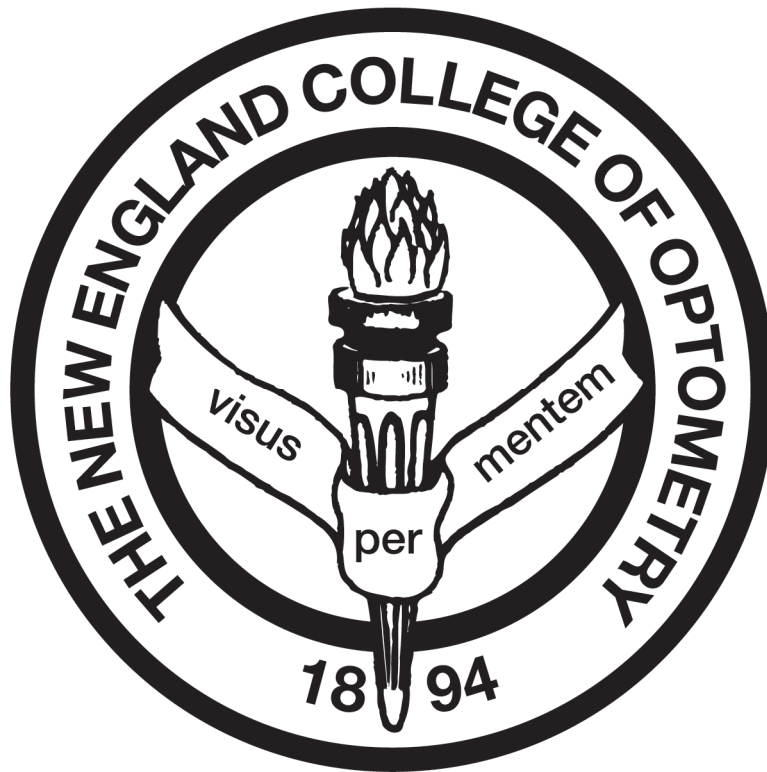


# STUDENT HANDBOOK



**2008-2009  
Academic Year**

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# The New England College of Optometry – Student Handbook

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## Quick Reference

### **College Main Telephone Number: 617-266-2030**

All parties on the Beacon Street Campus can be reached by using the College's telephone system and accessing the automated directory for the individual or office that you want.

**College Closing at Beacon St. Campus:** Notices of academic program closure or delay usually due to inclement weather will be:

- listed on all four major Boston television networks (local ABC, CBS, NBC & FOX)
- listed on WBZ radio (1030 AM)
- indicated on the College website with a dated notation of "open" or "closed"
- emailed to all College student emails with a dated notation of "open" or "closed"

**Clinic Closing:** Students with any type of clinical assignments must check with their assigned clinical sites as to their status according to the procedures in the 'Clinical Education Policy and Procedures Manual'.

**Institutional Communication:** The College uses electronic and written communications in the delivery of its educational programs and in the conduct of its business affairs. Students are responsible for assuring that they read and respond appropriately to all communications, especially email, from faculty and administration.

### **Unexpected Absence From:**

A **Clinic** assignment, clerkship, or screening even for one day must be reported in advance to the Clinical Education Office at 617-587-5566. Please refer to the 'Clinical Education Policy and Procedures Manual'.

A **Laboratory** session must obtain prior approval from laboratory instructor, instructor of record or appropriate department chair if the instructor(s) are unavailable before the start of the laboratory session.

**Classes** for more than three days must be formally excused by the Office of Academic Affairs by calling in advance to 617-587-5587. Please refer to the 'Absence Policies and Procedures' section.

**Bicycle Rack:** A rack is located outside of 424 Beacon Street to be used at your own risk. A sturdy cable and lock are strongly recommended. Note: Bicycles are not allowed within the College facilities.

**Off Campus Jobs:** There is a listing on our website at [www.neco.edu/students/career](http://www.neco.edu/students/career). Foreign students are not eligible for off campus jobs without getting prior approval to work from USCIS.

**On Campus Work-Study, Loans and Scholarships:** On campus work-study jobs are posted on the Financial Aid Office's webpage, [www.neco.edu/finaid](http://www.neco.edu/finaid), as are timesheets and other required forms. Call Ms. Joann Reed if you have any questions: 617-587-5582 or email [reedj@neco.edu](mailto:reedj@neco.edu). Information about financial aid in general, scholarships, loans, applications, and the Emergency Loan can also be found at the above website or in the Financial Aid Office.

**Cafeteria:** The cafeteria is located in the lower level of the College and is only open when classes are in session. There is a limited menu and hours of operation.

**Class Schedules:** These are created and distributed via email by the Office of Academic Affairs. They are also posted through the College email system under Public Folders.

**Clinical Education Policy and Procedures Manual:** The manual can be found on MediTrek and is distributed by the Clinical Education Office.

**College Buildings Hours:** The buildings are usually open seven days a week from 6 AM to 10 PM. *An ID card is required to enter the buildings at all times.* Failure to bring College identification may result in your not being allowed access especially after 5 PM on Monday through Friday and all day on weekends.

**Counseling:** All inquires should be directed to Ms. Barbara McGinley in the Office of Student Services at 617-587-5593 or [mcginleyb@neco.edu](mailto:mcginleyb@neco.edu).

**Deferment Forms and Enrollment Verification Letters:** Please submit your Deferment Forms with your part completed and/or submit your written requests for letters verifying your student status to the Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office has a three to five working day turnaround time for all requests.

**Health Insurance for Students:** Questions can be directed to the Student Services Office at 617-587-5593.

**Housing Information in Boston:** Contact the Student Services Office at 617-587-5593.

**Immunization Documents for Students:** Please contact the Student Services Office at 617-587-5593 for information and/or with questions.

**Library Hours:** These are posted at the entrance to the Library and on the College website.

**Lost and Found:** You should inquire at the Main Office as all found objects should be brought to that office.

**Lost ID Cards:** Please see Ms. Christine Foster in the Main Office.

**MBTA (T) Passes:** Discounted passes may be purchased during the first week in September and the first week in January. Please contact the Student Services Office at 617-587-5593 for further information and exact deadlines. You may also purchase passes at the Back Bay and Government Center train stations. For more information call the T at 617-222-5000.

**Midterm and Final Exam Schedules:** These are created and distributed via email by the Office of Academic Affairs.

**National Board of Examiners in Optometry:** The website is [www.optometry.org](http://www.optometry.org) or the telephone number is 1-800-969-3926.

**New England Eye Commonwealth Main Telephone Number: 617-262-2020**

All parties at NEE Commonwealth can be reached by using the Clinic's telephone system and accessing the automated directory for the individual or office that you want.

**Notary Public:** Ms. Trish Dahill, found in the Office of Human Resources, is a notary public at the College. She can be reached at 617-587-5599 or [dahillp@neco.edu](mailto:dahillp@neco.edu). Do not sign any forms until you are told to do so by the notary.

**Optometric Equipment and Course Notes:** The Campus Store which is located in the lower level coordinates the distribution of optometric equipment and course notes.

**Photocopiers:** These are located in the library and can be used for a nominal charge.

**Student Parking:** Parking for students is not available at the College.

**Textbooks:** Textbooks are available at the 'Barnes and Noble at Boston University' at 660 Beacon Street, Boston, MA at Kenmore Square (where Beacon Street and Commonwealth Avenue cross). Their telephone number is 617-267-8484.

**Tutoring Requests:** All inquiries should be directed to Ms. Barbara McGinley in the Office of Student Services at 617-587-5593 or [mcginleyb@neco.edu](mailto:mcginleyb@neco.edu).

**Vending Machines:** Beverage and snack machines are located in the lower level near the Campus Store.

**Website for the College:** [www.neco.edu](http://www.neco.edu)

## Office/Department Telephone Guide

<u>Office/Department</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>
Academic Affairs Office	617-587-5587
Administration Office	617-587-5574
Admissions Office	617-587-5580
Bioscience Department	617-587-5590
Business Office	617-587-5583
Campus Store	617-587-5600
Clinical Education Office	617-587-5566
College Main Number	617-266-2030
Community Care & Public Health	617-587-5594
Dean of Students Office	617-587-5577
Graduate Research Education	617-266-2030x5275
Financial Aid Office	617-587-5582
Library	617-587-5589
New England Eye Commonwealth	617-262-2020
Placement Office	617-587-5596
President's Office	617-587-5584
Registrar's Office	617-587-5581
Residency Education Office	617-262-2020x5177
Specialty & Advanced Care	617-587-5595
Student Services Office	617-587-5593
Vision Science Office	617-587-5588

# ***STUDENT GROUPS***

## **Student Council**

The Student Council governs the internal affairs of the student body. The Council consists of twenty-three voting members and is made up of the Executive Board:

- representatives from the first, second and third year classes of the Four Year OD Program
- representative from the Accelerated OD Program (AODP)
- representative from the Advanced Standing International Program (ASIP)
- representative from the Masters of Science in Vision Science Program (MS)

The Council's Executive Board includes a president, a vice-president, two secretaries, and a treasurer all of whom are elected by the entire student body at the end of the year. The positions of president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer are open to any student who meets the GPA requirements (See 'GPA Requirement to Hold Student Office/Committee Member' section).

Every year each class in the Four Year OD Program elects a president, a vice-president and three representatives to the Student Council. The AODP, ASIP and MS Programs each elect one representative. The students elected to these positions have the duty of representing their class during Student Council meetings as well as acting as liaison between their professors and classmates.

The vice-president of the Student Council will act as the interim president for the first year students in the Four Year OD Program until elections are held. Rising second and third year students of the Four Year OD Program, the MS Program and the Accelerated OD Program hold elections at the end of the Spring Term for positions beginning the following Summer Term. The Advanced Standing International Program holds elections in the middle of the Summer Term for the positions beginning the following Fall Term.

Student Council works toward making change to Optometric legislation and organizes activities such as the NECOlympics, the Halloween party, the Eye Ball, and the yearbook. At the fall budget meeting, the Executive Council members allocate funds from student activity fees to the various school organizations.

The Council also meets periodically with school administrators to help set policies concerning student interests and oversees the election of student representatives to various administrative committees such as Curriculum, Student Affairs and Financial Aid which usually occurs at the end of the academic year. The president of the Student Council is a voting member of the Board of Trustees. Monthly Council meetings are usually held in the late afternoon at the most convenient time for everyone.

