

## **DUSOM Medical Education and Health Profession Education Programs Prohibited Substance Use Recommendations for Policy, Procedures, Testing and Sanctions**

All students and members of the Duke University community are expected to follow the standards of conduct established by the University. This includes the prohibition against the unauthorized use, possession, storage, manufacture, distribution and sale of alcohol, controlled substances, and illegal drugs on Duke's premises, in or during Duke activities, or during any business conducted in Duke-supplied vehicles or during working hours. In accordance with the [Duke Community Standard](#), Duke is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all enrolled students. In addition, students in medical and health professions programs participate in patient interaction and patient care activities at Duke, Duke University Health System (DUHS), and affiliated sites, where drug and alcohol-related impairment can have a detrimental impact on patient care and safety.

**Purpose** – These recommendations refer to medical and health profession education programs in the Duke University School of Medicine including: Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy Doctorate, Physician Assistant, Pathologist Assistant, and Master of Biomedical Sciences. The intent of these policy recommendations is to define expectations in the assessment and management of prohibited substances.

**Definition of Prohibited Substances** – This policy applies to all substances covered under the Federal and North Carolina Controlled Substances Act, the North Carolina Toxic Vapors Act, the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act and/or any other applicable law ("Prohibited Substances"). Prohibited substances include but are not limited to Schedule I controlled substances, illegal drugs, and legal substances that can affect or impair physical or mental capacity, judgement or fitness for patient-related duty (including but not limited to alcoholic beverages, THC and cannabinoids, hallucinogens, and certain medically authorized or prescribed drugs or therapies). See the Duke Community Standard for more details [here](#). Based on location and nature of students' clinical assignments, specific substances and policies associated with their use may be more restrictive in those jurisdictions (and clinical sites may request additional or different testing outside of this policy).

**Expectations Regarding Prohibited Substance and Alcohol Use** – it is not permissible to possess, use, or consume Prohibited Substances in the learning or clinical environment (such as classroom or other academic sites, labs or clinical settings). Students may not come to learning or clinical environments under the influence of any Prohibited Substance. Recreational (i.e., non-prescribed) cannabis use is NOT legal in North Carolina, nor is it permitted in the context of patient care activities. Any use of a Prohibited Substance that is legally prescribed for a medical condition must be clearly documented during pre-matriculation testing.

**Expectations for communication regarding Prohibited Substance and Alcohol related legal actions** - Students are required to notify their Program Director in writing or by email within three days of any drug or alcohol related arrests, charges, or convictions. Failure by a student to provide timely notification of drug- or alcohol- related arrests or convictions may result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

**Expectations for Prohibited Substance and Alcohol Testing** – All students will be subject to testing for Prohibited Substances at/prior to matriculation and in accordance with specific program guidelines. Minimally, all students must be tested for the following substances at matriculation: amphetamines, cannabinoid (marijuana), cocaine, opiates and phencyclidine. All testing will be overseen by a designated certified medical review officer (MRO). If there is a positive result, the MRO will meet with the student to interpret the results, make referrals, and/or arrange subsequent testing. The MRO will inform the program leadership who will determine if the student is allowed to matriculate or not – no other personal health information will be shared with the program leadership. There are no additional costs to the student for the initial MRO evaluation.

Students may also be referred for testing at any other time **for cause** (e.g., exhibiting behaviors raising suspicion of substance use). If reasonable cause exists, enrolled students may be subject to unannounced drug screening, meaning students could be requested at any time to submit to a urine and/or serum screen to assess for Prohibited Substances.

Testing under this policy may occur at any time, without advance notification. Students will not be charged for these testing costs. However, students recommended to take part in surveillance monitoring (e.g., random urine testing secondary to a positive result) must comply as a condition of return to clinical service and will be responsible for paying for these associated costs (\$110-\$150 per test). Additionally, students will be required to execute a waiver prior to testing for release of test results to individuals and sites who need this for relevant clinical work to begin/continue.

**Expectations for identifying and managing concerns for impairment post-matriculation**—Education leaders or clinical supervisors will use the following definition of impairment:

*Impairment is defined as the inability of a person (in this policy, medical education and HPE students) to provide clinical care with level-appropriate skill and safety due to being under the adverse influence of alcohol, narcotics or other drugs, whether illicit or otherwise; or mentally or physically unable to reason, communicate, or perform clinical services in a safe and acceptable fashion; or distress that is recognized by the individual or others as detrimental to the person's or patient's well-being. Behaviors that may be observed in someone who is impaired include, but are not limited to unexplained absences or tardiness, inappropriate orders or responses to queries, diminishing quality of work, lack of preparedness, impaired interpersonal interactions.*

Program leadership is responsible for making the determination of removing a student from educational and/or clinical care activities upon evidence of impairment. If there is an urgent concern or imminent threat to the student and/or patient well-being, the Vice Dean, in collaboration with program leadership, will refer the student to the Office of Le Well for an immediate Fitness for Duty evaluation with a provider trained in Occupational Health and Medicine. The process of evaluation and clearance for return to educational program activities may take time such that a student's curricular progress may be interrupted and/or delayed. The student will be allowed to return to educational program activities upon clearance by the Occupational Health provider. This notification will be provided in writing by the Office of Le Well to the Program Director and the Vice Dean. The program will cover the costs for a Fitness for Duty evaluation, but the student must pay for any recommended treatments or evaluations deemed necessary before returning to the education environment.

**Confidential or Anonymous Reporting of Suspected Violations** – Any concerns regarding a student under this policy can be reported to the Program Director, the Office of Le Well Associate Dean for Learning Environment and Well-Being and/or the Vice Dean. Anonymous reports also may be made using [the Adverse Events Reporting System \(AERS\)](#).

**Academic and Disciplinary Action** – Violations of the Medical and HPE Education Programs Substance Use Policy may result in disciplinary and/or academic actions consistent with University policy and applicable federal, state and local laws. Specific violations and actions include, but are not limited to:

- Incoming students will not be permitted to begin orientation and/or the academic program without consenting to and undergoing required testing that results in clearance to participate in the educational environment.
- Students who do not consent to pre-matriculation, pre-clinical or for-cause screening will not be permitted to continue in any educational activities and may be suspended or dismissed from the program.
- Students can be temporarily removed from any clinical or academic site pending testing results.
- If a student is not cleared to participate in educational activities, the MRO will communicate that result and associated recommendations to the Office of Le Well, and Le Well will inform the Program Director of the MRO's recommendation.
- Students returning to the educational environment are expected to follow the recommendations of the MRO in order to maintain eligibility to remain in the educational program.
- Noncompliance with this policy and/or inability to meet the requirements set by the MRO will result in communication of noncompliance to the program director and review for possible adverse academic actions.

- Please refer to program specific policies on professionalism, advancement and promotion, as well as the SOM Academic Appeals Policy for details. All are located in the SOM Bulletin.

**Resources** – Students are at risk for considerable health consequences related to use of Prohibited Substances. Students in medical and HPE programs are also responsible for professional conduct in and around healthcare settings and may experience serious professional consequences for violations of the policy. For students seeking assistance, resources are available to help students in understanding and dealing with substance and alcohol abuse. Those resources can be found at:

[Duke Student Affairs Alcohol & Other Drug Resources](#)

#### **Related Policies**

[Duke Substance Use Policy](#)

[Duke University School of Medicine/Medical Education Student Alcohol Policy and Procedures for Events in the TSCHE and SGM Buildings](#)

Academic Sanctions Appeals Process

<https://medicine.bulletins.duke.edu/som-policies/appeals>

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