



**AMERICAN CANADIAN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

www.acsom.edu.dm

Student Handbook

August 2026



Table of Contents

American Canadian School of Medicine	5
Message from the Dean	7
Accreditation of ACSOM	8
Non-discrimination Policy	9
Student Admission, Registration and Matriculation	9
Definition of a Student	9
Requirements for admission and matriculation	10
M.D. Program Admission	10
Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)	10
Criminal Background Check	11
Admission Process	12
Transfer Students and Advanced Standing	12
Acceptance	13
Student Health Insurance	13
Technical (Non-academic) Standards for Admission, Progression and Graduation	13
Overview	13
The standards	14
Student Disability Disclosure and Accommodation Requests	15
Process for assessing an applicant's compliance with the technical standards.	15
Annual Re-attestation	16
Requests for Accommodations	16
Make a formal request for accommodations	16
Provide documentation of your disability	16
Policy on Service Animals	18
Traveling to Dominica with Your Service Animal	19
Service Animals on Campus	19
Student Financial Services	19
Billing & Payments	20
The ACSOM Payment Plan	20
Student Loans	21
Payment Processing Fees	21
Late Fees	21
Delinquent Accounts	21
Attendance and Withdrawal	21
Refunds and Reimbursements	21
Financial Aid	23
Satisfactory Academic Progress (FA-SAP)	23
Frequency of Review	24
FA-SAP Standards	24
ACSOM Health Requirements	28

Vaccination Requirements	28
Student Recognition of Risk	29
Communications and Contact Information	30
Populi	31
Canvas	31
MedHub	31
Student Affairs, Student Support Services, and Bursar	32
Use of Student information	34
Professionalism and Conduct	35
Role of Faculty Advisors:	35
Conduct	35
Responsibilities of ACSOM employees and students to one another:	36
Unprofessional and abusive behaviors:	37
Alcohol and Drug Abuse:	38
Sexual Harassment:	38
Medical Ethical Behavior	41
Conduct Violations:	42
Academics	44
Policy on Good Academic Standing	44
Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals	45
Definitions	45
Audit Status	48
Mandatory Semester Repeat	48
Longitudinal Courses and Semester Failure	49
Academic Dismissal	49
Remediation and Repetition Limits	50
Academic Appeals	50
USMLE Step 1 Preparation, CBSE Guidance, And Progression to Clinical Rotations Policy	52
The Comprehensive Basic Science Examination (CBSE)	53
USMLE Step 1 Attempt and Pass Requirements	56
Time and Attempt Limits for USMLE Step 1	56
Status of Students Unable to Commence Clinical Rotations	57
Advising, Monitoring, and Compliance	57
Appeals and Exceptions	58
ACSOM Academic Calendar	58
Leave of Absence (LOA)	58
Procedure for applying for LOA	60
ACSOM Program & Curriculum	61
ACSOM Preparatory Program (MD Direct)	61
Learning Support	66
Academic Standards	67
Overview and Expectations	67

Assessments	67
Formative & Narrative Assessments	69
Attendance and Absence Policy	70
General Requirement	70
Attendance & Absence	71
Definition of Absence	71
Excused Absences	71
Remote Participation During Short Approved Absence	73
Review of Repeated Excused Absences	73
Unexcused Absences	74
Sessions for Which No Unexcused Absence Is Permitted	75
Excessive Absence	75
Assessments, grading and promotion	77
Noise Policy During Formative and Summative Assessments (basic sciences)	78
Grading Policy	79
Academic Promotions	82
Student Evaluations and Promotions Committee (SEPC: Membership Faculty only)	82
The Committee on Academic Progress (CAP: membership faculty only)	82
End of Module Assessment and Student Promotion Policy & Procedures	83
Recognition of Academic Excellence & Distinction	84
Dean's List	84
Dean's Honor Roll	85
President's Honor Roll	85
Academic Remediation Policy	85
Academic Structure	85
Semester progression	86
Suspension & Dismissal Policy	89
Dismissal	90
Right to Appeal Disciplinary Decisions	90
Student Readmission Policy	94
Length of Time to Complete the MD Degree	95
Graduation Requirements:	96
United States Medical Licensing Examinations (USMLE)	97
Licensure To Practice Medicine in the U.S. & Canada	99
Licensure to Practice Medicine in Canada	100
Campus Policies	100
Campus Opening Hours:	101
Authorized entry & ID Pass:	101
Safety and security:	101
Fireworks, firearms and other weapons	102
Pets	103
Campus Space Usage:	103

Student Lounge:	104
Student Dress Code:	105
Other Policies and Administrative Procedures	108
Housing Policy	108
Immunization policy	108
Photography, Video, and Audio Recording Policy	110
Information Technology, Technology, and Internet Use Policy	111
Penalties and Sanctions for Contravention of Campus Non-Academic Policies	118
Student and Campus Life	119
Student Governance Association (SGA), Interest Groups, and Clubs	119
Disaster & Emergency Preparedness	120
Appendices	124
1. Abbreviations & Acronyms	124
2. Useful WWW links:	125



American Canadian School of Medicine

Dear Students,

We are thrilled to welcome you to the vibrant and dynamic community of the American Canadian School of Medicine (ACSOM), where your journey towards becoming a compassionate and competent healthcare professional begins. As you embark on this exciting chapter of your life, we extend our warmest greetings and heartfelt congratulations for choosing our institution to pursue your dreams of a career in medicine.

At ACSOM, we believe in the transformative power of education and the profound impact that dedicated individuals can have on the world. Our commitment to excellence in medical education, coupled with our unique Caribbean setting on the island of Dominica, creates an environment where your potential knows no bounds.

Your Student Handbook¹: This handbook serves as your compass through your time at ACSOM. It is designed to provide you with essential information, guidelines, and resources to navigate your academic, clinical, and personal experiences during your medical school journey. Within these pages, you will find valuable insights into our curriculum, policies, procedures, and support services that will help you succeed in our learning community.

While the procedures and policies in the ACSOM Student Handbook reflect the most current practices of the American Canadian School of Medicine, they are subject to change. ACSOM reserves the right to modify or revise policies, procedures, curriculum, course offerings, academic standards, and tuition schedules at any time. Students will be notified of such changes via official ACSOM email communication, and updated policies will be reflected in the next published edition of the Student Handbook.

Effective Date and Application: This Handbook takes effect on 1st August 2026 and replaces the January 2026 Student Handbook. It applies to all new and continuing ACSOM students with effect from 1st August 2026. Matters that arose before this date will normally be handled under the policy in effect at the time. Any exceptions or transition arrangements will be stated in the relevant policy.

Notwithstanding the policies and procedures stated herein, ACSOM reserves the right to make case-by-case exceptions, adjustments, or determinations in response to individual circumstances, institutional needs, regulatory developments, or unforeseen events. Such exceptions, adjustments, or determinations must be approved by the senior official, committee, or office identified in the relevant Handbook policy. Where no specific authority is identified, approval must be granted by the President, Dean, Campus Dean, Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs, Registrar, or other senior official designated by ACSOM. Such exceptions, adjustments, or determinations do not establish precedent.

¹ August 26 Final. Student Affairs July 31 2026

Our Vision and Mission: At ACSOM, we are committed to the community and healthcare system in Dominica as well as underprivileged communities world-wide. Our MD faculty are dedicated to fostering a learning environment, based on our clinically integrated curriculum that encourages curiosity, collaboration, and a commitment to the highest standards of medical practice that is dedicated to student success. As a non-profit Caribbean medical school, collaborating with the Commonwealth of Dominica and its local health facilities, we are committed to fostering a community that values the wide spectrum of cultures, perspectives, and experiences that shape both our region and the broader global healthcare environment.

Your Role: As students of ACSOM, you are not just acquiring knowledge; you are joining a legacy of healthcare professionals who have made a significant impact on healthcare delivery worldwide. Your journey here will demand dedication, perseverance, and a passion for making a difference in the lives of patients and communities. Remember that you are not alone; our faculty, staff, and fellow students are here to support you every step of the way.

Embrace the Journey: Medical school is a rigorous and rewarding experience. While the path ahead may be challenging, it is also filled with opportunities for growth, discovery, and personal fulfillment. Embrace every moment, from your first day in the classroom to your clinical rotations, as they are all integral parts of your transformation into a physician.

Conclusion: We are excited to have you as a part of our ACSOM family. Together, we will embark on a transformative journey that will shape your future and impact the world of healthcare. As you dive into this student handbook, keep in mind that it is not just a resource; it is a guide to realizing your potential and fulfilling your dreams.

Once again, the whole ACSOM community welcomes you. We look forward to witnessing your growth, celebrating your achievements, and supporting you in becoming the outstanding healthcare professionals we know you can be.

Message from the Dean

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the American Canadian School of Medicine (ACSOM).

The goal of our Doctor of Medicine program is to serve humanity, by training outstanding and compassionate physicians. This singular focus drives everything we do, from the design of our unique campus to admissions, curriculum, and faculty development.

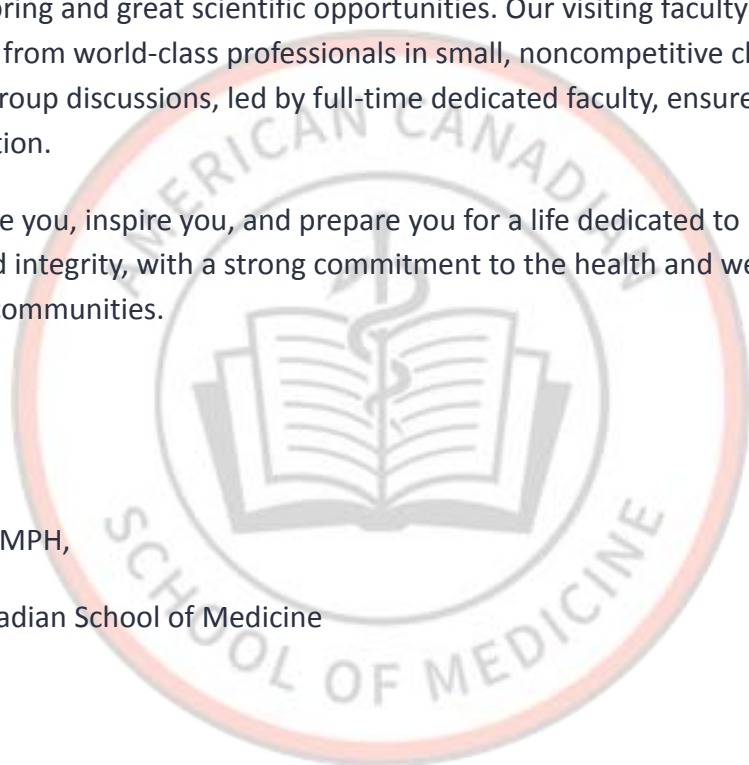
The education and training you receive during medical school serve as the foundation to becoming a caring and expert physician. You will find that the American Canadian School of Medicine is composed of excellent faculty and provides advanced pedagogical educational platforms, robust clinical experiences, and a modern and comfortable living and learning environment that allows individualized mentoring and great scientific opportunities. Our visiting faculty program offers an opportunity to learn from world-class professionals in small, noncompetitive classroom settings. In addition, our small group discussions, led by full-time dedicated faculty, ensure that you receive personalized instruction.

We hope to challenge you, inspire you, and prepare you for a life dedicated to healing your patients with compassion and integrity, with a strong commitment to the health and wellbeing of your local, national and global communities.

Happy learning!

Ramin Ahmadi, MD, MPH,

Dean, American Canadian School of Medicine



Accreditation of ACSOM

Accreditation is a rigorous independent peer-review process that examines in detail all aspects of a medical program.

ACSOM is proud to hold full accreditation from the **Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR)** and has been granted provisional accreditation from **The Accreditation Commission on Colleges of Medicine (ACCM)**.

The IAAR is a leading international independent accreditation agency for the quality assurance of education and was founded in 2011. IAAR is registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

The ACCM is an independent not for profit accrediting body based in the Republic of Ireland and is listed by the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA: <https://sites.ed.gov/ncfmea/>) as using standards to accredit medical schools that are comparable to the standards used to accredit medical schools in the United States.

Both of our Accrediting agencies are fully recognized by the **World Federation of Medical Education (WFME)**. These accreditations support graduate eligibility pathways, including ECFMG certification requirements, subject to each student meeting all applicable ECFMG, examination, residency, visa, and licensing requirements. Accreditation does not guarantee ECFMG certification, residency placement, licensure, visa eligibility, or acceptance by any individual licensing authority.

Student concerns or complaints regarding ACSOM's compliance with accreditation standards:

Any individual who may have concerns regarding ACSOM's compliance with the standards set by our accreditors can, in the first instance, share their concerns confidentially without fear of retaliation to the Office of Student Affairs. [Use this form to communicate your concerns](#) - If the complaint or concern about compliance with accreditation standards cannot be resolved internally, or if the complainant prefers, concerns may be lodged directly with either of our accreditors. [Contact ACCM](#); [Contact IAAR](#).

Any individual making such an inquiry or filing a complaint in good faith shall not be subject to retaliation irrespective of final adjudication of the matter. All records of such inquiries or complaints shall be held by ACSOM and subject to review by our accreditors or other regulatory agencies as may be required by law.

Non-discrimination Policy

Respectful Conduct and Standards of Behavior

ACSOM is committed to providing a respectful, professional, and supportive educational environment. All students are expected to treat their peers, faculty, staff, and members of the wider community with courtesy and consideration.

The school will take appropriate action in response to any behavior that involves unfair treatment, harassment, or misconduct based on personal characteristics or background, including but not limited to age, sex and gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, disability, religion, medical conditions, or family status.

While students are encouraged to engage in open discussion and express their opinions, this freedom does not include speech or behavior that targets individuals in a hostile, degrading, or persistent manner. Conduct that exceeds the boundaries of professional discourse—whether in person or online—and that is known to be unwelcome or disruptive, may be subject to disciplinary review.

Hateful, threatening, or intentionally harmful expression is not permitted and will be addressed through the student conduct process. Sanctions may include formal warnings, suspension, or dismissal from ACSOM.

Student Admission, Registration and Matriculation

Definition of a Student

For the purposes of institutional policies, procedures, and services, a student is defined as any individual who:

- Has been formally admitted to the American Canadian School of Medicine (ACSOM);
- Has completed the enrollment process, including submission of required documentation and payment of applicable fees; and
- Is actively engaged in academic, clinical, or research activities as part of an approved program of study at ACSOM, on a full-time basis.

Student status remains in effect throughout periods of active enrollment and during approved or assigned student statuses, including Leave of Absence, remediation, Audit Status, Clinical Hold, Appeal Pending Status, conditional enrollment, probation, or suspension, unless the student is formally withdrawn, dismissed, or graduated.

Requirements for admission and matriculation

It is the responsibility of all accepted students to complete all financial and other requirements prior to class registration. In addition, there will be several forms and documents that must be completed prior to the start of classes. Students who do not satisfy the requirements prior to class registration may be administratively withdrawn. It is the responsibility of all students to complete all required forms and check their ACSOM student email inbox for all important and official messages from American Canadian School of Medicine.

M.D. Program Admission

All ACSOM applicants are expected to demonstrate a strong history and mastery of core medical science subjects, as well as excellent communication skills needed by physicians to be successful in an ever-changing and challenging healthcare environment.

We admit individuals who are compassionate and committed to the profession of medicine. We encourage applicants who have the potential to excel not only in the classroom but also possess personal attributes that align with our mission and the benefit of the healthcare community.

A bachelor's degree is required. However, there is no requirement for a specific major as long as the required courses listed below have been completed.

Required courses:

- Two semesters of biology with labs
- Two semesters of general chemistry
- One semester of organic chemistry
- One semester of algebra or biostatistics
- One semester of physics

ACSOM has aligned our prerequisites with the [15 core competencies endorsed by the Association of American Medical Colleges \(AAMC\)](#) for entering medical students. We look for these pre-professional competencies in your undergraduate education records and accomplishments. Please note that while some of these competencies are obtained in the context of a course, we view these as competencies you have developed through life experience, and not as specific course requirements.

Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)

The MCAT is required as part of the admissions process. Once full application and verified credentials are received, all admitted students are considered for a partial or full tuition scholarship based on academic merits, leadership, experience, research, and volunteerism.

Although we can accept an initial application with a pending MCAT score, the final score will be used as part of a holistic review of the completed application. Therefore, an admission decision will not be granted until the MCAT score has been successfully submitted.

- College Transcript
- Official college transcript sent directly from the undergraduate institution that you attended.
- Two Letters of Recommendation:
 - A professional and an academic letter are highly recommended.
- Résumé:
 - This document must contain all your accomplishments, degrees, publications, research, extracurricular activities, and interests.
- Personal Statement:

The personal statement should be no more than 750 words and include a description of the applicant's passion for medicine, and any relevant experience.

Proof of English Language Proficiency for Non-Native English-Speaking Students Only This requirement can be met by taking either the TOEFL or the IELTS tests.

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) – this test measures the ability of nonnative speakers of English to use and understand English as it is spoken, written, and heard in college and university settings. The minimum acceptable score is 550 on the paper-based test or 213 on the computer-based test.

International English Language Testing System (IELTS) – this test measures the ability to communicate in English across all four language skills—listening, reading, writing and speaking—for people who intend to study or work where English is the language of communication. The IELTS score above 6.5 will be acceptable for admission.

Criminal Background Check

Every student applying to ACSOM must disclose all criminal convictions, academic suspensions/expulsions, and civil suits at the time of applying. Once accepted, an official criminal background check will be conducted. Please keep in mind, a criminal conviction will most likely prevent someone from obtaining a license to practice medicine or participate at clinical training sites. In addition, ACSOM is committed to keeping the campus a safe learning environment. Continuing students must also complete a criminal background check before starting clinicals. All continuing students should report any criminal charges while enrolled in classes, participating in clinicals, or on break. Failure to report this information could result in dismissal from ACSOM. This applies to students on leave as well.

Admission Process

ACSOM's admission requirements are designed to be broadly comparable to medical school admission expectations in the United States and Canada. The Admissions Committee considers multiple factors through a holistic review process to assess an applicant's potential for success in the MD program and future medical training. The Committee must be satisfied that the applicant has the academic preparation, experience, personal attributes, and professionalism expected for success at ACSOM and for progression toward a career in medicine.

Applications are reviewed comprehensively by the faculty-led Admissions Committee, with student representation where appropriate. All components of the admission packet are thoroughly reviewed. In addition to the documents submitted, an interview will be conducted. The interview provides an opportunity to dive deeper into our understanding of the applicant and determine qualitative characteristics that give a broader assessment beyond quantitative assessments.

All applications must disclose any felony or misdemeanor convictions on your record and submit supporting documentation. In addition, students should report any civil lawsuits they have been a party to. ACSOM must be notified within 10 calendar days should anything change on your record after applying to the program. Failure to do so could result in dismissal from the program.

Applicants should expect to receive written notice of the Admissions Committee's decision within 14 calendar days of their interview.

Transfer Students and Advanced Standing

ACSOM does not accept transfer students into individual preclinical semesters. Applicants seeking entry into the preclinical phase must apply as new applicants through the standard admissions process and must begin in Semester 1.

Eligible transfer applicants may be admitted with advanced standing only at the beginning of Year 3 and must have passed USMLE Step 1. Admission with advanced standing is not automatic and is subject to review and approval by the Admissions Committee and appropriate academic leadership. Applicants must provide documentation of their prior medical education, academic good standing, and successful completion of USMLE Step 1.

When advanced standing is granted, the ACSOM credits associated with the preclinical phase will be recorded for FA-SAP purposes as both attempted and successfully completed. Grades earned at the student's previous institution will not be incorporated into the student's ACSOM academic record or used to determine the student's academic standing at ACSOM. No student may begin core clinical rotations until ACSOM has received documented proof of a passing USMLE Step 1 result and all other clinical entry requirements have been satisfied.

Transfer students must complete all required core clinical rotations at ACSOM, regardless of whether they completed similar rotations at another medical school. Previous clinical rotations will not be accepted toward the ACSOM MD degree and will not be included as attempted or completed credits in FA-SAP calculations.

Acceptance

Upon being accepted to ACSOM, a student will receive an acceptance letter along with enrollment instructions. Students are required to complete their student profile and several forms from the Office of the Registrar registrar@acsom.edu.dm These should be completed prior to arrival in Dominica. Admission may be rescinded at any time prior to matriculation and the start of the semester.

Please be aware, a student can lose their acceptance status and be dismissed from the program should it later be discovered they submitted false documents or statements during the application process.

Student Health Insurance

All students attending ACSOM are required to have health insurance. More information can be found on the [ACSOM Student Health Insurance Web page](#). Mandatory health insurance will be included in your tuition and fees. Unless a student qualifies under the specific criteria defined in the Policy Exception section below, requests for insurance waivers will not be granted.

Policy Exception:

Dominica Citizens enrolled at ACSOM can waive for Year 1 and Year 2 health insurance fees. Dominica Citizens enrolled at ACSOM will be required to enroll in the ACSOM mandatory health insurance for their Year 3 & 4.

Technical (Non-academic) Standards for Admission, Progression and Graduation

ACSOM bases its technical standards on the American Association of Medical Colleges Technical Standards for Admission (Memorandum #79-4).

Overview

The American Canadian School of Medicine (ACSOM) is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment. The M.D. degree signifies readiness for postgraduate medical training and eventual independent practice. This requires the acquisition of foundational knowledge, clinical skills, and professional behaviors essential to the care of patients.

Candidates must be able to meet the technical standards outlined below, for admission, progression

and graduation, with or without reasonable accommodation. These standards define the essential functions expected of all students throughout the duration of their medical education.

Reasonable Accommodations

Qualified students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the program, compromise patient safety, or impose an undue burden on the institution. Students are encouraged to initiate this process early by contacting the [Office of Student Disability Services](#).

ACSOM will evaluate the submitted information to determine whether a reasonable accommodation can be provided. Following an individualized assessment, ACSOM reserves the right to deny any accommodation request that, in its judgment, would fundamentally alter the nature of the school's educational program, compromise academic standards, impose an unwarranted hardship on ACSOM, or pose a risk to the safety of patients or others.

The standards

1. Observation

Candidates must be able to observe demonstrations, laboratory exercises, and clinical encounters. They must accurately gather visual, auditory, and tactile information, directly or with assistive devices, to assess scientific and clinical phenomena.

2. Communication

Candidates must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients, families, and healthcare teams. This includes the ability to receive and convey verbal and nonverbal information, read and comprehend written material, and produce clear documentation.

3. Motor Function

Candidates must possess sufficient motor skills to perform physical examinations and clinical procedures. This includes emergency interventions such as airway management, wound care, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

4. Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities

Candidates must be able to analyze, synthesize, and apply information from various sources to solve problems, make clinical decisions, and demonstrate sound judgment in academic and patient care settings.

5. Behavioral and Social Attributes

Candidates must exhibit emotional maturity, adaptability, and integrity. They must develop and sustain respectful, ethical, and effective relationships with patients, peers, and faculty while functioning under stress and adapting to dynamic environments.

6. Ethics and Professionalism

Candidates must demonstrate honesty, accountability, and respect for patient confidentiality. They must adhere to professional codes of conduct and institutional policies while upholding the responsibilities and values of the medical profession.

Student Disability Disclosure and Accommodation Requests

Students with disabilities are expected to initiate a request for reasonable accommodations as early as possible, ideally upon acceptance and *prior* to matriculation. This ensures adequate time for documentation review and implementation of support measures.

To request accommodations, students must:

- i. Complete a Request for Accommodations Form.
- ii. Submit appropriate documentation from a qualified professional.
- iii. Engage in an interactive process coordinated by the [Office of Student Disability Services](#).

Post-Matriculation Requests

Students may initiate an accommodation request at any time during their enrollment. While pre-matriculation disclosure is encouraged to ensure timely support, ACSOM recognizes that disability-related needs may arise or be recognized after matriculation. All such requests will be handled promptly and confidentially through the Office of Student Affairs.

Contact:

Office of Student Affairs

Email: studentaffairs@acsom.edu.dm

Process for assessing an applicant's compliance with the technical standards.

Applicants are required to attest at the time they accept an offer to matriculate that they meet ACSOM's technical standards. These standards are not intended to deter any student who might be able to complete the requirements of the curriculum with reasonable accommodations.

All students must be able to meet the technical standards throughout their education. Students are required to complete a [Technical Standards Attestation Form](#) as part of the pre-matriculation process.

The form will allow students to:

- Affirm their ability to meet the standards, with or without accommodation.
- Indicate whether they may require accommodation, without being required to disclose a diagnosis.

- Initiate the accommodation request process, if applicable.

Annual Re-attestation

ACSOM recognizes that health or disability-related needs may emerge after matriculation. The attestation process is designed to promote informed understanding of program expectations and encourage open access to accommodations whenever needed. Therefore, students will also be required to re-attest their ability to meet the Technical Standards at the beginning of each academic year. This ensures that any changes in health status or accommodation needs are appropriately identified and addressed in a timely manner.

Requests for Accommodations

Requests from applicants for reasonable accommodations in meeting the technical standards will be reviewed and considered by the ACSOM [Student Disability Services](#) within the office of Student Services. Likewise, information and guidance for documentation for registering with Student Disability Services, including service animal registration, may be found at [ACSOM Student Disability Services](#).

Students seeking accommodations or disability support services at ACSOM are required to register with [Student Disability Services \(SDS\)](#). While students are welcome to contact SDS directly at any time to discuss or ask questions, the typical registration process is as follows:

Make a formal request for accommodations

Complete the application for accommodation(s) via our online application (above). We will ask you to provide information about your disability, history of accommodations in an academic context, and make requests for specific accommodations. Information provided is confidential, and only accessible by Student Disability Services. You are encouraged to complete the application and submit documentation (Steps 1 & 2) in advance of your intake appointment.

Provide documentation of your disability

SDS developed documentation guidelines to assist students with various disabilities and conditions to request the necessary documentation from qualified evaluating professionals (QEP). Once you have completed your SDS registration form, you are encouraged to return to the documentation guidelines page for guidance on securing the necessary documents. You are encouraged to send your disability documentation to SDS in advance of your intake appointment. Please review these documentation guidelines and contact our office if you have further questions beyond what is covered there.

Contact SDS

Current and prospective students [should email SDS](#) to schedule an intake appointment. Appointments can take place virtually.

