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*School of
Podiatric Medicine*

STUDENT HANDBOOK
& POLICY MANUAL

POLICY

All UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine students are responsible for being familiar with the contents of this Student Handbook. Students are strongly encouraged to review the entirety of this handbook. The Handbook and Policies are subject to change or correction, so all students should read the Handbook at the start of each academic year. Students are responsible for complying with both UTRGV and UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine policies.

DISCLAIMER

This Handbook does not constitute a contract, express or implied, between UTRGV or UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine and any current or prospective student. 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

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.

Vision

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. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students will be reviewed and accepted only on a case-by-case basis.

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, School of Podiatric Medicine (SOPM) reserves the right to change without prior notice; admission, degree requirements, curriculum, courses, teaching personnel, rules, regulations, tuition, fees, and other matters in the UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) and SOPM Student Handbook. This handbook does not constitute a contract, expressed, 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 refer to [the About UTRGV section of the Graduate Catalog](#) for the history of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV).

In April 2015, 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. In February 2019, The University of Texas System (UTS) approved the planning authority for a School of Podiatric Medicine (SOPM). Dr. Lawrence Harkless was hired as Interim Dean in June 2019 to develop the academic plan and application for the school. In February 2020 the application for a SOPM was approved by the University of Texas System (UTS) Board of Regents. SOPM will graduate the inaugural 2022 class in 2026.

Accreditation Statement

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Podiatric Medicine has obtained eligibility application approval from the Council on Podiatric Medical Education (CPME). The 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 degree in the U.S. The School of Podiatric Medicine is currently in the candidate status phase of the three-step process for seeking full accreditation.

Title IX

"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 on the basis of 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 on the basis of 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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Academic Responsibilities

Please refer to the [UTRGV Academic Responsibilities](#).

The Podiatric Medical Student Evaluation and Promotions Committee

The Podiatric Medical Student Evaluation and Promotions Committee (PMSEPC) is composed of the Assistant Dean of Clinical Education/Director of Clinical Education, the Medical Education Evaluation and Assessment Manager, the Director of Student Affairs (ex-officio member), the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs (ex-officio member), and three full-time faculty members at-large, and one faculty alternate, appointed by the Dean. Committee members will serve a two-year term and will elect a chair and co-chair. Students have the option to allow a PMSEPC approved student representative in their hearings for advocacy. PMSEPC student representatives will be vetted and trained by the PMSEPC. Students must be aware that allowing a student representative will require the student to fill out a FERPA form to allow the student representative to view their educational records at any time. Students may remove the FERPA permission at any point in their program. The PMSEPC has oversight of the following:

- SOPM student academic and professional performance during all four years of the curriculum.
- 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 2/3 majority vote.

Academic Appeals/Grievances

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

Pre-Clerkship Grievances

A student who feels that they have an academic grievance in the pre-clerkship curriculum, usually regarding an examination score or module grade, may attempt to informally resolve the concern by contacting the Course Director/Module Lead in writing within five (5) business days from the date the student knew or should have known of the academic concern. Within thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of the student's written communication from the Course Director/Module Lead, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs or designee will investigate the concern and provide the student with a written decision.

Clerkship Grievances

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 course grade, may attempt to informally resolve the concern by contacting the Clerkship Director or Assistant Dean of Clinical Education in writing within five (5) business days from the date the student knew or should have known of the academic concern. Within thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of the student's written communication, the Clerkship Director or Assistant Dean of Clinical Education/Director of Clinical

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Education will investigate the concern, employing departmental education processes such as committee review as per departmental practice, and provide the student a written decision.

Formal Appeals in Pre-Clerkship and Clerkship

The process and procedures for formal academic grievance ("appeal") 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, course or clerkship grades, remediation, repetition, suspension, probation, professionalism sanctions, and dismissal.

A student must file written notice of grievance with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs or designee and the Chair of the Podiatric Medical Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (PMSEPC) 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 Associate Dean of Academic Affairs or designee 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. An ad hoc group of the PMSEPC, including the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, the Chair of the PMSEPC, and one member of the PMSEPC, will investigate the grievance, meeting with the student as necessary to ensure a comprehensive review. The Chair of the PMSEPC will present the student's written statement and any supporting documentation, as well as the ad hoc investigatory summary to the PMSEPC at the next scheduled PMSEPC meeting. 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. The decision of the PMSEPC is final, pending appeal to the Dean of the SOPM (herein referred to as the Dean). The student continues in the curriculum until the appeals process is exhausted unless the student's continuance poses a safety concern.

The student may file a written secondary appeal to the Dean within five (5) business days from receipt of the PMSEPC written decision. The student must also inform the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs of the intent to appeal, also within the same five (5) business days. The student's appeal portfolio must include a justification statement for secondary appeal and all documentation provided to the PMSEPC. Upon review of the student's record and appeal portfolio, the Dean may elect to:

- 1) Take no action, allowing the PMSEPC decision to stand.
- 2) Modify the PMSEPC decision.
- 3) Make an alternate decision.
- 4) Impanel an ad hoc committee to re-examine the decision and make recommendations.

Within fifteen (15) business days from receipt of the student's appeal, the Dean will provide a written decision to the student and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs. The decision of the Dean is final.

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 follows the UTRGV Academic Integrity Violation Sanctioning Guidelines. Academic dishonest violations are Category Four Violations.

