

# ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## FERPA – Privacy of Student Records: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Students attending, or who have attended, Liberty University are given certain rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and Rules of the Department of Education (34 C.F.R. Part 99) implementing this Act.

The complete FERPA/Right of Information Policy may be found here.

## Course and Instructor Evaluations<sup>1</sup>

Each academic year, LUCOM courses undergo a formal process to evaluate the curriculum and instructors. During this process, course related data is reviewed and student feedback is a valuable and essential part of this practice.

This process is led and supervised by the appropriate Senior Associate Dean for the associated training year and review and oversight is provided by the corresponding curriculum subcommittee. This process informs future changes to the course syllabus and provides constructive feedback to the faculty who participate in instruction and/or clinical supervision within the course. Student input will facilitate student welfare by promoting changes that have the potential to improve the educational effectiveness of the curriculum, as well as assist faculty members by providing them with constructive input to help them improve their teaching strategies.

Each student has a responsibility to their professional development to provide constructive evaluation for the courses and the instructors in the curriculum as directed by the College's policy on curricular evaluation and improvement. This responsibility will be met by participation in course evaluations that are routinely administered by the College. The College expects each student to sincerely accept this responsibility and obligation in a constructive manner so that optimal feedback can be provided.

In the preclinical years, (OMS-I and OMS-II), students are invited to submit a confidential course evaluation within 1 week of completing the course.

In the clinical years, (OMS-III and OMS-IV), students must submit the confidential evaluations of the curriculum and preceptors/sites as directed within the syllabus. This is a required component of these courses.

be considered on an individual basis. The University and the COM has the right to require the student to seek additional evaluation by a provider recognized as having expertise in the evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of the condition.

If the student disagrees with the accommodation proposed, they may appeal the decision to the Dean of LUCOM. The decision of the Dean is final.

Students who fail in the curriculum or who are suspended or dismissed may not claim failure due to disability if they have not previously identified the disability and requested reasonable accommodations in advance of the curricular failure.

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### <sup>1</sup> 9.2 Academic Standards

## Academic Accommodations Process<sup>1</sup>

Accepted applicants and first and second year students must submit their request to the Office of Medical Education, in a sealed envelope or electronically, to LUCOMMedEd@liberty.edu. Students requesting accommodations in their OMS-III and OMS-IV years will email LUCOMClinicalEducation@liberty.edu with the request. Any request for accommodations must be submitted in writing with supporting documentation from a physician (M.D. or D.O.) or other medical professional with appropriate peer-recognized expertise or certification in the area of claimed disability, and will then be forwarded to the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Committee Chair for committee process. The details for the process of applying for academic accommodations are obtained from the Office of Medical Education.

In all cases, accommodations are not retrospective, and decisions do not affect grades or other actions that have taken place prior to the granting of the accommodation.

LUCOM does not offer accommodations that are not under their direct control or outside of the University i.e. COMLEX. These accommodations must be approved through the National Board of Osteopathic Examiners (NBOME) and can be reached at: (<https://www.nbome.org/resources/test-accommodations/>).

Additional details and information are available in the LUCOM Catalog.

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### <sup>1</sup> 9.2 Academic Standards

## Student Responsibility to Obtain Information<sup>1</sup>

Each student enrolled in the College of Osteopathic Medicine is individually responsible for knowledge of the current academic regulations, the general and specific requirements, and the operational policies, as contained in the College Catalog and Student Handbook including any changes to current or new published policy or procedures established during the year, and any other official documents or announcements of the College.

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### <sup>1</sup> 11.2 Student Evaluations of Instruction

## Disabilities and Academic Accommodations<sup>1</sup>

Liberty University and LUCOM complies with all applicable laws, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

It is the student's responsibility to initiate the process for disability services 2 months before the start of an academic year. Each request will

Students are individually responsible for remaining aware of educational obligations, i.e. being aware of their grades, the procedures for remediation, and the times and locations of all examinations or laboratory sessions, the time and location of clinical rotations, et al.