Determination of eligibility and accommodations

SDS takes into consideration the information provided during the intake meeting, your disability documentation, and the requirements of your academic and clinical program to determine your eligibility for services and, if appropriate, recommend specific accommodations. This is an interactive process in which it is essential that you be an active participant.

NOTE: A history of accommodations, or lack thereof, does not necessarily predict the provision of accommodations here at ACSOM. Furthermore, students should understand that any accommodations received at ACSOM **do not predict or guarantee** the provision of [accommodations on US Licensing exams](#). Specific guidelines and a list of USMLE – recognized disabilities are available on the [USMLE Accommodations request page](#).

- **You are advised to consult these sources as early as possible as the assessment process may take up to 60 business days to complete.**

An evaluation of the disability should:

- i. Be comprehensive. Provide specific evidence of the impairment and in most cases, have been completed in the past three years.
- ii. Be typewritten on an official letterhead, dated, and signed by the QEP. Certified English translations of non-English documentation are required.

The comprehensive evaluation must include:

Full name, credentials, current title, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number of the QEP conducting the evaluation.

The presenting difficulty and relevant historical information.

- A description of the onset, frequency, intensity, and duration of relevant symptoms as well as the extent to which the symptoms impact your normal abilities across multiple environments (e.g., social, academic, occupational, etc.).
- A description of the assessment and procedure and diagnostic tests administered.
- A description of your functional limitations due to the disability in the context of an academic environment.

- A request for specific accommodations and/or assistive devices along with a rationale for the requests.
- If applicable, a rationale as to why accommodations were not requested or required in the past.
- If applicable, provide previously approved accommodation documentation from your previous educational institutions, inclusive of the specific accommodations and dates they were provided.

ACSOM may request additional information before rendering an accommodation request decision. Students will receive an email outlining the outcome of the accommodation request. Relevant ACSOM faculty members and colleagues will be made aware of approved accommodations to ensure that they are implemented.

ACSOM will make reasonable efforts to accommodate students with disabilities. However, all accommodations must be pre-approved by the Student Disability Services Office. All requests will be reviewed in a timely manner. We recommend submitting all supporting documentation as soon as possible.

Policy on Service Animals

ACSOM strives to provide equal opportunities and access to the school's academic and extracurricular activities for individuals with disabilities. Therefore, we allow the presence of service animals for students with disabilities.

For the purposes of this policy, a service animal is a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability. A service animal is a working animal, not a pet. Emotional support animals are not classified as service animals and will not be allowed on campus nor in the clinical settings.

ACSOM uses ADA principles as a reference point for evaluating service animal requests, subject to Dominican law, campus safety requirements, laboratory restrictions, housing rules, and clinical site policies. Approval of a service animal by ACSOM does not override Dominican animal importation requirements, clinical-site restrictions, housing requirements, or campus safety rules.

- A service animal must be vaccinated, licensed, imported, and maintained in compliance with Dominican law and any applicable local, campus, housing, or clinical-site requirements;
- A service animal must always be under the control of the handler;

- A service animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered while in public places unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the person's disability prevents the use of these devices;
- A service animal should not be allowed to bark repeatedly in a lecture hall, theater, library, or other quiet places;
- A service animal must not present a danger to other people or animals;

The handler of a service animal is responsible for the care of the service animal at their own expense. In addition, it is the handler's responsibility to dispose of all animal waste.

More information about service animals can be found on the [ADA website](#):

Traveling to Dominica with Your Service Animal

Prior to importing your service animal into Dominica, you must obtain an Import Permit from the Veterinary Department of the Division of Agriculture. Your service animal must be vaccinated with an approved rabies vaccine by an official veterinarian stating type, serial number, date of expiration, and date of administration, at least 30 calendar days and not more than one year prior to importation of an animal.

- **Please read** the Government of Dominica's [information on animal importation](#) to Dominica.

Service Animals on Campus

An approved service animal is allowed to accompany the student during all academic activities, except in laboratories and other areas prohibited explicitly due to health, environmental, or safety hazards. The student is responsible for seeking prior approval from the Office of Student Affairs before bringing a service animal into any restricted or potentially restricted area. ACSOM will notify the student with a service animal of those areas of the campus where the presence of the animal may alter the established educational process or may be dangerous for the animal itself. The service animal must be registered in accordance with [ACSOM's service animal registration process](#).

Student Financial Services

Enrollment at ACSOM constitutes a financial obligation to the institution. Students are responsible for timely payment of all tuition, fees, housing charges, insurance premiums, and any other institutional charges incurred during their enrollment.

Students who have outstanding financial obligations to ACSOM may be placed on institutional financial hold. Financial holds may result in:

- Denial of course registration or continued enrollment
- Withholding of enrollment verification and official transcripts
- Withholding of diplomas, certificates, and degree conferral
- Restriction of access to institutional services and academic resources

Holds remain in effect until all outstanding financial obligations have been fully satisfied in accordance with institutional payment policies. Placement of a financial hold does not suspend the student's responsibility to comply with academic, professionalism, or conduct requirements.

Billing & Payments

Details of tuition and fees, other costs, scholarships and financial aid [are published on the school's website](#). Tuition and fees for all four years of study of the MD program are subject to change.

Adherence to Payment Due Dates

Students must meet one of the following criteria to officially enroll in ACSOM and start attending classes.

- The student account is "Paid in Full" 30 days prior to the start of the academic semester.
- The student has applied, qualified, and signed for either a private student loan or Institutional loan, and the loan has a scheduled disbursement date that is no later than 15 days after the start of the academic semester.
- The student has a payment plan set up and authorized by the Bursar's Office.

The ACSOM Payment Plan

- Any student who is approved for a payment plan will sign a promissory note. If the student fails to meet the terms of the payment plan the outstanding balance due will convert to a term loan.
 - Term 12 months
 - Interest Rate 13%
 - Repayment Starts 30 days after the end of the semester
 - Interest will retroactively accrue from the date the semester started or the date of the last payment, whichever is later, and added to the outstanding principal balance
 - The monthly payment amount and finance charges will be recalculated and redisclosed to the borrower
 - This is not an education loan. It is a private loan and cannot be deferred or put into forbearance.
- The ACSOM Payment Plan consists of 4 payments that are applied to the total invoiced balance.
 - Payment 1 - 25% of the invoiced balance due 30 days prior to the start of the Academic Semester. Payment 2 - 25% due 30 days after the start of the Academic Semester.
 - Payment 3 - 25% due 60 days after the start of the Academic Semester.
 - Payment 4 - the remaining balance is due no later than 90 days after the start of the Academic Semester.

- There is a 7-calendar day grace period for late payments. After the 7th calendar day, the student is considered delinquent. At the discretion of the Bursar's Office the payment plan can be canceled and the account balance due immediately.

Student Loans

If a student uses a private student loan or Institutional loan to pay for their cost of attendance but the loan amount is not enough to pay for their outstanding balance, the balance will be due 30 days prior to the start of the academic semester. Students who are late enrollees will have their balance due immediately upon finalizing the amount of their loan.

Payment Processing Fees

Payment processing fees are not a source of revenue for ACSOM but are charged to recover the cost of processing student payments. There is a 3% convenience fee added to all credit card payments.

Late Fees

There is a 5% late fee with a minimum of \$10 for each late payment.

Delinquent Accounts

There is a 7-calendar day grace period for late payments before a student's account becomes delinquent. Students who are eight or more days past due on making a payment are considered delinquent. Students who are delinquent will be reported to the Registrar and may be prohibited from attending classes.

Attendance and Withdrawal

Students are encouraged to first discuss their situation with the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs. Students have the right to withdraw from their studies during the semester/payment period. The date of withdrawal is the date the student submits notice by completing the [Withdrawal Form in Populi](#).

If notification of their intent to withdraw is not given by the student, the last date of attendance is used as the student's withdrawal date.

Refunds and Reimbursements

There are specific charges and fees that are not refundable because they are expenses that cannot be recovered by the school. They include:

- Administrative Fee
- Technology Fee
- Health Insurance
- First Month's Housing
- Visa Fees
- Any Travel or Loan Advances extended to the student.

The tuition will be refunded in full when a student withdraws within the first 30 days of the semester. After 30 days, no tuition refund will be issued.

Housing Refund

Students who withdraw, take a leave of absence or are dismissed and are seeking a prorated refund must provide written notice to the landlord within 7 calendar days of departure or dismissal. Upon receipt of the student's written notice, the Lease Agreement shall be terminated. The student shall remain responsible for paying rent for the duration of the notice period. Rent shall be prorated based on the number of days remaining in the notice period, or the landlord may agree to forfeit the security deposit in lieu of the remaining rent. Upon receiving notification from the rental agency that the lease agreement has been terminated, the Bursar's office will process the prorated refund. Any security deposit paid by the student will be refunded upon clearing the exit inspection.

Health Insurance Refund

All students are required to have ACSOM-sponsored health insurance unless an approved waiver applies. Students from Dominica who submit an approved waiver may use government-provided health insurance during Years 1 and 2. All students, including Dominican students, are required to have ACSOM-sponsored health insurance during clinical rotations. Health insurance is paid in advance by ACSOM and is non-refundable.

Student Visa Payments

The Government of Dominica charges an annual **USD \$93.00 Visa Fee** to all international students studying in the country. This fee will be invoiced to the student and is non-refundable.

Return of Loan Funds

Loan funds are awarded based on anticipated enrollment for the full term. If a student withdraws or fails to return from an approved LOA, they may no longer be eligible for the full loan amount.

- Loan funds used for tuition and fees are returned in accordance with the ACSOM Refund Policy.
- Loan funds disbursed for living expenses do not need to be repaid at withdrawal but remain part of the student's loan obligation.

Post-Withdrawal Disbursements

If a student withdraws before receiving all eligible loan funds, ACSOM will determine earned loan funds within 30 days of withdrawal.

Students will receive written notification and will have 14 calendar days from the date of the notification to accept a post-withdrawal disbursement. If no response is received, ACSOM returns any eligible funds to the lender.

All post-withdrawal disbursements will be processed within 90 days of the withdrawal date.

For inquiries regarding this policy, contact the Office of Student Financial Services at: [Bursar ACSOM](#) or [Financial Aid ACSOM](#).

ACSOM reserves the right to amend this policy with a minimum 30-day notice for the ACSOM community.

Financial Aid

Navigating the financial requirements of higher education can be complex. To support students in this process, Financial Aid Counselors offer individualized guidance designed to assist with the identification and understanding of available funding opportunities.

Counselors work with students on a one-on-one basis, providing expert advice tailored to each student's academic and financial circumstances. Their goal is to help students make informed decisions and effectively manage the financial aspects of their educational journey.

Types of financial aid offered at American Canadian School of Medicine:

- Scholarships
- Private Student Loan Program
- Institutional Student Loan Program

Available institutional scholarships:

- Academic Merit
- Founder's
- Global Equity
- Dominican Citizen Scholarship

All applicants to ACSOM are automatically reviewed for Academic Merit based scholarship eligibility during the admission process.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (FA-SAP)

Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid Purposes (FA-SAP) is the standard used by ACSOM to determine whether a student is progressing toward completion of the MD program at a rate that permits continued eligibility for applicable financial assistance.

FA-SAP is separate from academic progression. Academic progression decisions—including remediation, Audit – Non-Credit Bearing status, semester repeat and dismissal—are made under the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

This policy applies to ACSOM-administered scholarships, institutional financial assistance and any loan or external funding program that requires ACSOM to determine satisfactory academic progress. External lenders and scholarship providers may impose additional eligibility requirements. Meeting ACSOM's FA-SAP standards does not guarantee approval or continued funding by an external provider.

Frequency of Review

The Financial Aid Office (FAO) reviews each student's FA-SAP at the end of every semester or other designated payment period.

Students entering ACSOM without previously attempted coursework in the MD program are considered to be meeting FA-SAP upon initial enrollment. Their academic record will be evaluated at the end of their first semester.

FA-SAP is evaluated cumulatively and includes all coursework attempted at ACSOM, together with ACSOM credits assigned through an approved advanced-standing admission. A student's record is evaluated regardless of whether the student received financial assistance for all the coursework attempted.

FA-SAP Standards

To meet FA-SAP, a student must satisfy all three of the following standards.

Qualitative Standard

The student must maintain the academic standing required to continue in the MD program under ACSOM's academic progression policies.

A student who is dismissed or otherwise determined to be academically ineligible to continue does not meet the qualitative standard. A student required to repeat a semester will have financial-aid eligibility assessed separately under this policy and the conditions governing the applicable source of funding.

Quantitative Standard—Pace

The student must successfully complete at least 67% of the cumulative credits attempted toward the MD degree.

$$\text{Pace} = (\text{Cumulative credits successfully completed} \div \text{Cumulative credits attempted}) \times 100$$

The resulting percentage will not be rounded up when determining whether the 67% requirement has been met.

Maximum Timeframe

The student must remain capable of completing the MD program without attempting more than 150% of the published credits required for the degree.

A student becomes ineligible for applicable financial assistance when it is no longer mathematically possible to complete the degree within the maximum timeframe, even if the student has not yet reached the 150% limit.

The FA-SAP maximum timeframe does not extend ACSOM's separate requirement that the MD degree be completed within six years of initial matriculation.

Treatment of Coursework and Academic Statuses

For FA-SAP calculations, coursework and academic statuses are treated as follows:

- **Successfully completed coursework:** Credits for courses or modules successfully completed count as both attempted and earned.
- **Failed coursework:** Credits associated with failed courses or modules count as attempted but not earned.

- **Repeated coursework:** Each attempt is included in attempted credits. Credits are counted as earned only when the course or module is successfully completed. Earned credit for the same course or module is counted only once.
- **Required semester repeats:** When ACSOM requires repetition of an entire semester, credits for modules previously passed will remain included as attempted and earned. Repetition of those modules solely because of the full-semester-repeat requirement will not constitute an additional attempt for pace purposes. Modules that were failed remain subject to the repeated-coursework provisions above. All repeated coursework counts toward the maximum timeframe.
- **Remediation assessments:** A remediation assessment that does not carry separate academic credit is not treated as separately attempted coursework. Its outcome is reflected through the academic status of the associated module.
- **Incomplete grades:** Credits associated with an Incomplete grade count as attempted but not earned until a final passing grade is recorded. FA-SAP will be recalculated after the final grade is entered.
- **Withdrawals:** Coursework from which a student withdraws after the applicable add/drop period counts as attempted but not earned.
- **Audit – Non-Credit Bearing status:** Attendance or participation while in Audit – Non-Credit Bearing status does not generate attempted or earned credits. The underlying failed coursework and any subsequent semester repeat remain subject to the applicable provisions above.
- **Leave of Absence:** An approved Leave of Absence does not affect pace because no credits are attempted or earned during the leave. Time on leave may nevertheless affect the maximum period permitted for completion of the MD degree.
- **Clinical Hold:** A Clinical Hold does not generate attempted or earned credits unless the student is registered for credit-bearing coursework during the hold. A Clinical Hold does not extend the maximum period permitted for completion of the degree.
- **Transfer students and advanced standing:** Transfer admission and advanced standing are governed by the Transfer Students and Advanced Standing section of this Handbook. When a student is admitted with advanced standing into Year 3, the ACSOM credits associated with the recognized preclinical phase will be recorded for FA-SAP purposes as both attempted and successfully completed. Previous clinical rotations that are not accepted toward the ACSOM MD degree will not be included as attempted or completed credits in FA-SAP calculations.

FA-SAP Determinations

Following each review, the FAO will determine that the student:

- meets FA-SAP
- does not meet FA-SAP and is ineligible for applicable financial assistance
- has regained FA-SAP; or

- is eligible for financial-aid probation following an approved appeal.

The FAO will notify the student in writing, within 14 calendar days of the review, of any determination that affects financial-aid eligibility. The notice will state the reason for the determination, its effective date and, where applicable, the process for appeal or reinstatement.

Loss of financial-aid eligibility under this policy does not, by itself, alter the student's academic status. Similarly, permission to remain enrolled or repeat a semester does not automatically establish eligibility for financial assistance.

Regaining Eligibility

A student who loses financial-aid eligibility may regain it by:

1. completing sufficient eligible coursework, without the affected financial assistance, to satisfy the FA-SAP standards; or
2. successfully appealing the determination and being placed on financial-aid probation.

Payment of outstanding balances or the passage of time, without improvement in the student's academic record, does not restore FA-SAP eligibility.

FA-SAP Appeal

A student who becomes ineligible for financial assistance may submit a written FA-SAP appeal to the Financial Aid Office.

An appeal may be considered when illness, injury, bereavement, family emergency or another serious and exceptional circumstance contributed materially to the student's failure to meet FA-SAP.

The appeal must include:

- I. an explanation of the circumstances that prevented the student from meeting FA-SAP;
- II. the relevant dates and effect of those circumstances;
- III. appropriate supporting documentation;
- IV. an explanation of how the circumstances have been resolved or are now being managed; and
- V. a plan describing how the student will meet FA-SAP or comply with an assigned academic plan.

An appeal based only on financial need, disagreement with a grade or a desire to continue receiving assistance will not ordinarily be sufficient. Challenges to grades or academic progression decisions must be pursued through the academic appeals process described elsewhere in this Handbook.

Appeal Decision and Financial-Aid Probation

The Director of Financial Aid, as the designated FA-SAP appeal authority, will review the appeal in consultation with relevant academic and administrative offices where appropriate. The student will normally receive a written decision within 14 calendar days of receipt of a complete appeal and all required supporting documentation. An approved appeal will place the student on financial-aid probation for one semester or payment period. During probation, the student must either:

- meet all FA-SAP standards by the end of the probationary period; or
- comply with an approved academic plan designed to enable the student to meet FA-SAP within a specified period.

The appeal decision may impose additional conditions appropriate to the student's circumstances and funding source.

Failure to satisfy the conditions of probation or an approved academic plan will result in loss of eligibility for subsequent financial assistance.

A further appeal may be submitted only when new or materially different exceptional circumstances affected the student's performance during or after the probationary period. The same circumstances ordinarily cannot be used to support repeated appeals.

Financial Responsibility During an Appeal

Submitting an FA-SAP appeal does not guarantee approval, suspend ACSOM's payment deadlines or require ACSOM or an external provider to disburse funds while the appeal is pending.

The student remains responsible for all tuition, fees and other financial obligations incurred, regardless of whether the appeal is approved or denied.

Housing

In the event students depart due to a LOA or are dismissed from the ACSOM program early, prorated portions of their housing can be refunded. To begin the processing of any potential proration of housing charges, students must follow the following steps:

The student is required to provide the Landlord with written notice of their departure or dismissal from the Medical Program within two - seven calendar days of such occurrence known as the notice period.

Upon receipt of the student's written notice to the landlord, the Lease Agreement shall be terminated.

The student shall remain responsible for paying rent for the duration of the notice period. Rent shall be prorated based on the number of calendar days remaining in the notice period or the landlord agrees to forfeit the security deposit in lieu of cancellation.

Return of Funds to ACSOM Student Loan (ALP) Borrowers

ACSOM Loan Program (ALP) funds are approved under the assumption that the student will attend school for the entire period for which the aid is awarded. When a student withdraws or fails to complete their classes or fails to return from an Approved Leave of Absence, he/she may no longer be eligible for the full amount of loan funds that were originally scheduled to be received.

The University is required by the ACSOM Loan Program to calculate the amount of earned and unearned aid each time a student withdraws. If the amount disbursed for tuition and living expenses is greater than the amount earned while in attendance, the unearned tuition funds must be returned to the lender to pay down the student's debt.

Any portion of the loan used to pay University tuition charges is returned to the ALP by the University using the calculations and timeline stated in the University Refund Policy.

Any portion of the loan disbursed to the student for living expense purposes does not have to be repaid by the student at withdrawal. However, the student will fulfill this obligation as stated in the ACSOM Loan Program Manual.

Post Withdrawal Disbursements

In some cases, the student will withdraw while still having earned ALP funds. For instance, the student may not have received the approved loan disbursement at the time of withdrawal, but s/he did attend and thus earned a portion of the tuition paid with the loan. The University will notify the student of the determination within 30 calendar days of withdrawal.

The University will determine the amount earned for a post withdrawal disbursement within 30 calendar days of withdrawal and advise the student in writing that they have 14 calendar days from the date that the school sent the notification to accept a post withdrawal disbursement. If a response is not received from the student within the allowed time frame or the student declines the funds, the school will return any earned funds that the school is holding to the lender.

Post-withdrawal disbursements will occur within 90 calendar days of the date that the student withdrew.

If there are any questions regarding this Tuition Refund Policy, please contact Financial Aid at finaid@acsom.edu.dm.

ACSOM Health Requirements

Vaccination Requirements

Students must provide documentation of required immunizations, immunity, screening, and health clearance as part of ACSOM's health requirements. Required documentation must be submitted in the form and by the deadline specified by ACSOM.

Students who do not provide required vaccination, immunity, screening, or health documentation may be restricted from registration, campus activities, laboratory sessions, clinical skills activities, patient-facing activities, clinical assignments, clinical rotations, or other educational activities until compliance is documented.

Required vaccination and immunity documentation may include, but is not limited to:

- varicella/chickenpox immunity or vaccination;
- diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccination;
- measles, mumps, and rubella immunity or vaccination;

- poliomyelitis vaccination;
- influenza vaccination where required;
- COVID-19 vaccination where required;
- hepatitis B vaccination or evidence of immunity where required; and
- any additional vaccination, immunity, screening, or health documentation required by ACSOM, public health authorities, or clinical training sites.

Additional vaccines may be recommended for personal health, travel, public health, or clinical placement reasons. These may include hepatitis A, typhoid, or other vaccines recommended by a healthcare provider, public health authority, travel medicine guidance, or clinical site.

Clinical sites may impose vaccination, screening, health, background check, drug screening, and documentation requirements that differ from or exceed ACSOM campus requirements. Failure to satisfy clinical-site requirements may delay or prevent participation in clinical assignments or rotations.

Students requesting exemption from a vaccination requirement for medical, religious, or other recognized reasons must submit the required documentation to the Office of Student Affairs or other designated ACSOM office. An exemption approved by ACSOM does not guarantee acceptance by a clinical site, public health authority, immigration authority, or other external body.

Students are responsible for maintaining current health documentation and for submitting updated records when requested by ACSOM or a clinical site.

ACSOM may consider guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), Dominican public health authorities, clinical training sites, and other relevant health or regulatory bodies when establishing or updating vaccination, screening, and health documentation requirements.

Student Recognition of Risk

Medical education includes participation in classroom, laboratory, simulation, clinical skills, research, community, and patient-facing activities that may involve inherent risks. These risks may include, but are not limited to, occupational hazards, sharps injury, exposure to bloodborne pathogens or other communicable diseases, physical injury, emotional stress, environmental hazards, travel-related risks, and risks associated with clinical or community settings.

Students are expected to follow all ACSOM, laboratory, simulation center, clinical-site, public health, infection prevention, safety, and professional conduct requirements intended to reduce these risks.

Students are responsible for maintaining required health insurance, immunization and health documentation, personal safety awareness, and compliance with applicable training, reporting, and safety procedures.

Participation in medical education does not eliminate risk. Students who have health, disability, pregnancy, immunization, safety, or other concerns that may affect participation in required activities should contact the Office of Student Affairs, Student Disability Services, or an appropriate healthcare professional as early as possible.

Communications and Contact Information

Upon enrollment and registration, each student is assigned an ACSOM email address. Students **must** use their ACSOM email account for all official communications with faculty, staff, administration, student services, and other students when conducting ACSOM business or participating in ACSOM academic, clinical, or online learning activities.

All official communications between ACSOM and enrolled students may be sent by ACSOM email, Canvas, Populi, MedHub, or other official ACSOM communication channels. Students are responsible for checking their ACSOM email, Canvas, and Populi accounts regularly, at least daily during periods of active enrollment, and for responding to official communications in a timely and professional manner.

ACSOM does not use personal email addresses as the primary official communication channel for enrolled students. Students should not rely on personal email accounts for receipt of official ACSOM communications.

Messaging Applications

ACSOM may use messaging applications, including WhatsApp or similar platforms, for informal, urgent, or operational communications where appropriate. Unless expressly designated by ACSOM for a specific purpose, messaging applications are not the primary official communication channel and do not replace ACSOM email, Canvas, Populi, MedHub, or other official ACSOM systems.

Students should not use WhatsApp or other messaging applications to submit formal requests, appeals, complaints, absence documentation, accommodation documentation, medical information, financial information, or other official records unless specifically instructed by ACSOM.

Communications through messaging applications must remain professional and are subject to ACSOM professionalism, conduct, privacy, confidentiality, and social media expectations.

Students on Leave of Absence, Clinical Hold, suspension, conditional enrollment, Appeal Pending Status, or other temporary student status may retain access to ACSOM email or other systems where needed to support communication regarding student status, return requirements, outstanding obligations, or other institutional business. ACSOM may restrict, suspend, or terminate system access where required for security, administrative, disciplinary, or institutional reasons.

Populi

[Populi](#) is the official student information system (SIS) used at ACSOM. Students may use Populi to access academic records, grades, enrollment information, billing information, financial records, academic advisor assignments, forms, unofficial or official transcript requests, enrollment verification documents, and other student information or services.

Students are responsible for keeping their personal, emergency contact, and academic information current in Populi and for reviewing Populi regularly for official information and required actions.

Canvas

Canvas is the [ACSOM Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#). Canvas is used to support academic coursework and may include course materials, assignments, announcements, schedules, learning activities, assessments, and other course-related information. Canvas may also be used for institutional or campus announcements.

Students are responsible for monitoring Canvas regularly and for remaining aware of course, module, institutional, and campus communications posted there.

MedHub

MedHub is [ACSOM's undergraduate Medical Education management platform](#). MedHub may be used to document, track, schedule, and monitor educational activities, student evaluations, faculty evaluations, course evaluations, clerkship or rotation activities, and other program requirements.

Students are responsible for completing required evaluations, forms, documentation, scheduling tasks, or other MedHub requirements by stated deadlines.

Professional Use of ACSOM Communication Systems

All users of ACSOM technology and communication systems, including email, Canvas, Populi, MedHub, and institutional platforms, must use those systems professionally and in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, professionalism standards, privacy expectations, and the Information Technology, Technology, and Internet Use Policy.

Communications within ACSOM systems must be respectful, accurate, appropriate, and consistent with the conduct expected of future physicians. Harassing, discriminatory, threatening, abusive, misleading, unprofessional, or inappropriate communications are prohibited.