Academic dishonesty is 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 is the following or attempts 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, calculator, 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 re-graded. 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 which 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,

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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.
- Re-submission of past work as new, unique, or novel to a class when the work had been previously submitted.

4) 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 course or degree requirements.

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 course without the written consent of the present instructor or submission of work with identical or similar content in concurrent courses 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 course posing as another student who is officially registered for that course.
- 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.

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 services 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).

7) 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.

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

9) Misrepresenting facts for academic advantage to UTRGV or an agent of UTRGV. This includes providing false grades or résumés; 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.

10) In the realm of UTRGV SOPM educational programs, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies influence on students learning journey and the cultivation of critical thinking abilities. As these technologies unfold, they present new avenues for exploration and learning. However, it's paramount to uphold the principles of academic integrity within our UTRGV SOPM coursework. Specifically, the application of AI tools, including generative AI, in completing assignments related to Team-Based Learning (TBL), Problem-Based Learning (PBL), and open-book quizzes, is strictly forbidden within our curriculum. Employing AI for these purposes will be viewed as a breach of academic honesty. Engaging with AI in the aforementioned scenarios will be treated as academic misconduct and sent in with UTRGV Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Students are expected to uphold appropriate professional and ethical standards for themselves. They also are expected to act appropriately (e.g., inform a supervisor/ administrator) if their peers and

colleagues are not acting professionally and ethically. Students, staff, and faculty will report students suspected of academic dishonesty or any violation of student code of conduct to UTRGV Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities via Vaqueros Report It. UTRGV Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities will investigate the situation by reviewing the student's work, discussing the issue with the relevant faculty and possibly other involved students or personnel, and reviewing the issue with the identified student. If the investigation of the case by the UTRGV Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities concludes that a violation of the Student Code of Conduct occurred, the matter shall be referred to the School of Podiatric Medicine's Medical Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (PMSEPC) to develop an appropriate sanction.

UTRGV Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities will summarize the findings in writing to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs for review and to be shared with PMSEPC.

If the PMSEPC imposes an appealable sanction, the affected student may file a written appeal to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs within five (5) business days from receipt of the PMSEPC's written decision. The student must also inform the Director of Student Affairs of the intent to appeal, also within the same five (5) business days. The student's appeal portfolio must include a justification statement for appeal and all documentation provided to Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs. Within (5) business days from the receipt of the student's appeal, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs will submit a report with recommendations to the Dean of the SOPM.

Upon review of the student's record, the student's appeal portfolio, and the report and recommendations from the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, the Dean may elect to:

- a. Take no action, allowing the PMSEPC decision to stand.
- b. Modify the PMSEPC decision.
- c. Make an alternate decision.

Within fifteen (15) business days from the receipt of the appeal documentation, the Dean will provide a written decision to the student, the Director of Student Affairs, and the chair of the PMSEPC. The decision of the Dean is the final appellate review.

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 course 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.

A student in good academic standing may request an 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 may petition in writing to the PMSEPC for an LOA for medical, personal, financial, administrative, or non-emergent medical reasons. All petitions for LOAs should be prepared in

consultation with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs or their designee and must state the reasons for the requested LOA.

- If a student initiates an LOA before the completion of a course or clerkship, the student will receive a grade of “withdrawn”. A student, while on an approved LOA, is a matriculated student; however, they are not registered for any courses in the SOPM curriculum. The PMSEPC may impose academic conditions relating to any LOA. All LOAs count toward the expected six-year time frame for SOPM curriculum completion. Exceptions to this policy may be made by the PMSEPC.

For academic reinstatement to the curriculum after any period of absence from the curriculum, students must file a written petition addressed to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs, who may approve routine petitions to return to the curriculum for students in good academic standing without prior comportment issues or recurrent appearances at the PMSEPC.

The PMSEPC must review petitions from students whose absence was related to academic or behavioral difficulties. Any student who has been absent from the curriculum for academic reasons or professionalism issues will be requested to appear before the PMSEPC before the student re-enters the curriculum. Failure to appear will be considered by the committee when reviewing the student’s readiness to return. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Director of Student Affairs, and the PMSEPC Chair must receive petitions at least three working days prior to the scheduled PMSEPC meeting. Exceptions to this policy can be made for students with urgent issues that are time sensitive.

Students must provide acceptable evidence as to their readiness to re-enter the curriculum and the completion of any previously accepted plan of remediation of academic deficiencies or of activities to minimize academic discontinuity. Evidence may include reports from professionals with whom the student worked or consulted during the absence from the curriculum, if relevant to academic readiness to return. Students are expected to provide reports from such professionals if an accepted plan of remediation included consultation with healthcare professionals regarding underlying causes of academic deficiencies and treatments. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs will present such reports of fitness to return to the PMSEPC.

After review of a student’s petition and evidence, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs can determine that:

- The student is in good academic standing without comportment issues or recurrent appearances at the PMSEPC, has satisfactorily demonstrated readiness and fulfilled all conditions contained in their accepted plans of remediation and/or accepted plans to enhance or maintain readiness to return, and report this to the PMSEPC, or
- The student has not satisfactorily demonstrated readiness to return, fulfilled all conditions contained in accepted plans of remediation or enhanced or maintained educational continuity, and refer the student to the PMSEPC, in which case the PMSEPC can either:
 - allow the student to return to the curriculum, subject to additional requirements related to deficiencies in the student’s performance of their plan,
 - disallow the student’s petition to return to the curriculum and dismiss the student either because the student has previously been notified of this policy that they were at risk of academic dismissal based on deficiencies existing prior to the absence from the curriculum; or
 - determine that the student’s extensive time away from the curriculum has resulted in

unacceptable academic discontinuity.