The needs of the student body regulate the frequency of meetings. One of the secretaries of the Student Council will post announcements regarding when and where the meeting will be held. All are invited to attend.

If you have any questions concerning the Student Council, contact the Student Council President. The administrative advisor to the Student Council is Dr. Doreen Kleinman.

## **American Academy of Optometry**

The major goal of the American Academy of Optometry is to maintain and enhance excellence in standards of optometric practice. It does this by fostering research and the dissemination of knowledge in both basic and applied vision science. Since its founding in 1922, the Academy's success in achieving this objective has moved it to the forefront of American and international optometry and made fellowship in the Academy a significant and cherished attainment for optometrists and vision scientists.

Student membership in the Academy is open to all optometry students in good academic standing, to full time students in the vision and related sciences, and to residents in accredited optometric residency programs.

Student membership in the Academy provides an opportunity to attend the annual meeting of the Academy. The Academy meets each year in October in a major North American city to conduct scientific and educational meetings in optometry, including continuing education courses, section programs, paper sessions, scientific posters and exhibits, and award lectures. Student members are invited to attend the meeting of the New England chapter of the Academy in October and April. Student members also receive the monthly publication *Optometry and Vision Science*, which addresses topics of both scientific and practical clinical interest. Each year The New England Chapter of the Academy awards travel grants to students to attend the annual meeting of the Academy.

If you are interested in membership or further information, please contact the student representatives. The faculty advisor for the Academy is Dr. Stacy Lyons.

## **American Optometric Student Association**

The American Optometric Student Association (AOSA) is the international professional organization run for and by optometric students and is often an initial exposure to organized optometry. The AOSA is headed by an Executive Council (president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer) and a Board of Trustees representing each school or college of optometry. Every student at the College becomes a member of AOSA when his/her activity fee is paid. In return, members receive the AOSA newsletter "Foresight", automatic membership to the American Optometric Association and other benefits including penlights, T-shirts, clipboards, PDRs and access to the NPRN (National Practice Resource Network).

More importantly, the AOSA represents student interests to a variety of organizations including the National Board of Examiners in Optometry, American Regulatory Board of Optometry, Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry and various sections of the American Optometric Association. The AOSA sponsors the Annual Conference which coincides with the AOA Congress. The Conference, besides being a great time, affords students the opportunity to attend informative classes, become familiar with various products and manufacturers, meet fellow students from other schools and colleges of optometry and form business contacts with optometrists and future employers.

For more information, contact the AOSA student Trustee or check out [www.theaosa.org](http://www.theaosa.org). The faculty advisor for AOSA is Dr. Nicole Quinn.

## **Beta Sigma Kappa**

The Beta Sigma Kappa (BSK) International Optometric Honor Society is an elite group of Optometrists and Optometry students who are dedicated to stimulating scientific and clinical excellence and high moral standards in the profession.

The organization is involved in a variety of academic activities including tutoring and organization of review sessions and group seminars. It supports optometric research by awarding grants each year to deserving student projects. It also presents the Silver Medal Award to the graduating senior with the highest academic record. In addition to its academic goals, BSK encourages its members to volunteer for worthy community projects and supports social interaction among students.

Membership eligibility consists of a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 after the first year, 3.4 after the second year, and 3.3 after the third year. AODP students are eligible with a minimum GPA of 3.5 after the first year and 3.3 after the second year. ASIP students are eligible with a minimum GPA of 3.3 after the first year.

Membership certificates are presented to qualified individuals who join the organization. Individuals who maintain the required academic standards throughout the four years of optometry school are recognized with an additional certificate of achievement. All graduating members are recognized at the Awards Ceremony and are distinguished by a gold cord that is worn during the graduation ceremony.

Membership is for life, as are the standards advocated by the organization. For further information, contact Dr. Nicole Quinn who is the faculty advisor.

## **College of Optometrists in Vision Development**

The COVD-NECO-Special Interest Group is a chapter for COVD at The New England College of Optometry. There are currently 16 other chapters across the country at various optometry schools.

COVD-NECO-SIG serves as an advocate for comprehensive vision care with an emphasis on a developmental and behavioral approach to patient care; provides an education opportunity to share programs and information in the areas of behavioral vision care, vision therapy and related fields; and provides and promotes professional standards of behavior among members of the student organization and the general public.

Membership in COVD is required to be a member of the club. Applications will be distributed at the first meeting of each year and to anyone who is interested in joining thereafter.

The faculty advisor for COVD is Dr. Richard Laudon.

## **Massachusetts Society of Optometry Students**

The Massachusetts Society of Optometry Students (MSOS) is a student organization at the New England College of Optometry that serves as a liaison between the school and the local state association (the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists – MSO). The state organization is dedicated to the fulfillment of quality vision and eye care needs of the public. To achieve this goal, the MSO seeks to unite all Massachusetts optometrists in their effort to practice the highest standard of care through support of continuing education and research. The MSO promotes the full scope of practice through public education as well as legislative, legal and other pursuits. The MSO is also dedicated to promoting the success of its members in professional life.

As a student chapter of the MSO, the MSOS shares the same goals and benefits as the state organization. Furthermore, the MSOS represents student concerns and keeps students informed of issues at the state level of organized optometry.

All first year students are members of MSOS. As a member, you will have an opportunity to build relationships with local optometrists; attend luncheons at which prominent optometrists provide valuable education/career tips and be among the first to learn of the latest legislation/scope of practice developments within the field of optometry. The faculty advisor for MSOS is Dr. Clifford Scott.

## **National Optometric Student Association**

The National Optometric Student Association (NOSA) promotes the delivery of vision care to underserved communities through consumer education, legislative advocacy, minority recruitment and vision screenings. The Association informs minority community members about vision protection and works to raise legislators' awareness of minority consumers' visual needs.

NOSA's recruitment efforts include reaching out to the underserved community by talking to students of all levels about the importance of optometry in disadvantaged communities.

NOSA is affiliated with the National Optometric Association, a diverse organization of optometrists. For further information or questions about becoming an active member, contact the NOSA president. The administrative advisor for NOSA is Ms. Barbara McGinley.

## **Performance Vision Club**

Objectives of the Performance Vision Club (PVC) are to serve all patients in the community to improve their visual performance; to inform the public of preventative measures to ensure proper eye safety and to reduce the risk of eye injury; to promote professional standards of behavior and mutual respect among members, and to promote professional standards of behavior among members of the student organization and the general public.

Meetings can feature speakers, screenings, observations, examinations (childhood to adult), and sporting events. For more information, please contact the PVC president. The faculty advisor for PVC is Dr. Walter Potaznick.

## **NECO Lions Club**

The Lions Club is a group of concerned individuals who are dedicated to the Lions' motto of "We Serve" and volunteer their time and talents towards eye research and the betterment of our community. This is in response to the challenge Helen Keller gave the Lions at the Lions 1925 International Convention at Cedar Point, Ohio, when she asked the Lions to become the "Knights of the blind" and eliminate all preventable blindness in the world. We invite one and all to join the NECO Lions Club and help carry forth the inspiring words of Helen Keller.

The NECO Lions Club donates to the Massachusetts Eye Research fund and to research on diabetes, a disease which is a prime cause of blindness. All the funds are used for research conducted at Massachusetts' universities and research facilities. The NECO Lions Club meets on a monthly basis and has participated in many college wide events in efforts to raise funds for eye research, promote eye health, and enhance our community. Some of the many recent NECO Lions projects include supporting the local community by providing eye care services for the needy and working jointly with the Boston area Lions Clubs by providing eye care services and screenings through the Lions Eye Mobile community outreach project. The NECO Lions Club has also provided book-binding services to local publishers for children's Braille books. Bilingual Lions have also given presentations about eye care to senior citizens with other Boston Lions Clubs. Donations of glasses have been made to VOSH and local homeless shelters. The faculty advisor for the NECO Lions Club is Mr. Blair Wong.

## **Volunteer Optometric Services in Humanity**

VOSH-NECO is the student chapter of VOSH-International which provides eye and vision care to people who cannot afford care or for whom it is otherwise unavailable. Student clinicians, along with practicing optometrists, travel to underserved populations in countries typically in Central America. In recent years, VOSH-NECO has been going to the Dominican Republic. The mission is coordinated by the Batey Relief Alliance which coordinates the mission to the underserved areas in the Dominican. Every patient seen receives basic eye care examination and leaves with a pair of prescription eyeglasses, if vision correction is needed, given eye medications if needed or is referred for further treatment such as cataract surgery. Locally, VOSH-NECO participates in vision screenings in conjunction with the Lions Club, Cambridge Health Alliance, and the Sharewood Health Center. Students also participate by collecting, sorting, and classifying donated eyeglasses which are dispensed to needy patients during VOSH missions. Numerous fundraising events are held throughout the year to help offset expenses for each member who participates on the annual trip abroad. These include the VOSH Annual Alcon Night, Annual Walkathon, and monthly bake sales to name a few.

All NECO students are encouraged to join VOSH to better their clinical skills, to provide humanitarian assistance to an underserved population, and to enhance cultural awareness. VOSH members will get early hands-on experience by seeing patients of all ages at local screenings as well as the opportunity to see patients in other countries during the annual trip abroad.

Participation in VOSH provides a rewarding experience and a chance to give to the local and world communities. Each year, the VOSH president is elected by students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year class. If you are interested in becoming a member or have any questions about VOSH, please contact the student VOSH president. The faculty advisor for VOSH-NECO is Dr. Bina Patel.

# ***EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES***

This section outlines the educational policies of The New England College of Optometry. Students, faculty and administrators are expected to familiarize themselves with the academic, clinical, student ethics and administrative policies.

The Student Affairs Committee (SAC), composed of faculty members, administrators and student representatives, is responsible for the implementation of and adherence to the College's educational policies as well as other policies as defined throughout the Student Handbook.

## **Degree Requirements**

Degrees will be conferred pursuant to the completion of the following requirements:

- **Curriculum Requirements** – All didactic and clinical requirements for the degree must have been completed.
- **Academic Requirements** – A minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.000 with no outstanding grades of Failure, Remedial, or Incomplete is required. (The cumulative GPA is not a rounded number; a cumulative GPA of 1.999 does not qualify a student to graduate.)
- **Professional Conduct Requirement** – No student will be allowed to graduate with charges or pending actions.
- **Faculty and Board of Trustees Approval** – Conferring of a degree requires formal approval by the Faculty and Board of Trustees.
- **Fiscal Requirements** – All fiscal obligations must have been satisfied at least one week prior to the conferring of a degree. These include tuition and fees, expenses incurred at the clinic and Campus Store and/or library charges.
- **Financial Aid** – A student who has received financial aid must have an exit interview with a member of the Financial Aid Office.