ACSOM may monitor, access, review, retain, or disclose communications and records on ACSOM systems where necessary for institutional operations, cybersecurity, policy compliance, investigation of misconduct, accreditation, legal or regulatory obligations, or protection of students, patients, faculty, staff, or ACSOM.

Violations of communication, technology, privacy, or professionalism requirements may result in loss or restriction of technology access, administrative action, professionalism review, conduct review, disciplinary action, suspension, or dismissal, depending on the nature and severity of the violation.

Contact Information

Students must maintain current personal contact information, emergency contact information, local address, telephone number, and other required information in their student profile. Students must update this information whenever it changes and at any other time requested by the Registrar, Office of Student Affairs, clinical education office, or other designated ACSOM office.

Students entering or participating in clinical rotations are responsible for ensuring that their contact information remains current before and during clinical placements. Failure to maintain accurate contact information may delay communications, clinical placement, emergency response, administrative processing, or other student services.

Student Affairs, Student Support Services, and Bursar

At ACSOM, the Office of Student Affairs, Student Support Services, and the Bursar's Office are distinct offices with different responsibilities. These offices work cooperatively to support students throughout their enrollment.

Office of Student Affairs

The Office of Student Affairs is primarily responsible for student academic support, student-status matters, professionalism and conduct processes, student organizations, career development, and Registrar-related academic functions.

Responsibilities may include:

- academic advising and support;
- monitoring student progress and engagement;
- supporting academic progression processes in coordination with CAP, SEPC, faculty, and the Registrar;
- coordinating academic records, transcripts, enrollment verification, and related Registrar functions;
- supporting student academic organizations, medical student associations, clubs, and societies;
- administering or coordinating student conduct, professionalism, grievance, and disciplinary processes;
- supporting career development, residency planning, and postgraduate documentation processes; and

- communicating with students regarding academic, professionalism, student-status, or administrative matters.

The Office of Student Affairs and Registrar functions may be contacted at:

studentaffairs@acsom.edu.dm

Student Support Services

Student Support Services is primarily responsible for student well-being, onboarding support, disability support, student services coordination, and non-academic student support.

Responsibilities may include:

- student well-being support, including referral to counselling, wellness, and health-related resources;
- student health insurance support;
- emergency transportation coordination where available and appropriate;
- administrative support for onboarding, registration support, student documentation, and Dominica visa processes;
- housing coordination and accommodation-related support;
- Student Disability Services, including accommodation intake, documentation coordination, and implementation support;
- support for approved extracurricular activities, events, wellness activities, and non-academic clubs; and
- referral of students to appropriate ACSOM offices or external resources where needed.

Student Support Services may be contacted at:

studentservices@acsom.edu.dm

Bursar's Office

The Bursar's Office is responsible for student financial accounts and institutional billing.

Responsibilities may include:

- billing, collection, and processing of tuition, fees, housing charges, insurance charges, and other institutional charges;
- issuing account statements, receipts, and balance information;
- administering payment plans and payment deadlines;
- managing delinquent account notices and financial holds;
- coordinating refunds and reimbursements where applicable;
- supporting students with questions about institutional charges and account balances; and

- coordinating with the Financial Aid Office regarding scholarships, loans, disbursements, and other financial aid matters.

The [Bursar's Office should be contacted](#) for questions about student accounts, billing, payment plans, balances, refunds, and financial holds.

Students are responsible for contacting the correct office for the matter involved. Where a matter involves more than one office, ACSOM offices may coordinate internally while maintaining appropriate confidentiality and role boundaries.

Use of Student information

ACSOM adopts FERPA-like principles as an institutional standard for the protection of student educational records. Although ACSOM is not a U.S. Title IV institution operating under FERPA in the same manner as U.S. institutions, the School limits disclosure of student educational records except as permitted by institutional policy, student consent, accreditation requirements, regulatory reporting, health and safety needs, or other legitimate educational interests.

The right to inspect and review the student's education records:

Students have the right to review their education records within 45 calendar days of the day the institution receives their request. Students should submit a physical written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect to the Office of the Registrar. The institution official will arrange access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to seek amendment of inaccurate or misleading information:

Students may ask the institution to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they believe should be changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the institution decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the student will be notified of the decision and advised of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.

Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when they are notified of the right to a hearing. Following the hearing, if the institution still decides not to amend the record, the student has a right to place a clarifying statement in the record.

The right to limit disclosure of personally identifiable information:

ACSOM will not release student educational records to parents, family members, sponsors, or other third parties without written consent from the student, except where disclosure is permitted by institutional policy, accreditation requirements, regulatory reporting, health and safety needs, or

other legitimate educational or institutional interests. If students want parents or other family members to access their educational records, they must complete an [authorization form](#) and submit it to the Office of the Registrar.

Professionalism and Conduct

The American Canadian School of Medicine provides high-quality modern medical education opportunities for its students advancing medical knowledge and skills of future physicians.

Students must be professional and adhere to the Code of conduct. Any potential breach of the Code of Conduct may result in an investigation and administrative review. Potential disciplinary measures, up to and including dismissal from the school may be an outcome of an administrative review. Details of the administrative review process [can be accessed here](#).

Role of Faculty Advisors:

Each new student is assigned a Faculty Advisor. The Faculty Advisor is normally associated with the student's designated small group and provides guidance throughout the student's training at ACSOM. Faculty Advisors may be involved in teaching, learning support, assessment, advising, and professional development.

Faculty Advisor assessments, advising notes, and academic summary reports may be maintained by ACSOM and may contribute to institutional records used for academic advising, progression review, and preparation of the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE), also known as the Dean's Letter. A professional relationship with the Faculty Advisor is important to student success at ACSOM.

An important part of medical education is developing a lifelong commitment to ethical conduct, professional responsibility, and the standards of behavior expected of future physicians.

All ACSOM students are required to [attest to the ACSOM medical student Honor Code Pledge](#). Students must verify acceptance by endorsing the Honor Pledge. Registration may be blocked until this requirement has been completed. This requirement applies to all ACSOM students.

Conduct

Students are expected to comply with the laws of Dominica and with the laws, regulations, and institutional requirements of any jurisdiction or clinical site where they study, train, reside, or participate in ACSOM-related activities.

Students must report any arrest, criminal charge, conviction, or other legally reportable event to the Office of Student Affairs promptly. Such matters may affect student status, clinical placement, visa

or immigration status, eligibility to remain in Dominica, licensure eligibility, residency eligibility, or continued enrollment at ACSOM.

ACSOM expects students to demonstrate professionalism, ethical conduct, respect for the law, and conduct consistent with the standards of the medical profession both on campus and off campus.

Responsibilities of ACSOM employees and students to one another:

ACSOM faculty and staff are expected to model high standards of professionalism both on and off campus.

Employees must:

Be punctual and prepared for any defined duties (teaching or non-teaching).

Treat colleagues and students fairly, respectfully, and without bias to age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, nationality, citizenship, race, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics protected by ACSOM policy.

Where appropriate, give students timely, constructive, and accurate feedback.

ACSOM Students should:

- Be courteous and respectful to faculty, non-teaching staff and fellow Students
- Treat fellow Students as colleagues, not competitors.
- Take responsibility for maximizing the educational experience by addressing conflicts and discomforts that may impede learning.
- Be an engaged and [“self-regulating”](#) and reflective learner.
- Be trustworthy and honest.
- Know their limitations and ask for help when needed.

In the Clinical Setting, students must:

- Place patient welfare and safety above personal educational convenience or preference.
- Take the initiative and be educated about the patient’s illness.
- Treat all patients and members of the health care team respectfully.
- Be compassionate.

- Respect a patient's privacy.
- Follow all rules and regulations of the clinical setting or hospitals.

Unprofessional and abusive behaviors:

The responsibilities of ACSOM employees and Students listed above constitute examples of respectful and professional behaviors. These are the expected standards for **all members** of the ACSOM community.

Some behaviors that fall outside these expectations may constitute mistreatment, abusive conduct, disrespectful conduct, or unprofessional behavior. Determinations are based on the totality of the circumstances, including the nature of the behavior, its context, its impact, whether it was repeated or severe, and whether it is inconsistent with ACSOM's standards of professionalism and respect. Intent may be considered, but a finding of mistreatment or unprofessional conduct does not require proof that harm or humiliation was intended.

Behaviors defined as abusive:

- (i) Unwarranted physical contact (such as hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing) or threats of the same.
- (ii) Sexual harassment (Please refer to ACSOM's policy on sexual harassment: below)
- (iii) Discrimination based on Age, Race, Gender, Sexual orientation, Disability, Religion or national origin.
- (iv) Disrespectful or unprofessional behavior such as:
 - Repeated questioning of an individual with the primary intent to humiliate or embarrass them.
 - Grading based on factors other than on performance or merit.
 - Coercing an individual to do something morally objectionable.
 - Humiliation of an individual in public or in private.

For example:

Public:- Faculty mocking a student's question in front of the class.

- A student criticizing a staff member's mistakes in a demeaning way in front of others.

Private: - Faculty telling a student privately that they are “incompetent” instead of offering constructive feedback.

- Students sending mocking or belittling private messages to staff.
- Requiring or pressuring an individual to perform personal errands, personal services, or excessive non-educational tasks unrelated to legitimate educational, clinical, or institutional responsibilities*.

*Certain duties related to patient care or team functioning may be appropriate when they serve a legitimate educational, clinical, or operational purpose and are balanced with the student’s educational needs.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse:

Alcohol or drug misuse can adversely affect academic performance, professional judgment, personal health, patient safety, and the safety of peers, faculty, staff, and clinical-site personnel. Students who are experiencing concerns related to alcohol or drug use are encouraged to seek assistance through Student Support Services, the Office of Student Affairs, counselling resources, or an appropriate healthcare professional.

Students should not attend or participate in campus activities, ACSOM-sponsored activities, laboratory sessions, simulation activities, clinical skills sessions, clinical rotations, patient-facing activities, or any other required educational activity while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, misused prescription medication, or any other substance that may impair judgment, behavior, safety, professionalism, or performance.

Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism, civility, maturity, and ethical behavior in all ACSOM-related settings. Concerns involving alcohol or drug misuse may be addressed through student support, administrative review, professionalism review, conduct review, medical leave, suspension, or disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances. Drug and alcohol screening, testing, and related consequences are governed by the Drug Testing Policy.

Sexual Harassment:

ACSOM is committed to providing a learning environment free from sexual harassment. ACSOM is not a U.S. Title IX institution by virtue of its Dominica campus operations; however, ACSOM adopts comparable principles of non-discrimination, harassment prevention, fair complaint resolution, and protection from retaliation as institutional standards. U.S. clinical sites may impose additional site-specific legal and policy requirements.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual conduct, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually offensive verbal, visual, written, electronic, or physical conduct, and other conduct of a

sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, offensive, or disruptive learning, working, clinical, or institutional environment.

Students who experience or become aware of sexual harassment are encouraged to report the concern promptly to the Office of Student Affairs or through the applicable complaint or grievance process. While prompt reporting is encouraged, ACSOM may review concerns raised outside the recommended reporting period where the matter affects student safety, institutional standards, or the ACSOM learning environment.

Complaints may be handled through informal or formal processes, depending on the nature of the concern, the wishes of the complainant where appropriate, and ACSOM's responsibility to maintain a safe and respectful environment. The Office of Student Affairs can provide guidance on available reporting and resolution options.

Information related to sexual harassment complaints will be handled with appropriate confidentiality and shared only with individuals who have a legitimate institutional need to know or where disclosure is required for investigation, safety, compliance, legal, clinical-site, or institutional reasons. Retaliation against any person who raises a concern, participates in a review, or provides information in good faith is prohibited.

Students who believe they have experienced or witnessed abuse, mistreatment, harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or unprofessional conduct are encouraged to report the concern promptly to the Office of Student Affairs at studentaffairs@acsom.edu.dm or through the designated Student Corner Web Form.

Students may seek advice from a trusted faculty member, advisor, Student Support Services, counsellor, or the Office of Student Affairs before submitting a formal complaint. Students are not required to resolve the matter directly with the person involved before making a report.

Where appropriate and safe, informal resolution may be considered. However, concerns involving harassment, discrimination, threats, retaliation, repeated misconduct, patient safety, abuse of authority, or serious professionalism concerns should be reported to the Office of Student Affairs for review.

Anonymous reports may be submitted through the designated reporting form where available. ACSOM will review anonymous reports to the extent possible, but anonymity may limit the School's ability to investigate, obtain additional information, or take formal action.

Protocol for Handling Complaints of Abuse, Mistreatment, or Grievances

The Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs, or designee, is responsible for receiving and conducting an initial review of student complaints involving alleged abuse, mistreatment, harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or unprofessional conduct.

Following initial review, the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs, or designee, may take one or more of the following actions:

- provide guidance or supportive measures;
- refer the matter for informal resolution where appropriate;
- request additional information from the complainant, respondent, witnesses, faculty, staff, or other relevant individuals;
- refer the matter to a Grievance Committee for review;
- refer the matter to the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee where student conduct or disciplinary action may be involved;
- refer employee-related matters to the appropriate supervisor, Human Resources process, Dean, Campus Dean, or President; or
- determine that no further action is warranted based on the information available.

A student who is the subject of a formal complaint will be notified in writing of the nature of the complaint, the applicable policy or process, and the opportunity to respond, unless temporary delay of notice is necessary to protect safety, preserve evidence, or comply with legal, clinical-site, or institutional requirements.

A Grievance Committee may be appointed by the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs, Campus Dean, or Dean to review complaints that require formal grievance review. The committee should include members who were not directly involved in the matter under review and may include faculty, staff, and student representatives where appropriate. Student representatives should not serve on matters involving confidential, sensitive, clinical, safety, or personnel issues unless ACSOM determines that student participation is appropriate.

The Grievance Committee may review written materials, request additional information, and receive written or oral statements from the complainant, respondent, witnesses, or other relevant individuals. The committee will prepare written findings and recommendations for review by the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs, Campus Dean, Dean, or other designated senior official.

If a grievance involving an ACSOM employee is upheld or requires employment-related review, the matter may be referred to the employee's supervisor, Human Resources process, Dean, Campus Dean, President, or other appropriate institutional authority.

If a grievance involving a student is upheld or raises potential conduct, professionalism, or disciplinary concerns, the matter may be referred to the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee or other designated disciplinary process.

The complainant and respondent will be notified in writing of the outcome, consistent with privacy, confidentiality, personnel, student-record, safety, and institutional requirements. ACSOM will make reasonable efforts to complete initial review within 10 calendar days of receiving a complaint and to

complete formal grievance review within 30 calendar days, unless additional time is required. If additional time is required, the parties will be notified.

Appeals of Grievance and Disciplinary Committee findings are handled under "Right to Appeal Disciplinary Decisions" in this Handbook.

Medical Ethical Behavior

The medical profession has long subscribed to a body of ethical statements developed primarily for the benefit of the patient. As a member of this profession, a physician must recognize responsibility to patients first and foremost, as well as to society, to other health professionals, and to self. The following Principles adopted by the American Medical Association are not laws, but standards of conduct that define the essentials of honorable behavior for the physician. ACSOM uses these principles as professional reference standards to guide the development of ethical conduct in medical students.

- A physician shall provide competent medical care, with compassion and respect for human dignity and rights.
- A physician 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.
- A physician shall respect the law and recognize a responsibility to seek changes in those requirements which are contrary to the best interests of the patient.
- A physician shall respect the rights of patients, colleagues, and other health professionals, and shall safeguard patient confidences and privacy within the constraints of the law.
- A physician shall continue to study, apply, and advance scientific knowledge, maintain a commitment to medical education, make relevant information available to patients, colleagues, and the public, obtain consultation, and use the talents of other health professionals when indicated.
- A physician 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.
- A physician shall recognize a responsibility to participate in activities contributing to the improvement of the community and the betterment of public health.
- A physician shall, while caring for a patient, regard responsibility to the patient as paramount.

- A physician shall support access to medical care for all people.

Conduct

Students are expected to:

(i) act responsibly, professionally, and with appropriate regard for patient safety, the learning environment, and the responsibilities assigned to them. In clinical and patient-facing settings, patient safety and well-being take priority over personal convenience or educational preference.

(ii) be responsible for understanding and completing all assigned tasks and responsibilities in classroom, laboratory, simulation, clinical, and institutional settings. This includes completing evaluations of courses, faculty, clinical experiences, and other required institutional evaluations when assigned².

(iii) arrive on time at assigned locations, be prepared to participate, and conduct themselves in a manner that protects the safety, dignity, and welfare of patients, peers, faculty, staff, and others.

(iv) notify the appropriate supervisor, faculty member, preceptor, or ACSOM office if an issue arises that affects attendance, participation, assigned duties, patient care, or safety.

(v) ensure that patients and patients' family members are treated with respect, compassion, privacy, and professionalism.

Students must not:

(i) interact with patients, participate in patient care, or attend clinical, laboratory, simulation, or patient-facing activities while impaired by alcohol, drugs, misused prescription medication, or any other substance that may affect judgment, behavior, safety, professionalism, or performance.

(ii) engage in sexual, romantic, exploitative, or otherwise inappropriate relationships with patients. Students must also maintain appropriate professional boundaries with ACSOM employees, supervisors, faculty, staff, clinical personnel, and others in positions that may affect teaching, assessment, supervision, advising, employment, or student status. Relationships or conduct that create, or appear to create, coercion, exploitation, favoritism, conflict of interest, or impaired professional judgment are prohibited.

Conduct Violations:

Any student who engages in misconduct may be subject to review and disciplinary action. The following list is illustrative and is not exhaustive.

² Course evaluations are administered at the end of each module. Completion of evaluation forms is a mandatory professional requirement at ACSOM. Any student failing to complete course evaluations when requested to do so may be referred to CAP.

Misconduct may include, but is not limited to:

- acts of dishonesty, including furnishing false information to any ACSOM official, faculty member, staff member, office, committee, clinical site, or institutional process;
- forgery, alteration, misuse, or unauthorized use of any official document, record, transcript, form, identification card, credential, or instrument of identification;
- computer piracy, copyright infringement, unauthorized access to computer systems, unauthorized use of institutional technology, or violation of ACSOM's Information Technology, Technology, and Internet Use Policy;
- disruption or obstruction of teaching, learning, research, administration, clinical activities, disciplinary proceedings, institutional operations, or ACSOM-sponsored activities, whether on or off campus;
- physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, coercion, retaliation, or other conduct that threatens or endangers the health, safety, dignity, or welfare of any person;
- attempted or actual theft, misuse, destruction, or damage involving ACSOM property, community property, public property, or the personal property of another person;
- gambling on ACSOM premises, at ACSOM-sponsored activities, or through the use of ACSOM equipment, systems, or resources;
- failure to comply with directions of ACSOM officials, faculty, staff, security personnel, clinical-site personnel, or law enforcement officers acting in the performance of their duties;
- failure to identify oneself to ACSOM personnel when requested to do so, including failure to produce an ACSOM-issued ID or other recognized identification;
- unauthorized possession, duplication, use, or transfer of ACSOM keys, access cards, identification cards, passwords, credentials, or access codes;
- unauthorized entry to, presence in, or use of ACSOM premises, restricted spaces, clinical sites, housing, transportation, systems, or resources;
- unauthorized recording of conversations, meetings, classes, clinical activities, patient encounters, assessments, telephone calls, or electronic communications. Students may not record others without prior notice and permission, except where expressly authorized by ACSOM policy;
- violation of published ACSOM policies, rules, regulations, procedures, codes of conduct, clinical-site requirements, or written directives;
- violation of applicable law, including the laws of Dominica or any jurisdiction where the student studies, trains, resides, or participates in ACSOM-related activities, where the conduct affects or may affect ACSOM, the ACSOM community, clinical placement, public trust, patient safety, or the student's fitness for continued enrollment;
- illegal or unauthorized possession, use, storage, transfer, or display of firearms, explosives, fireworks, weapons, dangerous instruments, hazardous materials, or other prohibited items;
- aiding, abetting, encouraging, inducing, assisting, or attempting to assist another person to violate ACSOM policy or the Professional Code of Conduct; and

- conduct or communication that is threatening, aggressive, abusive, discriminatory, harassing, retaliatory, or otherwise inconsistent with ACSOM standards of professional behavior.

Examples of prohibited communication may include:

- messages or content that contain derogatory statements about any group, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristic protected by ACSOM policy;
- communication that targets, harasses, threatens, or demeans others based on personal, political, religious, ethical, or other views; or
- messages or content that contain aggressive, abusive, profane, threatening, humiliating, or unprofessional language directed toward ACSOM administration, faculty, staff, students, patients, clinical-site personnel, or other members of the community.

Academics

Policy on Good Academic Standing

Good Academic Standing means that a student is meeting the academic, professional, financial, administrative, health, and student-status requirements needed to remain actively enrolled and continue progressing through the MD program. A student is in Good Academic Standing when the student is actively enrolled, making satisfactory academic progress, has completed all required modules and any required remediation, has met all required health, documentation, and training certifications, and is not subject to Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, Clinical Hold, Appeal Pending Status, conditional enrollment, probation, dismissal, or any academic, disciplinary, financial, or administrative hold that restricts progression.

Only students in Good Academic Standing may progress through the curriculum, register for future semesters, participate in clinical rotations, receive approval for clinical placement, schedule or sit for licensing examinations where institutional approval is required, apply for away rotations or externships, and receive an MSPE or Dean's Letter for residency applications.

Why Good Academic Standing Matters

Being in Good Academic Standing allows you to:

- Continue progressing through the MD curriculum
- Register for upcoming semesters and required courses
- Participate in clinical rotations and clinical preparation activities
- Schedule and sit for licensing examinations, including USMLE and Canadian Board examinations
- Apply for away rotations and externships

- Receive a Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE/Dean's Letter)
- Maintain eligibility for financial aid, subject to Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards

If you are **not** in Good Academic Standing, you may experience:

- Limits on registration and progression
- Delays in entering or continuing clinical rotations
- Ineligibility to sit for licensing examinations
- Ineligibility for away rotations, externships, and certain clinical placements
- Loss of MSPE (Dean's Letter) eligibility
- Loss or suspension of financial aid
- Requirement to complete remediation, repeat coursework, or take a leave of absence
- Possible delayed graduation or separation from the MD program

Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals

This section is the controlling policy for academic progression in the basic sciences phase of the MD program. It governs EMSA failure, remediation eligibility, confirmed module failure, semester failure, Audit Status, mandatory semester repeat, academic dismissal, and academic appeals.

Where other sections of this Handbook describe academic performance, attendance, remediation, promotion, probation, suspension, dismissal, or student status, those sections must be read consistently with this Academic Progression section. In the event of conflict between this section and any other descriptive or procedural section, this section controls.

Definitions

Official Date of Record (Census Date)

The Official Date of Record is 15 calendar days after the first day of the semester. For the financial implications of this date, see the Student Financial Services section of this Handbook

EMSA Failure

An EMSA Failure occurs when a student does not achieve the required passing score on the End-of-Module Summative Assessment, or is ineligible to sit the EMSA under applicable attendance or assessment policies. EMSA Failures are remediable only in accordance with ACSOM's approved remediation policy.

Remediation Opportunity

A remediation opportunity is the permitted institutional opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the required standard after an EMSA Failure. Following an eligible EMSA Failure, a student is entitled to one remediation attempt, normally scheduled approximately two weeks after the EMSA or on another published remediation date determined by ACSOM.

Confirmed Module Failure

A confirmed Module Failure occurs only when a student has exhausted the permitted remediation opportunities for that module and has not achieved a passing outcome, or when the student is otherwise ineligible for remediation under ACSOM policy.

Semester Failure

A semester is deemed failed when a student has a confirmed Module Failure in any module within that semester.

Student Status Definitions

Status	Description
Good Academic Standing	Credit-bearing enrollment with satisfactory academic progression and compliance with applicable academic, professionalism, attendance, financial, and administrative requirements.
EMSA Failure / Remediation Pending	Temporary academic status after an unsuccessful EMSA or assessment ineligibility, where one remediation opportunity remains available under ACSOM policy.
Confirmed Module Failure	Status after a student fails the permitted remediation opportunity or is otherwise

	ineligible for remediation. Confirmed Module Failure results in Semester Failure.
Audit Status	Non-credit-bearing continuation status applied after Semester Failure. The student may participate in scheduled educational activities but may not sit summative assessments or earn credit for the remainder of the semester.
Mandatory Semester Repeat	Required re-enrollment in the full failed semester, including any modules previously passed.
Clinical Hold – USMLE Step 1	Institutional enrollment status for a student who has completed the preclinical phase of the program but has not yet satisfied the Step 1 requirement to begin core clinical rotations.
Academic Dismissal	Permanent separation from the MD program for failure to meet academic progression requirements, subject to applicable appeal rights.
Appeal Pending Status	Temporary administrative status while an academic appeal is under review. It does not reverse, suspend, or modify the decision under appeal unless the appeal is granted.
Probation	Conduct-based, professionalism-based, administrative, or return-to-study

	monitoring status, with written conditions. Not an academic progression outcome.
Conditional Enrollment	Enrollment subject to written conditions, normally as part of an approved return-to-study plan.

Audit Status

A student shall be placed on Audit Status immediately upon Semester Failure. Semester Failure occurs when the student has a confirmed Module Failure in any module within the semester.

Audit Status is a non-credit-bearing continuation status and has the following effects:

- No further remediation opportunities are permitted for that semester.
- The student may continue to participate in scheduled educational activities for the remainder of the semester in a non-credit-bearing capacity.
- A student placed on Audit Status may not sit for any summative assessment in any module for the remainder of that semester, regardless of the student's performance in other modules.
- Academic credit is not awarded for coursework completed during Audit Status.
- Coursework completed while on Audit Status does not replace the requirement to repeat the semester.
- The student must repeat the entire semester at the next scheduled offering, unless dismissed or otherwise separated from the program.

Mandatory Semester Repeat

A student who has failed a semester must repeat the entire semester in credit-bearing status at the next scheduled offering, unless dismissed or otherwise separated from the program.

A student required to repeat a semester must repeat all modules in that semester, including any modules previously passed. This requirement preserves curricular integrity, maintains the sequencing of integrated instruction, and allows faculty to reassess the student's readiness to progress through the curriculum as a whole.

Students repeating a semester must successfully complete the repeated semester before progressing further and remain subject to all applicable academic, professionalism, attendance, financial aid, and student conduct policies.