A request to extend a leave of absence requires that a new written request be submitted to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the Chair of the PMSEPC stipulating the reason for the extension, the additional amount of leave time requested, the amended proposed date of return, and the intent to return to the SOPM to complete the DPM degree. Once the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs has signed off on the extension, the request should be submitted to the Office of the Registrar no later than the first Friday of the semester for which the extension is being requested.

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 may dismiss a student whose absences exceed two years.

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

Withdrawal

Voluntary Withdrawal

A student who wishes to permanently leave the program should prepare the request to withdraw in consultation with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. The request must include the reason(s) for withdrawal and a statement that the student understands that withdrawal is voluntary and permanent. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs will inform PMSEPC unless the student requests that this information be confidential. The withdrawal is effective on the date the completed withdrawal form is received in the Office of the Registrar.

Involuntary Withdrawal/Dismissal

In general, prior to dismissal, students shall be placed on probationary status and given a plan for remedial action and specific performance requirements by the PMSEPC. However, in extraordinary circumstances, the PMSEPC may dismiss a student without prior probation.

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

- 1) failure to remediate deficiencies
- 2) an accumulation of narrative evaluations indicating serious gaps in knowledge and clinical skills and/or inadequate integration of the content of the curriculum
- 3) a specific academic deficiency (e.g., an important clinical skill has not been mastered)
- 4) failing performance on either APMLE 1 or 2 of the National Board of Podiatric Medical Examination
- 5) failure to assume appropriate professional responsibility
- 6) failure to meet professional standards, including those of demeanor and conduct; and,
- 7) a violation of the University Handbook of Operating Procedures or SOPM policies or procedures.

Probation, Suspension, & Dismissal

Students who are facing probation or dismissal decisions are strongly advised to appear before the

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PMSEPC in person.

Probation

Probationary status (probation) may be imposed by the PMSEPC under various circumstances including, but not limited to when it has significant concerns that failure to remediate deficiencies will result in dismissal of the student from the School of Podiatric Medicine DPM program. The notification to the student of probationary status will be accompanied by a plan for remedial action and specific performance requirements specified by the PMSEPC. A successful conclusion of the remedial work normally ends the probationary status following the recommendation to do so by the PMSEPC. However, the fact that the student was placed on probation will be included in the student's PMSEPC internal file and will remain in the student's permanent records in the SOPM.

Suspension

The PMSEPC may conclude that the student should be suspended from the UTRGV SOPM for a period of time to be determined at its reasonable discretion.

Reinstatement to the UTRGV SOPM is contingent upon the completion of all requirements stipulated under the suspension. The dean of the SOPM will either determine that these requirements have been met or seek a recommendation from the PMSEPC on the matter. If a recommendation from the PMSEPC is sought, the 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.

Suspension/LOA is automatic for students who have failed to pass APMLE 1 and 2 licensing examinations on their second attempt. Students must use the period of suspension to prepare for the next examination offering.

Dismissal

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

- 1) failure to remediate deficiencies.
- 2) an accumulation of narrative evaluations indicating serious gaps in knowledge and clinical skills and/or inadequate integration of the content of the curriculum.
- 3) a specific academic deficiency (e.g., an important clinical skill has not been mastered).
- 4) a failing performance on either APMLE1 or 2 of the NBPME examination.
- 5) failure to assume appropriate professional responsibility.
- 6) failure to meet professional standards, including those of demeanor and conduct; and
- 7) a violation of University regulations, policies, or procedures.

In general, prior to dismissal, students will be placed on probationary status and given a plan for remedial action and specific performance requirements by the PMSEPC. However, under extraordinary circumstances, UTRGV Student Rights and Responsibilities will investigate along with SOPM and the PSMEPC will provide a sanction decision to the student.

Failure to pass, after the third attempt, either APMLE1 or 2 of the NBPME licensing examinations leads to an automatic dismissal from the School of Podiatric Medicine.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken for all mandatory educational activities. Repeated unexcused absences and/or tardiness are taken very seriously and are perceived as an indication of a student's lack of commitment to the professional standards expected of a student physician-in-training. Repeated professionalism violations associated with unexcused absences or tardiness are subject to review by the Office of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs and, if not remedied, can result in a review by the Podiatric Medical School Evaluation and Promotions Committee (PMSEPC).

Mandatory educational activities include:

- Problem-based learning, clinical skills, case wrap-ups, 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 clerkships, electives, and selective.
- Accreditation-mandated training (e.g., financial aid).

Lectures in Years One and Two are recorded and attendance at lectures is not required but is highly recommended.

Modules, clerkship, and course directors or their assigned designers have the responsibility for keeping and maintaining records of attendance and tardiness for all mandatory educational activities. Students found to be in violation of the attendance or tardiness policy within modules, clerkships, or courses will be referred to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs who will address the issue with the student and determine actions to be taken. The Director of Pre-clerkship and Clinical Clerkship will apprise the Director of Student Affairs of students with repeated violations of the attendance and punctuality policies.

Grades & Class Rank

Pre-Clerkship Grades

Module grades for PMS 1 and PMS 2 are based on a Pass/Fail system. Each module provides students with its School of Podiatric Medicine Curriculum Committee (SPMCC) approved grading rubric which is comprised of two assessment components:

- 1) Objective Educational Activities and Assessments (examination, quizzes, presentations).
- 2) Performance Based and Professionalism Assessments (clinical skills, Objective Structured Clinical Exams, professionalism rubric, etc.).

