

NECO | New England
College of Optometry

Student Handbook 2025-2026

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INTRODUCTION

Notice Regarding Student Handbook

New England College of Optometry (NECO) 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 NECO and any present or prospective student. Nonetheless, this handbook presents the policies and procedures that students are responsible for knowing and complying with. It presents the policies in effect at the time of publication and in no way guarantees that the policies will not change.

While to NECO's knowledge, the handbook contains no erroneous, deceptive, or misleading statements or omissions, the policies of NECO are under continuing examination and revision and NECO 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 NECO's website or printed material.

Accreditation

Higher Education Opportunity Act Consumer Information Under 34 CFR 663.43B

New England College of Optometry (the College) is accredited by both the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) of the American Optometric Association and by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE). Both ACOE and NECHE are recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education as reliable authorities on the quality of education and adhere to the standards of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. The College has been continuously accredited by ACOE since 1941 and by NECHE since 1976.

Periodically, the College undergoes a peer review process. As a result of the 2022/2023 visit, ACOE and NECHE determined that the College should continue to be accredited. During the review process, the College is required to submit annual accreditation reports to ACOE and NECHE that meet their respective standards and address any recommendations that may have resulted from either the accreditation visits or interim filings. Requests for written documentation regarding the College's accreditation may be directed in writing to the Office of the President, 424 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02115.

For further information: <https://www.neco.edu/consumer-information/accreditation/>

Inquiries regarding the accreditation status by the Commission and authorization by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

New England Commission of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514
781-425-7785
info@neche.org

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
One Ashburton Place, Room 1401
Boston, MA 02109
617-994-6950

Student Complaints Submission form: mass.edu/forstufam/complaints/complaintform.asp

NECO is a nonprofit, coeducational institution of higher learning incorporated under the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. NECO is authorized under federal law to enroll nonimmigrant students and to train veterans under the G.I. Bill of Rights.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Office & Department Guide

Office/Department	Telephone	Email/website
Academic Affairs Office	617-587-5587	academicaffairs@neco.edu
Admissions Office	617-587-5580	admissions@neco.edu
Biomedical Sciences and Disease Department	617-587-5590	
Business Office	617-587-5583	businessoffice@neco.edu
Campus Store	617-587-5600	ShopNECO.com
Center for Academic and Professional Achievement	617-587-5593	capa@neco.edu
Center for Educational Effectiveness	617-587-5604	
Clinical Education Office	617-587-5566	clinicaleducation@neco.edu
College Main Number (Beacon St Campus)	617-266-2030*	
Financial Aid Office	617-587-5582	finaid@neco.edu
Operations and Front Office	617-587-5652	facilities@neco.edu
Human Resources Office	617-587-5599	hr@neco.edu
Information Technology Office	617-587-5591	helpdesk@neco.edu
Library	617-587-5589	library@neco.edu
NECO Center for Eye Care Comm Ave	617-262-2020	eyecare-commonwealth@neco.edu
NECO Center for Eye Care Roslindale	617-323-7300	eyecare-roslindale@neco.edu
President's Office	617-587-5678	presidentsoffice@neco.edu
Clinical Education & Clinical Sciences Department	617-587-5594	
Registrar's Office	617-587-5581	registrar@neco.edu
Specialty Care & Vision Sciences Department	617-587-5595	

*Access the NECO directory by calling 617-266-2030 to locate a specific individual, department, or office.

Campus Hours and Building Information

NECO's campus is located at 424 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02115.

Building hours are subject to change. See the Operations page of the NECO Portal for most up to date hours of operations.

Unexpected College Closing or Delay

The Office of Facilities Operations and Administration, in consultation with leadership, determines when health or safety concerns necessitate building closures or delayed openings. The College communicates unexpected changes to hours of operation primarily through the Informacast emergency notification system (see the "Emergency Notification System" section for more information).

Parking on the Beacon Street lot is not permitted during unexpected building closures.

This policy applies only to the Beacon Street campus. Due to the College's patient care mission, College owned and operated clinics, Community Health Centers, and external clinical assignments operate under a different schedule and may be open during times the College is officially closed. Please read the information sent electronically carefully.

Clinical Sites

- A student assigned to **clinic** is expected to contact their preceptor and/or the clinic director. If the clinical site remains open, the student is expected to go to clinic. If the student is unable to attend, the student must follow the procedure for an “unexpected absence” which can be found under “Absence Policies and Procedures”.
- A student assigned to **screening** will have their screening canceled if the Beacon Street Campus is closed regardless of the status of the screening site.
- A student assigned to an **observation** will have their observation canceled if the Beacon Street Campus is closed. The student is expected to contact their preceptor to cancel the observation for that day and reschedule their observation at the earliest available time.

Emergency Notification System

Under the Clery Act, emergency notifications are used to, “immediately notify the campus community upon the confirmation of a significant emergency or dangerous situation involving an immediate threat to the health or safety of students or employees occurring on the campus” (34 CFR 668.48(g)). These situations include, but are not limited to:

- Human behavior; campus or community violence
- Natural disasters; severe snow, severe storm, flood, earthquake
- Utility outages and leaks; gas, electric, water
- Hazardous events; toxic substance spills or releases
- Unexpected building closures
- Any other event posing an immediate threat to the campus

The College uses Informacast, an Emergency Notification System (ENS) designed to send simultaneous email, voice, and text notifications during emergencies or unexpected urgent events. This system complements other communication protocols, such as email, the emergency public address system, and fire alarms. The ENS will be initiated as quickly as possible to ensure the safety of the NECO community, unless issuing a notification will, in the professional judgment of responsible authorities, compromise efforts to assist a victim or to contain, respond to, or otherwise mitigate the emergency.

Upon notification of an emergency, the Office of Facilities Operations and Administration evaluates the situation, informs College leadership, and initiates the ENS. The ENS message contains the location(s) affected, actions needing to be taken by the community, and, if necessary, a promise of follow-up.

NECO has an obligation to inform all community members who might be present of emergency situations on campus. Students are automatically enrolled in the ENS upon commencement of studies. NECO highly discourages opting-out of these communications, as this decreases the College’s ability to provide critical information in an emergency. Students may opt-out at any time by notifying Operations at facilities@neco.edu.

Timely warnings may be issued independent of the ENS system. The Office of Facilities Operations and Administration tests the ENS system twice a year.

Campus Access NECO ID Cards

NECO maintains a closed campus: A collegiate environment in which every occupant is accounted for, either through credentialing as an active community member or checking in with the front desk or security guard.

In support of this, NECO issues ID cards (or “badges”) at matriculation at no cost. ID cards promote the safety of our community in three main ways:

1. Identifying the cardholder as an active NECO community member.
2. Allowing access to key doors at Beacon Street and Comm Ave.
3. Registering the cardholder as “on-site” in the event of an evacuation.

Violating these provisions of security protocol, among others, undermines campus security and may be grounds for disciplinary action:

- All occupants of the building will display College-issued identification visibly on their body at all times while on the premises or riding the shuttle;
- Community members enter the building through doors to which they have card access;
- Community members tap their card access badges every time they pass through a card access-controlled door. This confirms their status as active community members, and assists with accountability efforts in the event of an emergency;
- Community members will use only their own NECO ID, and will not lend their NECO ID to anyone, including other community members;
- If a community member does not have their card access badge, or their card access badge is malfunctioning, they will check in with the front office or security for temporary identification;
- Occupants of the building will not allow others entry through card access doors, even if they are an active community member. Exceptions include for public safety personnel if required for an emergency, or if otherwise directed by Operations management or security.

Unless explicitly told otherwise, those without card access are not authorized to enter spaces protected by card access.

Plastic ID holders and lanyards are available at the Beacon Street Front Office upon request. ID cards should be returned to the Beacon Street Front Office when a student ends or leaves their program.

All inquiries regarding card access to the Beacon Street campus and Commonwealth Avenue Campus should be directed to the Office of Facilities Operations and Administration at facilities@neco.edu.