Longitudinal Courses and Semester Failure

The longitudinal courses — Anatomy (Years 1 and 2) and Being a Doctor: Introduction to Clinical Medicine (Years 1 and 2) — are year-long courses. They are not semester modules. Each is assessed and graded once, at the end of the academic year in which it concludes, and carries its own grade and credit.

Semester Failure, Audit Status, and Mandatory Semester Repeat do not affect a longitudinal course the student has already passed. A passed longitudinal course is not repeated, and its grade and credit stand.

A student required to repeat a semester is not required to re-attend a longitudinal course already passed, but may attend it on a non-credit audit basis with the approval of the course director.

If a longitudinal course is still in progress when a Semester Failure occurs, the student continues in that course through Audit Status and any Mandatory Semester Repeat, and the course is assessed and graded when it concludes. Remediation of a longitudinal course is managed by the course faculty under the course's own assessment scheme. If a longitudinal course is ultimately not passed, CAP determines the outcome. A longitudinal course must be passed before the student may progress to the clinical phase. Failure of a longitudinal course is not a Module Failure and does not, by itself, constitute a Semester Failure.

Academic Dismissal

A student shall be dismissed from the MD program if the student fails a repeated semester, exceeds the permitted semester repeat limit, or CAP determines that the student is unable to meet the academic standards of the program.

Academic dismissal is subject to appeal under the Academic Appeals provision at the end of this section.

A student who appeals an academic dismissal or other academic progression decision may be placed in Appeal Pending Status while the appeal is under review. Appeal Pending Status is a temporary administrative status only. It does not reverse, suspend, or modify the underlying academic progression decision unless the appeal is granted.

During Appeal Pending Status, ACSOM may permit limited participation in educational activities where appropriate. Such participation does not confer academic credit, does not establish eligibility for summative assessments, and does not create a right to continued enrollment if the appeal is denied.

Remediation and Repetition Limits

A student has a maximum of one remediation opportunity for each eligible EMSA Failure. Successful remediation permits the student to progress without confirmed Module Failure, subject to all other academic requirements. Failed remediation results in confirmed Module Failure and leads to Semester Failure as set out in the definitions above. The same remediation limit applies during a repeated semester.

ACSOM may retain internal records of remediation activity for academic advising, progression review, accreditation, and quality-improvement purposes.

A student may repeat a maximum of one semester during the first two years of MD program, unless an exception is expressly approved by the Committee on Academic Progress with the approval of the Dean. Repetition of clinical clerkships is determined by CAP on a case-by-case basis, subject to the six-year maximum time to degree. A repeated module or semester may be identified on the official transcript with an “(R)” or other notation used by the Registrar to indicate repeated coursework. Failure of a repeated semester results in academic dismissal, subject to applicable appeal rights.

Students subject to a formal academic progression or administrative status change will be notified in writing. Such statuses may include Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, Academic Dismissal, Appeal Pending Status, Clinical Hold, probation, or conditional enrollment. Academic progression and student-status notices will be issued by the Office of Student Affairs in coordination with CAP and the Registrar, as applicable. Financial aid status notices will be issued separately by the Financial Aid Office.

Academic Appeals

1. What may be appealed

An appeal may be made only against an academic progression decision — for example, a confirmed Module Failure, a Semester Failure, a Mandatory Semester Repeat, or an Academic Dismissal.

An appeal may not be made against a published policy. The policies in this Handbook apply to all students. A request to be exempted from a policy, or a disagreement with what a policy says, is not an appeal and will not be heard as one.

Complaints about conduct, services, or treatment unrelated to an academic decision are handled under the Grievance and Disciplinary process, not under this section. A matter decided under this section may not be re-raised as a grievance.

2. Grounds of appeal

An appeal must state, in writing, at least one of the following grounds:

- (a) **Procedural error.** The procedure set out in this Handbook was not followed, and this could have affected the outcome.
- (b) **Factual error.** The decision rests on incorrect information — for example, a wrongly recorded result or a miscounted remediation attempt.
- (c) **New circumstances.** Serious circumstances existed that affected the student's performance, that the student could not reasonably have reported at the time, and that are supported by evidence.

3. What is not a ground of appeal

The following are not grounds of appeal and will not be considered:

- (a) Disagreement with a published policy, or a request for exemption from it.
- (b) Disagreement with academic judgment — that is, with the assessment of the student's work by those qualified to assess it.
- (c) A claim that other students were treated differently, unless the appeal identifies the students or decisions concerned and the same Handbook edition governed both cases. Outcomes under different Handbook editions, or at different stages of the policy (for example, remediation as against semester repeat), are not comparable.
- (d) Circumstances the student knew of at the time but did not report.
- (e) The student's willingness to attend, intention to study, or proposed use of time.

4. How to appeal

An appeal must be submitted in writing (via Populi) to the Office of Student Affairs within seven calendar days of written notification of the decision. It must identify the decision appealed, state the ground(s) for the appeal, and attach any supporting evidence. Late appeals are considered only where the delay itself resulted from circumstances qualifying under paragraph 2(c).

5. Preliminary review

The Office of Student Affairs reviews each appeal to confirm it states a ground under paragraph 2. An appeal that states no such ground is dismissed at this stage, with written reasons identifying what was missing. Preliminary review determines only whether a ground is stated, not whether it succeeds.

6. The Special Appeals Committee

An appeal that passes preliminary review is heard by a Special Appeals Committee (SAC), constituted in the same manner as described under "Right to Appeal Disciplinary Decisions" in this Handbook. No member of the committee may have taken part in the decision under appeal. The committee reviews whether the decision was correctly reached on the stated ground(s). It applies this Handbook as written; it has no authority to grant exemptions from policy or to vary the Handbook in an individual case.

7. Outcomes

The SAC may (a) dismiss the appeal, or (b) uphold it and refer the decision back to CAP. The SAC's decision and reasons are given in writing and forwarded to the Dean for final institutional review. The Dean may uphold, modify, return for further review, or overturn the SAC's decision. The Dean's written decision is final. There is no further appeal.

8. Effect of an appeal

Submitting an appeal does not suspend the decision appealed. The decision stands unless and until an appeal is upheld. A student appealing an Academic Dismissal or other academic progression decision may be placed in Appeal Pending Status, as described under Academic Dismissal above.

USMLE Step 1 Preparation, CBSE Guidance, And Progression to Clinical Rotations Policy

Purpose

This policy establishes institutional requirements governing:

- (a) The structure and purpose of Semester 4 of the MD curriculum in relation to progression to clinical rotations.
- (b) The use of the Comprehensive Basic Science Examination (CBSE) as a diagnostic readiness assessment.
- (c) Timing, attempt limits, and remediation expectations for USMLE Step 1.
- (d) Eligibility for progression to clinical rotations, and
- (e) Student status when unable to commence clinical rotations as scheduled.

The policy is intended to promote timely progression, transparency, academic rigor, and student success while maintaining institutional and regulatory compliance.

Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled in the Doctor of Medicine (MD) program who are completing the Basic Sciences phase and seeking progression to clinical rotations.

Structure and Purpose of Semester 4

Designation of Semester 4

Semester 4 is a required component of the Basic Sciences phase and is specifically designated for:

- protected time for intensive USMLE Step 1 preparation;
- institutional academic advising and learning support;
- diagnostic and formative assessments, including the CBSE; and
- guided and independent preparation activities.
- Semester 4 does not include clinical coursework.

Completion of the Basic Sciences (pre-clinical) Phase

A student is considered to have **completed the Basic Sciences phase** when:

- all required courses and modules in Semesters 1–4 have been successfully completed; and
- all academic and administrative requirements of the Basic Sciences phase have been satisfied.

Completion of Semester 4 **alone** does not confer eligibility to begin clinical rotations. Eligibility requires both completion of the Basic Sciences phase **and** a passing USMLE Step 1 result.

For the purposes of this policy, **completion of the Basic Sciences phase occurs at the conclusion of Semester 4.**

The Comprehensive Basic Science Examination (CBSE)

Purpose of the CBSE

The CBSE is administered one or more times during Semester 4 as a **diagnostic and advisory assessment** intended to:

- provide an objective measure of readiness for USMLE Step 1;
- identify strengths and knowledge gaps; and
- guide individualized advising, study planning, and risk stratification.

The CBSE is not a graded summative examination and is not a requirement for promotion or graduation.

CBSE USMLE Step 1 - Readiness Benchmark

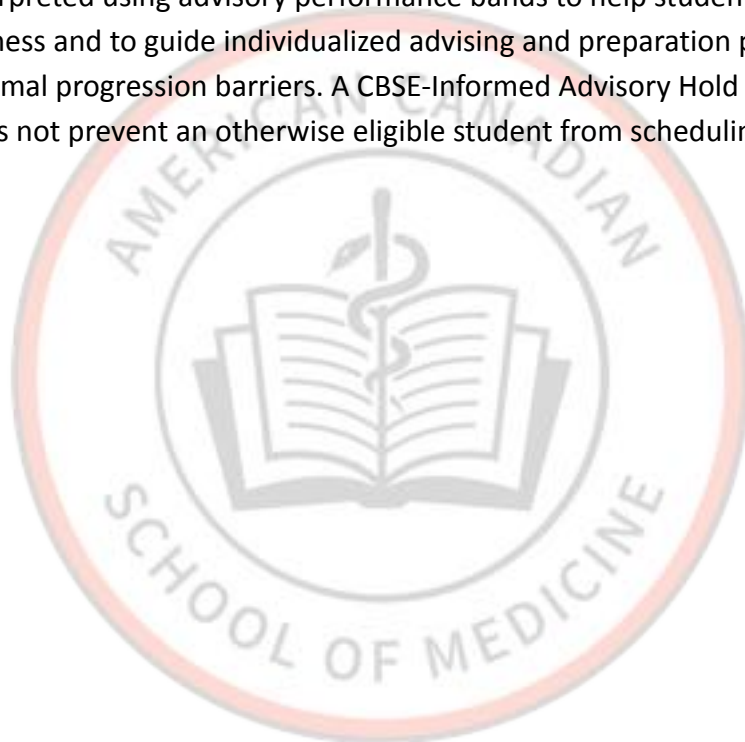
ACSOM applies an **advisory CBSE readiness benchmark range** informed by NBME interpretive guidance, institutional outcomes, and cohort performance trends.

CBSE performance:

- does not function as a pass/fail requirement;
- does not, by itself, prohibit a student from attempting USMLE Step 1; and
- is reviewed periodically and may be adjusted based on outcomes and external guidance.

CBSE Advisory Performance Bands and Advising Guidance

CBSE results are interpreted using advisory performance bands to help students understand their level of Step 1 readiness and to guide individualized advising and preparation planning. These bands do not constitute formal progression barriers. A CBSE-Informed Advisory Hold is an advisory designation and does not prevent an otherwise eligible student from scheduling or taking Step 1.



Readiness Band	Approximate probability of passing USMLE Step 1 *	Risk level	Advising guidance
Band 1 Strong Readiness (CBSE ≥ 66)	High (approximately 90% or higher)	Low	Proceed to Step 1 with routine advising.
Band 2 Acceptable/Borderline Readiness (CBSE 63–65)	Moderate to high (approximately 75–89%)	Moderate	Proceed to Step 1 with targeted advising and focused review.
Band 3 Elevated Risk (CBSE 59–62)	Low to moderate (approximately 50–74%)	Elevated	Enhanced advising and a structured study plan. The student may proceed to Step 1 but may be placed on a CBSE-Informed Advisory Hold and advised to delay the examination pending further preparation.
Band 4 High Risk (CBSE ≤ 58)	Low (approximately below 50%)	High	Intensive preparation and close faculty oversight. CAP may place the student on a CBSE-Informed Advisory Hold and strongly recommend delaying the initial Step 1 attempt pending further preparation and reassessment. The advisory designation does not prevent the student from proceeding.

*Probability bands are approximate and refer to the estimated likelihood of passing Step 1 if it is taken within one week of the CBSE. They are included to help students understand how their CBSE performance relates to ACSOM's advising guidance.

USMLE Step 1 Attempt and Pass Requirements

Requirement to Pass Prior to Clinical Rotations

A passing USMLE Step 1 score is required before commencing **any** clinical rotation, including core, elective, or observational experiences. No student (direct entry or transfer) may begin clinical training without documented proof of a passing Step 1 result.

First Attempt Expectation

Students are expected to sit for their initial USMLE Step 1 attempt timed so as to receive the result prior to beginning orientation for their first rotation. Where the first attempt has not occurred by the end of Semester 4, it must be made no later than 30 calendar days following the completion of Semester 4 without formal CAP approval. Under no circumstances may the first Step 1 attempt exceed 120 calendar days without formal CAP approval and an individualized remediation plan. Students who have not attempted Step 1 within 180 calendar days of completing Semester 4 will be subject to mandatory academic review by CAP and potential administrative withdrawal.

CBSE-Informed Advisory Hold

When CBSE performance and advising review indicate that attempting USMLE Step 1 during Semester 4 would place the student at high risk of failure, the CAP may impose a **CBSE-Informed Advisory Hold**.

This hold:

- is advisory and non-punitive;
- delays the first Step 1 attempt; and
- requires a documented remediation plan with a revised deadline for the initial attempt.

A CBSE-Informed Advisory Hold does not, by itself, constitute a change in enrollment or progression status.

A CBSE-Informed Advisory Hold applies only while a student remains enrolled in Semester 4; upon completion of Semester 4, any student who has not passed USMLE Step 1 automatically transitions to Clinical Hold – USMLE Step 1 status until a passing Step 1 result is achieved.

Time and Attempt Limits for USMLE Step 1

Maximum Number of Attempts

Students are permitted a maximum of **three attempts** at USMLE Step 1 while enrolled at ACSOM. Failure to pass within the permitted number of attempts will result in dismissal from the MD program, subject to appeal.

Interval Between Attempts

A minimum interval of **30 calendar days** is required between USMLE Step 1 attempts. Longer intervals may be required as part of a mandated remediation plan.

Maximum Cumulative Timeframe

Students must successfully pass USMLE Step 1 within **12 months of completion of the Basic Sciences phase** (i.e., completion of Semester 4).

This cumulative timeframe includes:

- all Step 1 attempts;
- required remediation periods; and
- any approved advisory holds or delays.

Failure to pass within this timeframe may result in dismissal unless an exception is granted through the formal appeals process.

Status of Students Unable to Commence Clinical Rotations

Clinical Hold – USMLE Step 1 Status

A student who has completed the Basic Sciences phase but has not passed USMLE Step 1 by the scheduled clinical start date will normally be placed on **Clinical Hold – USMLE Step 1 status**.

Conditions of Clinical Hold - USMLE Step 1 Status

While on Clinical Hold – USMLE Step 1 status, the student:

- is not enrolled in coursework or clinical rotations;
- may not participate in clinical activities or represent themselves as a clinical student; and
- remains institutionally enrolled solely for the purpose of completing USMLE Step 1.

Clinical Hold status ends immediately upon receipt of a passing Step 1 score, provided all other clinical entry requirements are met.

Financial aid eligibility and enrollment implications are governed by applicable SAP and Financial Aid Eligibility policies.

Advising, Monitoring, and Compliance

Students in Semester 4, on a CBSE-Informed Advisory Hold, or on Clinical Hold - USMLE Step 1 status are required to:

- participate in CAP-assigned advising and remediation activities;
- comply with readiness assessments and progress monitoring; and
- adhere to all published timelines and institutional expectations.

Failure to comply may result in additional review by CAP.

Appeals and Exceptions

Requests for delayed initial attempts, extensions beyond published time limits, or exceptions to maximum attempt or timeframe limits must be submitted in writing and reviewed by the Committee on Academic Progress. Approval requires compelling documentation and is not guaranteed.

This appeals and exceptions process applies only to Step 1 scheduling, timing, and readiness requirements and does not modify academic progression outcomes governed by the “Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals” section of this handbook.

ACSOM Academic Calendar

The ACSOM academic calendar is posted on our Learning Management System (LMS: Canvas) and on [the ACSOM website](#). **It is the responsibility of students to remain aware of the required components and activities associated with the education program.** Detailed schedules for teaching activities are provided on Canvas in the detailed course syllabi. Attendance is required at all scheduled academic (including orientation) activities and events including assessments from the first to the last published date in each semester, excluding break periods. During the clinical phase (years three and four) of the program, students are expected to comply with defined attendance and patient care activities as defined at the clinical site.

ACSOM does not observe any religious or national holidays of Dominica, the US or Canada that fall during semester teaching time.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

As described in our attendance policy, students are expected to attend all designated academic classes, and activities, and fulfill all curricular requirements for their course of study. ACSOM recognizes, however, that some students may encounter circumstances that prevent them from fulfilling all requirements for their program of study within the prescribed timeline. ACSOM has therefore established policies that allow arrangements for students to be able to complete their course of study.

Any student anticipating being unable to attend and fulfil all course requirements for longer than ten calendar days or 25% of the length of a module, must [apply for LOA](#). A period of LOA may be granted for up to one year based on individual circumstances.

Normally, during the LOA, the student will temporarily leave the program, and their registration suspended for the duration of the LOA. Students may only take LOAs of any type up to a total period of one year during the program.

Students considering applying for an LOA should discuss with their faculty advisor in the first instance and the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs before applying. There may be alternative solutions to help you continue your studies.

LOA may be granted on the following grounds:

Personal:

An LOA may be granted for various circumstances including bereavement, financial situation, reevaluation of interests and goals, care for other family members, attendance to public duties (e.g., Jury service).

Medical:

For an LOA on medical grounds, the application must be accompanied by a written letter of recommendation of leave from a QEP (see page 16).

Parental:

LOA is granted to a student expecting to give birth or adopting a child (Maternity leave) or a student who is the non-birthing parent or co-adopter of a child (Paternity leave).

Administrative:

On occasions, the OSA may advise a student to apply for and take a personal leave of absence. If the student is unwilling to apply for and take a personal LOA, the Office of Student Affairs may place the student on an Administrative LOA.

An administrative LOA is an ACSOM-mandated (non-disciplinary) leave to allow a student to address various deficiencies including:

- Failure to abide by ACSOM policies, including, but not limited to, those related to student behavior and conduct, the technical or professional standards.
- Disruptive behavior that compromises the academic activities of the ACSOM community.
- Personal or medical circumstances judged by ACSOM to be in the best interest of the student to take a leave, where the student has refused to apply for an LOA.

- Inability or unwillingness to carry out normal self-care obligations such as participation in their own healthcare, rehabilitation, or monitoring programs.
- Health and safety concerns such as substance misuse.
- Financial reasons.
- Posing a risk to themselves or others.

Educational:

LOA is granted to pursue research, an externship, a degree-granting program outside ACSOM, or any other career advancing activity. Educational LOA may only occur during years three and four and is not granted for a period exceeding one year.

Procedure for applying for LOA

Students wishing to apply for LOA (of any type) should follow the guidelines below.

In the first instance, the student should contact the OSA (studentaffairs@acsom.edu.dm) to discuss their proposed LOA.

- The application for LOA should be made through completing the [LOA form in Populi](#).

Students on LOA will **not normally** be permitted to complete any academic course components or requirements while on leave. Returning students resume enrollment at the next appropriate curricular point as determined by institutional scheduling. Academic progression following module or semester failure is governed exclusively by the “Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals” section of this handbook.

- Taking a leave of absence can affect your eligibility for financial aid and loans. It is the student’s responsibility to consult with the Financial Aid Office. Students returning from leave will also need to coordinate with the Financial Aid Office prior to enrollment to determine if they still qualify.
- Students with an approved leave of absence are not eligible to use the facilities on campus or other student services normally reserved for active students.

Students returning from LOA resume enrollment in accordance with institutional scheduling and applicable progression policies. Audit Status and Mandatory Semester Repeat are applied only under the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook. Students should also understand that, depending upon the length of the leave of absence, graduation may be delayed.

If a student fails to return to school at the end of the approved leave of absence they will face dismissal from the program.

ACSOM Program & Curriculum

Goals of the MD Program

The ACSOM medical education program is intended to prepare students for postgraduate medical training, including Graduate Medical Education, in North America and elsewhere in the world. The MD curriculum at ACSOM is delivered over four years. The first two years focus on basic sciences and preclinical preparation, while years three and four provide clinical education and rotation experiences.

Oversight of the curriculum and its delivery is the responsibility of the Curriculum Committee, which includes faculty members and student representatives. The Curriculum Committee uses an evidence-informed approach, including student assessment outcomes, module evaluations, and other relevant data, to review the curriculum and recommend changes to its content, organization, or delivery where such changes are likely to enhance educational quality, student learning, and student success.

ACSOM Preparatory Program (MD Direct)

The ACSOM Prep Program is a 19-week semester designed to prepare students for medical studies*.

It consists of two modules:

1. **Decelerated Foundations of Medicine (dFOM):** A 12-week course that covers core medical science principles.
2. **Pre-Attack and Defense (preAAD):** A 7-week course introducing concepts relevant to immunology and microbiology.

Program Structure:

- Morning Sessions (three hours per session): Days and times as described in the syllabus.
- Afternoon Sessions (three hours per session): Days and times as described in the syllabus.

Attendance at these sessions is mandatory.

The MD-Direct Program **does not include** the following MD course components: morning lectures, Introduction to Clinical Medicine, or Anatomy laboratory sessions.

*Admission to the ACSOM M.D. program after the MD-Direct Program is **not** guaranteed. Students must meet specific academic and behavioral standards to be considered for acceptance into the medical program. These requirements include:

- i. Academic Performance: Students must achieve a minimum average score of 70% across both modules with a minimum score of 60% in each of the MD-Direct Program modules' final exams.
- ii. Professional Behavior: Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and conduct throughout the program. Any violations of the code of conduct, including academic dishonesty or disruptive behavior, may result in dismissal from the Prep Program and disqualification from progressing to the M.D. program.

Students who fail to meet these academic and professional behavioral standards will not be eligible for advancement into the ACSOM M.D. program, regardless of completion of the MD-Direct Program.

MD Basic Science Curriculum

The structured learning experience over four semesters combines the academic and clinical environment with a community living experience that complements your medical education. This academic environment allows medical students to engage in a high-quality medical curriculum that prepares them for national examinations such as USMLE and Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination (MCCQE), while having time to gain global health experience and explore a new culture.

The year is built upon master courses and two longitudinal threads*. Each course is usually taught in 4-9 weeks. The threads run for the whole year.

Foundation of Medicine (MED 101)

The goal of the Foundations of Medical Sciences course is to review molecular bases of life and prepare students for further studies. During this course, you will develop basic knowledge in 6 fundamental disciplines:

- Biochemistry
- Molecules, Cells/Tissues
- Pathology
- Genes and Development
- Oncology
- Basic Pharmacology

Attack and Defense (MED 102)

This course is dedicated to immunology and microbiology. It is built on the previous block and reviews all key concepts in these two areas. The course introduces students to basic immunology, virology, and microbiology, with priority placed on understanding the fundamentals of these disciplines and examples relevant to clinical and diagnostic medicine.

The Structural Symphony (MED 107)

Students will learn several of the most common conditions including pathophysiological features, diagnosis, and basic management options. The first two weeks are dedicated to skin and adnexal disorders. The second half of this block considers muscle and bone disorders

Homeostasis I - Circulation and Cardiovascular (MED 104)

This course focuses on the general aspects of the heart and circulatory system. The first portion concentrates on the erythrocyte life cycle and function, while the second around platelets, bleeding control, and homeostasis. Finally, the third portion of the course focuses on the heart and the blood vessels describing structure, function, physiology, and pathophysiology within the cardiovascular organ system. Many of the common conditions related to heart and vascular disease will be covered during this course.

Homeostasis II - Respiratory and Renal (MED 105)

This course is designed to focus on the general aspects (such as development, physiology and pathophysiology) of the pulmonary, renal, and urinary systems and acid-base disturbances. The first portion includes basic sciences concerning the respiratory system. The next portion of the course concentrates on a renal and urinary system overview. The final section focuses on acid-base disturbances.

Energy and Metabolism (Med 106)

This course provides a thorough experience in gastroenterology and hepatology focusing on students attaining knowledge of the pathophysiology, molecular pathogenesis, and clinical management of diseases and exposure to current research in the field. This course also covers metabolism, hormones, and nutrition.

****Longitudinal Threads***

There are two longitudinal courses that interweave throughout the year:

Anatomy: Year 1 and 2 (MED L01 & L03)

The Anatomy Lab Course (Micro and Macro Anatomy) uses an integrative approach to teaching anatomy. The Anatomy Lab curriculum follows along smoothly with core morning courses and allows a deeper understanding of human anatomy in correlation with normal and pathologic processes occurring in the human body. Anatomy Lab classes are inclusive of various imaging techniques used in medical practice, along with physical examination with peer-to-peer, hands-on experience for versatile and profound comprehension of anatomy.

Being a doctor: Introduction to Clinical Medicine: Year 1 and 2 (MED L02 & L04)

Students will gain the ability to engage and communicate with patients in our standardized patient program, virtual patients of our unique Cyberpatient program, as well as patients in our local teaching hospital and ambulatory clinical setting. Students will learn how to develop a student-patient relationship and communicate with others using interpersonal skills to build relationships for the purposes of information gathering guidance, education, support and collaboration. The course will help students to practice medical professionalism and learn about important topics such as altruism, accountability, communication skills, humanism in medicine, interprofessional collaboration, and ethical and legal aspects of medicine.

*Year 1 longitudinal courses continue during Year 2. Intensive practice and USMLE preparations are added this year to ensure students are successful in passing their exam and starting their third-year clerkship experience.

Homeostasis III Adaptation and Reproduction (MED 201)

This course will focus on the endocrine and reproductive systems, specifically, the cellular and physiological functions of hormones in both health and disease. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the underlying principles of endocrinology and mechanisms involved in hormone regulation.

Sense and Sensibilities (MED 202)

This is a dedicated neuroscience unit that covers the central and peripheral nervous system and its related physiology, pathology, and pharmacology. It integrates these studies with the discipline of behavioral science and includes an introduction to clinical psychiatry. This course overlaps with Anatomy Lab to maximize students' immersion in the discipline.

Generations (MED 203)

This course is designed to focus on embryology, pediatrics, and geriatrics' general aspects. It is divided into three large parts. The first portion includes embryological development. The second portion of the course focuses on pediatric aspects, from newborns to adolescents. And in the last days of the course, some geriatrics will be covered, such as health care planning, medication management and atypical presentations of diseases.