Official College communications may be sent via University/College assigned email accounts. Information will not be sent to private email accounts. All students are required to maintain and access their LUCOM email account regularly for any communications that have been forwarded. The College may send communications via U.S. Mail, registered or certified mail at their discretion. The student is responsible to maintain their correct address with the Office of Admissions and Student Services and the Office of Clinical Education while on clinical rotations. Failure to receive communications from the COM due to failure to keep the COM informed of current address, failure to sign for certified or registered mail, or failure to access and be aware of information distributed via email will not relieve the student of the duties and obligations that are included in such communications.

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### <sup>1</sup> 5.1 Professionalism

## **Incomplete Course Work <sup>1</sup>**

### **OMS-I and OMS-II**

Students who are unable to complete coursework prior to the last day of the course due to unavoidable circumstances or circumstances outside of his/her control such as personal illness/injury or family emergencies must notify the Office of Medical Education to request a temporary course grade of "I" (Incomplete). Students must initiate the request for an "I" grade prior to the last day of the course. Documentation of the exceptional circumstances for an "I" grade may be required. An "I" grade will be changed to the earned grade upon the student's satisfactory completion of the course requirements. During the OMS-I and OMSII years, the Office of Medical Education will establish the deadline for the completion of the remaining coursework (all "I" grades must be resolved no later than 20 business days after the last day of the course). An "I" grade not resolved within this time frame will be converted to a failing (F) grade. No exceptions are permitted without specific approval from an appropriate dean.

### **OMS-III and OMS-IV**

Students who are unable to complete coursework prior to the last day of the course due to unavoidable circumstances or circumstances outside of his/her control such as personal illness/injury or family emergencies must notify the course director and the Office of Clinical Education to request a temporary course grade of "I" (Incomplete). Students must initiate the request for an incomplete prior to the last day of the course. The authority for the decision to grant an "I" grade completely lies with the appropriate clinical dean. Documentation of the exceptional circumstances for an "I" grade may be required. An "I" grade will be changed to the earned grade upon the satisfactory completion of the course or clinical rotation requirements. During the OMS-III and OMS-IV years, all "I" grades must be resolved no later than 20 business days after the last day of the course. An "I" grade not resolved within this time frame will be converted to a failing (F) grade. No exceptions are permitted without specific approval from an appropriate dean.

All "I" grades resulting from a missing preceptor evaluation of student will be resolved upon the receipt of the evaluation or from a granted Dean

Approval of Grade. Students are responsible to ensure that preceptor grades are completed prior to leaving a rotation. A preceptor's inability to return the preceptor evaluation of student within 10 business days after the last day of the course will result in the "I" grade; if not complete by 20 business days, it will be converted to a failing grade, but will be resolved upon the receipt of the evaluation or from a granted Dean Approval of Grade.

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### <sup>1</sup> 9.2 Academic Standards

## **Examinations <sup>1</sup>**

### **Examination Protocol**

Outerwear coats, hats, blankets, and food are not permitted in the exam room. Drinks are allowed provided they are in a sealed, spill-proof container.

Students are prohibited from bringing books, paper, bags/cases of any kid, or any electronic devices (cell phone, smart watches, Bluetooth devices, etc.) other than the LUCOM issued laptop into the exam room. Non-electronic, noise protecting headphones may be permitted upon presentation of headphones to a proctor and approval on each exam day. Foam earplugs are permitted. Students will be provided with implements to make notes during the exam. Students are not permitted to make any written notations prior to the start of the exam. There will be negative consequences for any student who does not abide by this policy (as a minimum: loss of points from the exam at the discretion of the Office of Medical Education). There will be no warning, even for first-time offenders.

Students must avoid any impropriety or the appearance of impropriety in taking examinations. These measures are in place to ensure the integrity of the exams.

### **Attendance**

A student is expected to be seated and prepared to begin each examination at the scheduled time. In order to not disturb other students, students who are not at start of the examination will be considered tardy. Any student who arrives after the scheduled examination start time will receive a minimum of a 2% grade deduction on the exam. If deemed eligible, tardy students may be permitted to take the examination in the remaining time for the exam. Additionally, tardy or inexcusably absent students from the exam may be permitted to take a make-up examination with 30% penalty deduction applied (resulting in a maximum possible score of 70%), if eligible, or a grade of 0 will be assigned. No student will be permitted to leave the examination before 15 minutes after the examination starting time, unless they have submitted their exam. Likewise, a student will not be permitted to leave the examination room in the final 15 minutes of the examination time, unless they have submitted their exam. Students who are leaving the examination room and have not yet submitted their exam, must sign-out and in. No more than one female and one male student is allowed to be signed out at the same time. This policy applies to all written examinations.