Replacement ID Cards

Lost, stolen, or broken ID cards should be reported immediately to the Office of Facilities Operations and Administration at facilities@neco.edu. ID replacement requests should also be directed to facilities@neco.edu.

Cards with incorrect or outdated information, defective cards, and the first replacement for a lost card will be provided at no charge. If a student loses their card more than once, each subsequent replacement will cost \$5.

Student's Personal Property Policy

Students bring personal property onto the College premises at their own risk, and personal property owners are responsible for the security of their belongings. The College assumes no responsibility and shall not be liable for any articles or vehicles lost, stolen, damaged, or left behind. Such property includes mail or parcels sent to or left for students.

Bicycles, Mopeds, and Electric Scooters

At Beacon Street, owners of bikes, mopeds, and electric scooters may utilize the bike racks in front of the building during posted hours of operation. At Comm Ave and Roslindale, owners should use public bike racks on the exterior of the building or in the parking garage. In all cases, owners are responsible for securing their property correctly to prevent theft, and assume full responsibility for said property (see Student's Personal Property Policy).

- Parking bicycles—as well as mopeds and electric scooters—in any location outside of designated bike racks is not permitted.
- Vehicles with batteries (electric scooters, etc.) are specifically prohibited inside NECO facilities.

The Office of Facilities Operations and Administration can assist with cutting bike locks if given permission in writing from the owner. Bikes left in the Beacon Street storage rack overnight may be impounded; the bike owner will have 48 hours to collect their bicycle before it is discarded. Operations reserves the right to remove and discard bikes deemed abandoned. NECO has no control over bike racks at Comm Ave or Roslindale. Vehicles with batteries found inside campus are subject to confiscation by NECO officials and violations of the policy may result in disciplinary action.

Lockers

Non-final year students are eligible to apply for locker space at Beacon Street through the Office of Facilities Operations and Administration. Operations assigns lockers at the beginning of every academic year. Lockers must be vacated by the date indicated in each student's assignment email.

Items that may **not** be stored in lockers include:

- Flammable materials, dangerous chemicals, explosives, or weapons of any kind (see "Weapons on Campus" for more information);
- Alcohol or illicit drugs;
- Battery-operated scooters, and other items containing lithium batteries;
- Perishable items (fruit, vegetables, etc.), or any food item (crackers, tea, etc.) outside of a sealed, pest-proof container.

Students are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness and integrity of their assigned locker. If a student is assigned a locker without a built-in lock, the student is responsible for providing their own. Students who want to switch lockers must inform Operations before doing so.

Lockers are NECO property, and NECO reserves the right to open a locker with or without the consent of the student to whom the locker is assigned. See the Facilities page of the Portal and the "Student's Personal Property" policy for more information.

Mail Room

Students may utilize the Beacon Street Mail Room to:

- Send prepaid outgoing mail through USPS;
- Receive mail and packages following the guidelines below.

The mailroom does not handle outgoing student mail shipping through UPS, FedEx, or any carrier beside USPS. The mailroom does not sell stamps or shipping supplies.

If shipping personal items to the College address, the following guidelines apply. Each parcel must:

- Not exceed 20 pounds;
- Measure within 2' x 2' x 2';
- Not contain perishable items;
- List the recipient's name clearly on the address label.

Students will receive an email from the Front Office once their delivery has been processed and is ready for pickup. Personal items unclaimed after five business days will be returned to sender. Any variance to this is at the approval of the Operations department.

Student groups expecting a large delivery, such as for an event, should inform Operations at facilities@neco.edu of:

- The date of the event;
- Expected number of boxes;
- Expected date of delivery;
- Who to inform when the packages arrive;
- Where the delivery will be stored (Operations does not store deliveries for students or student groups).

Inquiries should be directed to facilities@neco.edu. See "Students Personal Property Policy" for information regarding liability and responsibility for parcels.

Lost and Found

Lost items recovered on the Beacon Street campus or the shuttle are held at the Front Office. Typical unclaimed items (jackets, water bottles, umbrellas, etc.) will be discarded or donated after 90 days. Specialized unclaimed items (optometric equipment, airpods, jewelry, etc.) will be discarded or donated after six months.

Room Reservations

Students seeking to reserve a room for student meetings, events, and functions must contact the Assistant Director of Student Services and Events, capa@neco.edu.

Room reservation requests are subject to approval from both CAPA and the Office of Facilities Operations and Administration.

Coffee and Vending Machines

A Starbucks machine, and vending machines with food and snack items, are located in the garden level of the Beacon Street campus. They are available whenever the building is open.

Community Café

NECO operates the Community Café 10am-2pm on weekdays on the garden level of the College, in the Community Commons. Typical fare includes sandwiches, grab-and-go items, and pastries, as well as seasonal specialties like soup and hot dogs.

Students may place orders through the online system (linked on the NECO Portal) or at the counter.

NECO Food Pantry

The NECO Food Pantry, located on the garden level just past the Community Commons, is available to everyone in the NECO community whenever the building is open. The pantry is stocked with staple items—such as rice, beans, pasta, sauces, and canned goods—intended to be prepared at home.

The pantry operates anonymously without staff. When taking items, we ask that patrons complete a brief form on an iPad so we can monitor inventory levels. No personal information is collected. We also gather anonymous feedback from those who use the pantry to help guide future food selections and ensure the pantry continues to meet student and employee needs.

Contact foodpantry@neco.edu with any questions.

Student Parking at Beacon Street Campus

NECO community members who utilize parking privileges are required to be familiar with and abide by the Institutional Parking Policy (found on the Operations page of the Portal). Parking decisions are made at the discretion of the Office of Facilities Operations and Administration.

Active NECO students may apply for the “After Hours Only” parking decal through the Portal. Parking on the Beacon Street lot without proper authorization is prohibited. Students who wish to park outside the hours allowed by their decal, or without a decal, must request a temporary day pass from the Office of Facilities Operations and Administration. Students are typically not allowed to park before 5pm on weekdays. Operations has full authority over approving or declining a parking request, and may ask students to move their vehicles at any time.

Parking policies, parking decal request forms, and other transportation related information can be found on the NECO Portal on the Operations page. All inquiries should be directed to facilities@neco.edu.

NECO Campus Store

ShopNECO is NECO's online campus store, owned and operated by AdvancedOnline company. NECO no longer determines the pricing or sales. Questions should be addressed to their Customer Service. Find the

store: Direct at <https://shopneco.merchorders.com/> or under the Student Experience drop down on NECO's website.

Note: Scrubs and/or optometric equipment are not available on ShopNECO. Please refer to the documents in the Forms & Policies page in the NECO portal under Academic Affairs.

Student Equipment Kits

The Patient Care I (PC I) Instructor of Record will manage the order and distribution of equipment kits for PC I students. These will be purchased centrally and the cost is included in student fees. For more information, contact the Office of Clinical Education.

MBTA Passes

Discounted passes may be purchased during the start of the fall and spring semesters. Please contact CAPA for further information and exact deadlines. For more public transportation information, call the MBTA at 617-222-5000 or go to their website: www.mbt.com.

Printing & Copies

See the IT pages of the NECO Portal for more details.

Faxes and Scanning

Faxing and/or scanning related to college or clinic business can be done in the CAPA Office located on the first floor of the Beacon Street Campus right off the Rotunda.

Gender Inclusive Restrooms

NECO is committed to providing safe, accessible, and convenient restroom facilities for individuals of all genders. Students, faculty, staff, and visitors are encouraged to use the restroom that most closely aligns with their gender identity.

Single occupancy, all gender restrooms are located throughout the college, and are available for everyone to use. The most accessible locations include:

- In the Rotunda, under the stairs on the first floor;
- Next to the Admissions office on the first floor

Additional locations that are not wheelchair accessible are:

- In the Kamens Center next to the Chen Room on the first floor;
- Next to Conference Room 2501 on the second floor.

Please direct any issues with restroom access to the Office of Operations and Administration to facilities@neco.edu.