Community-Based Medicine, Public Health and Health Policy (MED 204)

This course provides students with a better comprehension of the North American healthcare system, including policy, cultural biases, and legal and social determinants of health.

Clinical Reasoning and Clerkship Preparation (MED 207)

This course is meant to prepare students for their clerkship by combining simulation with regular class instruction in medical decision-making and development of procedural competencies.

Clinical Reasoning and Critical Thinking (MED 206)

Students will become acquainted with the process of clinical reasoning including its heuristics, different approaches, learning and teaching methodologies and the sequence of problem-solving. Trainees will also learn how to recognize and monitor cognitive biases.

Year 3

This year provides students with core knowledge of the basic clinical medical, psychiatric, and surgical fields, each student will complete required rotations in:

- General Surgery & Emergency Medicine (MED 302 - 12 weeks)
- Internal Medicine & Neurology (MED 301 - 12 weeks)
- Pediatrics (MED 304 - 6 weeks)
- Psychiatry (MED 303 - 6 weeks)
- Obstetrics & Gynecology (MED 305 - 6 weeks)
- Family Medicine (MED 306 – 6 weeks)

Our [clinical sites](#) are currently situated in:

California:

[Desert Regional Medical Center Palm Springs](#)

Pennsylvania:

[Nazareth Hospital, Philadelphia](#)

[St. Mary Medical Center, Langhorne](#)

Our agreements provide for the provision of required rotations in Family Medicine, Psychiatry, OB/GYN, and Pediatrics (all of 6 weeks duration), Internal Medicine and General Surgery (both of 12 weeks duration), with Neurology incorporated within the Internal Medicine rotation.

Year 4

This year prepares students for the transition to residency training in North America or elsewhere. Year Four of the MD curriculum consists of elective clinical block rotations—Global Health, Intensive Care Unit/Emergency Department, and Acting Internship—together with elective clinical training designed to support students' preparation for graduate medical education and residency placement. All students must complete a minimum of five approved clinical electives in disciplines of their choosing. During this year, students finalize their specialty interests, complete the USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) examination, and engage in the residency application and interview process for programs in North America or elsewhere. Clinical training during Year Four may be completed across a combination of approved sites in Dominica, North America, and designated global health locations. The Acting Internship is intended to be completed, where possible, in the specialty in which the student plans to pursue residency training and is commonly undertaken in North America. The National Residency Matching Program (NRMP) Match occurs in the third week of March, with residency programs typically commencing in June or July following the Match.

Learning Support

The [Student Learning Center \(SLC\)](#) is open to all students who wish to enhance their skills and knowledge. The SLC provides different levels of support designed to enhance understanding and academic performance, including organized faculty support, dedicated tutoring, peer tutoring, and workshops designed to enhance test-taking skills, review covered material, and prepare students for final exams. These workshops aim to provide students with valuable tools and strategies to succeed academically. The SLC may be contacted at: learningcenter@acsom.edu.dm.

The SLC offers a structured support system designed to enhance students' **academic** success through a tiered assistance approach.

There are three levels of assistance at SLC:

Level 1: Leading Faculty Support

Students can address specific questions related to the current module to the leading faculty during their working

Hours on campus. If students still have questions after consulting with the leading faculty, they can seek assistance at the subsequent levels.

Level 2: Peer Tutoring

Peer tutors are students who are well-versed in the material and have successfully completed the module. They offer valuable insights into exam-taking strategies and possess a comprehensive understanding of the topics essential for the successful completion of the final exam (EMSA).

Level 3: Faculty Tutoring

Faculty tutors, who also serve as module directors, provide support if questions persist after consulting with the faculty or peer tutors. In that case, SLC provides support as follows:

- Communicate to the module director and identify the date and topics.
- Request the information from student(s) on their needs at least 2 calendar days before the session via email (learningcenter@acsom.edu.dm).

Details of tutoring sessions:

- Duration of tutoring: Not exceeding one hour
- Frequency of tutoring: Not exceeding once a week

Additional support

The SLC also organizes various workshops. The purpose of conducting a workshop is to enhance test-taking skills, review covered material, and prepare for the final exam. Workshops are held approximately once a month and last for approximately 60 minutes. Workshops are primarily intended for students experiencing difficulties in learning but are also open to attendance by all interested students.

Academic Standards

Overview and Expectations

As a future physician, active participation in all components of the ACSOM education program is fundamental to your career pathway. A medical education is a highly demanding endeavor and requires a greater commitment than you will have experienced in your previous undergraduate studies.

Attendance is mandatory for all classes, clinicals, and group activities, as well as for all assessments and Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs). ACSOM utilizes a wide variety of assessment types.

Assessments

Assessment tools for pre-clinical years (1 & 2)

- USMLE-type Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs)
- Case-based discussions: Evaluation of students' ability to apply their knowledge to real-life patient scenarios.
- Clinical case presentation
- OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination)

- Practical exams and skills assessments
- Online quizzes and self-assessments
- Clinical simulations and standardized patient encounters
- CyberPatient™

Assessment tools for the clinical years (3 & 4)

ACSOM students undergoing clinical clerkships during the 3rd and 4th years will be continuously assessed in an inclusive and effective way including formative, diagnostic, and/or summative approaches including:

- Clinical rotations: Evaluation by supervising physicians and residents on the students' ability to perform patient care tasks, communicate with patients and other healthcare professionals, and demonstrate their understanding of the medical information.
- Standardized Patient Encounters: Evaluation of students' communication and examination skills through interactions with actors trained to simulate patients.
- OSCEs (Objective Structured Clinical Examinations): Evaluation of clinical skills and knowledge through a series of structured patient encounters.
- Case-based discussions: Evaluation of students' ability to apply their knowledge to real-life patient scenarios.
- Clinical Presentations: Evaluation of students' ability to present patient cases and their diagnostic and treatment plans effectively.
- Written exams: Evaluation of students' knowledge of the medical information and their ability to apply it to real-life patient scenarios.

Clinical clerkship assessment will consist of the following:

- Mid-clerkship feedback
- Final summative assessment
- Final formative assessment
- National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) shelf exam

For each student, there will be one Medical Student Clinical Assessment Form which is submitted within 30 calendar days of the end of each clerkship or elective. This assessment form is to be completed at the end of each clinical clerkship (twelve-week core clerkship, six-week core clerkship, four-week clerkship, or a four-week elective).

Individualized mid-clerkship feedback after 2 weeks of every core clerkship or elective is required for all students; a formal mid-clerkship review and a written remediation plan will be provided for any student whose performance is deficient (defined as either below expectations or failing).

Summative assessments are used at the end of each clerkship and elective to determine whether students have mastered the specific (ACGME) competencies and entrustable professional activities (EPAs).

The final formative assessment will be used for the self-improvement of the student and will not be included in the final Medical Student Clinical Assessment Form. A comment section is provided at the end of each form for the clinical educator to complete.

The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) shelf exam is used as the final examination on the last day of the core clerkship to measure knowledge gained during the clerkship experience. The NBME final examination is a standardized exam with 110 multiple-choice questions that is returned to the NBME for scoring.

Rating scale in clinicals:

Exceeds expectations is an advanced student who functions consistently at a level higher than is usual for this stage of training.

Meets expectations is a capable student who performs consistently at a level appropriate for this stage of training with no serious weaknesses with respect to that specific clinical skill or category.

Below expectations is a student who falls short of adequate performance in a specific clinical skill or category. They have weaknesses that need addressing, and may have received mid-clerkship feedback identifying the relevant issues and have made a partial remedial response. For any student who receives this rating in one or more areas, this assessment form must include a specific description of the feedback given to a student, level of response, and areas in need of further remediation.

Fail: A student has serious weaknesses. A student falls substantially short of adequate performance in this category. May have received mid-clerkship feedback identifying the issues but has not subsequently acted on it or improved. For any student who receives this rating in one or more areas, this assessment form must include detailed comments to identify and describe the issues, feedback provided, and persistent problems.

Formative & Narrative Assessments

Throughout the courses, and clerkships, students are provided with regular, formative and narrative feedback on their performance. In the basic science courses this feedback takes the form of Periodic tests administered to assess students' knowledge and understanding of the module material. These assessments may consist of multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, or clinical case scenarios.

Regular quizzes will be conducted to gauge students' comprehension of specific topics covered in the module. These quizzes may be administered online or in class and will typically consist of a few questions to assess understanding.

Assignments and essays may be assigned to assess students' critical thinking, research skills, and ability to synthesize information. These assignments may require students to analyze case studies, write literature reviews, or develop research proposals.

Small Group Sessions and Discussions

Active participation in small group activities, discussions, and journal clubs will be evaluated to assess students' ability to collaborate, communicate, and apply their knowledge to practical scenarios. Faculty members may observe and provide feedback on students' contributions during these sessions.

Laboratory or Practical Assessments

If applicable, laboratory or practical assessments may be conducted to evaluate students' hands-on skills, data analysis, and understanding of experimental techniques.

Summative (Final) Assessments

The end of module summative assessment (EMSA) will normally consist of MCQs taken from the National Board of Medical Examiners Customized Assessment Service (NBME CAS) and are similar to the USMLE format. This assessment aims to offer an all-encompassing readiness for the board exams. To successfully complete the module, students are required to achieve a passing score of 68% or higher.

Attendance and Absence Policy

General Requirement

Attendance at required educational activities is an academic and professional obligation of all students in the MD program. Students are expected to attend and participate in all sessions designated by the School as required.

Required activities may include, but are not limited to, lectures, laboratories, anatomy laboratory sessions, clinical skills sessions, small-group sessions, simulations, orientations, compliance sessions, patient-related activities, examinations, and any other activity designated by the School as mandatory.

The availability of recordings, slides, notes, or other instructional materials does not remove the requirement to attend required sessions.

Attendance & Absence

Students are expected to arrive on time for all required educational activities and to remain for the full duration of the session. Punctuality is part of professional conduct and an essential component of attendance.

Late arrival, early departure, or temporary absence from a required session may be recorded as an absence where the missed time reaches the applicable threshold. Missing 15 minutes or more of a required small-group session, lecture, clinical skills session, laboratory session, simulation, or other interactive required session will be treated as an absence. This includes leaving the session and not returning.

Multiple shorter periods of late arrival, early departure, or temporary absence from the same session may be combined for attendance purposes. Where the total missed time in a single session reaches the applicable threshold, the student will be recorded absent for that session.

Students are expected to sign in, respond to attendance checks, or otherwise comply with attendance monitoring procedures as required by the School or course faculty. Failure to do so may result in the student being recorded absent.

Definition of Absence

An absence is failure to attend a required scheduled session. For purposes of this policy, one absence equals one scheduled session.

Absences are classified as either excused or unexcused.

Excused Absences

An absence may be classified as excused only where it results from a serious and verifiable circumstance. Such circumstances may include:

- acute illness or injury;
- a medical appointment that cannot reasonably be scheduled outside required academic time;
- serious illness or death of an immediate family member;
- legal obligations, including court appearances;
- participation in officially approved School activities;
- immigration, visa, or other legal or administrative obligations that cannot reasonably be deferred; or
- other serious and verifiable circumstances approved by the Office of Student Affairs.

Routine personal obligations, travel arrangements, social events, and academic workload do not normally constitute grounds for an excused absence.

Notice and Request Procedure

Students must notify the School of any absence as follows:

- (i) For a foreseeable absence, the student must notify the Course Director and the Office of Student Affairs by email as far in advance as possible.
- (ii) For an unexpected absence, the student must provide notice as soon as possible and normally within 24 hours of the missed academic activity, unless exceptional circumstances

prevent earlier communication. Failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as unexcused.

All requests for an absence to be classified as excused must be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs.

- Students must not submit medical or personal documentation directly to faculty.

Supporting Documentation

A student requesting an excused absence must submit appropriate supporting documentation to the Office of Student Affairs within five calendar days of the absence, unless an extension has been granted by the Office of Student Affairs.

Supporting documentation must come from an independent and appropriate source, such as:

- a licensed healthcare professional or medical facility independent of ACSOM;
- a court, legal authority, or other official institution.

Documentation must confirm the legitimacy and timing of the absence. Detailed medical information is not required.

Determination of Absence Status

The Office of Student Affairs, in consultation with course leadership where appropriate, will determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused and will notify the relevant faculty accordingly.

Faculty will be informed only of the classification of the absence and not of confidential medical or personal details.

Failure to provide timely notice or required documentation will result in the absence being recorded as unexcused unless the Office of Student Affairs approves an exception.

School Authority

The School reserves the right to determine:

- whether an absence is excused or unexcused;
- what notice and documentation are required;
- what make-up work or remediation is necessary; and
- whether a student has satisfactorily fulfilled the attendance and participation requirements of a course, module, or program activity.

Additional attendance requirements may be set out in course syllabi, module handbooks, clinical manuals, or other School policies. Where educationally justified, the stricter requirement will apply.

Academic Responsibility for Missed Work

Students remain responsible for all missed academic requirements.

Where an absence is excused, and in limited cases where an absence is unexcused, the student may be permitted or required to complete missed work, attend a make-up session, or satisfy an equivalent alternative requirement, in accordance with course requirements and timelines.

All permitted make-up work or alternative requirements must be completed no later than three calendar days before the End-of-Module Summative Assessment (EMSA), unless otherwise approved in writing by the Course Director, in consultation with the Office of Student Affairs where the absence involves documentation, accommodation, health, welfare, or student-status concerns. Failure to complete required make-up work may render the student ineligible to sit the EMSA.

Remote Participation During Short Approved Absence

As a limited academic courtesy, and not as an entitlement, the School may permit a student to participate remotely in certain educational sessions during a short, approved excused absence period of normally up to ten calendar days.

Remote participation is discretionary and is not equivalent to a general right to attend classes remotely.

Remote participation may be approved only where all of the following conditions are met:

- (i) the absence has been approved by the Office of Student Affairs;
- (ii) the student remains sufficiently well and able to participate meaningfully;
- (iii) the session is educationally suitable for remote participation;
- (iv) remote participation does not create undue burden for faculty or disruption to the session;
- (v) remote participation does not create confidentiality, professionalism, safety, or fairness concerns; and
- (vi) the Course Director approves the arrangement, in consultation with Lead Faculty where appropriate.

Remote participation will not ordinarily be permitted for:

- (i) examinations or other assessments, except as separately authorized under School assessment procedures;
- (ii) anatomy laboratory sessions;
- (iii) clinical skills sessions;
- (iv) simulations;
- (v) standardized patient encounters;
- (vi) mandatory safety or compliance training requiring in-person participation; or
- (vii) any other activity designated by the School as requiring in-person attendance.

Where remote participation is approved, the student will normally be regarded as having attended the session. The School may nevertheless require make-up work, an alternative assignment, or other remediation where remote participation does not fully satisfy the educational requirements of the session. The School reserves the right to deny, limit, or discontinue remote participation where in-person attendance is deemed educationally necessary or the arrangement is otherwise considered inappropriate.

Review of Repeated Excused Absences

Excused absences are not treated as misconduct. However, repeated excused absences may trigger review where they raise concerns regarding academic engagement, student well-being, or the student's ability to meet course requirements.

An absence review will normally be initiated by the Office of Student Affairs, in consultation with the Course Director and CAP where academic progression concerns are identified, where a student has missed more than 10% of required sessions in a module.

Such review is intended to be supportive and may include academic support, wellness support, make-up requirements, temporary accommodations where appropriate, or consideration of whether a Leave of Absence or other intervention should be discussed.

Unexcused Absences

An absence will be recorded as unexcused where:

- (i) it does not meet the criteria for an excused absence;
- (ii) timely notification is not provided without adequate justification; or
- (iii) required documentation is not submitted within the prescribed period.

For ordinary required teaching sessions, unexcused absences may result in warning, required meeting, make-up requirements where permitted, and/or professionalism concern before the thresholds below are reached. The School's response to repeated unexcused absences will normally be as follows:

Third unexcused absence: written cautionary notice to the student regarding attendance, any required make-up work, and the consequences for EMSA eligibility if the attendance concerns continue.

Fourth unexcused absence in a module: The student becomes ineligible to sit the End-of-Module Summative Assessment (EMSA), resulting in an EMSA Failure. The student remains eligible for any remediation opportunity permitted under ACSOM's assessment and academic progression policies. If the student successfully completes the permitted EMSA remediation, the student may still pass the module, provided all other academic, attendance, professionalism, and administrative requirements are satisfied.

Unexcused absences may also result in recorded professionalism concerns, no credit for missed required activities where applicable, or referral to the Committee on Academic Progress, where academic progression concerns are identified.

Pattern of Unexcused Absence

Unexcused absences may be reviewed on the basis of pattern as well as number. Formal review may therefore occur before a student reaches four unexcused absences where the pattern itself raises concern.

Examples include repeated absence:

- on Mondays, Fridays, or immediately before or after holidays or breaks;
- from the same type of required session;
- without timely notification;
- involving repeated late arrival or early departure amounting to substantial non-attendance;
- or
- across multiple modules in a manner suggesting selective or avoidant attendance.

Such patterns may be treated as both an attendance issue and a professionalism issue.

Sessions for Which No Unexcused Absence Is Permitted

No unexcused absence is permitted for:

- examinations and other scheduled assessments;
- OSCEs or similar practical examinations;
- required clinical activities or patient-care sessions;
- mandatory safety training;
- mandatory institutional compliance sessions;
- any other activity specifically designated by the School as requiring attendance without exception.

Failure to attend such activities without an approved excuse may result in assessment ineligibility, failure of the activity, EMSA Failure or other applicable assessment failure, professionalism review, or failure to meet a course or program requirement. Academic progression consequences will be determined under the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Excessive Absence

Absence will be considered excessive where a student:

- (i) misses more than 10% of required sessions in a module;
- (ii) incurs four or more unexcused absences in a module; or
- (iii) misses such a volume or type of required activity that the School determines the student has not adequately completed the educational requirements of the module.

Excessive absence may arise from excused absences, unexcused absences, or a combination of both. The School will consider the number, pattern, type, and educational significance of missed activities when determining whether the student has satisfied module requirements.

Where absence is excessive, the School may impose one or more of the following consequences, in addition to any automatic consequence otherwise specified in this policy:

- (i) a mandatory meeting with the Office of Student Affairs and the Course Director, and with Lead Faculty where appropriate;
- (ii) issuance of a formal attendance warning by the Office of Student Affairs, based on the attendance record maintained by course faculty;
- (iii) required session remediation, make-up sessions, or alternative assignments by a stated deadline;
- (iv) ineligibility to sit the End-of-Module Summative Assessment (EMSA);
- (v) referral to the Committee on Academic Progress where academic progression concerns are identified; and/or
- (vi) professionalism review where the absence pattern raises professionalism concerns.

Where a review results in a finding of significant attendance-related or professionalism concern, the outcome will be documented in the student's record and may be considered for inclusion in the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE) in accordance with School policy.

Duty Hours in Clinical Clerkships

During Clinical Clerkships, students must adhere to the duty hour guidelines as outlined by the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) listed below.

The ACGME's Approach to Limit Resident Duty Hours 12 Months After Implementation:

Standards for resident hours and institutional oversight promoting compliance. Increasing knowledge on the effect of the standards and on innovative ways to conduct education and patient care under limited resident hours.

ACGME considers duty hour limits an important element of its comprehensive approach to promote high-quality education and safe patient care. The [ACGME's common duty hour standards](#) acknowledge scientific evidence that long hours and sleep loss have a negative effect on resident performance, learning and well-being.

The duty hour standards include:

- An 80-hour weekly limit, averaged over four weeks;
- An adequate rest period, which should consist of 10 hours of rest between duty periods;
- A 24-hour limit on continuous duty, and up to six added hours for continuity of care and education;
- One day in seven free from patient care and educational obligations, averaged over four weeks;
- In-house call no more than once every three nights, averaged over four weeks;
- The option for programs in some specialties to request an increase of up to 8 hours in the weekly hours, if this benefits resident education, with approval by their sponsoring institution and the Residency Review Committee (RRC) in the given specialty. ACGME chose 80-hours as the upper limit to safeguard against the negative effects of chronic sleep loss and selected a limit of 24 hours plus up to six hours to address the effects of acute sleep loss, and to allow for adequate time for patient hand-off and didactic learning

Duty hours are defined as all clinical and academic activities related to the program:

- Patient care (both inpatient and outpatient)
- Administrative duties relative to patient care
- The provision for transfer of patient care
- Time spent in-house during call activities

- Scheduled activities, such as conferences

Medical Malpractice Insurance

Students are required to carry Medical Malpractice Insurance while on clerkship rotations. Students must use the Medical Malpractice Insurance identified and vetted by ACSOM to assure the appropriate coverage. For more information, please contact Student Support Services (studentservices@acsom.edu.dm).

Violations of clinical duty hour or malpractice insurance requirements are addressed under institutional professionalism and conduct policies and do not modify academic progression outcomes governed by the “Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals” section of this handbook.

Assessments, grading and promotion

Conduct in End of Module Summative Assessments (EMSAs)

All module EMSAs are conducted on campus in the exam center or other designated space (e.g. library, auditorium) and proctored in person by trained ACSOM staff.

- **Remote (off campus) EMSA testing for examinees is not possible under any circumstances.**

ACSOM observes NBME best practices for the conduct of our EMSAs conducted through the NBME CAS Service. All examinees are expected to comply with the conditions of taking the assessment.

NBME provides comprehensive information for examinees available at:

<https://www.nbme.org/examinees>.

Students are advised to read the guidance on rules and conduct of exams available at:

<https://www.nbme.org/common-questions/exam-rules-and-conduct>.

Specifically, regarding taking your NBME assessments in the E. Blackwell test center or other designated exam spaces please note the following:

Before the exam begins, students must ensure that they do not have any prohibited materials or devices on their person or at their testing space.

Prohibited materials and devices include but are not limited to:

- Cell phones
- iPads/tablets in addition to the one on which you are taking the exam
- iPod/media devices

- Watches with alarm, computer or memory capability
- Calculator
- Paging devices
- Recording/filming devices
- Reference materials (book, notes or any paper)
- Backpack, briefcases or luggage
- Beverage or food of any type.

Examinees will be given the opportunity by the proctor to deposit any of the above items in their possession in a receptacle at the entrance of the exam room.

- Failure to deposit prohibited items when instructed, followed by discovery of the item(s) on the student's person after the assessment has started, **will result in immediate exclusion from the assessment and a grade of zero for that assessment.** The matter will be referred to CAP for review under applicable academic integrity, professionalism, and conduct policies.
- Any broader academic consequence, including EMSA Failure, confirmed Module Failure, Semester Failure, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, or dismissal, will be determined under the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook and applicable conduct policies.

Noise Policy During Formative and Summative Assessments (basic sciences)

This policy aims to create a conducive environment for all ACSOM students to succeed during formative and summative assessments by minimizing distractions. This policy aims to ensure fairness, concentration, and respect for all students' efforts.

Policy overview:

- Absolute silence must be maintained from the moment the assessment begins until all tests are submitted.
- Students must avoid any verbal communication, including whispering, at any time.
- Students are not permitted to make any noises that could be disruptive, such as tapping, shuffling papers unnecessarily, or making noises with personal items (e.g., clicking pens, opening bags, etc.).
- For in-classroom formative assessments, personal electronic devices, including phones, smartwatches, and tablets, must be turned off or set to silent mode and stored in the container provided for that purpose during assessments.

Movement and Restroom Breaks:

- Unnecessary movement within the classroom/test center is not allowed.
- Restroom breaks are discouraged during assessments and should be taken only if absolutely necessary. If a student needs to use the restroom, they must raise their hand silently and wait for the instructor's/proctor's permission.

Communication Restrictions:

- Any form of communication, verbal or non-verbal, including gestures, passing notes, or sharing of materials without permission, is strictly prohibited.
- If a student has a question or needs assistance, they should raise their hand quietly and wait for the instructor/proctor to approach them.

Respect for Peers and Proctors:

- Students should respect their peers' need for a quiet environment by avoiding behaviors that might cause distractions.
- Students must also show respect to proctors or instructors and follow any additional instructions given during the assessment.

Consequences for Violations:

A student who violates the noise, communication, movement, or proctor-instruction requirements during an assessment may receive a warning, be reseated, be removed from the assessment environment, or be referred for review under applicable academic integrity, professionalism, or conduct policies, depending on the nature and severity of the conduct.

Repeated, intentional, or serious disruption, including speaking during an assessment, communicating with another student, refusing to follow proctor instructions, or intentionally disrupting the testing environment, may result in invalidation of the assessment or a grade of zero for that assessment.

Any broader academic consequence, including EMSA Failure, confirmed Module Failure, Semester Failure, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, or dismissal, will be determined under the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook and applicable conduct policies.

Grading Policy

A variety of evaluations may be used to assess students in a course or module, including but not limited to written evaluation of participation and engagement, examinations, team-based activities, direct observation and evaluation of professional conduct, written reports, oral presentations, Objective Structured Practical Examinations (OSPEs), and Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs).

Individual course or module syllabi provide detailed information about grading and assessment requirements for specific courses or modules.

To successfully complete a basic science module, students must satisfy all applicable academic, assessment, attendance, professionalism, and remediation requirements. At minimum, students must:

1. achieve the required passing score on the End-of-Module Summative Assessment (EMSA) or other required summative assessment, including any permitted remediation where applicable; and
2. comply with required attendance, participation, make-up work, professionalism, and assessment requirements for the module.

A student who does not satisfy these requirements is subject to the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Final module grades are reported according to the grading scheme approved by ACSOM and recorded by the Registrar.

Grading for modules will be reported on a Pass/Fail basis as follows:

Achieved Score	Reported Grade
90 - 100	Pass with Honors (H)
80 - 89.9	High pass (HP)
68 - 79.9	Pass (P)
Below 68	Fail (F)

Definitions:

- H = Honors, reflecting a truly outstanding performance
- HP = High Pass, awarded for excellent/very good work
- P = Pass, indicating satisfactory performance
- F = Fail. Any grade of F remains on the student's academic record.

Where remediation is permitted and successfully completed, the final reported outcome will be recorded in accordance with Registrar and academic policy. Internal records of remediation activity

may be retained for academic advising, progression review, accreditation, and quality-improvement purposes.

This grade reporting will also be used in years three and four. In clinical clerkships that have a subject examination, students must score at or above the 10th percentile of the national pool of students taking the examination to pass the clerkship. If a student fails a shelf examination for the second time in a third-year clerkship, an F is recorded on the permanent record.