## **Student Status Policies and Procedures**

*The Registrar will determine a student's academic progress or standing after each term.*

### **Academic Standing**

A student is considered to be in good academic standing unless he/she has met any of the criteria for Academic Dismissal and/or Clinical Dismissal for a second consecutive time or has not met the requirements set forth in a modified program. (Please review the 'Academic and Clinical Dismissal' sections that are in the latter part of this handbook.)

### **Academic Progress**

A student whose expected date of graduation is not more than one year after the date anticipated at the time of matriculation will be considered to be making satisfactory academic progress.

At the end of each term, the Registrar and/or the SAC review each student's performance. A student may progress normally or may be placed in one of the following categories.

**Academic Distinction**

A student with a cumulative grade point average of 3.500 or above at the end of an academic year will have achieved academic distinction for that academic year.

**Academic Warning**

A student will be placed on academic warning when his/her cumulative GPA falls within the range of 2.000 – 2.200. The student will receive a written notice from the Registrar when he/she is placed on academic warning for the first time and at the end of the academic year if the student remains on academic warning.

**Resolution of Academic Warning**

Academic warning will be resolved when the student's cumulative GPA is 2.200 or above.

**Academic Probation**

A student will be placed on academic probation for one or more of the following:

- student's cumulative grade point average is below the minimum grade point average of 2.000 required for advancement to the next professional year or graduation,
- student's term grade point average is 1.600 or below in any one term,
- student has earned two grades of "F" in one term.

The student will receive a written notice from the Registrar each time he/she meets a requirement to be placed on academic probation. However, this may not be the final action as any student placed on academic probation may be required to meet with the SAC.

Any student placed on academic probation may be required to meet with the SAC and will be required to meet with the Director of Student Services. A student in the Accelerated OD Program or the Advanced Standing International Program will also be required to meet with his/her program advisor.

**Clinical Probation**

A student will be placed on clinical probation for one or more of the following:

- student has earned a grade of remedial in a clinical course,
- student has earned a grade of failure in a clinical course.

The student will receive a written notice from the Registrar each time he/she meets a requirement to be placed on clinical probation. However, this may not be the final action as any student placed on clinical probation may be required to meet with the SAC.

**Resolution of Probation**

Academic probation will be resolved when the student's cumulative GPA is 2.000 or above and has met any requirements set by the SAC and/or the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs.

Clinical Probation will be resolved if a student receives a grade of pass (P) or higher in his/her next clinical course for a remedial grade or in his/her next equivalent level clinical course for a failure grade and has met any requirements set by the SAC, the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and/or as part of a remedial program.

## **Modified Status**

A student whose program has been changed as listed below or has been retained by the SAC will be placed on modified status. The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs in collaboration with the Student Affairs Committee may modify a student's academic or clinical program. Modification may take the form of increasing the time allowed to complete the curriculum, the sequence in which courses are taken, and/or by setting a different academic and/or clinical standard. The modified program will also contain the academic and/or clinical standard(s) that the student must meet in the modified program.

The SAC may set different academic and/or clinical standard(s) as part of a student's performance review or dismissal hearing as well as recommend curriculum changes to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs.

## **Student Request for Modified Program**

Ordinarily a student's request for a change in his/her academic curriculum should be submitted to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs no later than two weeks after mid-term exams. If approved, a student's request for a change in his/her curriculum will place the student on modified status. The same procedures as listed under 'Modified Status' will be used to create the modified program.

## **Inquiry Status**

A student who has an unprofessional conduct complaint pending before the SAC will be classified as an inquiry status student until the complaint is resolved. (Please review the "Unprofessional Conduct" section that is in the latter part of this handbook.)

## **Requirements for Student Advancement**

A student is required to meet minimum academic standards in order to advance to the next professional year of study.

- A student must have at least a 2.000 cumulative GPA at the end of the academic year.
- To enter the final Professional Year, a student must have a 2.000 cumulative GPA and no more than one grade of Incomplete, In Progress, Remedial or Fail in didactic or clinical courses unless placed in a modified program.

## **Dismissal Policies and Procedures**

### **Academic Dismissal**

A student in a degree program may be subject to dismissal:

- when the term GPA is 1.60 or below,
- following two consecutive terms on academic probation,
- when a grade of "F" is earned in a course retaken to resolve a grade of "F",
- when the requirements for advancement are not met,
- or when additional modified status requirements have not been met.

## **Clinical Dismissal**

A student in a degree program may be subject to dismissal:

- following the grade of Fail (F) earned in a clinical course that involves patient care,
- following two consecutive Remedial (RM) grades earned in clinical courses that involve patient care,
- when three nonconsecutive Remedial (RM) grades are accumulated in clinical courses that involve patient care,
- following two consecutive terms on clinical probation,
- or when additional modified status/remedial requirements have not been met.

The student will be required to meet with the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) for review and determination of his/her status.

## **Dismissal Hearing Policy and Procedure**

When a student meets the criterion for academic and/or clinical dismissal, the SAC will conduct a dismissal hearing.

As part of the review, the SAC will consider the student's academic record, clinical record, if applicable, and all pertinent information provided by the student such as:

- circumstances regarding poor academic and/or clinical performance,
- the student's proposal for satisfactorily completing the academic and/or clinical program,
- evaluation by the Counseling Service requested by the SAC or the student,
- or written faculty recommendations and comments when requested by the student.

Prior to any dismissal action, the SAC will notify the student in writing and/or by email of the time and date of his/her hearing. A student has the right to select a faculty member or administrator of The New England College of Optometry as an advisor.

Following the dismissal hearing, the student may be dismissed or retained on modified status. The SAC will notify the student in writing of the decision to dismiss or retain. If the student is retained on modified status, the SAC will also inform the student as to whether the notation 'academic and/or clinical probation' will be permanently transcribed onto the student's transcript. A dismissal that is upheld will always be permanently transcribed onto the student's transcript.

## **Appeal of Dismissal**

The student may submit a written appeal of his/her dismissal to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs within five business days after the date of the letter in which SAC advises the student of his/her dismissal. The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will serve as the reviewer of appeals of dismissals.

An appeal will only be considered if a student demonstrates that the SAC did not follow the dismissal process or if the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs finds that *new* extenuating evidence exists that was not available at the time of the hearing. The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will act in an expeditious manner after receipt of a written appeal and may elect to convene a committee of faculty and/or administrators to assist with this decision at any point of the process. The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs may request input from the SAC or others as necessary.

If the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs deems that the appeal is justified, he/she may consult further with others before advising the student in writing of the student's status, curriculum changes or conditions that are required as part of the student's program in order to be retained. If the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs does not feel that the appeal is justified, the student will be advised in writing of this finding. The decision of the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will be final.

A student who is appealing a dismissal will be allowed to attend didactic courses and may be allowed to attend clinical courses. The student must contact the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs who will inform the student as to what courses and clinical assignments he/she may attend.

## **Consequences of Dismissal**

As soon as the dismissal from the College becomes official, a student must complete the following:

- an interview with the Vice President/Dean of Students or designee,
- an exit interview with a member of the Financial Aid Office for those students who have received financial aid.

And the following will occur:

- transcribing of dismissal on student's transcript and record
- deactivation of the student's identification card to remove access to campus buildings except as a visitor during regular business hours,
- discontinuation of the student's email account. The student must provide the IT Department with another email address within five (5) where email can be forwarded for thirty (30) days. If a student fails to give the College IT Department another account within five (5) days forwarding will not be instituted.

## **Grading Policies and Procedures**

### **Academic Grading**

#### **Explanation of Grades**

A = 4.00	(Excellent)
B = 3.00	(Good)
C = 2.00	(Fair)
D = 1.00	(Lowest Passing)
F = 0.00	(Failure)
FD = 1.00	(Failed, passed special examination)
P	(Pass as part of the Pass/Fail system)
F	(Fail as part of the Pass/Fail system)
I	(Incomplete)
AU	(Audit)
W	(Withdrawal)
EX	(Exempt)
IP/WIP	(In Progress)

### **Grade of I (Incomplete)**

A student who does not complete all course requirements by the end of the term in which the course was taken may, at the discretion of the course instructor, be given a grade of Incomplete. Grades of Incomplete should be given only when a significant component of the course work has not been completed with the instructor's permission and/or the final exam was missed with approval from the Academic Affairs Office, and should never be used in lieu of an "F" or any other grade.

### **Resolution of I Grade**

A student who has a grade of Incomplete is required to make arrangements with the instructor to complete the course requirements within 5 weeks following the term in which the Incomplete was given. The student and instructor of record will be informed by the Registrar of the actual deadline date. A student receiving an Incomplete in the Spring Term is advised to remain in the Boston area until the Incomplete is resolved.

If the grade of Incomplete is not removed within this 5 week period, the grade will automatically become a grade of "F". If extenuating circumstances arise, the instructor of record may request an extension by contacting the Registrar before the deadline has passed.

Following the resolution of an Incomplete, the new course grade will be used in calculating the term and cumulative GPA. This may result in the student being placed on academic warning or probation for the term or in the student being eligible for dismissal.

### **Grade of F (Failure)**

A student who has earned a grade of "F" must make arrangements for resolving this grade with the instructor of record. If the instructor has specified on the grade sheet which resolution option will be allowed, this will be indicated in the failure letter to the student. If not, the Resolution of Failure Grade Form must be received by the Registrar's Office within 2 weeks of the date on the failure letter.

### **Resolution of F Grade**

A grade of "F" may be resolved by repeating the entire course at the next regularly scheduled course offering OR by taking a special examination within 5 weeks following the term in which the grade of "F" was earned. The instructor of record will have the right to decide which of these options is to be chosen. In extenuating circumstances, a reasonably equivalent course may be allowed with the approval of the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs.

A student receiving an "F" in the Spring Term is advised to remain in the Boston area if he/she is going to be allowed to retake a special examination or is required to retake the course if it is offered over the summer.

A student who makes up an "F" grade by retaking an examination will have the grade transcribed as "FD", which is equivalent to a "D" grade and will be used for GPA calculation. Academic warning or probation will remain for the term even though the change from an "F" to "FD" may qualify for the removal of academic warning or probation.