Students must pass both components to receive a passing grade for the module.

***The grading for Basic Science Curriculum will be administered by the SOPM Instructor of Record and approved by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

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 the pre-clinical years, a grade point average may 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

****Final grades for modules must be submitted to the registrar within two weeks from the end date of the module.

Ranking

Class rank is based on pre-clerkship and clerkship performance and is computed only after all grades have been collected at the conclusion of Mid-Point 4th Year (December) unless a ranking is needed at another time for outside agency reporting. 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 quartiles, not in numerical rank order ([Determining Class Rank and Honors](#)).

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

Promotions

To be promoted to the next curricular year, podiatric medical students must meet all requirements of the current year, and satisfactorily adhere to all University and SOPM standards.

Graduation from UTRGV SOPM requires the successful completion of pre-clerkship requirements (years one and two), successful completion of the clerkship rotations (years three and four), passing of the APMLE Steps 1 and 2, and Step 2 Clinical Portion of CSPE, the demonstration of a degree of professionalism deemed to be essential for all physicians, and satisfactory adherence to all University and SOPM standards. All requirements must be fulfilled within six years from matriculation.

Student's academic and behavioral performances are equally subject to evaluation. Students are expected to be honest, conscientious, respectful, and reliable in carrying out their assignments. Their behavior toward colleagues, faculty, staff, patients, and others with whom they interact in their roles as podiatric medical students are expected to be appropriate, reasonable, and considerate—consistent with podiatric medical professional standards.

The PMSEPC has primary responsibility for recommending for graduation only those candidates who have satisfactorily completed all graduation requirements and demonstrated the professional conduct

appropriate for a physician. The committee is charged with the review of the academic progress and professional development of each student during all components of the four-year podiatric medical education program.

The PMSEPC will review the information provided by the module clerkship director, the student, the student's academic advisor, the student's academic record to date, and other pertinent information as available. Recommendations regarding promotion or remediation are based on the guidelines outlined in this handbook.

Promotion to Year Three

Students who have met all of the 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 1 Exam.

Academic Performance Deficiencies

A student whose advancement or academic performance is in question shall be notified that their case will be on the PMSEPC agenda. A student may request to appear before the PMSEPC in person or may submit written documents for consideration by the committee.

A student is encouraged to inform the PMSEPC of any extenuating circumstances affecting academic performance and professional behavior. If the student does not provide any additional information, the PMSEPC will base their decision on the information available to them at the time. The PMSEPC retains the option to request consultations or assessments, including those of a medical nature, regarding any student who experiences problems that interfere with academic performance. The PMSEPC has the discretion to set specific rules for a meeting and these will be communicated to the student in advance.

Students who are facing probation or dismissal decisions are strongly advised to appear before the PMSEPC in person.

Examinations

The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the Medical Education Evaluation and Assessment Manager are responsible for the oversight and administration of computer-based examinations for the SOPM and for establishing examination protocols.

All major exams in the pre-clerkship Years One and Two will be scheduled in advance through the Office of the Dean. The exact times and dates for scheduling examinations will be coordinated with the Module Director. Students will not be allowed to take more than two exams on the same day.

In order to start residency with UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine in the United States, individuals must pass all three NBPME Step exams: APMLE 1, APMLE 2, and CSPE. Students are expected to take and pass each examination by the deadlines for that examination set by the PMSEPC. Students must be enrolled in the SOPM to be able to register for and take the APMLE 1 and 2 and Part II of CSPE. Students are required to complete applications for the APMLE examinations in sufficient time to request test dates on or before the PMSEPC deadlines. Students with circumstances that prevent them from taking or retaking the APMLE 1 and 2 and CSPE according to the dates in this policy must, as soon as possible, petition in writing to the Director of Student Affairs and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, who will

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review the request and make a determination.

Students must take and pass the APMLE Step One exam before being allowed to complete Year Three. Students must also take and pass the APMLE 2 and CSPE exams prior to graduation. Failure to pass the APMLE 1 or 2 or the CSPE after the third attempt (per exam) will result in automatic dismissal from the SOPM.

APMLE 1: Students are required to take APMLE prior to the start of Year Three orientation. Students who delay taking APMLE 1 until after the start of Year Three orientation will be referred to the PMSEPC. Students who fail APMLE 1 on their initial attempt will be referred to the PMSEPC and a review of the academic record will be completed. A passing score must be achieved within two attempts by late October of the third year.

APMLE 2: Passage of APMLE 2 Written and CSPE are required for graduation. Initial attempts to pass both written and CSPE exams must be completed by early February of the year preceding graduation. To ensure that a student who matches a residency will be able to start the post-graduate year on time, any student who cannot obtain a passing score on APMLE Step Two written and CSPE before the final date for submission of the National CASPR rank order list will be withdrawn from the residency match by the Office of Academic Affairs. At the discretion of the Director of Student Affairs and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, such students will be allowed to walk with their class at commencement. However, they will not receive a diploma until they have met all graduation requirements. Passing scores must be documented no later than May 1st of the year the student expects to graduate.

Failure to document a passing score for either Step Two exam by May 1st will result in a delay in graduation and residency.

Remediation

The Podiatric Medical Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (PMSEPC) monitors the progress of students throughout the four-year podiatric medical education program. Students must meet all the academic requirements for each year of the program to be promoted to the next academic year.