Students who are not on time for Standardized Patients, laboratory, or other skills-based assessments will not be permitted to participate and earn any points.

## Make-up Examinations <sup>1</sup>

A student who does not take an examination at its scheduled time and is deemed eligible, may take a make-up examination.

Make-up examinations may be short answer, essay, verbal, or multiple-choice formats at the director's discretion and with the approval of the Office of Medical Education (OME). Any and all exceptions will be stated in the course syllabus. The student is responsible to read each course syllabus and to comply with the policies as stated.

Make-up examinations will be given as soon as reasonably possible after the original examination on a day and time determined by the OME and will follow normal exam policies outlined in the handbook. Nothing in this policy will prohibit a student from taking a scheduled examination at a remote site if approved by the OME. A student may only be permitted to take an examination prior to the scheduled time due to extreme circumstances and with approval of the OME.

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### <sup>1</sup> 9.2 Academic Standards

## Remediation (OMS-I and OMS-II) <sup>1</sup>

Any student who fails a course with a grade of F or less than 70 but greater than 60 in a single course during the academic year will be given the opportunity to remediate that course without Student Progress Committee review or recommendation. The student will be allowed to continue with the curriculum prior to remediation.

A student who fails a course with a grade less than or equal to 60 will be required to meet with Student Progress Committee. The Student Progress Committee shall recommend to the Dean whether the student should be allowed to continue with the curriculum and be eligible for remediation or if the student should be required to follow the repeat protocol. Any student who fails two or more courses during any one academic year will not be given an opportunity to take any remediation examinations. The Student Progress Committee has the authority to recommend dismissal of the student if they feel the prognosis for academic success is poor.

Once grades are finalized that result in a second course failure in a single academic year, a student will be placed immediately on academic suspension and must meet with the LUCOM Office of the Registrar. A student who is appealing an assignment/course grade is expected to continue in coursework and take all examinations pending the result of the appeal. A student who is not appealing an assignment/course grade or whose appeal is denied will be required to appear before the Student Progress Committee and may be given the opportunity to follow the repeat protocol or may be dismissed from the COM. The final determination of any action is made by the Dean.

Notification of remediation opportunity, if granted, or requirement for repeating the academic year will be made by the appropriate academic administrator. Any student failing to receive at least 70 on any remediation examination will receive a failing grade for the course and will be required to appear before the Student Progress Committee. A student may be required to follow the repeat protocol or may be subject to dismissal from LUCOM based on their failure as well as review of the individual's composite professional and academic performance.

All remediation examinations for first and second-year students are normally scheduled at the end of the academic year during the elective

period for first year students and during the board review period for second year students. Extra remediation periods may be established by the Office of the Dean or the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

In the event a course and the remediation exam are failed or the remediation exam is not taken, the original course grade shall be recorded on the transcript. If the course is subsequently repeated and passed, it will be noted on the transcript that the course was repeated, consistent with the repeat policy.

\*The LU Graduate School Repeat Policy does not apply to LUCOM students.

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### <sup>1</sup> 9.2 Academic Standards

## Repeat Policy <sup>1</sup>

LUCOM students are eligible to repeat a course if the original course had been taken at LUCOM. In all cases, regardless of repeat status, a student is required to complete all academic requirements in no more than six years from the date of matriculation. The repeat policy may be applied to courses where the student has earned a grade of 0- 100, H, HP, P, F, FN, S, or U, or attempts where the student was awarded a grade of W, WP, WF, or I. This repeat policy does not apply to independent study and similar courses for which course content varies significantly with each offering or is a variable credit course.

When a course is successfully repeated, the repeat policy will automatically be applied, all earned grades will remain visible on the student's permanent record, and the most recent grade earned will be the only grade to count toward the student's term and cumulative averages. Any student who is required to repeat a course or rotation and fails that repeated course or clinical rotation is subject to dismissal from the COM.