If taking a special examination does not satisfactorily resolve the grade of "F", the student will be required to retake the entire course at the next regularly scheduled course offering. When a student retakes the course in which an "F" was earned, both grades will be transcribed on the student's transcript and will be used for GPA calculation.

### **Grade of AU (Audit)**

A student may audit a course with the recommendation of the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs. A student is required to attend the majority of classes and/or any lab sessions required by the instructor. Attendance must be verified by the instructor of record in order for the course to be transcribed.

### **Exemption from Courses**

A student may be exempted from a course only with the approval of the instructor of record. If the instructor finds that the student has sufficient educational background and successfully passes a test administered by the instructor, the student may be exempted from the course. If the student is granted an exemption, the course instructor must notify the Registrar and student in writing by the end of the third week of the beginning of the course. The student is required to attend the course until receiving written notification of an exemption. An exemption from a course does not entail a change in tuition.

### **Repeat of a Course**

A student may only repeat a course when an instructor requires the student to resolve a grade of “F”, when required by the Student Affairs Committee, or when placed in a modified program. A student may not elect to repeat a course to improve academic performance and GPA. Both grades will be transcribed on the student’s transcript and will be used for the GPA calculation.

### **Withdrawal from Courses**

A student is not normally allowed to withdraw from individual courses. In unusual circumstances, a student who is performing at a “C” or higher level may petition the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs for exception to this policy. The petition must be presented no later than two weeks prior to the final examination. Permission to withdraw from the course will only be given by the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs after consultation with the instructor of record. If the student’s request is approved, a grade of “W” will be transcribed. A student who withdraws from one or more courses will be placed on modified status. The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will devise a modified program using the same procedures as listed under Modified Status for this student. A copy of the letter approving the withdrawal and providing the student’s modified program will be sent to the Registrar.

If a student withdraws from a course without permission, as evidenced by nonattendance and failure to complete assignments and examinations, a grade of “F” will be transcribed.

Withdrawal from course(s) after the third week of classes will not result in a tuition adjustment if the student is still attending the college.

## **Clinical Grading**

### **Explanation of Grades**

H =	Honors	(Outstanding)
P =	Pass	(Performing at expected levels)
RM =	Remedial	(Performing below expected levels)
RMP =	Remedial to Pass	(Remedial, passed next clinical course)
RMF =	Remedial to Fail	(Remedial, did not pass next clinical course)
F =	Failure	(Inadequate)
I =	Incomplete	(Adequate; requirements not completed)
AU =	Audit	

W = Withdrawal  
NC = No Credit (No credit or grade given)  
IP/WIP = In Progress

Clinical grades represent an overall rating of a student's clinical performance as judged by technical skills, knowledge base, analytical skills, diagnostic skills, treatment and management, attitude, communication skills and professionalism. Successful completion of clinical courses is defined in terms of grades of Pass (P) or above. Clinical grading criteria are specified in the 'Clinical Education Policy and Procedures Manual'.

Clinical preceptors must submit written documentation to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs or designee to support a Remedial (RM) or Failure (F) grade, including a learning plan.

### **Grade of F (Failure)**

A student who earns a grade of "F" in a clinical course involving patient care will be required to meet with the SAC for a dismissal hearing.

### **Resolution of F Grade**

The resolution of an "F" grade depends on the outcome of the SAC dismissal hearing. If a student is allowed to continue, the student will be placed on modified status. Before further advancement in the clinical program is allowed, the student will have to satisfactorily complete a course of remediation and achieve a grade of "P" or above in the repeated clinical course. Upon completion of the remedial course work and repeated clinical course, the student will be reviewed by the SAC and further action will be taken by the SAC if necessary.

### **Grade of RM (Remedial)**

A student who earns a Remedial grade in a clinic course will be referred to the SAC for review and action if necessary. The student is required to contact the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs or designee to discuss his/her performance and program of remediation. The Director of Student Services will review all student cases with regard to the program of remediation, circumstances and specific needs.

### **Resolution of RM Grade**

A student who receives a grade of Remedial at the end of any clinical term will be placed on Clinical Probation:

- A grade of Pass (P) or higher in his/her next level clinical course and if applicable, the successful completion of his/her remedial program will remove a student from clinical probation; the original Remedial (RM) grade will be converted to a Remedial/Pass (RMP).
- A Remedial grade converts to a Remedial/Failure (RMF) grade if the student fails to meet passing criteria for the next level clinical course; the student is then eligible for dismissal and will be required to meet with the Student Affairs Committee (SAC).

Additional clinical assignments may be required when more than one Remedial grade is obtained and when a Remedial grade is awarded in the final term of the program. A student accumulating either two consecutive or three non-consecutive 'RM' grades throughout the clinical curriculum is eligible for dismissal.

### **Grade of AU (Audit)**

A clinical course can only be taken for a grade of audit if required as part of a student's modified degree program due to his/her modified or probationary status. A student is required to meet the

same attendance standards as a student taking the course for credit. The above attendance and satisfactory progress must be verified by the clinical preceptor in order for the course to be transcribed.

### **Grade of I (Incomplete)**

A student who does not complete all clinical course requirements by the end of the term in which the course was taken may, at the discretion of the clinical preceptor or Director of Clinical Education, be given a grade of Incomplete. A grade of Incomplete should be given only when a significant component of the clinical work has not been completed, and should never be used in lieu of an “F” or any other grade.

### **Resolution of I Grade**

A student receiving a grade of Incomplete is required to contact the Director of Clinical Education or his/her designee in order to make arrangements to complete the clinical course within 3 weeks following the term in which the Incomplete was given. The student and Director of Clinical Education will be informed by the Registrar of the actual deadline date.

If the grade of Incomplete is not removed within this 3 week period, the grade will automatically become an “F”. If extenuating circumstances arise, the Director of Clinical Education may request an extension by contacting the Registrar before the deadline has passed.

Following the resolution of an Incomplete, the new clinical course grade will be used in determining the student’s status with regard to clinical probation, academic standing or eligibility for dismissal.

### **Repeat of a Clinical Course**

A student may only repeat a clinical course if required by the SAC or as part of a modified program when placed on modified status. Both grades will be transcribed on the student’s transcript. A student may not elect to repeat a clinical course.

### **Exemption from Clinical Courses**

There is no exemption from or substitutions for clinical courses involving patient care (See paragraph below with regard to contact lens clinical courses). Students will be assigned only to clinical assignments that have been previously established by formal affiliation with the College. The Office of Clinical Education publishes a list of clinical affiliates annually.

A student may be exempt from contact lens clinical courses only. If the instructor of record finds that the student has sufficient educational background and/or clinical experience, the student may be exempted from the contact lens clinical course. If the student is granted an exemption, the instructor of record must notify the Registrar and the student in writing by the end of the third week of the beginning of the contact lens clinical course. The student is required to attend the contact lens clinical course and/or assignment until receiving written notification of exemption. An exemption from a contact lens clinical course/assignment does not entail a change in tuition.

### **Withdrawal from Clinical Courses**

A student is not normally allowed to withdraw from a clinical course. A student may request permission to withdraw from a clinical course by writing to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and providing a copy to the Clinical Education Office no later than 3 weeks before the last day of the student’s present clinical assignment or 3 weeks before the first day of the student’s next clinical assignment. Permission to withdraw from a clinical course will only be given by the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs. If the student’s request is approved, a

grade of “W” will be transcribed. A student who withdraws from a clinical course will be placed on modified status. The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will devise a modified program for this student. A copy of the letter approving the withdrawal and providing the student’s modified program will be sent to the Registrar and the Clinical Education Office.

If a student withdraws from a clinical course without permission by not attending clinic, clerkships or screenings or by failing to complete other requirements of the clinical course, a grade of “F” will be transcribed.

Withdrawal from a clinical course(s) after the third week of the term may not result in a tuition adjustment.

## **Submitting Grades**

Final grades are due from the instructor of record on the date specified by the Registrar. The instructor of record must submit the original Grade Sheet that is signed and dated in a sealed envelope and/or in person to the Registrar’s Office. All grades, including Incomplete, In Progress, and Remedial are considered for purposes of determining academic standing and progress.

## **Change of Grade Policy**

The instructor of record for each course has final authority for the designation of grades. Once a grade has been reported in writing to the Registrar’s Office, the following procedures apply:

### **Change of grade for I, F, or RM**

The instructor of record must complete a Change of Grade Form or write a formal letter with the instructor’s signature and deliver the form/letter directly to the Registrar’s Office.

### **Change of grade due to a clerical error**

The instructor of record must complete a Change of Grade Form or write a formal letter with the instructor’s signature with a statement indicating the reason for the change for review by the Registrar. The Registrar may request final approval from the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs.

### **Change of grade due to a calculation error**

The instructor of record must complete a Change of Grade Form or write a formal letter with the instructor’s signature with a statement indicating the reason for the change for review by the Registrar.

All grade changes must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office in person or in a sealed envelope. Emails and faxes are not acceptable.

## **Notification of Grades**

Grade reports are ordinarily mailed out to the students’ local address usually within 3-4 weeks after the term ends. Grades are given directly to the student only in the form of a grade report or as an unofficial transcript. Grades that are provided in any other format are considered unofficial.

Changes in grades will be given to the student by the Registrar's Office through a new grade report, which is usually mailed to the student.

## **Grade Point Average (GPA) Calculation**

The term or cumulative GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of quality points by the total number of credit hours attempted during a specific time period. Pass/Fail grades, Clinical grades, Incomplete grades, and In Progress grades are not used in the calculation of the GPA.

A course that is taught over the span of two or three terms and for which only one grade is given is recorded as "IP" (In Progress), "WIP" (Work In Progress) or a blank space for the first or second term. When the final grade is received, it is recorded for each term of the course. An interim grade, which reflects a student's progress in a course that is in progress, especially "D" or "F", will be used for the evaluation of academic standing and progress.

Quality points are awarded per credit hour as follows:

A =	4.00
B =	3.00
C =	2.00
D or FD =	1.00
F =	0.00

One credit hour is equivalent to:

- 10 hours of lecture per term
- 20-30 hours of laboratory per term
- 20 hours of clinic per term

Course load per Fall Term and/or Spring Term is defined as:

- Full time: usually 24 or more credit hours
- Half time: at least 12 and up to 23.99 credit hours
- Part time: less than 12 credit hours

Course load per term in the final year and per March Term and Summer Term is defined as:

- Full time: 16 or more credit hours
- Half time: at least 8 and up to 15.99 credit hours
- Part time: less than 8 credit hours

A student who attends and completes all required courses offered to his/her class for the term or academic year will be considered to be full time. These course load designations are used for student classification status only. (For policies relating to tuition see 'Tuition, Fees and Payment Policy' section.)