Module directors are responsible for monitoring student progress within their modules and are responsible for reporting the names of students who have failed a module to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, the Director of Student Affairs, and the PMSEPC within five business days of the completion of the module. The Dean is responsible for reporting failures to the SOPM registrar.

The remediation plan, including expectations for work to be performed, student assessment, passing level, and time for the remediation, are developed by the Module Director(s) and/or assigned faculty and submitted to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs within two weeks from when the initial grade of Fail (F) is posted. The first remediation attempt must be completed within three weeks in the summer of the same academic year.

The consequences of failure to meet academic standards and requirements are outlined below.

- **One Deficiency in an Academic Year:** If the student fails one module in year one with a raw score between 65% - 69.999%, the student can retest within one week of notification of failure to successfully remediate the grade before the beginning of year two. If a student is unable to

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successfully remediate through a cumulative module retest, the student will remediate at the end of the academic year. Successful remediation in the cumulative module retest requires a 70% raw score.

- If the student fails one module in year one below 65%, the student must successfully remediate the grade before the beginning of year two. Students whose raw score is below 65% do not qualify for a one-week retest as a remediation plan. Students will not remediate during the regular academic year but will be expected to have completed remediation within the three weeks following the end of the academic year.
 - If the final grade earned in a course is Fail (F), a formal plan of remediation is instituted.
 - If the student fails to successfully remediate the failed course, the student will receive an F in the course and will be referred to the PMSEPC for review.
- **Two Deficiencies in an Academic Year:** More than two deficiencies (F grade) in a single academic year may result in dismissal from the program. Alternatively, the student may be required to repeat the full year. The PMSEPC will determine a plan to resolve the deficiencies merited by the situation and will place the student on formal At-Risk status.
- **Multiple Deficiencies across Academic Years:** Multiple deficiencies during enrollment will be reviewed for the severity of the overall problem and a recommended course of action for the individual will be made by the PMSEPC. Consistency of performance is also evaluated. Any student who records two or more deficiencies (F grade) throughout enrollment in the SOPM will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the PMSEPC, will be placed on At-Risk status, and may be subject to further PMSEPC action.
- **Failure to pass APMLE 1:** Students who fail the APMLE Step 1 will have their score, academic record, and any other pertinent information evaluated by the PMSEPC. Students must obtain a passing score on the APMLE Step 1 to progress in the curriculum.

To support the student's effort to pass the Step 1 exam, the PMSEPC shall recommend remedial measures and any changes deemed necessary to the student's enrollment status. In many cases, the PMSEPC will recommend the student should then enter directed study with oversight from the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

Decisions by the PMSEPC for promotion to the next academic year or for recommending graduation from the SOPM are contingent upon the successful remediation of all academic deficiencies and completion of all academic requirements.

Clerkship - Year Three remediation is discussed in the Clinical Education section of this handbook.

Student Feedback & Evaluations

SOPM students are required to participate in all evaluation activities regarding their educational experience and learning environment. Active participation in the evaluation of educational experiences and the learning environment is one of the rights and responsibilities of students that keeps the podiatric medical profession strong.

The information provided by students on evaluations is considered confidential, however, the Office of the Dean will be able to track and monitor which students have completed surveys and identify students

who provide unprofessional responses. Evaluation data will be used solely to improve the quality of the educational experience and learning environment in the SOPM. Student responses will be de-identified and reported only in aggregate (no individual responses will be shared with anyone including module co-directors, faculty/ facilitators, attendings, residents and/or interns, faculty advisors/ mentors, etc.). The SOPM will provide reports to students regarding how their feedback has been used and/or resulted in change.

Graduation

Candidates for graduation must meet the following requirements:

- 1) Be at least 18 years of age at the time the degree is awarded.
- 2) Present evidence of good moral character.
- 3) Offer evidence of having satisfactorily fulfilled all academic requirements of the four-year podiatric medical education program.
- 4) Comply with all necessary legal and financial requirements.
- 5) Abide by federal, state, and local statutes and ordinances, both on and off campus.
- 6) Refrain from behavior incompatible with the responsibilities of the medical profession.
- 7) 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.
- 8) Complete the podiatric medical education program within six years.
- 9) Complete all required courses and clerkships and the designated minimum number of elective and selective courses with satisfactory (passing level) performance.
- 10) Pass the AMPLE Step One within three attempts prior to December 15 of the third year of the medical curriculum.
- 11) Pass the APMLE part 2 written examination within three attempts prior to February 28th of the fourth year of the medical curriculum.
- 12) Pass the APMLE 2 CSPE clinical skills examination within three attempts prior to February 28th of the fourth year of the curriculum.
- 13) Demonstrate consistent evidence of professionalism as assessed by the PMSEPC.
- 14) Receive the PMSEPC's recommendation for graduation and receipt of the DPM degree.

Each student's record is reviewed by the Director of Student Affairs and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in the student's fourth year to confirm the successful completion of all academic requirements and the demonstration of a degree of professionalism deemed to be essential for all physicians. Upon completion of this review, the findings, and recommendations of the Director of Student Affairs and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs are forwarded to the PMSEPC for approval. Students should be aware that they must complete all course requirements within six years from the time of matriculation to receive the DPM degree. The final approval for graduation is made by the Academic Administrative team and the Dean of the SOPM and certified by the UTRGV president.