Usage of Perfumes and Colognes

Perfume or cologne can trigger allergic reactions and we ask all students to refrain from the use of perfume and cologne. NECO and its owned and operated clinical sites are “perfume-free” environments.

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT (CAPA)

The Center for Academic and Professional Achievement (CAPA) focuses on providing a NECO experience in which every student is supported by the campus environment, connected to the institution, and prepared for lifelong success in the optometric field. For general questions or concerns, please contact capa@neco.edu.

Student Organizations

Student Groups

The following recognized student groups at the New England College of Optometry provide opportunities for leadership development in student government; optometric research; local, national, and international eye care; and public health legislation.

Student Council

American Academy of Optometry (AAO)
 American Optometric Student Association (AOSA)
 Asian Student Association (ASA)
 Beta Sigma Kappa (BSK)
 Canadian Association of Optometry Students (CAOS)
 College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD)
 Community Health Club
 Contact Lens Society (CLS)
 Latinos en Optometry (LEO)
 Lion's Club
 Massachusetts Society of Optometrists Student Chapter (MSOS)
 National Optometric Student Association (NOSA)
 Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation Association (NORA)
 Ocular Disease Club
 Performance Vision Club (PVC)
 PRISM
 Private Practice Club (PPC)
 Sigma Upsilon Sigma
 Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (VOSH)

Descriptions can be viewed in the Student Life section of the NECO portal. If you have further questions, please contact capa@neco.edu.

Student Council

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 (a president, a vice president, treasurer, secretary, and media/clubs coordinator) and:

- 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)

Student Council positions are open to any student who meets the GPA requirements and are elected by the student body.

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 are responsible for representing their class during Student Council meetings and acting as liaisons between their professors and classmates.

There will be class liaisons for the first semester of the Four-Year OD Program to facilitate communication with course faculty. The vice-president of the Executive Council will act as the interim president for the first-year students in the Four-Year OD Program until elections for a full class council are held in the Spring Term. 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 changes to optometric legislation and organizes activities such as the Welcome Back BBQ, NECO Olympics, the Halloween party, and the Eye Ball. At the fall budget meeting, the Executive Council members allocate funds from student activity fees to the various recognized 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 Alumni Association Board of Directors includes all members of the Executive Student Council. 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. The secretary of the Student Council will email announcements regarding when and where the meeting will be held. Meetings are open to all students, faculty, and administrators as observers without the right to speak or to vote unless otherwise invited.

If you have any questions concerning the Student Council, contact capa@neco.edu.

GPA Requirements to Hold Student Office/Committee Member

Student office positions include but are not limited to, all leadership positions on Student Council and within student organizations. A student must have and maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.500 or better; the student must not be on Academic Probation and/or Clinical Probation for more than 1 semester 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 these requirements must resign their position immediately. If applicable, the position will be replaced as outlined in the organization's by-laws or committee.

Immunization Requirements

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, under the College Immunization Law, requires all students in a health science program who may be in contact with patients to provide the College with proof of immunity against measles, mumps, and rubella (2 doses of MMR); tetanus; diphtheria; acellular pertussis (1 Tdap vaccine within the past 10 years); varicella (2 doses), hepatitis B (3 dose series or 2 dose Heplisav-B series) vaccine, and meningitis (1 dose of the MenACWY vaccine for any student up to and including age 21). Lab reported results showing positive serology tests are also accepted for measles, mumps, rubella, varicella and hepatitis B. The College also requires a Mantoux skin test or IGRA blood tests for tuberculosis annually and to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19. The College mandates that students obtain all immunizations or provide serologic proof of immunity (lab report) prior to enrollment.

Exemptions from immunizations can be made only for certain medical conditions, such as health circumstances that contraindicate immunization, pregnancy, or participation in a current sequence of immunizations. Exemptions for COVID-19 immunization(s) can be made only for certain medical conditions or religious beliefs. A written statement from a physician is necessary for all health circumstances.

Students will not be allowed to participate in clinical assignments that begin in the first term of the first year until all immunization requirements have been fulfilled. The College's clinical affiliations may also require additional immunizations and/or testing that must be complied with before participating in patient care at that clinical site.

Students are responsible for any costs associated with immunizations. It is recommended that students check with their health insurance provider for more information about any associated costs.

Please keep a copy of your immunization documents for use. If your personal copy has been lost and you need a copy of your immunization records, you can request them through your doctor or make a request through CAPA via MedProctor. For more information or questions, please contact CAPA, capa@neco.edu.

Immunization Policy for All Clinical Providers

Consistent with the variety of Massachusetts laws, regulations and public health orders requiring all health professionals who may be in contact with patients to be vaccinated against certain diseases, and in accordance with recommendations by the CDC, the NECO Clinical Network requires proof of immunization from clinical providers, including screening doctors, residents, opticians and student interns.

All providers in the clinical system are required to comply with these regulations, and will be asked to provide documentation of vaccinations of the following before hire:

- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (2 doses)
- Tetanus/Diphtheria/Acellular Pertussis (Tdap- Adacel only)
- Hepatitis B (3-dose series) vaccination is strongly recommended*
 - *A waiver for Hepatitis B vaccination may be allowed under certain circumstances, based on service location. (Requests for waivers should be directed to the NECO Chief Compliance Officer for review).

- Hepatitis-B (2 doses)
- Varicella
- COVID-19 vaccinations (both first and second doses within 5 months of start of clinic, and maintaining up-to-date vaccination (i.e. booster); thereafter, following CDC and NECO guidelines for intervals between boosters)
- Tuberculosis Test upon hire and if symptomatic (Mantoux or Quantiferon gold test)*
 - *Annual TB testing will not be required at NECO owned and operated sites (Commonwealth and Roslindale) unless there has been a history of exposure to TB. Initial TB testing is required for all new providers upon hire, and a response to an annual symptoms questionnaire may be requested.
- Additionally, influenza and pertussis vaccinations are highly recommended. They may be required by specific clinical sites.

To assist any provider who is disabled, has a qualifying medical condition that contraindicates the vaccination, or who objects to an immunization or vaccination on the basis of sincerely held religious beliefs and practices, NECO will engage in an interactive process to determine if a reasonable accommodation can be provided so long as it does not create an undue hardship for NECO and/or does not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others in the workplace, including but not limited to other employees, patients and visitors to NECO facilities and/or to the employee.

To request an accommodation for one of the above reasons, please notify Dr. Gary Chu in writing at chu@neco.edu. Once NECO is aware of the request for an accommodation, NECO will engage in an interactive process to identify possible accommodations. Please know that you may request an accommodation without fear of retaliation.

Providers (including screening doctors, residents, opticians, and student interns), will not be allowed to participate in clinical assignments until all immunization requirements have been met or an accommodation, that does not cause an undue burden, has been granted. Questions about requirements may be addressed to the Chief Compliance Officer. [*CDC Recommendations for Healthcare Worker Vaccinations*](#)

The NECO Clinical Network's contracted sites (i.e. health centers, local hospitals, Veterans Administration hospitals and clinics, schools, homeless shelters, etc.) may require additional immunizations and/or testing that must be completed before participating in patient care at that clinical site. If the contracted site does not include one or multiple of the above required elements, the NECO personnel should follow NECO requirements. Fulfillment of immunization requirements will be tracked by the NECO credentialing department for employees and by CAPA for student interns.

Counseling

All counseling inquiries should be directed to CAPA at 617-587-5593 or capa@neco.edu.

Uwill

Uwill provides students with expanded access to mental health services. The 24/7/365 line provides in-the-moment support with a licensed clinician. Additionally, ten free visits with a counselor, whether in person or via telehealth, are available to all students. Call 833.646.1526 any time!

Students can also find more information about Uwill in the NECO portal.

Student Advising

CAPA offers individual advising appointments to discuss study skills, time management strategies, and more. Please reach out to capa@neco.edu.