## Absence Policies and Procedures

Students are expected to attend all classes and are required to attend all laboratory sessions, clinical assignments and mandatory meetings. Absences often require prior approval. Students should review the following types of absences to see which procedure applies to them.

**Planned Absences:** Students will not be granted excused absences because of travel plans or personal events that are in conflict with the Academic Calendar.

**Unexpected Absences:** Students with unexpected absences may receive an excused absence with sufficient reason such as an illness, a death in the family or a personal emergency with submission of appropriate documentation to the Office of Academic Affairs.

### Absence to Attend Professionally Related Activities

Each year there are a series of professionally related activities which occur outside of the region and which are in conflict with the Academic Calendar. Requests to attend an event should be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs at least 30 days prior to the departure. Those students in clinical assignments must also follow the authorized absence procedures in the 'Clinical Education Policy and Procedures Manual'.

A few specific events are:

- Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (For a VOSH trip, a list will be gathered and submitted by the VOSH President.)
- American Academy of Optometry
- American Optometric Student Association
- Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology

Since participation requires more than a 3 day leave, the following criteria will be applied:

- A student must have a GPA of at least 2.200 and may not be on Warning, Probation and/or Inquiry Status.
- Students will be granted one leave for professional activities per term. Extraordinary circumstances may warrant an exception. Exceptions will be reviewed on an individual basis, but may be granted if the student has an official role in the event, (e.g. officer, coordinator, etc.) and should have a GPA above 2.80. The student's role should be described as part of the request.
- Under no circumstances will a student be allowed to attend more than two events in a given term.

Student participation in professional activities is encouraged by the College. It must also be recognized that a student's priority is to his/her studies and his/her obligation to patient care. If a student is granted an excused absence, the student assumes all responsibility for:

- obtaining and completing missed assignments and examinations,
- switching laboratory sections, with written notification of the switch to relevant instructors,
- switching clinical assignments with a classmate to insure coverage for patient care and completion of his/her own clinical requirements. The switch must follow the guidelines in the 'Clinical Education Policy and Procedures Manual'.

### **Absence from the College for Three or More Consecutive Days**

A student who will be absent for three or more consecutive days from the College is expected to obtain prior approval from the Office of Academic Affairs. Please review the descriptions of Planned and Unexpected Absences at the beginning of this section.

### **Absence due to Religious Observance**

In general, the College does not observe religious holidays.

Each student, upon notifying his/her instructor of record and clinical preceptor at least three weeks in advance, shall be excused from class/lab to observe a religious holiday of his/her faith. The student assumes all responsibility for:

- obtaining and completing missed assignments and examinations,
- switching laboratory sections, with written notification of the switch to relevant instructors,
- switching clinical assignments with a classmate to insure coverage for patient care and completion of his/her own clinical requirements. The switch must follow the guidelines in the 'Clinical Education Policy and Procedures Manual'.

While the student will be held responsible for the material covered in his/her absence, each student shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up any work missed. No test, quiz, major class event, or major College event will be scheduled on a major religious holiday. Faculty and administration shall in no way penalize a student who is absent from academic or clinical activities because of religious observances.

### **Absence from a Clinical Assignment, Clerkship, and/or Screening**

Please refer to the 'Clinical Education Policy and Procedures Manual'

### **Absence from a Laboratory Session**

A student must obtain prior approval from the laboratory instructor, instructor of record or the appropriate department chair if the instructor(s) are unavailable prior to the start of the laboratory session.

### **Absence from a Mandatory Class or Meeting**

A student must obtain prior approval from the instructor of record for the class and/or the appropriate office convening the meeting.

### **Absence from a Quiz**

The instructor of record will determine the consequences for being absent from an announced or unannounced quiz. A student should contact the instructor of record prior to the quiz for a previously announced quiz.

### **Absence from Midterm and Final Examinations**

All students are required to attend midterm and final examinations on the dates published by the Office of Academic Affairs except in the case of serious illness or personal emergency. If a student is ill or has a personal emergency, the student must contact the Office of Academic Affairs (617-587-5587) prior to the start of the examination to request an excused absence. *Not all requests will be approved.* If there is no one available in Academic Affairs to verbally discuss the request for an excused absence, the student should leave a message on Academic Affairs' voicemail and must then contact the Office of Student Services (617-587-5593) to

inform them of his/her inability to attend. The office that is verbally contacted will inform the instructor of record that the student is unable to attend the examination.

In the case of illness, a written medical excuse must be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs. The written medical excuse documentation must include date(s) of the illness and a date specifying medical clearance to return to the College. In the case of a personal emergency, the Office of Academic Affairs will inform the student of what documentation is necessary.

The Office of Academic Affairs will contact the instructor of record via email with a copy to the student and the Registrar's Office as to whether or not the absence from the examination has been approved.

Upon written notification of an approved absence from the Office of Academic Affairs:

- The student is required to contact the instructor of record to reschedule the missed examination immediately upon his/her return.
- If the missed exam is the final exam, the instructor of record will award a grade of Incomplete until the exam has been made up. Please see "Resolution of Incomplete Grades" with regard to deadlines.

In situations where students do not follow the correct procedures as stated above, students will not be given an excused absence. The instructor of record is not required to offer a make up exam for these students. Options include recording a grade of 0 (zero) for the exam, requiring an alternative exam and/or other additional assignment, or other options at the discretion of the instructor of record.

The Office of Academic Affairs will keep a record of examinations missed by each student and will forward the records to the Chair of the Student Affairs Committee each term. Habitual absences from examinations will not be tolerated as this provides an unfair advantage over classmates. Habitual absences will be treated as unprofessional conduct.

## ***MISCELLANEOUS PROCESSES AND POLICIES***

### **Course Offerings**

The College accepts no obligation to re-offer courses to any student during the same academic year.

### **Leave of Absence and Readmission**

A student, who is in good academic standing and has a cumulative GPA of 2.000 or above, may request a leave of absence from the College. This request must be in writing and must be submitted to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs at least 30 days in advance of the anticipated leave date. If the student is in his/her final year, The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will notify the Clinical Education Office upon receipt of the request. This requirement of an advanced notice will be waived only under extraordinary circumstances.

The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will inform the student in writing of the decision and any terms and date of reentry relative to returning to the College as well as also notifying the appropriate offices.

Please note the following:

- The decision to grant the leave will be a function of consultation between the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs, Director of Clinical Education if student is in his/her final year and the Chair of the Student Affairs Committee.
- A leave of absence may not be granted before all tuition and fees are paid in full and the student has met with the Financial Aid Office to discuss the effect of the leave upon financial aid arrangements.
- A leave of absence is usually not extended beyond one year. Ordinarily, a student is granted only one leave of absence.
- Any student who returns to the College after a leave of absence may be required to take additional course work due to curriculum changes. Students taking a leave of absence do so with the understanding that course sequencing may change during the leave of absence. Students may be required to pass a clinical proficiency examination prior to assignment to clinical patient care.

## **Withdrawal**

A student may withdraw from the College by informing the Registrar in writing. This should be done at least two (2) weeks before Final Exams begin or three (3) weeks before the end of a final year clinical assignment. A student must make an appointment with the Vice President/Dean of Students or designee and have an exit interview with the Financial Aid Office.

When the withdrawal from the College becomes official, the following actions will occur:

- Deactivation of the student's identification card to remove access to campus buildings except as a visitor during regular business hours.
- Discontinuation of the student's email account. The student must provide the IT Department with another email address within five (5) days where email can be forwarded for thirty (30) days. If a student fails to give the College IT Department another email account within five (5) days forwarding will not be instituted.

## **Reapplication after Withdrawal or Dismissal**

A student who has withdrawn or has been dismissed from the College must reapply by submitting new documentation to the College for readmission to the program. A student who withdraws or has been dismissed from the College must apply to the Admissions Committee for readmission but will not be readmitted without the recommendation of the Student Affairs Committee. The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs in consultation with the SAC will determine the reentry level, date of reentry and modified program, if necessary. The original expected graduation date may be revised as appropriate.

The former student must have met all prior fiscal obligations to the College before petitioning or applying for readmission. Withdrawal from the College in good academic standing does not in itself guarantee readmission. Previous admission to the College in no way guarantees successful readmission by a former student who reapplies to the College. Readmission to the College will only be decided by the process listed in the above paragraph. An administrator or faculty member of the College has no authority to infer that a student will be successfully readmitted.

# *Student Rights and Responsibilities*

The College uses electronic and written communications in the delivery of its educational programs and in the conduct of its business affairs. Students are responsible for assuring that they read and respond appropriately to all communications from faculty and administration.

## **Student Ethics Policy**

The Student Ethics Policy was written by students to ensure ethical behavior and practices. Students at The New England College of Optometry are preparing for a career in a profession which demands of its members high standards of ethical conduct and personal honesty. All students are expected to make a commitment to abide by a Code of Ethics, exemplifying a standard of behavior, which forms a sound basis for future professional conduct. Students are required to respect the academic environment of the College, to uphold the rights and well being of all members of the College community, and to avoid any form of dishonesty.

All students are required to endorse the Code of Ethics, thereby agreeing to uphold the provisions of academic and professional conduct. Furthermore, The New England College of Optometry supports the ideals of the American Optometric Association Code of Ethics as a valuable guideline for future professional practice.

## **Misconduct Descriptions**

Academic Misconduct: This is the misrepresentation of one's own academic achievement. It includes but is not limited to the following:

1. cheating on examinations,
2. copying and/or providing examination questions and/or answers to others,
3. plagiarism.

Professional Misconduct: This includes but is not limited to the following:

1. deliberate acts of disrespectful behavior toward faculty, staff, students or patients,
2. failure to abide by standard clinical policies and procedures,
3. theft of an examination or examination answers,
4. forgery, alteration or knowing misuse of patient records,
5. theft or destruction of College/Clinic property and/or property belonging to members of the College's community.

A student whose behavior can be reasonably inferred that he or she has acted in accordance with academic and/or professional misconduct may be subject to actions by the Student Affairs Committee.