Degrees will be conferred once a year on commencement day in the spring. Students completing requirements for a degree earlier in the year will be conferred the degree on the following commencement day but may request that the Registrar provide a *Certification of Completion* on the date of graduation. Students who fail to meet graduation requirements by the published degree conferral date/commencement day may petition the PMSEPC to consider an alternate degree conferral

date under extenuating circumstances when the graduating student is expected to begin an internship or residency in July.

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Clinical Clerkships and Rotations Overview

Clerkships and rotations are in four-week blocks. Students are assigned to various clinical sites and work under the supervision of designated residents and SOPM faculty. During clinical clerkships and courses, 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 electives at CPME accredited institutions. Students apply for the electives through the American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine (AACPM) National DPM Clerkship. Student plans for extramural electives must be discussed with and approved by the student's faculty advisor prior to enrollment to ensure that the elective is appropriate.

Required Clinical Experiences and Procedures (RCEP)

The SOPM has a system with central oversight that monitors and ensures the completion of required clinical experiences in the medical education program and remedies any identified gaps.

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

Students are required to record their individual experiences in the One45 computer system, but must NOT record any patient-specific identifying information (name, date of birth, medical record number, protected health information, etc.)

During the midpoint of their clerkship, students will meet the clinical coordinator to assess their progress in completing the RCEP experience logs in both One45 and physical logbooks, ensuring they're on target to meet the requirements by clerkship end. The coordinator will inform both students and supervising faculty about any pending RCEPs. If a student hasn't met the requirements by the last Monday of the clerkship, they must seek supervising faculty approval for an alternate learning experience by the last Wednesday. These alternatives, sanctioned by the director of clinical education, may encompass computer-based modules, case-based learning, clinical simulation, or additional clinical exposure.

One week prior to the end of the clerkship, the Clerkship Coordinator will notify students and clerkship directors of any outstanding RCEPs.

By the end of the clerkship, students must satisfactorily enter the clerkship RCEPs in One45 to successfully pass the clerkship. A grade will be documented as an Incomplete (I) until successful RCEP completion. Once documented as an acceptable experience (alternate or RCEP) the grade for the course can be recorded.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the experience and procedural information are properly documented and maintained in One45 and are available to the Clerkship Director.

Students are expected to document their clinical encounters **daily**, and report to the Clerkship Director if

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they are having difficulties with any RCEP.

Duty Hours

During clinical rotations, students are expected to be involved in activities related to healthcare delivery. Time is 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 teaching 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, One45, to enter their duty, conference, and on-call hours. Students must inform academic coordinators or clerkship directors if faculty/teachers require students to work past duty hour limitations. Students may also anonymously report through the SOPM Professionalism portal.

Reports on duty hour status are available monthly for clerkship directors to review. After this review, findings are discussed with the academic coordinators, clerkship directors, and students prior to any action. Compliance reports are provided to the clerkship directors and the PMSEPC with any violations investigated by the clerkship director and reported to the Assistant Dean or Director of Clinical Affairs. In the event of duty hour violations, progressive administrative action will be taken and plans for the correction of recurrent violations developed.

Clinical Grading & Ranking

A comprehensive and holistic approach to assessment and ranking is 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 cognitive 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. Clerkship grades are based on an Honors, High Pass, Pass, and Fail system.

Each clerkship provides students with a PMSEPC approved grading rubric which is based on:

- 1) Objective Educational Activities and Assessment which evaluates students'

- 2) Knowledge Performance-Based Assessment (OSCE's, DOPS for clinical skills, and professionalism-based rubric).
- 3) Post Clerkship Comprehensive Clinical Assessment Shelf Exam

Criterion vs. Norm-Based Evaluation

The UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine uses a criterion-based performance evaluation system in clinical rotations. All students whose performance meets established criteria can earn a pass regardless of how other students perform. This contrasts with a curved or norm-based system where only a certain proportion of students can earn the top descriptor of performance.

Grading: Final Grade Determination for 3rd and 4th Clerkships years and Ranking

(Knowledge 20% points, Skills 25% points, Professionalism 25% points, Shelf Exam after each rotation 30% points = 100 Total % Points)

Total % Points and Grade Distinction

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

Final grades for each rotation are reported as per the clinical year through grading policy. Clerkship directors will assess final grades for the rotation considering the student's:

- Fulfillment of required clinical experience procedures/objectives.
- Participation in educational activities including attendance and assignments.
- Final rotation evaluation/assessment
- Passing of professionalism including completion and submission of required assignments
- Passing of post-clerkship comprehensive shelf exam

**** Failure to receive a passing score on the post-clerkship comprehensive shelf exam or professionalism results in a failed rotation.**

Elective grades are based on the assessment criteria developed for each elective and approved by the SPMCC before the selective/elective is offered. Final grades for selective and electives must be submitted to the UTRGV Registrar within six weeks of the end date of the module.

Students who remediate and pass a module clerkship or course will receive a grade no higher than a "pass" and their grade will appear on their academic records. Grading policies for modules, clerkships, and electives must be published in the respective syllabi and reviewed with the students at orientation at the start of 3rd year.

When due	Professionalism: Required Assignments and Expectations	% of Grade
Before the Last Friday	Submission of the end of clerkship Evaluation of Clinical Instructor	*Factored into Clerkship Overall Professionalism (5%)
	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	Clerkship Patient Logs completed and signed logs uploaded on One45	

Failed Rotation and 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. See the Clinical Education Remediation section of the SOPM Student Handbook for more information.