Health Insurance for Students

According to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and NECO policy, all students (regardless of enrollment) must be covered by a comprehensive health insurance program. NECO offers general health insurance program that meets these standards. This policy is provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield and administered by University Health Plans. There is an option to waive the college-provided insurance if a student is already covered.

Questions about this requirement and waiver deadlines can be directed to the CAPA.

Tutoring Requests

For all tutoring services, didactic or clinical, please contact peertutoring@neco.edu. For didactic tutoring, please make sure to get an email approval from your professor.

Accommodations

Students seeking academic accommodations are encouraged to review the accommodation documents posted to the NECO portal [here](#). Any questions about accommodations can be directed to Marianna Toumpourou, Associate Director of Student Accessibility & Advising at toumpouroum@neco.edu or 617-202-8648.

LIBRARY

About the NECO Library

Spanning two floors at the heart of the Beacon Street Campus, the NECO Library offers a full range of information services and materials. The library's study space and physical materials are available whenever the Beacon Street campus is open, and online content is available anytime. Librarians are available to assist with finding, evaluating, using, and citing information, both in person and online. The library is also a member of the [Fenway Library Organization](#) (FLO), a local consortium, and students are able to study at other FLO member libraries throughout Boston with their NECO ID.

Borrowing Materials

The library circulates physical reserve materials in support of the current term course offerings, in addition to online course reserves. Items on reserve, as well as all other physical library collections, are available self-serve and can be borrowed whenever the Beacon Street buildings are open. The library also loans equipment such as iPad Minis, as well as chargers, adapters, and peripherals for various devices. For more details regarding the library's borrowing policies and available materials, please visit <https://library.neco.edu/borrowing-materials>.

Library Website

library.neco.edu is a 24/7 gateway to the library's vast online collections. From here, you can search the library's holdings, including databases, scholarly articles, eBooks, eJournals, clinical point-of-care tools, and print materials. You can also easily request materials that the library does not own. In order to access the library's subscribed resources from off campus, you must log in using your NECO Gmail account.

Textbooks

For your convenience, required readings for all courses are available on reserve at the NECO Library. All are available in print, and most are available online as well. Borrowing is self-serve, and available whenever the Beacon Street buildings are open. Current course reserves can be found on the library website: <https://library.neco.edu/course-reserves>.

TUITION AND FINANCIAL AID

Tuition and Fees

The Board of Trustees of the New England College of Optometry has set the annual tuition rate for the 2025-2026 Academic Year as follows:

- \$49,852 – all four years of the Four-Year OD Degree Program
- \$68,202 – first and second years of Accelerated OD Degree Program
- \$49,852 – third year of Accelerated OD Degree Program
- \$68,202 – first year of Advanced Standing International Program
- \$49,852 – second year of Advanced Standing International Program
- \$68,202 – first year of Accelerated OD China Program
- \$12,463 – per clinical rotation second year of Accelerated OD China Program
- \$24,926 – per year of Master of Science in Vision Science Degree Program
- \$1,558 – per credit hour cost for non-degree students taking First Professional Courses

A student enrolled less than full-time will be charged at a per credit rate.

Tuition rates are subject to change by the Board of Trustees of the College. The annual tuition is payable in 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 more than full-time tuition for the term.

Exempted Course Tuition Charges

A student in a degree program who is exempted from a course will not receive a reduction in tuition.

Extended Program Tuition Charges

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

Thesis Maintenance Fee

A student in the MS degree program has a grace period of two terms, usually summer and fall, from their original completion date before a thesis maintenance fee of \$600 per term is assessed. This charge will be assessed until the student graduates, formally withdraws or is administratively withdrawn due to the thesis deadline having passed.

Dual Program Tuition

A student in the dual OD/MS degree program will have the tuition charge waived as long as they are paying full-time tuition charges for the OD program.

Fees and Expenses

Annual fees include a student activity fee of \$375, or if a student is admitted or readmitted during the spring they will be charged a student activity fee of \$185, and an individual health insurance fee of approximately \$2,977 for all students (final health insurance fees for the 2025-2026 year have not yet been determined). The health insurance fee will only be waived if other insurance has been deemed acceptable.

Other One-Time Fees

One-time fees for first-year students only include a \$300 laboratory fee for all programs, and a \$1,520 equipment fee for the Four-Year OD Program and Accelerated OD Program.

Other one-time fees include a \$110 contact lens fee for first-year students in the Advanced Standing International Program and second-year students in the Four-Year OD Program and Accelerated OD Program.

Fees and expenses are subject to change by the Board of Trustees of the College.

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 in the Four-Year OD Program. Tuition and fees for the first term for first-year students in the Four-Year OD Program are due by August 15th (about two weeks before the beginning of the term). 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 Business Office 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. The College may charge a late fee of \$100 for accounts not paid by the due date.

Refund Policy

The College's refund policy with regard to tuition, fees* and other expenses applies in the case of a student's withdrawal, dismissal, suspension or leave of absence, as follows:

Effective Date of Withdrawal, Dismissal, or Leave of Absence	Percentage Refunded
Before the 1 st day of the academic term	100%
During the 1 st week	90%
During the 2 nd week	80%
During the 3 rd week	70%
During the 4 th week	60%
After the 4 th week	0%

*All fees, except for the mandatory equipment fee, are non-refundable. The equipment fee is refundable only if the equipment is returned intact and unopened within the first two weeks of the term.

When calculating a refund, a reasonable administrative fee may be charged. This fee shall be the lesser of 5% of charges assessed to the student or \$100.

A refund of excess financial aid is processed by direct deposit to the student's bank account.

A refund of the health insurance fee is generally not permitted except in cases where it is determined that the eligibility requirements were not met or if the request for coverage was determined by the College to have been sent in error. A student may not cancel their insurance once they are enrolled, unless they join the military. A student should contact the Center for Academic and Professional Achievement with regard to health insurance questions or concerns.

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 charges
- Library late fees and book replacement charges
- Unreturned borrowed equipment
- Institutional loan defaults (HPSL, LDS, Fund for Education, Saval Loans, short-term emergency loans, etc.)
- Collection fees
- Returned check fees

Withheld services include, but are not limited to:

- Classroom instruction, clinical education, etc.
- Library use and other services
- Awarding of diploma
- Certifications
- Enrollment verifications
- Board, licensure and other forms processing

Financial Aid Handbook

The Financial Aid Office publishes a handbook every academic year. The handbook includes information about financial aid eligibility, loans, scholarships, Veterans and military benefits and information for international students. The handbook is located in the NECO Portal or on the Financial Aid website at <https://www.neco.edu/admissions/tuition-and-aid/>

On Campus Work-Study, Loans and Scholarships

On campus work-study jobs and work study forms are posted on the NECO Portal on the Financial Aid page. Information about loans and scholarships can be found on the NECO Portal or on the Financial Aid main website.

Student Award Disclosure Policy

NECO offers a limited number of scholarships from private donors and its endowment. Outside organizations frequently ask the College for assistance in selecting deserving students for their scholarships or other awards. Depending on the award criteria, students may have to actively apply for a scholarship or be selected by a committee based on grades, GPA, financial need, student loan indebtedness, state of residence, or other factors.

Scholarship committees may be composed of faculty members, administrators, private donors, student representatives, or others, who on a strict “need to know” basis, review a candidate’s qualifications. Although the information is reviewed with the utmost confidentiality, some students may not wish to participate. A student may opt out of the scholarship/award process by submitting a written request to both the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and the Director of Financial Aid. Scholarship selection occurs most of the year, so it is best to submit your request to opt out early in the academic year. The opt out status from the scholarship/award process will remain in effect unless a written rescission is received by both the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and the Director of Financial Aid.

Students who receive endowed scholarships from NECO donors, or other awards, are given recognition by the College to celebrate their achievements. Recognition can be in the form of being honored at one of the awards ceremonies, a written announcement in the awards program, an announcement and photo on the College’s website, or other form of communication.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Warning and Probation

A student will be placed on Financial Aid Warning after not meeting the 2.25 GPA requirement for a term. During the Financial Aid Warning terms, a student will receive federal financial aid for which she or he is otherwise eligible.