When an infraction of the Ethics Policy has been perceived, the observer(s) shall submit a written complaint describing the infraction directly to the Chair of the Student Affairs Committee within three business days. If further action is necessary, the SAC will invoke the Unprofessional Conduct Policy.

## **GPA Requirement to Hold Student Office/Committee Member**

A student must have and maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.200 or better in order to run for a student office, hold a student office, represent a student government office or be a student member on College committees.

A student who fails to maintain this cumulative grade point average will be required to resign his/her position immediately. If applicable, the position will be replaced by the student who received the second highest number of votes.

## **Unprofessional Conduct**

The College reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of any student at any time for whatever the faculty and administration at The New England College of Optometry consider to be good and sufficient reason. Unprofessional conduct may include, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, unexcused absences from assignments, falsifying clinical records, abusive behavior, organizing or participating in harassment or hazing and theft or destruction of College's, Clinic's or College member's property as well as other conduct unbecoming a student at the College.

A faculty member, student or other member of the College community who considers a student's conduct to be unprofessional must submit a written complaint to the Chair of the Student Affairs Committee (A member of the College should consult with his/her supervisor before submitting the complaint). Upon receipt of the written complaint, the SAC will notify the student that a complaint has been received and that the student has been placed on Inquiry Status pending an investigation of the complaint by the Student Affairs Committee. The student will also be informed that he or she shall have the right to present evidence and testimony and may also select a faculty member or administrator of the College as an advisor to aid him/her in answering the complaint. The student will be notified by the Chair of the SAC as to the date, time and place of the investigative hearing and will be provided with information with regard to the unprofessional conduct charge.

An investigative subcommittee usually consisting of the Chair, a student member and one faculty member of the SAC will be formed. The subcommittee will meet separately with the student, the individual making the charge and any other individual with information pertinent to the complaint. The subcommittee shall attempt to collect, within reason, all evidence and testimony relevant to the charge before making its recommendations to a majority of the SAC in an expeditious manner. Penalties are determined on an individual basis and include, but are not limited to, dismissal, suspension, disciplinary probation and additional academic assignments. The Chair of the SAC will notify the student in writing as to the results of the inquiry and actions to be taken.

### **Appeal of SAC Decision on Unprofessional Conduct**

The student may submit a written appeal of the decision of the SAC to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs within five business days after the date of the letter in which the SAC advises the student of their decision. The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will serve as the primary reviewer of appeals of the decision.

An appeal will only be considered if a student demonstrates that the SAC did not follow the investigative hearing process or finds that *new* extenuating evidence exists that was not available at the time of the investigative hearing. The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will act in an expeditious manner after receipt of a written appeal and may elect to convene a committee of faculty and/or administrators to assist with this decision at any point of the process. The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs may request input from the SAC or others as necessary.

The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will act in an expeditious manner after receipt of a written appeal. If the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs deems that the appeal is justified, he/she may request input from the SAC and/or other involved parties as appropriate before advising the student in writing of the final decision. If the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs does not find that the appeal is justified, the student will be advised in writing of this final decision.

A student who is appealing an unprofessional conduct decision with the consequence of dismissal or suspension should contact the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs to find out what didactic courses and/or clinical courses/assignments that he/she may attend.

### **Consequences of Unprofessional Conduct Dismissal or Suspension**

As soon as the dismissal or suspension from the College becomes official, a student must complete the following:

- an interview with the Vice President/Dean of Students or designee,
- an exit interview with a member of the Financial Aid Office for those students who have received financial aid.

And the following will occur:

- transcribing of unprofessional conduct dismissal or suspension on student's transcript and record
- deactivation of the student's identification card to remove access to campus buildings except as a visitor during regular business hours,
- discontinuation of the student's email account. The student must provide the IT Department with another email address where email can be forwarded for thirty (30) days. If a student fails to give the College IT Department another account within five (5) days forwarding will not be instituted.

### **Falsification of Records**

Falsification of official records is a violation of College policy and is subject to disciplinary action. Such falsification includes forging signatures, or deliberately misrepresenting or altering information submitted on College records. Appropriate action will be taken which includes expulsion from the College.

### **Hazing Policy**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts prohibits hazing. Hazing is defined as any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Consent of the individual is not available as a defense. The crime of hazing is punishable by a

fine of not more than \$3,000 or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

Any person who knows that another person is the victim of hazing and is at the scene of such a crime should report the crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as possible. Failure to report is punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000.

The New England College of Optometry will not tolerate hazing of any kind. Hazing will be considered unprofessional conduct. Any student found guilty of hazing by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, whether or not the incident was affiliated with the College, will be subject to immediate dismissal for unprofessional conduct.

## **Harassment**

The College is committed to providing an environment in which each student is treated with dignity and respect. Any verbal, physical, or other form of harassment of students because of race, sexual identity, national origin, age, religion, mental or physical disability, and veteran status, by staff, faculty, other students, or others authorized to be on the premises is illegal and will not be tolerated. Such harassment is defined as unwelcome statements, questions, innuendoes, actions, pictures, gestures, jokes, etc., regardless of their subtlety, that cause someone to be offended, intimidated, humiliated, or degraded. Harassment creates a hostile environment, negatively impacts academic performance, and is strictly prohibited at the College.

All College administrators and faculty have the explicit responsibility and duty to take immediate action to prevent the occurrence of any harassment of students because of race, sexual identity, national origin, age, religion, mental or physical disability, and veteran status. They also have the responsibility to report any complaints or observations of such harassment immediately to the Vice President/Dean of Students. Any student who has been harassed is encouraged to tell either the Vice President/Dean of Students or the Director of Human Resources. Reports of harassment of any kind will be responded to immediately. Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process of handling harassment reports. Concerns related to sexual harassment are specifically addressed in the following policy.

## **Sexual Harassment**

### **Introduction**

In keeping with efforts to establish an environment in which the dignity, rights, and worth of all members of the community are respected, it is the policy of The New England College of Optometry that sexual harassment of, or by, any member of the College community will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is unlawful and prohibited by both state and federal statutes. It is also a violation of College policy and subject to disciplinary action. Retaliation against individuals for filing complaints of sexual harassment, or for cooperating in an investigation of such complaints, is also unlawful and subject to disciplinary action by the College.

This policy seeks to encourage all members of the College community to express freely and responsibly any concern or complaint of sexual harassment. For the purposes of this policy, the College community consists of: internal and external faculty, staff, administrators, students, members of the Corporation, independent contractors, patients, and visitors on the premises.

## **Definition**

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when the following occurs:

- **Quid Pro Quo Harassment:** submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment or academic standing; or submission to or rejection of such conduct is the basis for an employment or academic decision (salary, benefits, job status, assignments, grades, etc.);
- **Hostile Environment Harassment:** such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or academic environment.

Examples of unwelcome conduct that could create a hostile environment include, but are not limited to:

- sexual flirtations, advances, propositions, or physical contact;
- verbal or written comments, innuendo, gestures, glances, pictures, voice-mail, email, or jokes of a sexual nature or of a nature commonly considered offensive by individuals of a specific gender or sexual orientation;
- references about an individual's body, sexual interests, or habits;
- displays of sexually suggestive objects, posters, or pictures, etc.

Sexual harassment also encompasses harassment of an individual that is based on the gender or sexual orientation of the individual. Sexual harassment is most notably perpetrated by individuals in positions of authority, but can also be perpetrated by co-workers, peers, or subordinates. It can also involve interactions between non-employees (e.g. patients and visitors) and employees.

Conduct can be considered harassment regardless of the gender of the perpetrator or the person being harassed. It can also be considered harassment when it occurs without the intent to offend, if it negatively impacts an observer of the conduct. Sexual harassment does not refer to academic curriculum content that is germane to the subject matter of the course and presented in a serious instructional manner.

If you have been subject to sexual harassment, or believe you may have been but are not certain, you are encouraged to immediately report your complaint or concern through the means provided within the text of this policy so that the matter may be addressed immediately.

## **The Sexual Harassment Committee**

The Sexual Harassment Committee is established to provide an avenue through which complaints of sexual harassment will be addressed. The committee is composed of 5 members, and is to include 3 females and 2 males. Staff members are appointed, and faculty members are elected, both for terms of 3 years; student members are elected annually. The Committee (contact the Office of Human Resources for current names and contact numbers) consists of:

- two staff members: the Director of Human Resources (who serves as Chair), and one staff member appointed by the President; at least one staff member must be female;
- two faculty members: one of junior rank and one of senior rank, elected on by faculty; at least one of which will be female;
- one student member: appointed by the Director of Student Services, in keeping with the gender make-up of the committee.

## **Reporting Allegations of Sexual Harassment**

To protect the privacy of all concerned, a reported complaint, its subsequent investigation and resolution will occur with as much confidentiality as possible without compromising the thoroughness of the investigation. Supervisors will be notified. Strict confidentiality on the part of all persons involved will be mandated, but cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Any breach of confidentiality will be subject to disciplinary action. There are two routes available for reporting complaints of sexual harassment; the complainant may choose either route. The College must respond to all notices of potential harassment, even if a reported complaint is immediately withdrawn. Each reporting route requires the identification of the complainant and alleged harasser (respondent) in order for an effective investigation and appropriate resolution to occur.

### ***1) Primary Route***

- The complainant may notify his/her supervisor, or the supervisor of the respondent, or a member of the Committee. The person first contacted informs the Committee Chair.
- The Chair investigates by speaking with both parties, individually or together.
- The Chair determines if the conduct in question occurred and, if so, whether it fits the definition of sexual harassment.
- Conduct that is considered harassment must cease immediately; disciplinary action will correspond to the nature of the offense.
- Either the Chair, the complainant, or the respondent, may request that the matter proceed to the Committee Route before a final resolution or disciplinary action is determined.

### ***2) Committee Route***

- The complainant submits a signed statement and a request for a Sexual Harassment Committee review to a Committee member, who informs the Chair.
- The respondent is then notified and asked to respond to the charges in writing. The respondent is informed that an investigation and determination will take place, with or without his/her assistance.
- A Committee meeting is scheduled within ten working days to discuss the matter with the complainant and the respondent individually; an advocate for each party may be present.
- If conflicting versions of the matter are described to the Committee, a meeting with both parties will be held within ten working days; an advocate for each party may be present.
- If conflicting versions are unresolved, the Committee will assign one of its members, as approved by both parties, to investigate the complaint. The investigator, who shall remain neutral, will attempt to determine the validity of the complaint within ten working days.
- The investigation may include private discussions with any person able to provide important input on the matter, including department heads, supervisors and co-workers.
- The Committee meets without the presence of the two parties to determine if the conduct in question occurred and, if so, whether it fits the definition of sexual harassment.
- Conduct that is considered harassment must cease immediately; disciplinary action will correspond to the nature of the offense.

The Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee shall be included in any investigation of complaints related to instructional material.

All aspects of the complaint, investigation, and resolution will be documented and filed in the office of the Committee Chair. Either party may appeal the committee's decision through the grievance/administrative review procedures that exist for staff, faculty and students, as described in related College handbooks. Each may seek outside counsel, but such counsel may only provide supporting documents.

### **Disciplinary Action or Sanctions**

Violations of the sexual harassment policy may lead to a variety of sanctions including, but not limited to, written reprimands, suspension (with or without pay), and termination of employment or student status. Once conduct has been determined to be sexual harassment, disciplinary action shall be prompt and appropriate to the offense. Discipline shall be consistent with the act and not altered by the status of the persons involved. In general, sanctions will be stronger for incidents of quid pro quo harassment, and for repeated incidents of hostile environment. The Chair (primary route) or the Committee (committee route) recommends the sanction. The appropriate supervisor is informed so that the sanction may be promptly administered.

If it is determined that a complainant knowingly alleged an incident of harassment that was without any merit or basis in fact, disciplinary action will be imposed against the complainant.

### **Policy Dissemination and Training**

The Sexual Harassment Policy will be included in employee and student handbooks. The policy will also be distributed to employees and students annually. Training shall be provided to employees bi-annually and to students during their first and third academic years. The appropriate administrators will coordinate the training. All employees and first and third year students should attend.

### **Consenting Relationships**

Members of the College community who hold positions of authority are expected to maintain strictly professional relationships with their subordinates at all times. Sexual relationships between persons in authority and their subordinates should not occur. Positions of authority include, but are not limited to: administrators in relation to all employees and students, students in relation to patients, faculty in relation to students and patients, and supervisors in relation to their staff. Relationships in existence prior to employment or matriculation are excluded. Administrators, faculty members, and supervisors who engage in a consenting sexual relationship are strongly advised that they could be subjecting themselves to an eventual allegation of sexual harassment. In such cases, prior consent by the subordinate does not provide absolute defense for, nor grant immunity to, the person in authority against a harassment charge.

## **Grievance Procedures**

It is believed that sound educational policies in conjunction with a practical affirmative action program are the most effective means of ensuring fair and equitable educational opportunities. However, it is also recognized that changing institutional and individual needs, the human element in relations among students, faculty and administration, and the complexities of personal interaction within the educational environment require mechanisms whereby students can seek redress or adjustment of conditions that affect them. The College's grievance procedure has been designed to meet that need.

Any student, who feels he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, gender or national origin, should detail the grievance in writing to the Vice President/Dean of Students. If, within ten days, the Vice President/Dean of Students has been unable through informal efforts to resolve the issue to the mutual satisfaction of all, he/she will appoint a Grievance Committee. The Director of Human Resources will Chair the Committee and will randomly pick a committee of two members from the Faculty and/or administration and two members from the Student

Council. The Grievance Committee will meet within fifteen days from the date the written grievance is received by the Vice President/Dean of Students. The Grievance Committee will issue its response to the student grievance within fifteen days from its meeting referred to in the previous sentence, and the decision of the Grievance Committee will be final.

## **The Americans with Disabilities Act**

The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and protects qualified applicants and students with disabilities from discrimination in all aspects of the application process and student life. The ADA also requires educational institutions to provide qualified applicants and students who have disabilities with any necessary reasonable accommodations that do not impose undue hardship to the school.

The College strictly adheres to the provisions of the ADA. Applicants and students with disabilities are invited and encouraged to make their necessary accommodations known to:

Director of Student Services  
The New England College of Optometry  
424 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02115  
617-587-5620

If you believe you have been discriminated against with regard to the ADA, please contact the Director of Student Services immediately.

## **Nondiscrimination Policy**

The College does not discriminate with regard to any of its policies, practices, or activities involving students on the basis of gender, race, color, national origin, religion, age, mental or physical disability, sexual identity, and veteran status. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies:

Vice President/Dean of Students  
The New England College of Optometry  
424 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02115  
617-587-5574

Inquiries concerning the application of nondiscrimination policies may also be referred to:

Regional Director  
Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Education  
33 Arch Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02110-1491  
617-289-0150

# **Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy**

## **Introduction**

As a recipient of federal monies, The New England College of Optometry maintains a Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy, in compliance with The Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Amendment of 1989. The purpose of the policy is to prevent the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol, and the abuse of alcohol, by employees and students.

In accordance with federal regulations, the policy contains information about the use of drugs and alcohol in relation to:

- the standards of conduct expected by the College;
- disciplinary actions for violations of the standards;
- legal sanctions for violating corresponding laws;
- potential health risks;
- accessible counseling and treatment services.

This policy is to be distributed to students initially entering the College community and to all employees and students annually. There will be a biennial review of the policy to determine its effectiveness, to implement any necessary changes, and to ensure the consistent application of sanctions for violations of the policy.

## **Standards of Conduct**

The College strictly prohibits, on its premises and at all College sponsored functions off-campus:

- The possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs, including the inappropriate possession, use, or distribution of pharmaceutical drugs;
- The possession or consumption of alcohol by, or distribution to, persons under 21 years old.

The College reserves the right to restrict the use, distribution, or possession of alcohol on College premises or at any College sponsored functions by persons 21 years old or older. The College also reserves the right to request documentation of age before serving alcohol.

Functions planned for or by employees or students at which alcohol will be served must be pre-approved by the Vice President of Administration.

At all College functions, non-alcoholic beverages must be provided and located in a visible area separate from alcoholic beverages. Food must always be available at all College functions where alcohol is served.

The College expects employees and students to create and maintain a professional and educational environment that is safe and healthy and encourages responsible conduct. Furthermore, the College holds employees and students responsible for the consequences of using or distributing illicit drugs, and serving or consuming alcohol.

## **Disciplinary Action**

Reports of suspected violations of the Drug & Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy by employees and students will be responded to by College administration.

Disciplinary action will be imposed on students who violate the Drug & Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy and may include immediate suspension or dismissal from school.

Students violating local, state, or federal laws regarding drugs and alcohol on College premises or at College functions are not exempt from the corresponding legal sanctions. Disciplinary action taken by the College for legal violations may include a referral to local authorities for prosecution, the sanctions listed above, and/or mandatory completion of an appropriate rehabilitation program as a condition of continued student status.

### **Legal Sanctions for Violating Alcohol Laws**

A minor consuming or in possession of alcohol may be taken into custody immediately and fined up to or exceeding \$300.

Persons who falsify age documentation or misrepresent their age for the purpose of possessing or consuming alcohol are subject to a fine of up to or exceeding \$300.

Anyone delivering or serving alcohol to persons under 21, or for the use by someone under 21, is subject to a fine of up to \$2,000 and/or imprisonment for up to 6 months.

The fine for operating a motor vehicle while drinking an alcoholic beverage ranges from \$100 to \$500.

Persons suspected by authorities of driving under the influence of alcohol will be stopped and given a sobriety test. Failure of the test will result in immediate arrest, and revocation of one's driver's license. A first conviction for driving under the influence of alcohol may result in a fine of up to \$1,000, imprisonment for up to two years, mandatory completion of an alcohol education or rehabilitation program, and revocation of one's license. Sanctions for driving under the influence increase in severity with each successive conviction.

Persons suspected of public drunkenness may be taken into protective custody for at least 5 hours.

### **Legal Sanctions for Violating Drug Laws**

Criminal penalties for offenses vary according to the particular substance and the quantity of the substance. Generally, the penalties for manufacturing or distributing controlled substances are greater than for simple possession.

Illegal possession with the intent to manufacture or distribute is subject to the same penalties as illegal manufacture or distribution. Possessing relatively large quantities of illicit substances will be considered possession with intent to distribute.

In general, persons suspected of possessing, using, or distributing illicit drugs will be arrested and will remain in jail until bail is met. A court date for arraignment will be set within 10 days.

Convictions for some offenses include mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment. A person sentenced to a mandatory term is not eligible for parole, furlough, or work release. Penalties for repeat offenses are increasingly harsher.

A person convicted of a drug offense may be declared ineligible for any or all federal benefits for up to one year, or longer for repeat offenses. Federal benefits include grants and contracts, and professional licenses.

## **Health Risks**

### Alcohol abuse:

- nausea & headaches
- fatigue
- malnutrition
- brain cell damage
- cirrhosis
- loss of memory
- poor concentration
- liver & stomach cancer
- increased heart rate
- blackouts
- muscle degeneration
- heart disease
- ulcers
- bone degeneration
- personality disorders
- alcoholism

### Illicit drug use:

- brain, nerve & liver damage
- respiratory arrest
- convulsions
- hypertension
- lowered blood pressure
- personality disorders
- addiction
- heart failure
- pulmonary edema
- cardiac arrhythmias
- psychosis
- coma
- malnutrition
- death

## **Counseling and Treatment Services**

The Student Counseling Service provides information and referrals, diagnostic assessment and short term crisis treatment, and 24 hour on-call emergency service. When students require long term treatment, the Counseling Service provides individual psychotherapy on a fee for service basis and liaison services for any outside treatment agency, as well as supportive care within the College. A directory of agencies providing information on substance abuse and rehabilitation programs is also available through the Counseling Service. All inquiries and discussions are strictly confidential. The Counseling Service can be reached through the Student Services Office at 617-587-5593.

In addition, the Library is able to provide resources for information on substance abuse.

## **Boston Area Referral and Treatment Agencies**

Listed below are randomly selected agencies providing referrals and/or rehabilitation services. The list does not represent recommendations for any particular programs. It is advisable to check with your doctor and health insurance provider for individual referrals.

Drug & Alcohol Hotline - (800) 327-5050

High Point - (800) 233-4478

ADCare Recovery - (617) 227-2622

## **Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act of 1990**

In compliance with the Student Right-To-Know Act, the College provides information regarding graduation rates. You may obtain this information from the Registrar's Office.