A student leaves a rotation before it is finished without the permission of the clerkship director or is asked to leave a rotation by the clinical faculty/preceptor or the director of a hospital, is considered to have failed the rotation.

Clinical Education Remediation

In order to pass a third-year clerkship, a student must pass all the components of the clerkship (as defined in the clerkship syllabus).

If a student receives a failing grade in a clerkship, within one week of receiving notice the student and clerkship director will meet to discuss the student's performance. The student will also have to present to the PMSEPC for a remediation plan.

If a student fails the end of the clerkship written examination but performs at a satisfactory level in all other aspects of the clerkship, the student will have the opportunity to remediate that exam. The student will not be eligible to receive "Honors" and "High Pass" for the clerkship regardless of the score obtained on the remediated exam. If a student fails a clerkship remediation exam, the student will receive a grade of "Fail" in the clerkship and will be required to repeat the clerkship. A student who is repeating a clerkship must complete all components and requirements for the clerkship regardless of whether the student completed those components during the initial attempt at the clerkship; previous work cannot be resubmitted. Students repeating a clerkship are not eligible for final clerkship grades of "Honors" and "High Pass."

If a student fails a third-year clerkship for reasons other than, or in addition to, failure of the written examination, the student will receive a "Fail" and be required to present to PMSEPC for determination of how the student will be remediated. Failure of rotation may result in dismissal from the program.

A student repeating a clerkship due to a failure will do so during the next clerkship block after their scheduled third year clerkships are completed. Time in the 4th year for electives or vacation shall be used

to repeat the clerkship. The student cannot be promoted to the fourth year until all third-year clerkships are passed. Implications for repeating a clerkship include, but are not limited to, delayed graduation and an additional year of podiatric medical school.

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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. In particular, 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 which 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 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 as they seek

rehabilitation, and help them to reintegrate into the medical community.

Student Professionalism, Standards Conduct & Ethics

Project 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:

- 1) Shall be dedicated to providing competent medical care, with compassion and respect for human dignity and rights.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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.
- 4) Shall respect the rights of patients, colleagues, and other health professionals, and shall safeguard patient confidence and privacy within the constraints of the law.
- 5) 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.
- 6) 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.
- 7) Shall recognize a responsibility to participate in activities contributing to the improvement of the community and the betterment of public health.
- 8) Shall, while caring for a patient, regard responsibility to the patient as paramount.
- 9) Shall support access to medical care for all people.

Professionalism Portal

Podiatric medical students are expected to conduct themselves professionally in interaction not only with patients, but also with peers, faculty, and staff of the SOPM and the broader community. The SOPM has written expectations regarding professional conduct. SOPM Podiatric medical students are governed by the Podiatric Medical Students Code of Professional Conduct.

Members of the UTRGV community, including visitors or special guests, are encouraged to voice concerns about professionalism in students, faculty, or staff. Online forms for reporting such concerns are available for peer-to-peer use, as well as for any visitor, special guest, student, staff, or faculty member at UTRGV to use for reporting concerns about any SOPM student, staff, or faculty member.

To report potential violations of the Podiatric Medical Students Code of Professional Conduct individuals complete a form that is available for confidential use and may be directed to the Director of Student Affairs for confidential handling by calling (956) 296-1626.

Individuals who submit reports regarding students are encouraged to provide their names but do have the option of reporting anonymously with the understanding that there may be difficulty in establishing the validity of the submitted report.

All submissions to the professionalism portal are directed to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs who investigate each report and decide regarding what actions, if any, are indicated. The investigation may involve interviewing the student cited in the report and/or gathering additional data from the witness(es), if available. The ultimate goal is to provide the student with opportunities for remediation and counseling if needed; the actions are not, initially, intended to be punitive. However, repeated reports of violations can result in disciplinary action.

Students who feel that they have been cited in error for violations of the Podiatric Medical Students' Code of Professional Conduct have the recourse of filing a grievance.

Student Conduct

Podiatric medical students must adhere to the UTRGV Student Code of Conduct. Any violation will be reported to UTRGV Student Rights and Responsibilities Office and then to the PMSEPC for review of academic/sanction standing.

Student Records & Privacy

SOPM adheres to the [UTRGV policy on Academic Records](#) as well as the [UTRGV Student Rights and Responsibilities Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act](#).

Tuition & Fees

Tuition and Fees are available on the SOPM website. 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](#).

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 course, 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 course 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 and shirt, preferably with collar. Tie optional.
Women: Dresses or skirts of medium length, or professional style slacks.
- 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 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 **classroom** setting:

- 1) For men, a shirt with a collar is preferred.
- 2) For women, shirts and blouses must extend to the waistband of the skirt or pants.
- 3) Students are permitted to wear casual slacks, jeans, and T-shirts provided they are clean, in good repair, and do not contain any offensive language or pictures.
- 4) Only shorts of mid-thigh length are permitted.

Standards in the **laboratory** setting:

- 1) Students should follow the guidelines as 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 on the School of Podiatric Medicine Announcements and Events Blackboard site.