Failure of any required clerkship component, including an NBME subject/shelf examination where applicable, constitutes failure of that clerkship. Remediation, repeat requirements, and progression consequences for clinical clerkships are determined by CAP on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable clinical education and grading policies and the six-year maximum time to degree.

Grades:

Official grade records of ACSOM are maintained by the Office of the Registrar and communicated to students through Populi.

When a semester or module is repeated under the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook, grades earned in the repeated enrollment are recorded as separate transcript entries in addition to the original transcript entries. Repeated coursework may be identified on the official transcript with an “(R)” or other notation used by the Registrar to indicate repeated coursework.

Temporary Grades

ACSOM may assign a temporary grade only when a final grade cannot yet be determined because an approved make-up assessment, required assessment component, documentation review, or other approved academic requirement remains pending.

Temporary grades are administrative placeholders only. They do not represent successful completion of a module or course and do not create progression rights. Temporary grades must be resolved by the deadline established by the Registrar in consultation with the Course Director or relevant academic office.

Temporary grades may include:

- **I — Incomplete:** Used when required academic work or documentation remains outstanding for an approved reason.
- **E — Examination Pending:** Used when an approved make-up or deferred examination remains pending.

If the temporary grade is not resolved by the stated deadline, ACSOM may assign the final grade or academic outcome in accordance with applicable assessment, remediation, attendance, and academic progression policies.

Academic Promotions

Professionalism is a core requirement of the MD program. Conduct and professionalism concerns are addressed under institutional professionalism and disciplinary policies. These processes are separate from academic progression outcomes, which are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

A student who has achieved passing academic grades may nevertheless be denied promotion or advancement if the student has unresolved professionalism, conduct, attendance, compliance, financial, or administrative concerns that affect the student's eligibility to progress. Oversight of student promotion and advancement is provided by the following committees:

Student Evaluations and Promotions Committee (SEPC: Membership Faculty only)

Following grade reports by each Module Leader, student outcomes in each required assessment are verified at the end of the module, and final grades are recommended for approval by the Dean and Registrar. Reports of student evaluations for each module are also considered by the Student Evaluations and Promotions Committee (SEPC), which may make reports and recommendations to the Curriculum Committee, CAP, or other appropriate institutional body as applicable.

SEPC verifies assessment outcomes, grade reporting, and student evaluation data. The Committee on Academic Progress (CAP) holds authority for determinations and actions related to academic standing, progression, remediation requirements, academic monitoring or conditional enrollment where applicable, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, and Academic Dismissal. Matters requiring final Dean approval will be forwarded to the Dean with CAP's recommendation. Students with questions or concerns regarding their grades should contact the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs in the first instance.

The Committee on Academic Progress (CAP: membership faculty only)

The Committee on Academic Progress (CAP) oversees the academic progress of individual students throughout the MD program. CAP reviews quantitative and qualitative information, including assessment outcomes, course or module performance, attendance concerns, remediation outcomes, professionalism concerns, advising reports, and other relevant information, to determine whether a student is meeting the standards required for continued progression.

CAP may make recommendations or determinations concerning student support, advising, learning interventions, remediation requirements, academic monitoring, conditional enrollment, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, Clinical Hold, and Academic Dismissal, in accordance with the

policies set out in this Handbook. Academic Appeals are heard by the Special Appeals Committee, with final decision by the Dean, as set out in the Academic Appeals provision.

CAP may issue a written notice of concern and require a Plan of Action for students with identified academic risk factors, repeated academic difficulty, attendance concerns, or professionalism concerns. Failure to comply with a CAP-required Plan of Action may result in further academic, administrative, or disciplinary review.

Academic progression outcomes are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Professionalism or conduct concerns may be referred by CAP to the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee or other applicable disciplinary process. Serious or persistent professionalism or conduct concerns may result in disciplinary sanctions, suspension, or dismissal under the institutional disciplinary process.

End of Module Assessment and Student Promotion Policy & Procedures

This section describes the procedure for review, verification, and release of End-of-Module Summative Assessment (EMSA) results and related module assessment outcomes. EMSAs are primarily conducted through the NBME Customized Assessment Services (CAS) system. Academic progression outcomes are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Procedure:

- 1. Meeting arrangement:** After receiving the EMSA report from NBME, a meeting of the Student Evaluations and Promotions Committee (SEPC) is normally arranged within 1–3 calendar days.
- 2. Results Review & Release:** In accordance with the ACSOM Grading Policy, a student who achieves 68% or higher on the EMSA is deemed to have passed the EMSA, unless a different passing standard has been approved by ACSOM and communicated to students in advance through official course or assessment guidance. EMSA results and final module grades are verified through the established SEPC, Registrar, and Dean approval process. Individual EMSA results and final grades are normally made available to students through Populi on the same day as the SEPC meeting.
- 3. Post-review documentation and referral:** Following each SEPC meeting, assessment outcomes, grade recommendations, and any relevant concerns are documented. Any identified assessment-quality concerns are referred to the Curriculum Committee and the Module Director for review and appropriate follow-up. SEPC verifies assessment outcomes and grade documentation but does not independently establish academic progression

outcomes. Academic progression outcomes are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Note:

1. Confidentiality of assessment results is essential to fairness and integrity in the assessment process. Students receive official notification of results through Populi or other official ACSOM communication channels.
2. Students seeking guidance regarding EMSA performance should first review their item analysis report, where available through the [NBME Insights Platform](#), and use that report to guide discussion with faculty, advisors, or the Student Learning Center.

ACSOM Preparatory Program (MD Direct)

The ACSOM Preparatory Program (MD Direct) is governed by a separate Program Handbook. Students enrolled in the MD Direct Program are subject to the academic, attendance, assessment, progression, and conduct requirements set out in that handbook.

Successful completion of the MD Direct Program does not, by itself, constitute completion of any part of the MD curriculum. Progression from the MD Direct Program into the MD program is governed by the admission, matriculation, and progression requirements established by ACSOM.

Where there is any difference between this MD Student Handbook and the MD Direct Program Handbook regarding Program requirements, the MD Direct Program Handbook governs the Prep Program.

Recognition of Academic Excellence & Distinction

The academic awards of Dean's List, Dean's Honor Roll, and President's Honor Roll recognize high-quality and exceptional academic achievement. These distinctions are awarded each semester, based on final approved grades in required modules or rotations completed during that semester.

Dean's List

The Dean's List recognizes students who achieve a consistently high level of academic performance. To qualify, a student must earn Honors or High Pass grades in at least 66% of required modules or rotations completed during the semester, with no more than one Pass grade and no Failures.

Dean's Honor Roll

The Dean's Honor Roll recognizes a higher level of academic distinction. To qualify, a student must earn Honors grades in at least 66% of required modules or rotations completed during the semester, with no more than one High Pass grade and no Pass or Fail grades.

President's Honor Roll

The President's Honor Roll is the highest academic distinction awarded by ACSOM. To qualify, a student must earn Honors grades in all required modules or rotations completed during the semester, with no High Pass, Pass, or Fail grades.

To be eligible for any academic distinction, a student must be in good academic standing, have completed all required modules or rotations for the semester without remediation, have no unresolved Incomplete or temporary grades, have no Failures, and have no unresolved professionalism, conduct, financial, or administrative hold that affects eligibility for recognition.

These awards are forms of institutional academic recognition. They do not, by themselves, alter academic standing, progression status, financial aid eligibility, scholarship eligibility, clinical placement, residency eligibility, or licensure eligibility.

Academic Remediation Policy

This policy governs the procedures for academic remediation. It does not establish or modify academic standing, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, academic dismissal, or other progression outcomes, all of which are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

The remediation policy at ACSOM provides a structured process for supporting students who encounter academic challenges and for helping students demonstrate achievement of required academic standards following an eligible EMSA Failure or other remediable assessment outcome.

Principles:

- Equity and fairness: all students will be treated equitably and fairly, with remediation plans tailored to their individual needs where appropriate
- Transparency: the remediation process will be transparent, with clear guidelines and communication channels.

Academic Structure

The preclinical curriculum consists of two academic years, each divided into two semesters. Students are assessed through required summative assessments, which may include:

- faculty-selected NBME CAS exams, including End-of-Module Summative Assessments (EMSAs);
- Objective Structured Practical Examinations (OSPEs);
- Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs); and
- Other required assessments specified in the syllabus.

To progress through the semester, a student must satisfy all applicable academic, assessment, remediation, professionalism, and attendance requirements.

An unsuccessful EMSA, OSPE, OSCE, or other required summative assessment outcome is handled in accordance with the applicable assessment and remediation procedures. A confirmed Module Failure occurs only when the student has exhausted the permitted remediation opportunity and has not achieved a passing outcome, or when the student is otherwise ineligible for remediation under ACSOM policy.

Semester progression

Procedural Remediation Pathways

This table summarizes remediation procedures and does not establish academic progression outcomes. Academic progression outcomes are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Rule	Description
Passing Score	The minimum passing score for an EMSA is 68% , unless a different passing standard is approved by ACSOM and communicated to students in advance through official course or assessment guidance.
Remediation Attempts	Remediation eligibility and attempt limits are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.
Remediation Timing	Remediation timing will be determined by ACSOM and communicated to the student in writing. Students are responsible for complying with all remediation deadlines, requirements, and conditions.

Failure of One Module in a Semester	A failed remediation or ineligibility for remediation results in confirmed Module Failure. Confirmed Module Failure in any module results in Semester Failure and is governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.
Failure of Two Modules in a Semester	Confirmed Module Failure in any module results in Semester Failure. Multiple confirmed Module Failures within the same semester do not create additional remediation rights and do not alter the requirement for Audit Status and Mandatory Semester Repeat under the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.
Progression Requirement	A student must successfully complete all required modules in the semester, including any required remediation, and must remain in compliance with applicable attendance, professionalism, financial, and administrative requirements to progress.

Procedural Audit Participation

This section describes procedural participation expectations only and does not establish academic standing, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, or Dismissal outcomes. Academic progression outcomes are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Eligibility for remediation attempts, and the consequences of exhausting them, are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

- Audit status is not a Leave of Absence and does not constitute academic progression. A student in audit status is still subject to all institutional rules, including attendance, professionalism, and conduct.

While in audit status, the student should attend classes, access instructional resources, and participate in formative or review activities for feedback, but **shall not participate in summative or graded assessments and shall not earn academic credit.**

During this period, participation remains non-credit-bearing and summative assessment is not permitted.

If an appeal is denied, the student shall remain in Active Audit (Non-Credit Bearing) status for the remainder of the semester and shall be required to repeat the entire semester at its next scheduled offering.

Repeated Semester Procedures (Informational)

- A minimum score of 68% is required to pass each module.
- Only one remediation attempt is permitted for any module in a repeated semester.
- Failure to pass any module in a repeated semester will result in dismissal from the program.

Additional Notes:

- Each instance of academic difficulty will be assessed individually by the Committee on Academic Progress (CAP).
- Students must adhere to the prescribed timelines for remedial actions.
- Failure to complete required procedural remediation steps may result in referral to the CAP for application of institutional academic standing outcomes.
- This policy aims to support students in their academic journey while maintaining program standards, ensuring they receive necessary assistance and resources to succeed while addressing areas of weakness identified through module failures.

Probation and Conditional Enrollment

Probation is a conduct-based, professionalism-based, administrative, or return-to-study monitoring status. Probation is not, by itself, an academic progression outcome and is not automatically imposed solely because of an EMSA Failure, confirmed Module Failure, Semester Failure, Audit Status, or Mandatory Semester Repeat.

Academic progression outcomes are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Conduct-based or professionalism-based probation is a defined period, normally not exceeding 60 calendar days unless extended by the appropriate committee or administrative authority, during which a student must demonstrate the ability to correct identified behavioral or professionalism concerns and comply fully with the Student Code of Conduct, professionalism standards, and any written conditions imposed by ACSOM.

Conditions of probation may include, but are not limited to, required meetings with Student Affairs, faculty advising, professionalism coaching, written reflection, compliance with a behavioral agreement, restrictions on participation in specified activities, monitoring of attendance or engagement, or other conditions reasonably related to the concern that led to probation.

Failure to comply with the conditions of probation may result in further disciplinary or administrative action, including suspension or dismissal where appropriate.

A student returning from a Leave of Absence, conduct-based or administrative suspension, or reinstatement following a successful appeal may be placed on conditional enrollment or probation as part of a return-to-study plan. Academic return-to-study plans require CAP approval. Conduct, professionalism, or administrative return-to-study plans require approval by the Dean of Student Affairs.

Placement on probation or conditional enrollment does not reverse, suspend, or replace any academic progression outcome, including EMSA Failure, confirmed Module Failure, Semester Failure, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, Clinical Hold, or academic dismissal, unless expressly stated in a written appeal decision.

Probation (conduct based)

A defined period of up to 60 calendar days during which a student is given the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to correct identified behavioral deficiencies and to abide by the Student Code of Conduct.

Suspension & Dismissal Policy

Suspension is a conduct-based, professionalism-based, or administrative status and is not an academic progression outcome. Academic progression outcomes, including confirmed Module Failure, Semester Failure, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, Clinical Hold, Appeal Pending Status, and Academic Dismissal, are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

When a student is placed on conduct-based, professionalism-based, or administrative suspension, the suspension period is intended to allow the student to address the concerns that led to the suspension and to satisfy any conditions required by ACSOM before return.

A student seeking to return from conduct-based, professionalism-based, or administrative suspension must submit a return-to-study Plan of Action for approval by the Dean of Student Affairs. Where the suspension or return-to-study plan involves academic progression concerns, CAP review or approval may also be required.

A student returning from suspension may be placed on conditional enrollment or probation. Conditional enrollment or probation does not reverse, suspend, or replace any academic progression outcome unless expressly stated in a written appeal or reinstatement decision.

Students should contact the Financial Aid Office before or during any period of suspension, as suspension may affect financial aid, loan eligibility, payment-plan status, or other financial obligations.

Dismissal

Disciplinary dismissal is a formal conduct - based, professionalism - based, or administrative action resulting in permanent separation from ACSOM. Serious or repeated violations of professional conduct, academic integrity, institutional policy, student conduct standards, or conditions of probation or conditional enrollment may be grounds for disciplinary dismissal.

Academic Dismissal arising from academic progression outcomes is separate from disciplinary dismissal and is governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Right to Appeal Disciplinary Decisions

Students at ACSOM have the right to appeal disciplinary, conduct-based, professionalism-based, or administrative actions, including suspension or disciplinary dismissal from the MD program, in accordance with the process set out below.

This disciplinary appeal process does not apply to academic progression decisions. Academic progression outcomes, including Semester Failure, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, Clinical Hold, Appeal Pending Status, and Academic Dismissal, are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

The appeal process is intended to be conducted respectfully and professionally. All parties are expected to act with integrity and professionalism throughout the process. Unprofessional behavior during the appeal may result in additional disciplinary action.

A student facing disciplinary suspension, administrative suspension, or disciplinary dismissal may appeal if the student can demonstrate procedural error, disproportionate sanction, new relevant information, or significant extenuating circumstances that were not adequately considered in the original decision.

Appeal Process

1. Submission Timeline:

- The appeal must be submitted within seven calendar days from the date the dismissal notification is issued.
- Appeals submitted after the deadline may be accepted if a valid reason for the delay is provided.
- The opportunity to appeal expires 30 calendar days after the date of the dismissal notice.

2. Appeal Submission:

- Appeals must be submitted using the official [ACSOM Disciplinary Decision Appeal Form](#) in Populi or other submission process designated by ACSOM.
- Only emails sent from the student's official ACSOM email address will be accepted.

3. Required Documentation:

The appeal must clearly state the specific basis for appeal and include any supporting documentation. Grounds for appeal are limited to:

- procedural error that may have affected the outcome;
- disproportionate sanction;
- new relevant information that was not reasonably available at the time of the original decision; or
- significant extenuating circumstances that were not adequately considered in the original decision.

4. The appeal will be reviewed by a Special Appeals Committee (SAC) composed of:

- **Chairperson:** A faculty member from basic sciences or clinical education who was not involved in the decision being appealed. The Chairperson will be appointed by the Dean or designee.
- **Faculty members:** Three faculty members from relevant departments who were not involved in the decision being appealed. Faculty members will be appointed by the Dean or designee.
- **Student representative:** A student representative from a different cohort than the appellant, selected through the SGA or another student-representative process approved by ACSOM may be included in appeals against non-academic disciplinary decisions.
- **Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs:** Ex-officio, non-voting member, to provide procedural guidance and support policy adherence.

The SAC will review the written appeal, the original disciplinary decision, relevant records, and any supporting documentation submitted by the student. The SAC may also request clarification from the student, the referring committee, faculty, staff, or other relevant individuals where necessary.

The SAC's review is limited to determining whether one or more of the stated grounds for appeal has been established:

- procedural error that may have affected the outcome;
- disproportionate sanction;
- new relevant information that was not reasonably available at the time of the original decision; or

- significant extenuating circumstances that were not adequately considered in the original decision.

Normally, the SAC will make its recommendation within seven calendar days from the receipt of the appeal.

Conditions for Reinstatement (If appeal is successful):

Reinstatement:

- A successful disciplinary appeal may result in reinstatement to the MD program, modification of the disciplinary sanction, return of the matter for further review, or another action consistent with ACSOM policy.
- Reinstatement following a disciplinary appeal does not alter any separate academic progression outcome unless expressly stated in the written appeal decision. Academic progression outcomes, including Semester Failure, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, Clinical Hold, Appeal Pending Status, and Academic Dismissal, are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.
- The student must meet any conditions set out in the written appeal or reinstatement decision.
- Requests to modify reinstatement conditions, including deadline extensions, must be submitted in writing and may be considered only where ACSOM determines that there is good cause.

Reinstatement Notification:

Students will receive conditions for reinstatement related to conduct, administrative, or documentation requirements. Academic progression and completion requirements are governed exclusively by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Failure to Meet Reinstatement Conditions:

- Failure to meet reinstatement conditions may result in further administrative or disciplinary action, including suspension or disciplinary dismissal, consistent with ACSOM policy.
- Failure to meet reinstatement conditions does not create a new right to appeal unless ACSOM policy expressly provides for further review.

Dean's Review and Final Decision:

After the SAC reaches a decision or recommendation, it is forwarded via CAP to the Dean for final institutional review. The Dean may uphold, modify, return for further review, or overturn the SAC's decision or recommendation. The Dean's written decision is the final institutional decision in the disciplinary appeal process.

Finality of Decision:

Once the disciplinary appeal process is concluded and the Dean's written decision has been issued, the decision is final. No further appeal will be accepted. If material new information later becomes available, the student may submit it to the Dean of Student Affairs for administrative review; however, such review is discretionary and does not reopen the appeal process. Students are expected to comply with all reinstatement conditions and institutional requirements.

Subsequent Dismissal After Reinstatement

A student who is reinstated following a successful disciplinary appeal and is later subject to a new disciplinary dismissal may appeal the new disciplinary dismissal only through the disciplinary appeal process set out in this section.

A prior successful appeal does not create a right to additional or repeated appeals beyond the process described in this section. Once the disciplinary appeal process for the new dismissal is concluded and the Dean's written decision has been issued, the decision is final.

Reinstatement after a prior appeal does not reverse, suspend, or modify any separate academic progression outcome unless expressly stated in the written appeal or reinstatement decision. Academic progression outcomes are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Confidentiality and Documentation:

- Records related to disciplinary appeals, reinstatement decisions, suspension, dismissal, and related communications will be maintained by ACSOM in accordance with institutional recordkeeping practices.
- Access to disciplinary appeal records is limited to individuals with a legitimate institutional need to know, including personnel involved in student affairs, disciplinary review, academic administration, legal or regulatory compliance, accreditation, or implementation of the decision.
- Appeal records may be shared with accrediting bodies, regulatory authorities, clinical sites, legal counsel, or other authorized parties where required or permitted by institutional policy, applicable law, accreditation requirements, or clinical placement requirements.

Student Readmission Policy

ACSOM expects that a student seeking to return after a Leave of Absence (LOA), conduct-based suspension, professionalism-based suspension, administrative suspension, or reinstatement following a successful disciplinary appeal has used the time away to address the circumstances that led to the interruption of enrollment and to prepare for successful return.

This section applies to return from non-academic interruptions of enrollment and to reinstatement following a successful disciplinary appeal. Academic progression outcomes, including Semester Failure, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, Clinical Hold, Appeal Pending Status, and Academic Dismissal, are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Plan of Action Approval:

Students seeking to return after a Leave of Absence, conduct-based suspension, professionalism-based suspension, administrative suspension, or reinstatement following a successful disciplinary appeal must submit a return-to-study Plan of Action.

The Plan of Action must describe how the student has addressed the circumstances that led to the interruption of enrollment and how the student will maintain compliance with ACSOM academic, professionalism, conduct, administrative, financial, health, documentation, and student-status requirements upon return.

Return-to-study Plans of Action following conduct-based, professionalism-based, or administrative interruption require approval by the Dean of Student Affairs. Where the return-to-study plan involves academic progression concerns, CAP review or approval may also be required.

A student approved to return may be placed on conditional enrollment or probation and may be required to comply with advising, monitoring, documentation, professionalism, attendance, financial, health, or other return conditions.

The decision regarding return to enrollment will be communicated to the student in writing and will identify any conditions or requirements for return.

Approval to return does not reverse, suspend, or replace any separate academic progression outcome unless expressly stated in the written return-to-study, appeal, or reinstatement decision. Academic progression outcomes, including Semester Failure, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, Clinical Hold, Appeal Pending Status, and Academic Dismissal, are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Students returning from an interruption of enrollment remain subject to all applicable academic progression, financial aid, conduct, professionalism, clinical placement, health, and administrative requirements. Failure to comply with return conditions or institutional requirements may result in academic action, administrative action, disciplinary action, suspension, or dismissal, depending on the nature of the non-compliance.

Financial Aid Considerations:

Students seeking to return after a Leave of Absence, suspension, administrative interruption, or reinstatement following a successful disciplinary appeal must consult the Financial Aid Office before returning to enrollment.

A Leave of Absence, suspension, administrative interruption, delayed return, Clinical Hold, repeated semester, or change in enrollment status may affect financial aid eligibility, loan disbursement, repayment obligations, payment-plan status, scholarship eligibility, and outstanding institutional balances.

The Financial Aid Office will advise the student regarding financial aid status, loan or payment-plan implications, scholarship conditions, and any financial requirements that must be resolved before return to enrollment. Financial clearance may be required before registration or continued enrollment.

Length of Time to Complete the MD Degree

The MD program at ACSOM is designed as a four-year, full-time program of study. There is no provision for completing the MD program on a part-time basis.

Students are normally expected to complete all requirements for the MD degree within four years. All students must complete the MD degree within six years from the date of matriculation, which is defined as the official start date of the student's first semester in the MD program.

A student may require more than four years to complete the program because of an approved Leave of Absence, Clinical Hold, suspension, Mandatory Semester Repeat, delayed clinical progression, withdrawal and readmission, or another approved interruption of enrollment or progression.

Time spent on Leave of Absence, Clinical Hold, suspension, repeated semesters, withdrawal and readmission, or other periods of non-progression counts toward the six-year maximum time to degree unless ACSOM grants a written exception.

Students whose enrollment or progression is interrupted should consult the Office of Student Affairs, Registrar, CAP where academic progression is involved, and the Financial Aid Office. Interruptions of enrollment or progression may affect academic standing, financial aid eligibility,

loan repayment obligations, payment-plan status, clinical placement, graduation timing, and continued eligibility to complete the program.

A student who cannot complete the MD program within the six-year maximum time to degree is subject to administrative and academic review and may be dismissed from the program.

Academic progression outcomes, including Semester Failure, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, Clinical Hold, Appeal Pending Status, and Academic Dismissal, are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Graduation Requirements:

Students are eligible for graduation only after satisfying all academic, clinical, administrative, financial, professionalism, and student-status requirements established by ACSOM.

Graduation requirements include:

- successful completion of the prescribed basic science curriculum;
- successful completion of all required core clinical clerkships;
- successful completion of all required elective, sub-internship, acute care, or other clinical graduation requirements established by ACSOM;
- successful completion of any required ACSOM, NBME, or other institutional assessment required for graduation;
- successful completion of USMLE Step 1 and USMLE Step 2 CK;
- satisfaction of all professionalism, conduct, health, documentation, clinical-site, Registrar, Student Affairs, and financial clearance requirements; and
- approval for graduation by the appropriate academic and administrative offices.

Eligibility for graduation does not guarantee ECFMG certification, residency placement, licensure, visa eligibility, or acceptance by any licensing authority.

Academic progression outcomes, including Semester Failure, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, Clinical Hold, Appeal Pending Status, and Academic Dismissal, are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

United States Medical Licensing Examinations (USMLE)

USMLE Step 1

USMLE Step 1 assesses whether a student can understand and apply important concepts of the sciences basic to the practice of medicine, with emphasis on principles and mechanisms underlying health, disease, and modes of therapy.

A student may be granted permission to sit USMLE Step 1 during Semester 4 or after successful completion of the Basic Sciences phase, in accordance with the USMLE Step 1 Preparation, CBSE Guidance, and Progression to Clinical Rotations Policy and subject to applicable ACSOM academic, administrative, advising, and documentation requirements.

Effective May 14, 2026, USMLE Step 1 is administered as an eight-hour testing session consisting of fourteen 30-minute blocks, with no more than 20 questions per block.

Students must pass USMLE Step 1 before beginning core clinical rotations. A student who has not passed USMLE Step 1 by the scheduled clinical start date will be placed on Clinical Hold – USMLE Step 1 status in accordance with the USMLE Step 1 Preparation, CBSE Guidance, and Progression to Clinical Rotations Policy.

USMLE Step 1 attempt limits, remediation expectations, timeframes, Clinical Hold status, and related progression consequences are governed by the USMLE Step 1 Preparation, CBSE Guidance, and Progression to Clinical Rotations Policy and, where applicable, the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Academic progression outcomes related to USMLE Step examinations, including Clinical Hold, eligibility for clerkships, and Academic Dismissal, are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook and the USMLE Step 1 Preparation, CBSE Guidance, and Progression to Clinical Rotations Policy.

USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK)

Step 2 CK assesses a student's ability to apply medical knowledge, skills, and understanding of clinical science essential for the provision of patient care under supervision. It ensures that due attention is devoted to principles of clinical sciences and basic patient-centered skills.