If the student has not met the required GPA after the financial aid warning term, the student will be placed on financial aid probation and will need to appeal for one more term of federal financial aid.

The Financial Aid Office will notify the student when they have been placed on financial aid probation.

SAP Appeal Process

Students can appeal for reconsideration of their eligibility for Title IV funds. They may appeal their financial aid suspension status based on injury or illness, the death of a relative, or other special circumstances. The appeal must explain why you failed to make satisfactory progress and what has changed in your situation that will allow you to make satisfactory progress at the next evaluation.

If the appeal is approved, the student will be placed back into a financial aid probationary status. If, at the end of this probationary period, the student is still not making the minimum 2.25 GPA for SAP, then the student will lose their Title IV eligibility, with no possibility of appeal.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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

Academic Calendar

The Registrar's Office is responsible for annually coordinating and publishing the academic year calendar. The calendar can be found on the NECO [main website](#) or in the [NECO Portal](#). All students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with important academic dates. It is important for students to check the academic calendar periodically as some dates may change. Final year students taking clinical rotations follow the calendar at their clinical site.

Enrollment Status by Program

A student who attends and completes all required courses offered to their 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 and Financial Aid' section.)

First Professional Degree Program

- Fall and Spring Term is defined as
 - Full time: 12 or more credit hours
 - Half time: at least 8 and up to 11.99 credit hours
 - Part time: less than 8 credit hours
- Summer Term and each term in the final year are defined as:
 - Full time: 9 or more credit hours
 - Half time: at least 4.5 and up to 8.99 credit hours
 - Part Time: less than 4.50 credit hours

Stand Alone Graduate Degree Program

- Fall and Spring Term is defined as
 - Full time: 10 or more credit hours
 - Half time: at least 5 and up to 9.99 credit hours
 - Part time: less than 5 credit hours
- Summer Term is defined as:
 - Full time: 9 or more credit hours
 - Half time: at least 5 and up to 8.99 credit hours
 - Part time: less than 5 credit hours

Credit Hour Definition

One credit hour is equivalent to

- 15 hours of in class lectures and a minimum of 30 hours of out of class student work per term
- 30 hours of laboratory per term
- 30 hours of online interactive training per term
- 30 hours of clinic and a minimum of 15 hours of out a class student work per term

Requirements for Student Advancement

A student is required to meet minimum academic and clinical standards in order to advance to the next year of study. A student in the OD/MS program must meet the first professional and graduate program standards to advance to the next year of study.

First Professional Degree Program (FYOD, ASIP, AODP, MS/OD China) – Enrolled Fall 2022 to present

- A student must have at least a 2.250 cumulative GPA at the end of each academic year and have completed all clinical requirements without an unresolved grade of “F” for that year unless placed on modified status.
- To enter the final professional year, a student must have a 2.250 cumulative GPA, no more than one grade of Incomplete, In Progress, Remedial or Fail in didactic or clinical courses, and have completed all clinical requirements for all three years without an unresolved grade of “F” unless placed on modified status.

First Professional Degree Program (FYOD, ASIP, AODP, MS/OD China) – Enrolled Prior to Fall 2022

- A student must have at least a 2.000 cumulative GPA at the end of each academic year and have completed all clinical requirements without an unresolved grade of “F” for that year unless placed on modified status.
- To enter the final professional year, a student must have a 2.000 cumulative GPA, no more than one grade of Incomplete, In Progress, Remedial or Fail in didactic or clinical courses, and have completed all clinical requirements for all three years without an unresolved grade of “F” unless placed on modified status.

OD/MS Dual Degree Program (DYOD)

- A student must have at least a 2.750 OD cumulative GPA and a 3.000 MS cumulative GPA at the end of each academic year.
- A student must meet all program requirements for that year which is confirmed by their advisor to the Graduate Studies Committee.
- A student must have no more than one grade of Incomplete, In Progress, or Fail in didactic or clinical courses unless placed on modified status. To enter the final Professional Year, a student must also have completed all clinical requirements for all three years.

Stand Alone Graduate Degree Program (VS)

- A student must have at least a 3.000 cumulative GPA at the end of each academic year.
- A student must meet all program requirements for that year which is confirmed by their advisor to the Graduate Studies Committee.

- A student must have no more than one grade of Incomplete, In Progress, or Fail in a didactic course unless placed on modified status.

Academic Honors

NECO strives to recognize students that have demonstrated high academic achievement and performance. The distinctions below detail the qualifications to receive these honors. Please note, GPA cannot be rounded up.

Beta Sigma Kappa (BSK) International Optometric Honor Society

Students in the First Professional Degree Program who have a cumulative GPA of 3.50 or higher at the end of each academic year will be invited to apply to join BSK.

Dean's List

Awarded after the Fall and Spring terms (Rotations and Summer terms do not qualify) to students in the First Professional Degree Program. Students who have a term GPA of 3.50 or higher will be awarded Dean's List. A letter will be sent to the student and the honor will be noted on the student's transcript.

Honor Roll

Awarded after the Fall and Spring terms (Rotations and Summer terms do not qualify) to students in the First Professional Degree Program. Students who have a term GPA of 3.00 – 3.49 will be awarded Honor Roll. A letter will be sent to the student and the honor will be noted on the student's transcript.

Academic Standing & Progress

The Registrar will determine a student's academic progress and standing at the end of each term once all grades have been submitted. If a student receives an incomplete grade(s), their academic standing will be officially determined once all incomplete grades have been resolved. A student is considered to be in good academic standing unless they have met the criteria for Academic Probation and/or Clinical Probation or have not met the requirements set forth in a modified program. At the end of each term, a student will be placed on one or more of the following academic standings:

- Good Standing
- Academic Warning
- Academic Probation
- Clinical Warning
- Clinical Probation

Any student placed on Academic Probation and/or Clinical Probation, will be reviewed by the Student Affairs Committee (SAC).

Academic & Clinical Warning and Probation

Academic Warning

Students placed on Academic Warning are still considered to be in good standing and making satisfactory academic progress. The academic warning status is a way to notify students that their cumulative GPA is close to the criteria to be placed on Academic Probation.

A student in a first professional degree program will be placed on Academic Warning when their cumulative GPA falls within the range of 2.250 – 2.499. The student will receive a written notice, which may be transmitted via the student's NECO email from the Registrar.

*Students that entered their academic program between Fall 2019 and May 2022 will be placed on Academic Warning when their cumulative GPA falls within the range of 2.000 – 2.399.

Resolution of Academic Warning

Academic Warning status will be resolved when the student's cumulative GPA is 2.500 or above.

*Students that entered their academic program between Fall 2019 and May 2022: Academic Warning will be resolved when the student's cumulative GPA is 2.400 or above.

Academic Probation

A student will be placed on Academic Probation for one or more of the reasons listed below for their degree program. The student will receive a written notice, which may be transmitted via the student's NECO email from the Registrar each time they meet a requirement to be placed on Academic Probation. Students placed on Academic Probation are eligible for dismissal from the College and will be reviewed by the Student Affairs Committee (SAC), and may be required to meet with the SAC.

