

Augusta University

Policy Library

Student Fitness for Participation

Policy Owner: Legal Affairs

POLICY STATEMENT

Augusta University (AU) is committed to providing a safe environment for all of its stakeholders, e.g. students, employees, patients, and members of the public we serve. To provide a safe environment, students who participate in clinical or practicum activities must be able to perform and participate in academic and clinical activities in a safe, secure, competent and effective manner. Students who are not fit for these activities may present a safety hazard to themselves, to other students/employees, to patients, to the AU community and the public at large.

This policy and procedure covers students enrolled in health profession programs in the Dental College of Georgia, College of Nursing, Medical College of Georgia, Allied Health Sciences, or relevant training programs at AU. Almost all students participating in these programs will have a required clinical or practicum component prior to completing their educational program at AU.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:

- Alumni Faculty Graduate Students Health Professional Students
 Staff Undergraduate Students Vendors/Contractors Visitors
 Other: off-campus people that are supervising our students for extramural clinical or practicum experiences.

DEFINITIONS

Fit for Participation: Physically and mentally capable of safely and competently participating in academic and non-academic university-related activities with or without reasonable accommodation.

Clinical Activities: Educational experiences involving patient care in a health delivery setting such as, but not limited to, a hospital, ambulatory care center, dental clinic, or mental healthcare facility.

PROCESS & PROCEDURES

Students, faculty, or others whose observations lead them to question a student's fitness for participation in university activities must report their observations to the Office of the Dean of Students and the student's Academic Dean. Examples of observable behaviors that could lead to a reasonable assumption that a student is unfit for participation include, but are not limited to, behavior that:

- o raises concern about impairment or an inability to function in educational, clinical, or practicum settings;

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- poses a danger to their self or others (students, patients, faculty, staff, or members of the community);
- involves intentional or irresponsible damage to property
- poses an ongoing threat of or actual disruption to the academic process or environment;
- constitutes an act of violence or sexual misconduct (allegations of sexual misconduct must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator);
- demonstrates unacceptable patient/client management and/or patient/client safety
- demonstrates declining work performance as manifested by unavailability, constant tardiness, lapses in judgment, mood swings, unexplained absences, embarrassing behavior, signs of intoxication or self-medication, and/or withdrawal from academic, clinical or other professional activities.
- demonstrates difficulties with manual dexterity, memory, coordination, alertness, speech, vision acuity, concentration, interactions with colleagues and supervisors, outbursts, hostility, and/or significant change in personal hygiene.

University Police should be called immediately if:

- there is evidence a crime may have been committed;
- the student makes threats to harm himself or others; or
- the student is behaving in a way that is dangerous to his/herself or to those around the student.

In appropriate circumstances, a student may be required to be examined by a designated healthcare provider to determine the student's fitness to participate in and perform academic and clinical activities. AU reserves the right to require students to undergo psychological/psychiatric evaluation and treatment, as well as tests for illegal drugs, controlled substances, and/or alcohol. The student's Academic Dean or the Dean's designee will notify the student of the need for an assessment to determine fitness as set forth above and refer the student to a qualified healthcare provider to determine the student's fitness for participation

In the interim, the student will be restricted from participating in relevant activities. After the student participates in the fitness assessment, a healthcare provider will assess the student's suitability to return to the AU program based on the specific reason the student is deemed unfit to participate. The healthcare provider will communicate to the student, to the Dean of Students, and to the student's academic dean the results of the assessment.

If the student disagrees with AU's assessment of fitness for participation in his/her program based on the specific reason the student is deemed unfit to participate, the student may have an assessment performed by a qualified healthcare provider of the student's choosing at the student's cost. If the healthcare provider selected by the student deems the student fit for participation based on the specific reason the student is deemed unfit to participate, AU may request an independent assessment performed by a qualified healthcare provider not affiliated with the university. AU shall pay the costs associated with the independent assessment. The

opinion of the qualified healthcare provider who performs the independent assessment of whether the student is fit to participate based on the rationale that gave rise to the assessment shall be final. Students who are deemed unfit to return to the program for an extended period of time may be required to repeat some or all of the academic/clinical requirements necessary for graduation, at student's expense and possibly with a delayed graduation. If the assessment performed by healthcare provider reveals a disability for which the student requests accommodation, the student will be referred to AU's Office of Testing and Disability Services.

Students who refuse to comply with recommended evaluations may be subject to disciplinary or administrative action, up to and including dismissal.

REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

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RELATED POLICIES

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APPROVED BY:

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University

Date: October 17, 2018

President, Augusta University and CEO, AU Health System

Date: October 25, 2018