Step 2 CK is a one-day examination administered throughout the year. It is divided into sixteen 30-minute blocks, with no more than 20 questions per block, and is administered in one nine-hour testing session, inclusive of breaks and administrative time.

At ACSOM, students are required to take Step 2 CK during their final year of studies. To be eligible to sit for Step 2 CK, the student must have completed all core clinical clerkships.

In order for ACSOM to confer the M.D. degree, the student must pass Step 2 CK within one calendar year of becoming eligible in no more than two attempts. Failure to do so will result in academic review by CAP and may result in dismissal from the MD program, subject to applicable appeal rights. Any non-academic leave taken to prepare for Step 2 CK is subject to the Leave of Absence policy. Academic progression outcomes remain governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Subject Clerkship Exam: (SCE) delivered by National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME).

Scoring and Grading:

Faculty will set the minimum passing score on the SCE annually for each and every discipline.

Students scoring below the minimum passing score (or below the required percentile benchmark, where applicable) on a required subject clerkship examination will receive a temporary grade of “I” (Incomplete) pending directed remediation and/or retake. If the student does not successfully complete the required remediation or retake within the permitted timeline, the clerkship is recorded as “F” and progression consequences are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals policy.

If a student does not attend the exam at the designated time, they will receive an “F”.

After the student has passed the exam, the grade for the clerkship will be updated from “I” to the earned grade.

NBME SCE Scheduling – 1st Attempt

There is a two-week examination window at the end of the clerkship. Your assigned faculty member will notify you of the scheduled exam.

NBME SCE “No Show” Policy

It is the student's responsibility to arrive on time and with proper ID. Students who fail to arrive on time or without proper identification may be treated as a “No Show,” may receive a failing outcome for the scheduled examination, and will have the scheduled examination counted as an attempt.

A student who is unable to attend the examination because of a documented technical issue, such as a natural disaster causing the examination center to close, will not be considered a “No Show”. If there is a documented valid issue preventing the student from attending the exam, the student would be exempt from the “No Show” policy.

The student must immediately email ACSOM and provide documentation. ACSOM will review the documentation. If approved, ACSOM will work with the student to reschedule the exam.

Any student who does not pass the NBME Subject Clinical Examination (SCE) must work with CAP on remediation planning and learning support. Academic progression outcomes related to clinical clerkships, NBME SCE performance, remediation, repeat requirements, or dismissal are governed by the applicable clinical education, grading, and academic progression policies.

Accommodations for USMLE Examinations

Students seeking accommodations for USMLE examinations are responsible for reviewing and following the current accommodation request procedures published by USMLE and any other relevant examination authority.

Approval of accommodations by ACSOM does not guarantee approval of accommodations by USMLE. USMLE accommodation decisions are made by the relevant USMLE authority according to its own requirements, documentation standards, timelines, and review process.

Students are encouraged to begin the USMLE accommodation request process as early as possible, as documentation review and decision timelines may affect examination scheduling.

ACSOM may provide supporting documentation where appropriate and where permitted by institutional policy, but the student remains responsible for submitting the request, monitoring the application, meeting USMLE requirements, and scheduling the examination.

Licensure To Practice Medicine in the U.S. & Canada

Graduates seeking postgraduate training or licensure in the United States are responsible for satisfying all requirements established by ECFMG, USMLE, residency programs, state medical boards, visa authorities, and any other applicable regulatory or credentialing bodies.

ECFMG Certification is required for international medical graduates seeking entry into ACGME-accredited residency or fellowship programs in the United States. ECFMG Certification requirements include, but are not limited to, medical school eligibility requirements, successful completion of USMLE Step 1 and USMLE Step 2 CK, and satisfaction of applicable clinical skills and communication skills requirements, including Pathways requirements where required by ECFMG.

Graduation from ACSOM, completion of the MD curriculum, or academic good standing does not guarantee ECFMG Certification, residency placement, visa eligibility, state licensure, or eligibility to practice medicine in the United States.

Students and graduates are responsible for reviewing current ECFMG, USMLE, NRMP, FSMB, state medical board, and residency program requirements. Requirements may change and may differ by jurisdiction, program, specialty, or application year.

ACSOM may provide institutional documentation, verification, or information to ECFMG, FSMB, state medical boards, residency programs, clinical sites, credentialing services, government agencies, or employers where authorized or required. Such information may include academic status, enrollment history, graduation status, professionalism or conduct concerns, disciplinary actions, academic or administrative holds, interruptions in enrollment, special requirements, or other information requested as part of a credentialing, licensing, certification, or regulatory review.

Licensure to Practice Medicine in Canada

Students and graduates seeking postgraduate training, residency placement, registration, or licensure in Canada are responsible for reviewing and satisfying all current requirements established by the Medical Council of Canada (MCC), the National Assessment Collaboration (NAC), CaRMS, provincial or territorial medical regulatory authorities, postgraduate training programs, immigration or visa authorities, and any other applicable regulatory or credentialing bodies.

The Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination (MCCQE) is a key component of the Canadian pathway.

Graduation from ACSOM, completion of the MD curriculum, academic good standing, or eligibility for graduation does not guarantee eligibility for the Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada (LMCC), CaRMS participation, postgraduate training, provincial or territorial registration, licensure, immigration or visa approval, or independent practice in Canada.

Canadian requirements may change and may differ by province or territory, postgraduate training program, specialty, application year, or regulatory pathway. Students and graduates are responsible for confirming current requirements directly with the relevant Canadian authorities.

ACSOM may provide institutional documentation, verification, or information to Canadian regulatory authorities, credentialing services, postgraduate programs, CaRMS, clinical sites, government agencies, or employers where authorized or required. Such information may include academic status, enrollment history, graduation status, professionalism or conduct concerns, disciplinary actions, academic or administrative holds, interruptions in enrollment, special requirements, or other information requested as part of a credentialing, licensing, certification, or regulatory review.

Graduation from ACSOM, academic good standing, or eligibility for graduation does not guarantee eligibility for MCC registration, LMCC, CaRMS participation, postgraduate training, provincial or territorial licensure, immigration or visa approval, independent practice in Canada, or eligibility in any other jurisdiction. Students and graduates are responsible for confirming current requirements directly with the relevant Canadian authorities.

Campus Policies

Campus policies apply to students, faculty, staff, visitors, and other members of the ACSOM community while physically present on the ACSOM campus, in ACSOM-designated spaces, or participating in ACSOM-sponsored activities.

Students are permitted to use ACSOM campus grounds and facilities in accordance with institutional policies, posted rules, safety requirements, and directions issued by authorized ACSOM personnel.

Violations of campus policies may result in loss of access to campus spaces, administrative action, conduct review, disciplinary sanctions, suspension, dismissal, or removal from campus, depending on the nature and severity of the violation. Visitors who violate campus policy may be required to leave campus and may be denied future access.

Campus Opening Hours:

The ACSOM campus is normally open 24 hours per day, seven days per week, subject to safety, staffing, facilities, maintenance, emergency, weather, or institutional restrictions.

Study rooms and classroom spaces normally close at 02:00 AM unless otherwise approved or posted by ACSOM. The library remains open 24 hours per day for quiet study purposes, subject to posted rules, campus safety requirements, and directions issued by authorized ACSOM personnel.

ACSOM may restrict, close, or modify access to campus spaces at any time for safety, security, maintenance, emergency management, institutional operations, or other campus needs.

Authorized entry & ID Pass:

Students will receive an ACSOM-issued ID badge during on-campus registration or another designated registration process. Students must display or carry their ACSOM ID badge while on campus and must present it upon request to ACSOM security personnel, faculty, staff, or other authorized ACSOM representatives.

ACSOM ID badges may be used for campus access, reserving study space, checking out library materials, attendance verification, identification during assessments, or other institutional purposes.

Students may not lend, transfer, alter, duplicate, or misuse an ACSOM ID badge. Unauthorized use of an ID badge, failure to present identification when requested, or unauthorized entry to ACSOM premises may result in loss of access, conduct review, disciplinary action, suspension, or dismissal.

A student who loses an ID badge must report the loss immediately to Student Support Services or Campus Security. A replacement ID may be issued subject to the applicable replacement fee.

Safety and security:

Your safety is ACSOM's priority. Your safety is assured by:

- 24-hour campus security service (+1 767 316 8077; security@acsom.edu.dm).
- Surveillance cameras in common areas, corridors, lecture halls, libraries and auditoriums. Entry pass system for ACSOM students and employees.
- Single-entry temporary passes for visitors only upon providing an ID.

- Fire alarm system in study buildings, hydrants, and plans of emergency evacuation of buildings.
- **The ACSOM campus and all its spaces is a strictly alcohol and drug-free environment.**

Possession, consumption, manufacture, sale, or distribution of illicit drugs is strictly prohibited.

Contravention of ACSOM drug and alcohol abuse policies may result in disciplinary sanctions, up to and including disciplinary dismissal. Academic progression outcomes, including Academic Dismissal, are governed by the **Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals** section of this Handbook.

Prohibited behaviors:

- Consumption of tobacco or tobacco - containing products in any form not limited to smoking, (chewing, hookah etc.).
- Use of vaping and e-cigarette products
- Consumption of alcohol or alcohol-containing products in any space on campus.
- Consumption of recreational drugs or other banned substances.
- Use of abusive language.
- Recording pictures or videos of classes or of patients in clinical or other settings.
- Inappropriate physical contact.
- Damage, deliberate misplacement, misfiling or rendering inoperable of any stored information such as books, film, data files or programs from a library, computer or other information storage, processing or retrieval system.
- Use of any teaching facility, equipment or service of ACSOM contrary to the expressed instruction of a person or persons authorized to give such instruction.

Fireworks, firearms and other weapons

Firearms, ammunition, explosives, fireworks, firecrackers, gunpowder, knives, clubs, and any other weapon, dangerous instrument, or unauthorized explosive, flammable, or volatile material are strictly prohibited on ACSOM campus premises, in ACSOM-designated spaces, at ACSOM-sponsored activities, and in any ACSOM-controlled housing or transportation where applicable.

Objects not ordinarily considered weapons may be treated as prohibited if used, displayed, carried, or threatened to be used in a manner that creates a safety risk, intimidation, disruption, or reasonable fear of harm.

Violation of this policy may result in immediate removal from campus, loss of campus access, referral to campus security or law enforcement, conduct review, disciplinary action, suspension, or dismissal.

Pets

Pets are not permitted on ACSOM campus premises, in ACSOM-designated spaces, at ACSOM-sponsored activities, or in ACSOM-controlled housing or transportation, unless expressly approved in writing by ACSOM.

This policy does not apply to approved service animals, which are governed by the Policy on Service Animals section of this Handbook.

Students are responsible for complying with all Dominican animal importation, vaccination, licensing, housing, and public health requirements. Unauthorized animals may be removed from campus or ACSOM-controlled spaces, and violations may result in administrative action, conduct review, loss of access, or disciplinary action.

For more information about animal importation to Dominica, vaccination, fees, and obtaining an import permit, [please see here](#).

Campus Space Usage:

ACSOM campus spaces, including classrooms, conference rooms, halls, study rooms, library areas, food hall areas, student spaces, and employee-only areas, must be used in accordance with posted rules, reservation procedures, safety requirements, and directions issued by authorized ACSOM personnel.

Spaces designated as classrooms, conference rooms, or halls may not be used for any purpose other than study or approved academic activity without permission from a faculty member or Senior Administrator.

Spaces designated as break rooms are reserved for ACSOM employees unless otherwise authorized by ACSOM.

Students may not enter undesignated, restricted, employee-only, or unclear spaces without permission from a faculty member, Senior Administrator, Campus Security, or another authorized ACSOM representative.

Library carrels are available for individual quiet study during normal working hours, subject to library rules and space availability.

Spaces designated as study rooms may be used for individual or group study during normal campus operating hours. Study rooms may not be reserved or occupied for the exclusive use of one student if other students wish to use available seating in the room for study purposes.

No cooked meals are permitted in campus spaces except in the food hall on Level 1 or as part of a designated ACSOM function. Heated sandwiches, burgers, hot wraps, foods with strong aromas, and

similar items are not permitted in study rooms. Snack items, such as energy bars, granola bars, or fruit, may be consumed in study rooms provided that all wrappers, containers, and waste are removed immediately after use.

Beverages are permitted in study rooms and other approved spaces outside the food hall **only if kept in spill-proof containers**. Disposable cans, plastic or similar cups, with or without lids or straws, are not permitted outside the food hall.

All personal items, including food items, must be removed from study spaces and classrooms when the student leaves the room at the end of the study period or by the end of normal campus operating hours. Items left unattended overnight or for more than one hour may be removed by ACSOM staff.

Larger technology items, such as secondary screens or keyboards, may be left overnight in study rooms only at the owner's risk. ACSOM is not responsible for loss, theft, or damage to personal items left unattended.

Paper study materials, posters, notes, or other materials may not be affixed to painted wall surfaces. Students may be held responsible for repair costs arising from damage caused by attaching or removing materials from walls, furniture, doors, or other campus surfaces.

The glass panel of any door must not be covered, blocked, obscured, or altered in any building.

Failure to comply with campus space usage rules may result in removal of items, loss of access to study spaces or reservation privileges, administrative action, conduct review, or disciplinary action.

Student Lounge:

The student lounge is a designated student space intended for relaxation, social interaction, informal conversation, and light study. It is not a designated quiet-study area. The student lounge is a non-quiet space, but students must keep noise at a reasonable level and avoid disrupting others or nearby academic activities. Headphones must be used when listening to music, watching videos, or using other audio.

Access and Hours

The student lounge is available to enrolled ACSOM students from 8:00 AM to midnight, Monday through Sunday, unless access is restricted by ACSOM for safety, maintenance, events, emergencies, or institutional needs.

General Expectations

Students using the lounge are expected to treat others with respect and courtesy, maintain a clean and orderly environment, and comply with all ACSOM conduct, professionalism, facilities, and safety requirements.

Harassment, discrimination, threatening behavior, disruptive conduct, misuse of facilities, or any other misconduct is not permitted.

Cleanliness and Personal Belongings

Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves. Trash must be disposed of in the bins provided, and personal belongings must be removed when leaving the area.

Personal items must not be left unattended. ACSOM is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property. Items left in the lounge overnight or for an extended period may be removed by ACSOM staff and placed in lost and found or otherwise handled in accordance with institutional practice.

Food and drinks are permitted in the lounge, provided students clean up after themselves and avoid creating odors, spills, pests, or damage.

Furniture or equipment may not be moved, removed, altered, or misused without permission from Facilities or another authorized ACSOM representative.

Use of computers, internet, screens, or other technology in the lounge must comply with ACSOM's acceptable use and IT policies.

Group study sessions should normally be held in designated group study areas rather than in the student lounge.

Violations

Failure to comply with student lounge rules may result in cleaning charges, removal of personal items, loss of lounge privileges, loss of access to student spaces, administrative action, conduct review, disciplinary action, suspension, or dismissal, depending on the nature and severity of the conduct.

Student Dress Code:

Professional and appropriate dress is essential to maintaining a respectful, safe, and hygienic learning environment. Students are expected to present themselves in clean, professional, and respectful attire that reflects the standards of the medical profession.

General Guidelines

Clothing must be:

- clean and in good repair;
- modest and non-distracting;
- appropriate for a professional academic environment; and
- free from offensive language, images, or symbols.

Not Acceptable Classroom Attire

The following are not acceptable in classrooms, laboratories, academic activities, or other professional ACSOM settings:

- sleepwear, pajamas, or bathrobes;
- clothing that exposes the torso, undergarments, or excessive cleavage;
- see-through or transparent garments;
- shorts of inappropriate length;
- flip-flops, bedroom slippers, or unsafe footwear;
- hats, hoods, or sunglasses worn indoors, unless medically, culturally, or religiously required; and
- clothing with profane, violent, discriminatory, sexually suggestive, or otherwise unprofessional content.

Attire for Clinical, Simulation, and Patient-Facing Settings

In clinical environments, Simulation Center sessions, Introduction to Clinical Medicine sessions, laboratories, standardized patient encounters, or other patient-facing activities, students must dress in a professional and hygienic manner appropriate to the setting.

Students must wear clean, properly fitted scrubs in approved ACSOM colors, a clean white coat when directed, and closed-toe shoes with non-slip soles. Open-toe shoes, high heels, unsafe footwear, or clothing that interferes with clinical or laboratory safety are not permitted.

White coats must be clean, properly laundered, and worn during clinical, laboratory, simulation, professional, or other activities when directed by faculty or ACSOM.

Students should bring required clinical equipment, such as a stethoscope or other tools specified by the course or session. Clinical tools must be clean and disinfected before and after use where appropriate.

Students must comply with the ACSOM ID badge requirements set out in the Authorized Entry & ID Pass section of this Handbook. In clinical, simulation, laboratory, or patient-facing settings, the ACSOM ID badge must be clearly visible unless otherwise directed.

Personal Hygiene and Professional Appearance

Personal hygiene is an essential part of professional conduct. Students must maintain daily cleanliness and appropriate odor control and must avoid strong perfumes, colognes, or scents that may cause discomfort to patients, standardized patients, peers, faculty, or staff.

Hair must be clean, neat, and secured away from the face where required for safety, hygiene, or patient care. Facial hair must be clean and well-kept.

Fingernails must be short, clean, and appropriate for clinical, simulation, laboratory, or patient-facing settings. Artificial nails, nail polish, or long nails may be prohibited where required for infection prevention or patient safety.

Makeup, jewelry, accessories, and other aspects of personal appearance must be professional, non-distracting, and must not interfere with safety, infection control, or patient care.

Infection Prevention

Students must follow all infection prevention and control requirements in clinical, simulation, laboratory, and patient-facing settings. This may include hand hygiene before and after patient or standardized patient encounters, use of masks or gloves when required, changing into clean scrubs or white coats, and disinfecting stethoscopes or other clinical tools.

Eating and drinking are prohibited during Simulation Center sessions, patient encounters, laboratory sessions, or other activities where safety, hygiene, or professionalism requires restriction.

Professional Conduct

Students must approach all clinical, simulation, and patient-facing encounters with empathy, attentiveness, and respect. Punctuality, preparedness, appropriate communication, and professional behavior are integral to the development of the habits and attitudes expected of future physicians.

Enforcement

Students who are not dressed or prepared in accordance with this policy may be asked to correct the issue, leave the activity, or be marked absent where attendance requirements are affected.

Repeated or serious violations may result in professionalism review, administrative action, conduct review, loss of participation privileges, suspension, or disciplinary action.

Dress code enforcement does not modify academic progression outcomes. Academic consequences arising from missed activities, assessment ineligibility, attendance violations, or related academic

requirements are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Other Policies and Administrative Procedures

Housing Policy

Students are required to arrange housing in Dominica through the ACSOM-approved housing vendor, SafeHaven Rentals, unless an exception is approved in writing by ACSOM.

If a student identifies a property or apartment that is not currently in the approved vendor inventory, the student must notify the ACSOM-approved housing vendor. The vendor will determine whether the property can be reviewed for inclusion in the approved housing inventory and whether it meets minimum standards, including safety, water, electricity, internet access, maintenance arrangements, and other housing requirements established by ACSOM or the vendor.

A student may not rent an unapproved property as ACSOM-approved housing unless the property has been reviewed, added to the approved housing inventory, and approved for student occupancy through the ACSOM-approved housing process.

Students remain responsible for complying with all housing agreements, payment obligations, safety rules, landlord requirements, and ACSOM housing-related policies. Housing concerns should be reported promptly to SafeHaven Rentals and, where the concern affects student safety, welfare, or enrollment, to the Office of Student Affairs.

Immunization policy

Students must satisfy ACSOM health, immunization, screening, and documentation requirements before matriculation and must remain compliant with updated requirements throughout enrollment.

Students who do not meet ACSOM health and immunization requirements may be restricted from registration, campus activities, laboratory sessions, clinical skills activities, patient-facing activities, clinical assignments, clinical rotations, or other educational activities until compliance is documented.

Required immunization and screening documentation may include, but is not limited to:

- measles, mumps, and rubella immunity or vaccination;
- varicella immunity or vaccination;
- hepatitis B vaccination and/or evidence of immunity where required;
- tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis vaccination status;
- poliomyelitis vaccination status;
- tuberculosis screening;

- influenza vaccination where required;
- COVID-19 vaccination or other infectious disease requirements where required by ACSOM, public health authorities, or clinical sites; and
- any additional immunization, screening, health, or documentation requirements imposed by ACSOM, public health authorities, or clinical training sites.

Students entering clinical training must also satisfy all health, immunization, background check, drug screening, documentation, and onboarding requirements imposed by assigned clinical sites. Clinical sites may impose requirements that differ from or exceed ACSOM campus requirements. Failure to satisfy clinical-site requirements may delay or prevent participation in clinical assignments or rotations.

Students requesting exemption from an immunization requirement for medical, religious, or other recognized reasons must submit the required documentation to the Office of Student Affairs or other designated ACSOM office. Exemption requests are reviewed according to ACSOM procedures and may also be subject to public health requirements and clinical-site policies. An exemption approved by ACSOM does not guarantee acceptance by a clinical site or external authority.

Students are responsible for maintaining current documentation of immunization and health compliance and for submitting updated records when requested by ACSOM or a clinical site.

Exposure to blood borne pathogens

Students may be exposed to bloodborne pathogens or other potentially infectious materials during clinical, laboratory, simulation, research, or patient-facing activities. Bloodborne pathogens may include, but are not limited to, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus (HBV), and hepatitis C virus (HCV).

Students must follow standard precautions, infection prevention requirements, personal protective equipment requirements, sharps safety procedures, and all applicable site-specific safety protocols whenever participating in activities where exposure to blood, body fluids, sharps, or other potentially infectious materials may occur.

ACSOM uses recognized bloodborne-pathogen safety principles, including OSHA-informed guidance, as a reference standard for student safety education and institutional practice. U.S. clinical sites may impose additional OSHA, institutional, or site-specific requirements. Students must comply with the requirements of the clinical site, laboratory, simulation center, research setting, or other location where the activity occurs.

A bloodborne-pathogen exposure may include a needlestick or sharps injury, contact of blood or potentially infectious material with mucous membranes or non-intact skin, or any other exposure identified by the supervising site or healthcare professional.

If an exposure occurs, the student must immediately:

- wash or flush the affected area as appropriate;
- report the exposure to the supervising faculty member, preceptor, attending physician, resident, clinical site supervisor, laboratory supervisor, or other responsible site personnel;
- follow the site's exposure protocol and obtain prompt medical evaluation;
- complete all incident reporting required by the site; and
- notify the Office of Student Affairs as soon as practicable after urgent medical and site-reporting steps have been initiated.

Students must cooperate with recommended evaluation, testing, treatment, counselling, documentation, and follow-up after an exposure. Where post-exposure prophylaxis, laboratory testing, or medical follow-up is recommended by the evaluating healthcare professional or site protocol, students are expected to follow those recommendations promptly.

Costs associated with evaluation, testing, counselling, treatment, post-exposure prophylaxis, follow-up care, or related services are the responsibility of the student except where covered by the clinical site, ACSOM, insurance, or another applicable arrangement. Students are responsible for maintaining required health insurance and for understanding the coverage limits of their policy.

Failure to follow infection prevention requirements, site safety protocols, exposure-reporting procedures, or follow-up requirements may result in removal from the activity, clinical-site action, administrative action, professionalism or conduct review, delay in progression, or other action depending on the nature and severity of the non-compliance.

Photography, Video, and Audio Recording Policy

Photography, video recording, audio recording, livestreaming, or other recording may not be conducted in any manner that interferes with privacy, safety, academic activities, clinical activities, administrative operations, assessments, meetings, or the normal functioning of ACSOM.

This policy applies to students, faculty, staff, visitors, guests, contractors, and any other person present on ACSOM premises, in ACSOM-designated spaces, or participating in ACSOM-sponsored activities.

Recording is prohibited in classrooms, laboratories, Simulation Center activities, clinical skills sessions, patient-facing settings, meetings, assessments, offices, residence-related spaces, or other restricted areas unless expressly authorized by ACSOM.

Recordings must comply with ACSOM's Social Media Policy, Student Code of Conduct, professionalism standards, privacy expectations, clinical-site requirements, and any applicable confidentiality or consent requirements.

Any photography, video, audio, or other recorded content intended for publication, distribution, promotional use, media use, commercial use, or public posting must be approved in advance by a campus Dean or other designated ACSOM official. Approval for recording does not remove the requirement to obtain consent from individuals who are photographed, filmed, recorded, identified, or otherwise included in the content.

Unauthorized recording, publication, distribution, or misuse of recorded content may result in removal from the activity or premises, loss of recording privileges, administrative action, conduct review, disciplinary action, suspension, or dismissal.

Information Technology, Technology, and Internet Use Policy

ACSOM provides information technology, network, internet, email, software, learning-management, and digital resources to support education, communication, research, administration, and institutional operations. Users are expected to use these resources responsibly, lawfully, securely, and professionally.

This policy applies to all students and to any other person authorized to use ACSOM information technology resources. ACSOM IT resources include, but are not limited to, computers, mobile devices, networks, email systems, software, internet access, cloud-based systems, learning platforms, institutional accounts, printers, audiovisual systems, and any other electronic or digital tools provided by ACSOM or connected to the ACSOM network.

Acceptable Use

ACSOM IT resources must be used primarily for educational, academic, research, professional, and institutional purposes. Limited personal use is permitted only where it does not interfere with academic responsibilities, institutional operations, network performance, cybersecurity, or compliance with ACSOM policies.

Users must communicate respectfully and professionally when using ACSOM systems. Harassment, cyberbullying, threats, discriminatory communication, abusive language, impersonation, or other unprofessional electronic communication is prohibited.

Users must protect confidential, personal, academic, clinical, institutional, and student information. Unauthorized access, use, disclosure, downloading, copying, transmission, or sharing of confidential information is prohibited.

Users may not install unauthorized software, bypass security controls, connect unauthorized devices to the ACSOM network, share passwords, misuse institutional accounts, or use ACSOM systems in a way that compromises security, privacy, or institutional operations.

Users must comply with applicable copyright, data protection, privacy, cybersecurity, academic integrity, and professional conduct requirements. Illegal downloading, file sharing, piracy, unauthorized distribution of copyrighted materials, or access to illegal content is prohibited.