First Professional Degree Program (FYOD, ASIP, AODP, MS/OD China)

- Student's cumulative GPA is below the minimum grade point average of 2.250 required for advancement to the next professional year or graduation
- Student's term GPA is below 2.000 in any one term
- Student has earned a grade of "F" in one term

* Students that entered their First Professional Degree Program between Fall 2019 and May 2022 (FYOD, ASIP, AODP, MS/OD China)

- Student's cumulative GPA is below the minimum grade point average of 2.000 required for advancement to the next professional year or graduation
- Student's term GPA is below 1.600 in any one term
- Student has earned a grade of "F" in one term

OD/MS Dual Degree Program

- Student's MS cumulative GPA is below the minimum grade point average of 3.000 required for advancement to the next year or graduation
- Student's OD cumulative GPA is below the minimum grade point average of 2.750 required for advancement to the next year or graduation
- Student's term GPA is below 2.000 in any one term
- Student has earned one grade of "F" in one term for either program

*Students that entered the OD/MS Dual Degree Program May 2022 or prior

- Student's MS cumulative GPA is below the minimum grade point average of 3.000 required for advancement to the next year or graduation

- Student's OD cumulative GPA is below the minimum grade point average of 2.750 required for advancement to the next year or graduation
- Student's term GPA is 1.600 or below in any one term for either program
- Student has earned a grade of "F" in one term for either program

Stand Alone Graduate Program (MS)

- Student's cumulative GPA is below the minimum grade point average of 3.000 required for advancement to the next year or graduation
- Student's term GPA is 1.600 or below in any one term
- Student has earned a grade of "F" in one term

Resolution of Academic Probation

Academic Probation in a first professional degree program will be resolved when the student no longer meets the criteria for academic probation and any requirements set by the Student Affairs Committee and/or Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs have been met.

Academic Probation in a graduate degree program will be resolved when the student no longer meets the criteria for academic probation and any requirements set by the Student Affairs Committee, the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs, and/or the Director of Graduate Programs have been met.

Academic Probation in the OD/MS dual degree program will be resolved when the student no longer meets the criteria for academic probation and any requirements set by the Student Affairs Committee, Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs, and/or the Director of Graduate Programs have been met.

Clinical Warning

Students placed on Clinical Warning are still considered to be in good standing and making satisfactory clinical progress.

A student in a first professional degree program will be placed on Clinical Warning when they receive the grade of RM in any clinical course, unless they meet the criteria for Clinical Probation. The student will receive a written notice, which may be transmitted via the student's NECO email from the Registrar.

Resolution of Clinical Warning

Clinical Warning will be resolved when the student receives the grade of Pass (P) or higher in their next clinical course. The RM will be changed to a Remedial Pass (RMP).

If the student does not receive a P or higher in the next clinical course, the RM will be changed to a Remedial Fail (RMF) and the student will be placed on Clinical Probation. See Clinical Probation for more information.

Clinical Probation

A student will be placed on Clinical Probation for one or more of the reasons listed below for their degree program. The student will receive a written notice, which will be communicated via the student's NECO email from the Registrar each time they meet the criteria for being placed on Clinical Probation. Students placed on

Clinical Probation are eligible for dismissal from the College. They will be referred to the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) to determine their status and may require a hearing for further review.

First Professional Degree Program (FYOD, OD/MS, ASIP, AODP, MS/OD China)

- Student has earned two consecutive Remedial (RM) grades in a clinical course, resulting in the first RM becoming an RMF
- Student has earned the grade of Failure (F) in a clinical course
- Student has earned a total of three or more RM/RMP/RMFs over the course of their program

Resolution of Clinical Probation

Clinical Probation for a student will be resolved after the student meets the requirements set forth by the Student Affairs Committee, the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs, and/or as part of a remedial program (e.g., repeating and passing the failed clinical course).

Inquiry Status

A student who has an unprofessional conduct complaint pending before the Student Affairs Committee or a disciplinary probation violation pending will be classified as inquiry status until the complaint is resolved. Please review the 'Unprofessional Conduct' section of this handbook for more information.

Disciplinary Probation

A student will be placed on Disciplinary Probation if they are found in violation of any policies under 'Student Policies and Profession Standards' section of this handbook. If the student is involved in subsequent violations, they will be eligible for dismissal and be referred to the Student Affairs Committee.

Resolution of Disciplinary Probation

Disciplinary Probation will be resolved if the student meets the conditions set forth in their retention letter from the Student Affairs Committee or other appropriate committee. The appropriate committee will determine if 'Disciplinary Probation' or another notation will be transcribed on the student's transcript.

Modified Program

A student will be placed on a modified program if their program has changed from the regular program's curriculum. A modified program can come from a student request approved by the Office of Academic Affairs, from the SAC's recommendation to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs after any SAC decisions and/or from any changes in enrollment that happen during a term like an approved course withdrawal or a leave of absence.

A student's request for a modified program should be submitted to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and/or their designee no later than two (2) weeks after midterm exams.

Re-classed

The Student Affairs Committee (SAC) treats every academic situation individually, and their decisions are based upon what is best for the student. In some circumstances, the SAC may decide to retain a student, but

require the student to repeat a previous semester or a full academic year. This would place the student on a modified program.

Student Affairs Committee (SAC)

A student who has been placed on academic and/or clinical probation will be reviewed by the SAC. The SAC review process is as follows:

1. Students will be sent a notice via NECO email from the Registrar. Dependent on the reason for the referral to the SAC, the notice may include:
 - a. The official SAC notice letter,
 - b. Student Reflection Form, and
 - c. Additional information as needed. *
2. Upon receipt, students must follow the next steps as outlined in the letter. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Completing the Student Reflection Form, and
 - b. Submitting it to the SAC Chair by the date stated in the letter.
3. The SAC will review each student's academic and/or clinical performance, their student reflection form, and any additional information provided. The SAC may require a student to meet with them before making a decision. If a meeting is required, the student will be notified via NECO email by the Registrar with the day and time of the meeting.
4. The SAC will then render one of three possible decisions, listed below, which will be communicated to the student via NECO email by the Office of Academic Affairs. The student will be required to sign and return said letter.
 - a. Retain
 - b. Reclass
 - c. Dismissal
5. When a student is *Retained*, the SAC may recommend modifications to the student's curriculum. A second letter outlining their modified program will be sent by the Office of Academic Affairs via NECO email. This letter will also need to be signed and returned by the deadline provided.
6. When a student is *Reclassified*, the student will receive a second letter outlining the terms of their leave of absence from the Office of Academic Affairs via NECO email of which the student must sign and return by the deadline stipulated.
 - a. The student will be withdrawn from the current semester's courses, where a 'W' will be transcribed for all courses.
 - b. The student will be put on a Leave of Absence until they are able to resume their studies.
 - c. The student will need to verify their intent to return to the College by emailing the Registrar and the designee of the Office of Academic Affairs by the date stated in the letter from the Office of Academic Affairs.
 - d. The student will be dismissed if they decide not to be reclassified. In these situations, please see Academic Dismissal section for more information.

*If more information is required to render a decision, the SAC Chair and/or the Registrar will reach out to the student. The student will be expected to provide the requested information as soon as possible.

NOTE: An SAC decision can be appealed, please see the Appeal of SAC Decision section below.

Appeal of SAC Decision

A student may submit a written appeal of the SAC's decision to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs within three (3) days after the date of the letter in which SAC informs the student of their decision. This letter should include the date, the reason(s) for the appeal, and the student's signature. The document must be emailed directly to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and/or designee. The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and/or designee will serve as a reviewer of appeals.

An appeal will only be considered for two specific reasons:

1. If a student demonstrates that the SAC did not follow the decision process
2. 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. A committee of faculty and/or administrators may be elected to assist with this decision at any point of the process including input from the SAC and/or other involved parties as appropriate.

If the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs deems that the appeal is justified, they will advise the student in writing by NECO email of the student's status, curriculum changes, and/or conditions that are required 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 by NECO email. The decision of the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will be final.

A student who is appealing a decision will be allowed to attend didactic courses and labs and clinical assignments unless told otherwise by the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and/or their designee.

Dismissal from the College

As soon as a dismissal from the College becomes official, the following will occur:

- Permanently transcribing of dismissal on student's transcript
- Deactivation of the student's identification card to remove access to campus buildings except as a visitor during regular business hours

A student should contact each of the below listed offices to ensure all elements of their NECO accounts and records are taken care of along with answering any questions they may have.