On the student's transcript, the original grade is followed by the letter "E" to indicate that the original grade is excluded from the earned hours, term average, and the computation of the cumulative average. The grade for the repeat of the course will be followed by the letter "I," which will indicate that the grade for the repeat of the course will be included in the earned hours, term average, and the computation of the cumulative average. The grades which have been excluded from the term and cumulative average calculations will not count toward hours or hours earned, but will remain on the student's record as attempted hours.

This policy is retroactive to include any course taken at Liberty University College of Osteopathic Medicine. Activation of the repeat policy for a prior semester will not affect the academic standing for that semester. Academic standing for a prior semester may be changed only because of a grade reporting error.

The repeat request must be submitted prior to degree conferral for the policy to be activated. Once a student has graduated, the repeat policy may not be used on a course taken prior to graduation to enhance the cumulative average which was recorded at the time of degree conferral.

Students are advised to consult with the Office of Financial Aid to determine what impact repeating coursework could have on their financial aid awards.<sup>2</sup>

## Repeat Protocol

The following repeat protocol will apply primarily to OMS I and OMS II students who are permitted to take a leave of absence, repeat a previously failed course or courses, and/or complete some courses within a term that have been attempted but not finished.

In cases where a student on academic probation is permitted the opportunity to repeat a previously failed course or courses, he/she must repeat and complete all courses offered for that academic year. Students who are approved for a voluntary leave of absence and are in good academic standing (without any course failures) must repeat the entire semester from which they withdrew, and may choose to repeat a previous semester. Students under the repeat protocol will be billed as students on an altered degree plan.

The student will be expected to meet with the COM Medical Education Learning Specialist(s) (MELS) biweekly until otherwise advised by the Medical Education Learning Specialist. Failure of any course taken in the repeat year will result in referral to the Student Progress Committee (SPC). The SPC will conduct a review of the individual's composite professional and academic performance and make a recommendation to the Dean regarding whether the student should continue in the curriculum and be eligible for remediation or if the student should be dismissed for failure to demonstrate satisfactory progress in the curriculum. No student shall take longer than three years to complete the OMS-I and OMS-II curriculum, excluding approved time for a voluntary leave of absence in good academic standing.

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<sup>1</sup> 9.2 Academic Standards

<sup>2</sup> 9.7 Financial Aid and Debt Management Counseling

## Grade Reports, Records, and Transcripts <sup>1</sup>

A report of grades attained by a student in the LUCOM will be available through their ASIST account.

The official records of each student in LUCOM will be secured in the Office of the Registrar. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (PL93-380) will govern the release of information for this record, which contains the transcript from Liberty University, transcripts and transcript evaluations from other educational agencies attended by the student, secondary school transcripts, scholastic aptitude, other standardized test scores, LUCOM admission application, and general correspondence with the student. Letters concerning misconduct or disciplinary actions at Liberty University are kept in the Office of the Dean. The official transcripts will only be released when the student has met all of their financial obligations to Liberty University. Questions regarding a hold on the student account may be addressed to Student Accounts at (434) 592-7201. The transcript and contents of the permanent record may be examined by the student upon emailing the request from your Liberty email account to [lucomregistrar@liberty.edu](mailto:lucomregistrar@liberty.edu) or by coming to the Registrar's Office and filling out a Transcript Request form.

## Transcript Notations

Failing grades will be included in calculating the term average for that semester and the cumulative grade point average to that point. If a course is failed and subsequently passed on remediation, a grade of 70 (the highest possible grade on remediation) will be recorded with the notation X on the transcript that the course was passed by remediation.

The remediation grade of 70 will be used to calculate all cumulative averages from that point forward. The original grade earned prior to remediation will be reflected as a comment on the transcript.

A designation of 70R may appear on the transcript to indicate that a previously failed course was passed by way of repetition. The use of a 70R applied to grades earned prior to academic year 2019-20.

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<sup>1</sup> 9.2 Academic Standards

## Attendance <sup>1</sup>

Due to the numerous attendance requirements throughout medical school, students are strongly encouraged to live no more than a 50-mile radius from the school during their OMS-I and OMS-II years at LUCOM.

While students are encouraged to attend all educational sessions, individual faculty members may have specific requirements for attendance during their course as detailed in the syllabus. The attendance policy for each course will be specified in the course syllabus along with make-up requirements and/or penalties. All mandatory Learning Activities (LA's) for a course will be identified in the syllabus, subject to change with advance notice to the class via email or announcement. The consequences for unexcused absence from a mandatory LA will be delineated in the syllabus (e.g., deduction of 2% from the final course grade). Any student who misses a mandatory learning activity without prior approval, except unavoidable absences (see below) will be considered absent. See above, in the Examinations section, for attendance policies for graded learning activities.