We also maintain ongoing security records in compliance with the Campus Security Act of 1990. Students may obtain information regarding safety and security from the Administration Office. The College also distributes this information to students and posts it periodically throughout the academic year. NECO's policy is to disclose to an alleged victim of any crime of violence, the results of any disciplinary proceedings against the alleged perpetrator of such crime. Further information is available from the Administration Office.

## Information Security Policy

The College complies with federal law regarding information security as required by the Gramm Leach Bliley Act. The full text of the Information Security Policy is located on the College's website at [http://www.neco.edu/pubs/operations/information\\_security\\_plan.pdf](http://www.neco.edu/pubs/operations/information_security_plan.pdf).

## Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the university receives a request for access. Students should submit to the Registrar, Dean, Head of the Academic or Clinical Department, or other appropriate official, written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The College official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the College official, the student will be directed to the correct official.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Students may ask the College to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the College official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the College decides not to amend the record, the student will be notified and advised of his/her right to a hearing. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the College in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the College has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks. A school official has a legitimate education interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Upon request, the College discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. FERPA requires an institution to make a reasonable attempt to notify the student of the records request unless the institution states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5920

## **Student Records Access**

The individuals at the College who have access to the student records, other than the Registrar's Office employees, are the President, the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs, the Vice President/Dean of Students, the Director of Clinical Education, the Chair and Members of the Student Affairs Committee, the Director of Student Services, the Directors of the Accelerated, the Advanced Standing International and the Master of Science Programs (if the student is in that program), and College-authorized auditors. Other College administrators with legitimate educational interests are allowed access to student records as mandated by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

## **Student Directory Information Policy**

The following information is considered directory information and is released on request without the student's specific written consent: dates of attendance, program and year in which student is enrolled, course load, the College's degrees received, address and telephone number, date and place of birth, and degrees received from other institutions.

## **Student Award Disclosure Policy**

Throughout the year students are eligible for various awards that require personal information to be provided as well as published. However a student may opt out of participating by submitting a written request to the Director of Student Services and the Director of Financial Aid in a timely manner (usually before the end of October to ensure non participation in any awards). This request to not participate in awards eligibility will stay in effect until such time that the student submits a written rescission.

Awards Committees may review a student's application, loan debt, financial need, GPA, course grades, etcetera where applicable. For some awards the release of a student's name, address and social security number is needed. All recipients of awards will have their names and/or pictures printed in programs and/or future communications.

## **Name and Address Policy**

A student is required to provide the Registrar with his/her local address and telephone number, permanent address and telephone number, and legal name while in attendance at the College. The student is responsible for notifying the Registrar's Office immediately in writing of any changes. A student's name, address and telephone number are considered directory information and will be available to individuals affiliated with the College as well as third parties at the discretion of the Registrar.

The Registrar's Office does not ordinarily provide mailing lists to third parties. A third party must submit a written request for a mailing list and designate its single usage. The Registrar reserves the right to consult with the Vice President/Dean of Students and/or Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs.

# **Tuition, Fees and Payment Policy**

## **Tuition Fees**

For the 2008-2009 Academic Year, the Board of Trustees of The New England College of Optometry has set the annual tuition rate as follows:

- \$32,252 – all years of the Four Year OD Degree Program
- \$38,209 – first year of Accelerated OD Degree Program
- \$24,189 – second year of Accelerated OD Degree Program
- \$24,189 – third year of Accelerated OD Degree Program
- \$43,003 – first year of Advanced Standing International Program
- \$32,252 – second year of Advanced Standing International Program

A student enrolled less than full-time will be charged at a per credit rate. Tuition fees are subject to change without notice.

The annual tuition is payable in approximately equal installments coinciding with the start of each academic term. A student will be billed for each term that a student is registered for didactic or clinical courses.

### Repeated Courses Tuition Charges:

A student who is not registered full time in the term that the repeated course is given will be charged on a per credit basis for the repeated course as well as any other course as applicable. A student who is registered full time in the term that the repeated course is given will not be charged additional tuition for the repeated course.

### Extended Program Tuition Charges:

A student whose program is extended will be subject to applicable tuition and fee charges.

## **Fees and Expenses**

Annual fees include a student activity fee of \$310 and an individual health insurance fee of \$950 for all students which will only be waived if other insurance has been deemed acceptable.

One time fees for all first year students in all programs include a \$300 laboratory, a \$955 equipment fee, and a \$10 fee for Massachusetts Society of Optometry membership.

Additional fees include a course notes fee of approximately \$125 to \$175 which is assessed every year except for a student's final year.

Fees and expenses are subject to change without notice.

## **Payment Policy**

All tuition and fees are due and payable on or before the first day of classes of each term, except for first-year students, which are due by August 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of entry. Students may not register or attend classes if tuition and fees are not paid in full or appropriate arrangements have not been made with the Chief Financial Officer at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the term. The College does not accept credit cards for the payment of tuition and fees.

# Transcript Policy

1. A transcript may not be released to a third party if the student or former student has not met his/her financial or other outstanding obligation to the College.
2. A transcript will be issued only on the written request and authorization of the student or former student concerned. This written request (**no emails or faxes**) must provide the following information.
  - full name while attending the College (not married/divorced present name)
  - dates of attendance and/or degree(s) received with graduation date(s) if applicable
  - last four digits of Social Security Number and date of birth for verification only
  - address(es) where the transcript(s) should be mailed
  - signature of student or former student and date
  - full payment, if applicable
3. Only academic and clinical course work taken at the College as well as any transcribed administrative or disciplinary information will appear on the transcript.
4. There is a three to five working day turnaround time for all transcript requests. Requests are handled on a first come/first serve basis.
5. FEES: There is no charge for transcripts for students while attending the College and until the end of the month in which a student graduates unless more than five transcripts are requested within one academic year. Students who have requested more than five transcripts within one academic year will be charged \$10.00 for each additional transcript.

There is a charge of \$10.00 for each transcript for former students and must be included with the written request. A check drawn on a bank within the United States should be made out to “The New England College of Optometry”. Payment is also acceptable by submitting a ‘money order’ or ‘postal order’ in U.S. currency especially from foreign countries.

6. The student or former student is responsible for providing the correct address for mailing of a transcript. If an additional transcript has to be sent because of an address error by the student or former student, the transcript fee will be charged again.
7. **OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT** – An official transcript, which is so designated and bears the seal of the College and the signature of the Registrar, is sent only to educational institutions, state boards, National Boards, research institutes, Departments of the Federal Government, and other authorized agencies and institutions.

**UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT** – An unofficial transcript, which is so designated and does not bear the seal of the College or the signature of the Registrar, is sent to the student, former student and other individual parties.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The policy of the College does not allow an official transcript to be sent or given directly to the student or former student even in a signed and sealed envelope.

SUBMIT WRITTEN REQUESTS WITH FEE, IF APPLICABLE, TO:

The New England College of Optometry  
Registrar’s Office  
424 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02115

## **Hold on Services Policy**

The College may withhold services to any student or former student who has financial or other outstanding obligations to the College.

Outstanding obligations include, but are not limited to:

- tuition and fees
- clinic and bookstore charges
- library late fees and book replacement charges
- unreturned borrowed equipment
- HEAL student loan default
- collection fees
- returned check fees

Withheld services include, but are not limited to:

- transcripts to third parties\*
- certifications
- enrollment verifications
- board, licensure and other form processing
- library use and other services

\*Transcripts for students or former students in default on a HEAL loan will be sent and will indicate that the student or former student has a HEAL loan default.

## **Electronic Communications Policy**

While the College fully supports an individual's right to freedom of speech, as well as pursuit of academic freedom, the email systems and electronic communications systems of the College are not an appropriate medium for all types of communication.

The use of the College's communications systems (including email, websites and phone systems) is reserved primarily for the conduct of business at the College. The College's systems may not be used to solicit or proselytize for outside or personal commercial ventures, religious or political causes or activities, outside organizations or other solicitations or activities that would jeopardize the College's tax-exempt status or would otherwise violate this policy.

To enhance efficient communications, the College establishes internal distribution lists for various programs. Group emails sent via College established distribution lists may be monitored by College administrators and/or program directors.

## **Course Proprietary Policy**

No instructor may be audio-taped, video-taped, or photographed without his/her specific permission. With the permission of the instructor, course materials in the form of lectures, handouts, presentations, videos or other materials not restricted by copyright may be obtained by the student for private use but may not be disseminated without the permission of the instructor. Violation of this policy will be considered unprofessional conduct.

## **Smoke-Free Environment**

NECO is a healthcare institution that maintains a smoke-free environment. Under the Massachusetts Smoke-Free Workplace Law, all enclosed workplaces must be free from smoke. Therefore, the smoking of cigarettes, pipes, cigars and similar materials is prohibited inside all College buildings.

Ashtrays are placed outside of several College entrances to accommodate smokers. Please be respectful of those who may not wish to be exposed to smoke by remaining a courteous distance from the entrances/exits.

## **Massachusetts Nonresident Driver Requirement**

If you are a nonresident enrolled as a full time student at a school or college in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts who operates a motor vehicle in Massachusetts that is registered in another state or country during any period beginning on September 1<sup>st</sup> of any year, and ending on August 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year you must comply with the following law:

“IT IS UNLAWFUL FOR A NONRESIDENT STUDENT TO FAIL TO FILE A NONRESIDENT DRIVER STATEMENT WITH THE POLICE DEPARTMENT LOCATED IN THE SAME CITY OR TOWN AS THE SCHOOL OR COLLEGE ATTENDED, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 3 OF CHAPTER 90 OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS. FAILURE TO FILE SUCH STATEMENT IS PUNISHABLE BY A FINE NOT TO EXCEED \$200.”

You may download this form at: <http://www.mass.gov/rmv/forms/20098.pdf>. Instructions are located at the top of the form. The Registrar’s Office recommends that you keep a copy for your personal files.

The student must complete the form in quadruplicate and mail to:

Boston Police Department  
Attn: Community Service Officer  
650 Harrison Avenue  
Boston, MA 02116-6199

## **Accreditation**

The New England College of Optometry is accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education and by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

The College makes every effort to be certain that the handbook is substantively true and correct in content and policy as of the date of publication. It should not, however, be construed as the basis of an offer or contract between the College and any present or prospective student. While to the College's knowledge, the handbook contains no erroneous, deceptive, or misleading statements or omissions, the College retains the right to amend, add or delete any information in the handbook, including any course of study, program or regulation, subsequent to publication thereof. Changes are made on a periodic basis utilizing the College's website or printed material.

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