-compliance with a standard or a procedure that has not been followed. All individual efforts to resolve

the issue or problem must have been exhausted by internally available procedures. The complaint must include the name, signature, mailing address, and telephone number, the names of all parties involved, a summary of the complaint, the specific CPME standard(s), the requirement(s), or criterion impacted by the incident, and evidence to support non-compliance.

The Council on Podiatric Medical Education
11400 Rockville Pike, Suite 220
Rockville, MD 20852
301-581-9200

[Email](#)

[Website](#)

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[Appendix 4.8 SOPM Student Academic Workload Policy.pdf](#)

[Appendix 4.13 UTRGV SOPM Course Credit Hour Policy.pdf](#)

[Appendix 4.14 UTRGV Credit Hour Policy.pdf](#)