Prohibited Use

Users may not use ACSOM IT resources to:

- engage in hacking, phishing, malware distribution, credential theft, unauthorized access, system interference, or other cybersecurity violations;
- access, create, store, transmit, or distribute obscene, threatening, defamatory, discriminatory, harassing, exploitative, illegal, or otherwise prohibited content;
- disrupt teaching, assessment, research, institutional operations, or network performance;
- engage in academic dishonesty, plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, impersonation, or misuse of assessment platforms;
- access, copy, share, or distribute examination materials, NBME materials, confidential course materials, student records, patient information, or institutional documents without authorization;
- use ACSOM systems for commercial activity, fundraising, solicitation, political campaigning, or external organizational activity without institutional approval;
- stream, game, download, or use excessive bandwidth for non-academic purposes where this interferes with network performance or institutional operations; or
- use ACSOM systems in a manner that violates ACSOM policy, clinical-site requirements, or applicable law.

Use of Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI

Students may use artificial intelligence or generative AI tools for general learning support, brainstorming, outlining, study planning, language refinement, or formative self-study only where such use is not prohibited by the course, assignment, assessment, clinical site, or ACSOM policy.

Students may not use AI or generative AI tools to complete, generate, substantially revise, or submit academic work, assignments, reflections, clinical documentation, assessment responses, examination content, discussion posts, or other required work unless the Course Director or responsible faculty member has expressly permitted such use.

Students may not upload or enter confidential, student-related, patient-related, clinical-site, examination-related, NBME-related, proprietary, unpublished, or institutional information into public or external AI systems unless expressly authorized by ACSOM.

Unauthorized use of AI or generative AI tools may constitute academic dishonesty, professionalism misconduct, a confidentiality breach, or misuse of institutional technology.

Monitoring and Privacy

ACSOM may monitor, access, review, preserve, restrict, or disclose use of ACSOM IT resources where necessary for cybersecurity, system maintenance, policy compliance, investigation of misconduct, legal or regulatory obligations, accreditation, institutional operations, or protection of students, patients, faculty, staff, or ACSOM.

Users should not expect privacy when using ACSOM-owned devices, ACSOM accounts, ACSOM networks, ACSOM email, ACSOM cloud systems, or other institutional IT resources. Data created, transmitted, accessed, or stored using ACSOM systems may be monitored, reviewed, retained, or disclosed by ACSOM.

Reporting Concerns

Suspected misuse of ACSOM IT resources, cybersecurity incidents, phishing attempts, account compromise, unauthorized access, data breaches, or inappropriate electronic communication should be reported promptly to the IT Department at helpdesk@acsom.edu.dm and, where student conduct or professionalism is involved, to the Office of Student Affairs at studentaffairs@acsom.edu.dm.

Consequences for Misuse

Violation of this policy may result in loss or restriction of IT privileges, removal of access to ACSOM systems, administrative action, academic integrity review, conduct review, disciplinary action, suspension, dismissal, reporting to a clinical site or regulatory authority, or legal action, depending on the nature and severity of the violation.

Policy Review and Updates

ACSOM may review and update this policy periodically to reflect changes in technology, cybersecurity risks, legal requirements, institutional needs, clinical-site requirements, and educational practice.

Social Media Policy

ACSOM expects students to maintain professional, respectful, ethical, and responsible conduct in all online environments. Online conduct is subject to the same standards of professionalism, confidentiality, integrity, and respect that apply in academic, campus, clinical, and institutional settings.

For purposes of this policy, online environments include social media platforms, messaging applications, blogs, microblogs, podcasts, video-sharing platforms, networking sites, forums, group chats, learning-platform discussion spaces, and any other internet-based or mobile platform that allows users to create, share, comment on, or distribute content.

Professional Conduct Online

Students must communicate professionally and respectfully online. Content that is threatening, harassing, defamatory, discriminatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, humiliating, or otherwise inconsistent with ACSOM professionalism standards is prohibited.

Students should exercise judgment before posting, sharing, liking, forwarding, commenting on, or reacting to content. Online content may be copied, shared, archived, or distributed beyond the intended audience and may have academic, professional, disciplinary, legal, or reputational consequences.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Students must not post, share, describe, photograph, record, or otherwise disclose confidential, patient-related, student-related, faculty-related, clinical-site, institutional, examination-related, or proprietary information without authorization.

Students must not post patient information, clinical details, images, recordings, case descriptions, or other content that could reasonably identify a patient, standardized patient, clinical site, student, faculty member, staff member, or other individual without appropriate authorization and consent.

HIPAA is a U.S. law that applies in relevant U.S. healthcare settings, including U.S. clinical training sites. ACSOM also expects students to follow comparable privacy and confidentiality principles in all academic, campus, and clinical settings, whether or not HIPAA directly applies.

Representation of ACSOM or Clinical Sites

Students may identify themselves as ACSOM students where accurate and appropriate, but they may not present themselves as official representatives, spokespersons, or agents of ACSOM, any clinical site, hospital, clinic, preceptor, partner institution, or affiliated organization unless expressly authorized.

Students must make clear that personal opinions are their own and do not represent ACSOM or any clinical site or affiliated organization.

Students may not use ACSOM's name, logo, images, facilities, faculty, staff, students, patients, clinical sites, or other institutional materials for promotional, commercial, political, fundraising, or public-facing purposes without prior approval from ACSOM.

Medical Advice and Patient Interaction

Students must not provide medical advice, diagnosis, treatment recommendations, or patient-specific guidance through social media or other public online platforms.

Students should not initiate or maintain personal social media relationships with current patients, standardized patients, or individuals encountered through clinical training where doing so may compromise professionalism, privacy, boundaries, or patient care.

Copyright, Accuracy, and Responsible Sharing

Students must comply with copyright, intellectual property, privacy, and confidentiality requirements. Students may not copy, upload, distribute, or share copyrighted, proprietary, NBME-related, examination-related, course-related, or institutional materials without authorization.

Students are responsible for the accuracy and professionalism of content they post or share. Students should distinguish clearly between fact and opinion and should avoid posting misleading, inflammatory, or unverified information in a manner that could reflect adversely on professional judgment or institutional standards.

Political, Advocacy, and Personal Expression

ACSOM respects students' ability to engage in lawful personal expression. However, students must not use ACSOM names, logos, platforms, official channels, clinical-site affiliations, or institutional resources to imply ACSOM endorsement of political candidates, political parties, campaigns, advocacy positions, commercial products, or external organizations without authorization.

Personal expression must still comply with ACSOM professionalism, conduct, confidentiality, non-discrimination, and harassment policies.

Consequences for Violations

Violation of this policy may result in removal of content where within ACSOM's control, loss of access to institutional platforms, administrative action, professionalism review, conduct review, disciplinary action, suspension, dismissal, reporting to a clinical site or regulatory authority, or legal action, depending on the nature and severity of the violation.

Drug Testing Policy

ACSOM is committed to maintaining a safe, professional, healthy, and substance-free learning and clinical environment. Students must not participate in classroom, laboratory, simulation, clinical, patient-facing, or ACSOM-sponsored activities while impaired by alcohol, drugs, controlled substances, misused prescription medication, or any other substance that may affect judgment, behavior, safety, professionalism, or performance.

Students are responsible for ensuring that any prescription or over-the-counter medication they use does not impair their ability to participate safely and professionally in academic, laboratory, simulation, clinical, or patient-facing activities. A student taking medication that may impair alertness, judgment, coordination, or safe participation must seek appropriate medical guidance

and, where necessary, notify the relevant Course Director, clinical supervisor, or Office of Student Affairs before participating in the affected activity.

Screening and Testing

ACSOM may require drug or alcohol screening or testing in the following circumstances:

- as part of pre-clinical or clinical onboarding requirements;
- as required by clinical sites, hospitals, licensing bodies, regulatory authorities, or other placement partners;
- randomly during enrollment;
- where there is reasonable suspicion that a student may be impaired or may have used alcohol, drugs, controlled substances, or misused medication in a manner that affects safety, professionalism, or performance; or
- as a condition of return from leave, suspension, conditional enrollment, probation, treatment, reinstatement, or other student-status review.

Screening and testing will be conducted in a manner intended to be fair, impartial, and respectful of student privacy, while protecting patient safety, campus safety, clinical-site compliance, and institutional standards.

Initial screening may be conducted on campus or through an approved testing provider. Confirmatory testing, where required, will be conducted by an independent or approved laboratory or testing service. Students may be required to disclose prescription or over-the-counter medication that may affect testing, but only to the reviewing medical or testing professional as directed by ACSOM or the testing provider.

Positive, Reactive, or Concerning Results

If a screening or test result is positive, reactive, or otherwise concerning, ACSOM may require confirmatory testing, medical review, documentation review, counselling assessment, psychological or clinical evaluation, addiction-specialist evaluation, treatment, monitoring, or other follow-up as appropriate.

A student may be temporarily removed from classroom, laboratory, simulation, clinical, patient-facing, or ACSOM-sponsored activities while a result is under review or while ACSOM determines whether the student may safely continue participation.

If ACSOM determines that the student may pose a risk to self, peers, faculty, staff, patients, standardized patients, clinical-site personnel, or the learning environment, ACSOM may place the student on Leave of Absence, medical Leave of Absence, suspension, conditional enrollment, probation, Clinical Hold, or another appropriate student status. Academic progression outcomes

remain governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Refusal, Failure to Report, or Failure to Cooperate

A student who refuses to submit to required screening or testing, fails to report to the collection site at the assigned time, attempts to tamper with or falsify a specimen, interferes with the testing process, fails to provide required documentation, or fails to cooperate with required follow-up will be subject to administrative action, conduct review, disciplinary action, suspension, or dismissal.

Contested Results

A student who contests a positive or reactive result may request review in accordance with the process designated by ACSOM or the testing provider. Any retesting or additional testing requested by the student may be at the student's expense unless ACSOM determines otherwise in writing.

Return, Readmission, or Reinstatement After Positive Result or Substance-Related Action

A student seeking to return after substance-related leave, suspension, dismissal, conditional enrollment, treatment, or other status action may be required to provide documentation of evaluation, treatment, fitness to return, compliance with treatment recommendations, or completion of a substance-use treatment or monitoring program.

Readmission, reinstatement, or return to enrollment is not guaranteed. If approved to return, the student may be required to comply with ongoing monitoring, random testing, counselling, treatment, reporting, or other conditions. A subsequent positive test, refusal to test, failure to comply with monitoring, or recurrence of substance-related misconduct may result in suspension or dismissal.

Substances Tested

Substances tested may include, but are not limited to, alcohol, amphetamines or methamphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, cannabinoids, cocaine metabolites, hallucinogens, methadone, opiates, phencyclidine, propoxyphene, and other substances included in the testing panel required by ACSOM, a clinical site, or an approved testing provider.

Tobacco-Free and Smoke-Free Campus

ACSOM is a tobacco-free and smoke-free campus. Smoking, vaping, e-cigarette use, snuff, chewing tobacco, and use of tobacco-containing or nicotine-delivery products are prohibited on ACSOM campus premises, in ACSOM-designated spaces, in ACSOM-controlled housing or transportation where applicable, and at ACSOM-sponsored activities.

This policy applies to students, faculty, staff, visitors, guests, contractors, and any other person present in ACSOM-controlled spaces. Violations may result in removal from the area, loss of campus access, administrative action, conduct review, disciplinary action, suspension, or dismissal. Visitors who violate this policy may be required to leave campus and may be denied future access.

Penalties and Sanctions for Contravention of Campus Non-Academic Policies

ACSOM students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the standards of the medical profession and the mission, reputation, and integrity of the School. These expectations apply on campus, in ACSOM-designated spaces, in ACSOM-controlled housing or transportation where applicable, during ACSOM-sponsored activities, in clinical or community settings, and in off-campus conduct that may affect ACSOM, other members of the ACSOM community, patient safety, public trust, clinical placement, or the student's fitness for continued enrollment.

Students may be subject to administrative action, conduct review, disciplinary action, or referral to an external authority for violations of ACSOM non-academic policies. ACSOM may also require a student to complete counselling, evaluation, treatment, remediation, education, restitution, or another corrective action before returning to class, campus activities, clinical activities, or continued enrollment.

Disciplinary or administrative sanctions may be imposed alone or in combination and may include:

- verbal or written warning;
- formal written reprimand;
- required counselling, evaluation, education, treatment, or rehabilitation program;
- restitution, rectification, payment for damages, or reimbursement of costs;
- restriction or loss of access to specified services, activities, facilities, systems, housing, transportation, or campus spaces;
- loss of privileges or participation rights;
- conditional enrollment or probation;
- suspension from campus, activities, registration, courses, rotations, or the MD program for a defined period;
- disciplinary dismissal from ACSOM; or
- referral to law enforcement, regulatory authorities, clinical sites, or other external bodies where appropriate.

Sanctions will be determined based on the nature, severity, frequency, and impact of the conduct; the student's prior conduct history; the risk to students, faculty, staff, patients, clinical sites, ACSOM, or the public; and any mitigating or aggravating circumstances.

Students are responsible for complying with the laws of Dominica and any other jurisdiction in which they study, train, reside, or participate in ACSOM-related activities. Criminal arrest, charge, conviction, investigation, or other legal action may affect student status, clinical placement, visa or

immigration status, licensure eligibility, residency eligibility, or continued enrollment. Students must report criminal arrests, charges, convictions, or other legally reportable events to the Office of Student Affairs promptly.

All sanctions described in this section are conduct-based, professionalism-based, or administrative sanctions. Academic progression outcomes, including Semester Failure, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, Clinical Hold, Appeal Pending Status, and Academic Dismissal, are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook.

Student and Campus Life

Student Governance Association (SGA), Interest Groups, and Clubs

The Student Governance Association (SGA) is a student-led representative body with elected positions and officers. The SGA exists to represent the interests and concerns of the student body, promote student engagement and involvement, support student professionalism and community life, and facilitate communication between students, faculty, and the ACSOM administration.

Student interest groups and clubs may operate under the SGA to foster student engagement in areas related to medical education, professional development, service, wellness, culture, recreation, and community involvement. Examples may include specialty interest groups, academic interest groups, service groups, cultural groups, wellness activities, and other approved student organizations.

SGA operations and activities are supported by and subject to the general oversight of the Office of Student Affairs (OSA). SGA affiliation or participation may include opportunities for membership in external student organizations, such as the American Medical Student Association (AMSA), where available and approved.

SGA, in collaboration with Student Services and OSA, may organize approved extracurricular, wellness, cultural, service, recreational, or community-building activities for ACSOM students and the broader ACSOM community.

Only student groups or clubs operating under the SGA structure and approved through the process described below may operate as recognized ACSOM student organizations. All groups or clubs must be registered with OSA before beginning activities, using ACSOM's approved student organization registration process.

Applications for new student groups or clubs must be submitted through the SGA Executive to OSA. Applications must include the proposed purpose of the organization, proposed constitution or operating rules, list of officers, proposed faculty advisor, and any other information required by OSA.

Applications should normally be submitted in the semester before the proposed semester of operation. Recognition of student groups and clubs is subject to annual review by the SGA Executive, OSA, and Student Services.

No student organization will be approved if its purpose, constitution, activities, membership practices, or proposed operations are unlawful, discriminatory, unsafe, inconsistent with ACSOM policy, contrary to

ACSOM's Code of Conduct, or detrimental to the interests, reputation, safety, or functioning of the ACSOM community.

Any membership fee for SGA or for any SGA-recognized group or club must be determined annually in consultation with OSA and Student Services and must be communicated clearly to students.

Each recognized student organization must submit an annual report of activities, membership, officers, and expenditures as part of the annual renewal process. Reports must include information required by OSA and Student Services. Student organizations that fail to submit required annual reports or renewal materials by the stated deadline may be deregistered.

The recognition or registration of any SGA group or club may be suspended or terminated by the Senior Associate Dean of Student Affairs, Dean, or President if the organization's activities, conduct, finances, governance, communications, or operations are determined to be inconsistent with ACSOM policy, student safety, professionalism, institutional values, or the overall interests of the ACSOM community.

Deregistration, suspension, or termination of a student organization under this policy does not, by itself, modify any individual student's academic progression status. Academic progression outcomes, including Semester Failure, Audit Status, Mandatory Semester Repeat, Clinical Hold, Appeal Pending Status, and Academic Dismissal, are governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook. Individual students may still be subject to conduct, professionalism, administrative, or disciplinary action based on their own conduct.

Disaster & Emergency Preparedness

ACSOM recognizes the need for students, faculty, staff, and visitors to be prepared for unexpected natural, environmental, public health, security, infrastructure, or other emergency events. Such events may include hurricanes, tropical storms, earthquakes, flooding, fire, pandemic illness, major utility disruption, civil disturbance, or other conditions that may affect campus safety or normal operations.

ACSOM will make reasonable efforts to protect the safety of the ACSOM community, communicate timely information, maintain essential operations where possible, and restore normal academic and administrative operations as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so.

Definitions

Campus State of Emergency

A Campus State of Emergency exists when declared by the Dean, Campus Dean, President, or designated senior official. A Campus State of Emergency may be declared when conditions create a serious risk to the safety, security, health, or welfare of ACSOM community members or significantly impair campus operations.

A Campus State of Emergency may apply to the entire campus, specific buildings, specific activities, or specific groups, depending on the circumstances.

Emergency Closing

An Emergency Closing is the closure of campus, campus buildings, or ACSOM-designated spaces to students, faculty, staff, visitors, or the public, except for individuals designated by ACSOM as having essential functions.

Essential Function

An Essential Function is a function that ACSOM determines must continue during an emergency or closure. Essential functions may include safety, security, facilities, communications, health support, emergency management, or other functions designated by ACSOM. Teaching and routine academic activities are not normally considered essential functions during an emergency closure unless specifically designated by ACSOM.

Shelter Status

Shelter Status refers to the use of designated ACSOM buildings or spaces for protection or shelter during emergency conditions, when authorized by ACSOM.

Academic and Operational Continuity

During an emergency, ACSOM may modify academic, clinical, administrative, and campus operations as necessary. Modifications may include suspension of in-person activities, remote instruction, altered schedules, temporary relocation of activities, modified attendance expectations, delayed assessments, campus access restrictions, or other measures required for safety and continuity.

Students, faculty, and staff are expected to follow official ACSOM emergency communications, instructions, closures, shelter directions, evacuation instructions, and return-to-campus notices.

Academic progression outcomes remain governed by the Academic Progression, Remediation, Audit Status, Semester Repeat, Dismissal, and Appeals section of this Handbook. Emergency-related academic adjustments do not create automatic progression rights, assessment exemptions, or changes to academic standing unless approved in writing by ACSOM.

Disaster Preparedness and Response

ACSOM maintains emergency preparedness and response procedures to support campus safety during natural disasters, severe weather, public health emergencies, infrastructure failures, or other emergency conditions.

During an emergency or disaster event, ACSOM may activate an incident-management structure to coordinate campus operations, student support, communications, facilities, security, and off-island support where appropriate.

Official communications may be issued through Canvas, Populi, ACSOM email, direct messaging, campus notices, or other available communication channels. Students are responsible for monitoring official ACSOM communication channels during emergencies.

The immediate campus contact for disaster-response coordination is the Campus Dean at:

campusdean@acsom.edu.dm

Campus Security may be contacted at:

+1 767 316 8077

Communications During Infrastructure Disruption

In the event of island-wide power, telephone, or internet disruption, ACSOM may use alternative communication methods where available, including satellite phones, satellite messaging devices, radio communication, posted notices, or communication through designated local and off-island response personnel.

Where feasible, ACSOM may make satellite phones or satellite messaging devices available to support urgent student contact with immediate family. Access to such devices will be coordinated by the local emergency management team and may be prioritized based on safety, urgency, and operational need.

Shelter and Emergency Location Guidance

During severe weather or emergency conditions, ACSOM community members should follow ACSOM instructions, Government of Dominica advisories, and directions from the Office of Disaster Management or other official emergency authorities.

Students who are away from campus during an adverse weather or emergency event should seek safe shelter in accordance with official Government of Dominica guidance, including use of official shelters where appropriate.

Hurricane and Severe Weather Preparedness

ACSOM recognizes the following general categories of cyclonic weather events:

- **Tropical Depression:** maximum sustained winds of 38 mph or less.
- **Tropical Storm:** maximum sustained winds of 39 to 73 mph.
- **Hurricane:** maximum sustained winds of 74 mph or higher.
- **Major Hurricane:** maximum sustained winds of 111 mph or higher.

ACSOM recognizes the following general weather status terms:

- **Tropical Storm Watch:** tropical storm conditions may pose a threat, generally within 48 hours.
- **Tropical Storm Warning:** tropical storm conditions are expected, generally within 36 hours.
- **Hurricane Watch:** hurricane conditions may pose a threat, generally within 48 hours.
- **Hurricane Warning:** hurricane conditions are expected, generally within 36 hours.

Students are expected to maintain personal emergency preparedness, including adequate personal supplies, medications, identification, communication plans, and awareness of official weather and emergency advisories.

Campus Preparedness

ACSOM may prepare designated campus spaces for emergency use, shelter, supplies, communications, security, or support services depending on the nature of the event. All campus preparations are under the direction and coordination of an institutional incident command team (ICT).

ACSOM may restrict access to campus buildings or spaces, require students to shelter in place, direct students to relocate, suspend campus activities, or issue other instructions necessary for safety and emergency management.

Students must comply with emergency instructions issued by ACSOM, Campus Security, Government of Dominica authorities, the Office of Disaster Management, clinical sites, or other official emergency personnel.

Failure to follow emergency instructions, shelter directions, evacuation requirements, campus restrictions, or safety directives may result in administrative action, conduct review, disciplinary action, loss of campus access, suspension, or dismissal depending on the nature and severity of the conduct.

Timeline of Response

		Watches		Warnings
T = -96 h	T = -72 h	T = -48 h	T = -24 h	T = -12-6 h
Coordinate & Check: Finalized stakeholder Registers Continued acquisition of necessary supplies & resources ICT confirm with CRT & off-island team	ICT roles and responsibilities in effect Registration of stakeholders and pets Campus facilities Finalised Shelter Preparation begins Begin Targeted Campus Communications	CRT & ICT Reports Targeted Campus Communications Second check of registration and tracking Assignment of Shelter Volunteers Shelter areas assigned	Initial decision of timing of start of campus shelter operation Third check of registration and tracking Completion & confirmation of shelter readiness Shelter routines and rules communicated to stakeholders	Shelter operations & management commence Shelter check-in of stakeholders Outreach/tracking to any unaccounted stakeholders Final readiness reports to off-island team Campus closed to unauthorized individuals

Appendices

1. Abbreviations & Acronyms

ACSOM – American Canadian School of Medicine

AAMC – Association of American Medical Colleges

ACCM – Accreditation Commission on Colleges of Medicine

ACGME – Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act

ALP – ACSOM Loan Program

AMA – American Medical Association

BCLS – Basic Cardiac Life Support:

CPR Training CAP – Committee on Academic Progress

CBSE – Comprehensive Basic Science Examination

ECFMG - Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates

EMSA – End-of-Module Summative Assessment

FAIMER - Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research

FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

FCVS – Federation Credentials Verification Service

HIPAA – Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

IAAR – Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating

LMCC – Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada

LOA - Leave of Absence

MCC – Medical Council of Canada

MCCQE – Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination

MSPE – Medical Student Performance Evaluation

NBME – National Board of Medical Examiners

NRMP – National Residency Matching Program

ODM – Office of Disaster Management Dominica

OSCE – Objective Structured Clinical Exams

RRC – Residency Review Committee

SAC – Special Appeals Committee

SCE – Subject Clerkship Exam

SEPC – Student Evaluations and Promotions Committee

SGA – Student Governance Association

SIS – Student Information System

SOP – Standard Operating Procedure

SPA – Special Protocol Assessment

UGME – Undergraduate Medical Education

USMLE – United States Medical Licensing Examination

WFME – World Federation for Medical Education

2. Useful WWW links:

[ACCM](https://accredmed.org/): [HTTPS://ACCREDMED.ORG/](https://accredmed.org/)

[ACGME](https://www.acgme.org/): [HTTPS://WWW.ACGME.ORG/](https://www.acgme.org/)

[ACSOM](https://www.acsom.edu.dm/): [HTTPS://WWW.ACSOM.EDU.DM/](https://www.acsom.edu.dm/)

[ACSOM CANVAS](https://gmed.instructure.com/login/canvas): [HTTPS://GMED.INSTRUCTURE.COM/LOGIN/CANVAS](https://gmed.instructure.com/login/canvas)

[AAMC](https://www.aamc.org/): [HTTPS://WWW.AAMC.ORG/](https://www.aamc.org/)

[AMA](https://www.ama-assn.org/): [HTTPS://WWW.AMA-ASSN.ORG/](https://www.ama-assn.org/)

[AMSA](https://www.amsa.org/): [HTTPS://WWW.AMSA.ORG/](https://www.amsa.org/)

[AP GOLD FOUNDATION](https://www.gold-foundation.org/): [HTTPS://WWW.GOLD-FOUNDATION.ORG/](https://www.gold-foundation.org/)

[ECFMG](https://www.intealth.org/accreditation/): [HTTPS://WWW.INTEALTH.ORG/ACCREDITATION/](https://www.intealth.org/accreditation/)

[IAAR](https://iaar.agency/en): [HTTPS://IAAR.AGENCY/EN](https://iaar.agency/en)

[NHC](https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/): [HTTPS://WWW.NHC.NOAA.GOV/](https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/)

[NCFMEA](https://sites.ed.gov/ncfmea/): [HTTPS://SITES.ED.GOV/NCFMEA/](https://sites.ed.gov/ncfmea/)

[NRMP](https://www.nrmp.org/): [HTTPS://WWW.NRMP.ORG/](https://www.nrmp.org/)

[ODM \(DOMINICA\)](https://odm.gov.dm/) : [HTTPS://ODM.GOV.DM/](https://odm.gov.dm/)

[STUDENT CORNER](https://sites.google.com/view/acsom-student-corner/): [HTTPS://SITES.GOOGLE.COM/VIEW/ACSOM-STUDENT-CORNER/](https://sites.google.com/view/acsom-student-corner/)

[USMLE](https://www.usmle.org/): [HTTPS://WWW.USMLE.ORG/](https://www.usmle.org/)

[WDOMS](https://www.wdoms.org/): [HTTPS://WWW.WDOMS.ORG/](https://www.wdoms.org/)

[WFME](https://wfme.org): [HTTPS://WFME.ORG](https://wfme.org)