- Center for Academic and Professional Achievement at capa@neco.edu
- Financial Aid Office at finaid@neco.edu
- Business Office at businessoffice@neco.edu
- Registrar at registrar@neco.edu
- Facilities at formanm@neco.edu

Unprofessional Conduct Dismissal or Suspension

An unprofessional conduct dismissal or suspension, unless successfully appealed, will always be permanently transcribed onto the student's transcript and record. This notation in the transcript cannot be changed or eliminated.

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 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 or designee in consultation with the SAC and the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), if applicable, 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 insinuate that a student will be successfully readmitted.

Student Status Definition

Unless otherwise stated, the policies and procedures in this Handbook apply to all active NECO students. Active NECO students include any students who are currently enrolled in didactic and/or clinical classes or are on an approved or mandatory leave of absence.

Change in Enrollment Status

Students who have a change in enrollment status after the beginning of the current term will be given the grade of withdrawal "W" applied to their discontinued courses they were enrolled in, unless otherwise approved by the Office of Academic Affairs.

Leave of Absence and Readmission

A student who is in good academic standing may request a leave of absence from the College. This request must be submitted in writing to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs at least 30 days in advance of the anticipated leave date. This requirement of an advanced notice will be waived only under extraordinary circumstances.

If the student is in their final year of a first professional degree program and/or in a graduate program, the Office of Clinical Education and/or the Department of Graduate Research Studies will be notified by the Office of Academic Affairs upon receipt of the request.

The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will inform the student in writing of the decision, any terms or provisions required 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 among the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs, the Director of Clinical Education (if a student is in their final year), the Director of

Graduate Research Studies (if a student is in a graduate program), and any other appropriate individuals, in their sole and absolute discretion.

- A leave of absence may not be granted before all tuition and fees are paid in full and a student must arrange an appointment with a staff member from the following offices:
 - Center for Academic and Professional Achievement (CAPA)
 - Financial Aid Office to answer any questions about aid
 - Business Office to determine the student's unpaid balance
 - Registrar to answer questions about transcripts and/or their Visa (when applicable)
- A leave of absence is usually not extended beyond one year. Extraordinary circumstances may warrant an exception. Exceptions will be reviewed on an individual basis.
- A leave of absence is an approved temporary break from study with an intent to return in a future semester. Students on leave do not take courses and are not considered actively enrolled, but remain matriculated in their program.
- A student who returns to the College after a leave of absence may be required to take additional coursework due to curriculum changes. A student taking a leave of absence does so with the understanding that course sequencing may change during the leave of absence.
- A student may be required to pass a clinical proficiency examination prior to assignment to clinical patient care. If the student fails to pass, the student will be required to complete clinical tutoring before retaking the proficiency examination. Failing to pass a second time may result in the student being placed on a modified clinical track, being reclassified, or not being allowed to return.
- International students taking a leave of absence for either medical or nonmedical reasons must schedule an appointment with their international advisor. Please note that an international student's F1 status may be affected by the leave of absence from the College.

Conditional Leave of Absence and Readmission

If a student is not eligible for a leave of absence, yet presents extraordinary extenuating remediable circumstances, a conditional leave of absence may be requested. Examples of such circumstances may include severe medical or personal conditions. Documentation of the circumstances by a practitioner deemed to be qualified by the College must accompany the request. This request must be submitted in writing to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs at least 30 days in advance of the anticipated leave date. This requirement of an advanced notice will be waived only under extraordinary circumstances. Remediation of the condition by a qualified practitioner must be presented by the student in order to return to the College. Conditions set in the return documentation, such as continued medical care, must be adhered to.

If the student is in their final year of a first professional degree program and/or in a graduate program, the Office of Clinical Education and/or the Department of Graduate Research Studies will be notified by the Office of Academic Affairs upon receipt of the request.

The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will inform the student in writing of the decision, any terms, and the date of reentry relative to returning to the College. The Office of Academic Affairs will notify the appropriate offices and departments.

Please note the following:

- The decision to grant the conditional leave will be a function of consultation among the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs, the Director of Clinical Education (if a student is in their final

year), the Director of Graduate Research Studies (if a student is in a graduate program), and any other appropriate individuals, in their sole and absolute discretion.

- 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. Extraordinary circumstances may warrant an exception. Exceptions will be reviewed on an individual basis.
- A leave of absence is an approved temporary break from study with an intent to return in a future semester. Students on leave do not take courses and are not considered actively enrolled, but remain matriculated in their program.
- A student who returns to the College after a leave of absence may be required to take additional coursework due to curriculum changes. A student taking a leave of absence does so with the understanding that course sequencing may change during the leave of absence.
- A student may be required to pass a clinical proficiency examination prior to assignment to clinical patient care. If the student fails to pass, the student will be required to complete clinical tutoring before retaking the proficiency examination. Failing to pass a second time may result in the student being placed on a modified clinical track, being reclassified, or not being allowed to return.
- International students taking a leave of absence for either medical or nonmedical reasons must schedule an appointment with their international advisor. Please note that an international student's F1 status may be affected by the leave of absence from the College.

College Withdrawal

A student in a first professional degree program may withdraw from the College by informing the Registrar in writing. This should be done at least two (2) weeks before final examinations begin or three (3) weeks before the end of a final year clinical assignment. A student who does not withdraw by these deadlines will receive a 'Zero/Fail' for any missed examinations, papers, etcetera and this 'Zero/Fail' will be used in the grade calculation.

A student in a graduate program may withdraw from the College by informing the Director of Graduate Research Studies in writing. The Director will notify the Registrar in writing and provide the student's withdrawal letter.

A student must arrange an appointment with a staff member from the following offices:

- Center for Academic and Professional Achievement (CAPA)
- Financial Aid Office - to answer any questions about aid
- Business Office - to determine the student's unpaid balance
- Registrar - to answer questions about transcripts and/or their Visa (when applicable)

When the withdrawal from the College becomes official, the student's identification card will be deactivated to remove access to campus buildings except as a visitor during regular business hours.

Changes in Didactic Course Status

Add/Drop

Students may add or drop an elective course only during the first week of classes without a 'W' grade noted on their transcript. After the first week of classes students are required to request a course withdrawal. Non-elective courses are not eligible for add/drop; however, a student can request a change to their current program. Please see the Modified Program section for more information.

Withdrawal from Didactic 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 or designee 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 or designee 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 or designee 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.

Students should contact the Business Office and Financial Office with questions on how withdrawing from courses would affect their tuition and/or financial aid.

Exemption from Didactic 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/or 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 with a duration of 14 or more weeks; end of the first week of the beginning of the course with a duration of 12 or less weeks. 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. Once the exemption has been granted the student will receive the grade of EX.

A student who has been reclassified or is on a modified program is ineligible to be exempt from a course unless they have received permission from the VP/Dean of Academic Affairs or their liaison. Approval of an exemption from the VP/Dean of Academic Affairs or their liaison must take place prior to requesting approval from the instructor of record.

Auditing a Didactic Course

A student may audit a course with the approval of the Instructor of Record and the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs or designee. 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.

If a student has extenuating circumstances that prevent them from attending the scheduled meetings of a course but would still like to audit, approval must be obtained from the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and the Instructor of Record.

Students auditing a course are allowed to attend lectures and labs as well as have access to course materials. Students will not receive credit for the course nor are they allowed to participate in any quizzes, examinations, or practicals. Students must fill out the Audit Request form on the Registrar's page of the student portal to be registered for the course. At the end of the course, the student will receive the grade of AU.

Repeating of a Didactic Course Previously Passed

In extremely rare circumstances, the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs has the authority to invite a student to repeat a course the student previously passed. This privilege would only be granted to students that:

- 1) Do not meet the GPA requirements for graduation before entering rotations, and/or
- 2) If it was apparent the student did not have a fair chance to raise their GPA to meet the required threshold.

Both class grades will reflect on the student transcript. The first attempt credits will be changed to "0.00", while the second credits will stand. The student will accept the second grade counting towards GPA, even if it ends up being lower than the first grade. Students will repeat the course at its next available offering. After the repeated class is graded, and if the GPA is not at or above the required GPA threshold, the student will be eligible for dismissal by the Student Affairs Committee.