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/Directors in the Office of Student Affairs
- Counseling Services
- Module, course, and clerkship directors

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 Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs for further instructions. Students wishing to report anonymously may do so by filing a report on the secured section of the UTRGV Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR) through Vaquero Report It Form which is available online at www.utrgv.edu/reportit. A grievance involving perceived mistreatment can be resolved informally or formally. A student pursuing a formal non-academic grievance resolution must contact the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs, in writing, within five business days of the alleged grievance. If the grievance involves staff, faculty, or student(s) from the broader UTRGV community, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs will work with other appropriate authorities, as indicated. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs will assist the student in the informal resolution of the grievance, to be completed within 30 calendar days from the written grievance. If an informal resolution is not achieved, the aggrieved student has an additional five business days to file a formal written grievance.

The Director of Student Affairs, acting as a student advocate, assumes the responsibility for formulating

and facilitating the most appropriate response.

The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs monitor 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 trigger a confidential meeting with the Associate Dean of Student Affairs to address the concern.

Students may also reach out to the [UTRGV Student Rights and Responsibilities office](#). [Vaqueros Report It!](#) also provides an outlet 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 and alcohol 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 maintain a negative urine drug screen to fulfill the requirements of the program. A positive test will result in a report to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Affairs 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 at any point. The expenses related to drug testing are borne by the accepted applicant or enrolled student. Drug test results remain separate from the academic record.

Parking Arrangements

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

SECTION 5: STUDENT AFFAIRS

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Student Health & Wellness

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

Financial Aid & Scholarships

Financial Aid

This includes staff who assist students with meeting the cost of their medical education, offer guidance in navigating the financial aid process, and provide resources on how to manage expenses associated with the pursuit of a medical degree.

The Associate Director of Financial Aid for the SOPM is dedicated to assisting students with the financial aid application process and providing one-to-one counseling regarding the availability of federal, private, and institutional funds.

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, and/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. Satisfactory Academic Progress standards are also required for SOPM state and institutional financial aid programs. At UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine (SOPM), satisfactory academic progress is determined once a year at the end of each academic year; and once 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 not meeting 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 denied Title IV aid (financial aid) because of a failure to meet satisfactory academic progress (SAP) standards can appeal this determination by completing a Financial Aid SAP Appeal form and submitting it along with any supporting documentation to the SOPM Financial Aid Appeals Committee.

The SOPM Financial Aid Appeals Committee will be convened as needed by the SOPM Director of Student Affairs. Committee members consisting of SOPM Administration along with representation from the UTRGV Financial Aid Office will review submitted financial aid appeal forms.

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. At the SOPM, “good standing” means “satisfactory academic progress” which consists of good academics and professionalism standards. 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 repeating year. However, the scholarship (when available) may be reinstated once the student achieves good standing and is promoted.

Tuition Refund Policy

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, or if still enrolled.

Notice of intention to withdraw must be made in writing to the Director of Student Affairs 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.

C. Relevant Federal/State Statutes, Board Regents, and/or Coordinating Board Rules

- Texas Education Code Chapter 54. Tuition and Fees:
<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/ED/htm/ED.54.htm>

Accommodations

The SOPM is committed to serving all students by providing equitable access to learning opportunities. As such, students can request accommodations through [UTRGV Student Accessibility Services](#).

Library Services

The SOPM utilizes the [School of Medicine Libraries](#) 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 expenditures 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 a strong role as a regional information center.

Academic Advising & Support Services

Academic Advising

The SOPM has an effective system of academic advising system that integrates the efforts of faculty members, module directors, clerkship directors, and student affairs counseling and tutorial services and ensures that podiatric medical students can obtain academic counseling from individuals who have no role in their assessment or promotion decision-making. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs ensures that students have access to academic counseling from individuals who do not have roles in making assessments.

Support Services

The Office of the Dean monitors and coordinates academic interventions/activities for at-risk students. They are additionally responsible for preparing students for the APMLE Step 1 Exam. Students are assisted with high-yield resources, study skills strategies, test-taking skills, scheduling, time management, and overall readiness for the Step 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 help sessions on course modules
- Time management
- Stress management
- Early intervention and remediation
- APMLE Step 1 Exam Preparations
- Referral services to other UTRGV services

All Podiatric medical students are encouraged first to discuss any academic concerns with their Module/Clerkship director.

Career & Residency 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 are in place to:

- Help students identify and achieve their personal and professional goals.
- Assist students in the process of selecting a career, and guide students through the transition from podiatric medical school to residency training.

Student Organizations

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 of that specialty. Through their participation, students become knowledgeable about and may consider becoming active student members of one or more professional associations of that specialty. The UTRGV SOPM Office of Student Affairs supports extracurricular student organizations as another means for students to explore career interests.

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 on 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 fall. An impartial Election Committee oversees this process, ensuring fair play. All UTRGV SOPM students are eligible to run for positions, with specific roles designated for certain classes. 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.

To qualify for office, candidates must be full-time students in good academic and professional standing. This emphasizes the importance of responsibility and integrity among members, ensuring the SGA's effectiveness in serving its community.

Committees

At the beginning of each academic year, the UTRGV SOPM committee chair(s) and the UTRGV SOPM Associate Dean of Academic Affairs will work together with the UTRGV SOPM SGA to organize elections for class representation. Each cohort will elect four representatives, including two primary and two alternate representatives. This procedure will be maintained until there are four full cohorts within UTRGV SOPM. After achieving this milestone, subsequent elections will involve choosing one primary representative and two alternates for each class. It's 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 two years, with an option for reelection 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 Medical Education Evaluation and Assessment Manager will notify them via email. Their participation in committee meetings will be paused 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 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 Committee Chair and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, potentially leading to temporary or permanent removal from the committee, depending on the breach's 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, telephone number, 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.

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