Students requesting to be excused from a mandatory learning activity or examination must submit the request to the Office of Medical Education (OME) prior to the date of absence, at least 30 days for pre-planned events (i.e., professional meetings, weddings). The excused absence request must be submitted via the online Excused Absence Request Form (see syllabus for link). A request is not considered approved until the student receives an email confirmation from the OME. Likewise, the OME will communicate if a request has been denied. Unless there is a dire emergency, students are in all cases expected to make a request for absence in advance of a learning activity, this includes unavoidable and unplanned absences like illness, death of an immediate family member, etc. However, due to the short notice of these requests, these may be reviewed and approved retroactively as determined by the OME.

Supplemental documentation may be required by the OME to substantiate the excused absence requests (e.g. doctor's note indicating the patient was seen/treated at a date in close proximity to the absence, obituary, wedding program, etc.).

Students making requests to attend professional meetings should be detailed and specific in their requests. These requests must include the meeting/conference name, location, meeting dates, travel dates, method of travel, what the student hopes to learn/how they will benefit from the meeting, and if they are presenting or otherwise representing LUCOM (e.g. as a leader of a student organization).

Upon the student's return, he/she must contact the course director to discuss any required make-up work. Students are responsible for any assignments and lecture material missed during their absence. Students

are not entitled to make up work, missed exams, etc. if they do not have an excused absence. Students with an excused absence who miss a scheduled assessment or graded activity will be entitled to take a make-up of the assessment/activity.

In the event an excused absence is granted for a graded learning activity for which there is no ability to adequately recreate the event, the student will not have an opportunity to earn those points; the total points possible for the course will be reduced to adjust for the missed activity.

Repeated unexcused absences or tardiness may result in administrative action, including referral to an appropriate dean or to the Student Progress Committee for disciplinary action.

A course director may approve, at any time, unannounced quizzes for extra credit. Total value of these extra credit assessments may total up to 5% of the total points for the class. If a student is not present during any extra credit assessment, they are not entitled to make it up. (It remains possible to make 100% for the class based on performance even if a student misses one or more "pop" assessments.) Bonus points are not awarded based solely upon attendance. A student may not earn more than 100% in any course.

Lectures at LUCOM will be digitally recorded to supplement learning and for student review of information provided during the class. They are not a replacement for attendance in class. There is no guarantee that every lecture will be recorded or that the lecture recording will be of a quality that can be utilized for primary learning.

Regularly scheduled learning activities are typically scheduled during standard LUCOM operational hours of 8am-5pm, Monday through Friday. The dates and times provided in the syllabus and the Canvas calendar are subject to change. As a result, students should not make outside commitments that would necessitate absence within these hours, without prior approval from the OME (the standard approach to considering these requests would apply). Students who commit to plans that are not granted an excused absence should be prepared to cancel those plans in order to be present for any change of schedule that requires attendance for mandatory learning activities, or assume an unexcused absence with any corresponding penalty/loss of points. During inclement weather and other intervening circumstances, learning activities may need to be scheduled outside of the typical schedule.

Any student, who is absent from classes for five consecutive school days without notifying the OME, will be considered to have voluntarily withdrawn from the College.

## <sup>1</sup> 5.1 Professionalism

### Outside Employment

Due to the intense nature of medical education, LUCOM does not encourage its students to hold a job while enrolled. Medical school requires full-time commitment to coursework, personal and professional development, and other obligations; therefore, students are encouraged instead to focus on the curriculum and co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities which will enhance the educational process. While employment may be discouraged, students are encouraged to consider appropriate clinical shadowing opportunities.

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## <sup>1</sup> 9.2 Academic Standards

### Classroom Behavior <sup>1</sup>

The instructor may dismiss any student from class who is involved in disruptive behavior. Disruptive behavior may include but is not limited to loud or disruptive vocal events, watching movies online, talking on the phone, etc. Any student dismissed from class for disruptive or unprofessional behavior may result in disciplinary action.

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