Changes in Clinical Course Status

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 Office of Clinical Education no later than three (3) weeks before the last day of the student's present clinical assignment or three (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 or designee. 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 or designee 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, the Office of Clinical Education, and all other appropriate parties.

If a student withdraws from a clinical course without permission by not attending clinical assignments (Patient Care I, II, III, IV) or by failing to complete other requirements of the clinical course, a grade of "F" will be transcribed.

Students should contact the Business Office and Financial Office with questions on how withdrawing from courses would affect their tuition and/or financial aid.

Exemption from Clinical Courses

There is no exemption from or substitutions for clinical courses involving patient care. Students will be assigned only to clinical assignments that have been previously established by formal affiliation with the College, with the exception of student scheduled observations as a part of Patient Care I (PCI). The Office of Clinical Education publishes a list of clinical affiliates annually.

Auditing a Clinical Course

A clinical course can only be taken as an audit if required as part of a student's modified program due to their 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. At the end of the course, the student will receive the grade of AU.

Repeating of a Clinical Course

A student may only repeat a clinical course if required by the Student Affairs Committee or the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs 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.

Grading Policies and Procedures – Didactic Courses

Didactic Grade Definitions

Grade	4.0 Scale	Standard Scale*	Definition
A	4.00	90 – 100	Excellent
B	3.00	80 – 89	Good
C	2.00	70 – 79	Fair
D	1.00	60 – 69	Lowest Passing
F	0.00	59 - 0	Failure
FD	1.00		Failed, passed special examination
P			Pass as part of the pass/fail system
F			Failure as part of the pass/fail system
I			Incomplete
AU			Audit
W			Withdrawal
EX			Exempt
NG/NC			No grade/No credit given, approved by Registrar
IP/WIP			In Progress
LB			Lab/Seminar course that bears no credit and is not listed on transcript

* Faculty reserve the right to deviate from the standard scale and any modification will be clearly communicated in the course syllabus.

Grade of Incomplete, Didactic Course

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 or the Office of Academic Affairs, 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, the final exam was missed with approval from the Office of Academic Affairs, and/or the course's evaluations are incomplete. An incomplete grade should never be used in lieu of an "F" or any other grade, nor should it be given to allow a student to take a special examination. (The purpose of a special examination is to resolve a grade of "F". See *Retake a Special Examination to resolve an "F"* for more information.)

Resolution of Incomplete Grade

A student who has a grade of Incomplete is required to make arrangements with the instructor to complete the course requirements or the Office of Academic Affairs to complete the course evaluations within five (5) weeks following the term in which the Incomplete was given. 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 five (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. Otherwise, the Incomplete will expire, and an "F" grade will be applied.

A student in the MS program who has an Incomplete in the final course of the MS program will only have two terms in which to complete this course. If the student is administratively withdrawn from the MS program, the grade will automatically become a grade of "W". The Director of Graduate Research Studies can extend this deadline only if the student registers and pays the Thesis Maintenance Fee.

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 Academic Probation for the term and in the student being eligible for dismissal.

Grade of Failure, Didactic Course

A student who has earned a grade of "F" will be placed on Academic Probation and be eligible for dismissal, where they will be referred to the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) for review. If the student is retained by the SAC, the student will be required to make up the failed class. The instructor of record will have the right to decide which of the below listed options is to be chosen for the student to resolve the failing grade.

A student receiving an "F" in the Spring Term is advised to remain in the Boston area.

Resolution of F Grade

The student will be sent a letter from the Office of Academic Affairs informing them of how they will resolve the "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 five (5) weeks following the term in which the grade of "F" was earned.

Retake a Special Examination to resolve an "F"

A student must complete the SAC hearing process prior to taking a special examination. If taking a special examination does not satisfactorily resolve the grade of "F", the student will be referred to the SAC again.

A student can resolve a grade of "F" by taking and passing a special examination. The original grade of "F" will be changed on the transcript to the grade of "FD" which is equivalent to a "D" grade and will be used for GPA calculation. Academic Probation will remain for the term even though the change from an "F" to "FD" may qualify a change to the student's academic standing status.

Repeat Course to resolve an "F"

A student can resolve a grade of "F" by retaking the class or a reasonably equivalent course as approved by the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs or designee. When a student repeats the course in which an "F" was earned, both grades will be transcribed on the student's transcript, and both grades will count in the calculation of the GPA.

If retaking the class does not satisfactorily resolve the grade of "F", the student will be referred to the SAC.

Grading Policies and Procedures – Clinical Courses

Clinical Grade Definitions

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 course syllabi.

Clinical preceptors must submit written documentation to the Office of Clinical Education to support all clinical grades.

Grade	Definition
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
IP/WIP	In Progress
NG/NC	No grade/No credit given, approved by Registrar

Grade of Incomplete, Clinical Course

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 the instructor of record of the patient care course, 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 Incomplete Grade

A student receiving a grade of Incomplete is required to contact the instructor of record of the patient care course or their designee immediately following receipt of the grade of Incomplete in order to make arrangements to complete the clinical course. The work must be completed within three (3) weeks following the term in which the Incomplete was given. The student and the instructor will be informed by the Registrar of the actual deadline date of when the grade must be received.

If the grade of Incomplete is not removed by the actual deadline date given by the Registrar, the grade will automatically become an "RM". If extenuating circumstances arise, the instructor 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 and academic standing or eligibility for dismissal.

Grade of Remedial, Clinical Course

It is recommended that a student who earns a Remedial grade in a clinical course meet with the Instructor of Record of the respective course to discuss possible consequences and steps for resolution.

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

Resolution of Remedial Grade

A grade of Pass (P) or higher in their next level clinical course and if applicable, the successful completion of their modified program, will remove a student from Clinical Warning. The original Remedial (RM) grade will be converted to a Remedial Pass (RMP).

A grade of Remedial (RM) or Failure (F) in their next level clinical course, will convert the first Remedial grade (RM) to a Remedial Failure (RMF) grade. The student will then be placed on Clinical Probation, becoming eligible for dismissal, and referred to the SAC as described in the 'Clinical Probation' and 'Clinical Dismissal' sections of the handbook.

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 Failure, Clinical Course

A student who earned a grade of "F" in a clinical course involving patient care will be placed on Clinical Probation, become eligible for dismissal, and referred to the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) for review.

Resolution of Failure Grade

If a student is retained by the SAC, the SAC will recommend a program of remediation to the VP/Dean of Academic Affairs and/or designee. The Office of Academic Affairs will send a letter of the program of remediation to the student and all other appropriate parties. 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. The student will be placed on Modified Status for the duration of their remediated program.

If the completion of the course of remediation does not satisfactorily resolve the grade of "F", the student will be referred to the SAC.

Submitting Grades

Final grades are due from the instructor of record three (3) days after final exams end. For any questions, please contact the Registrar's Office.

Viewing of Grades

Students can view final grades, grade reports and unofficial transcripts on the NECO portal once grades have been entered. Please contact the Registrar's Office for more details.

A grade report or transcript at the end of a term will not be released until the student's course evaluations have been completed. Please review 'Course Evaluation Requirement' section for more information.

Grades listed in Canvas are not official, official grades are only listed on the student's transcript or grade reports on the Portal.

Change of Grade Policy

The instructor of record for each course will submit the final grades for each course. Once a grade has been reported to the Registrar's Office, a grade can only be changed for the following reasons:

- Change of grade for Incomplete
- Change of grade based on the passage of a special examination
- Change of grade due to a clerical error
- Change of grade due to calculation error

To change a grade, the instructor of record must submit a Change of Grade Form to the Registrar's Office. The Registrar may request final approval from the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs in certain situations.

Grade Appeal Policy

A student may appeal a grade they believe was awarded unfairly. All grade appeals must be submitted no later than the end of the fourth (4th) week following the semester in which the grade was earned.

Step 1: Instructor of Record

The student should first meet with the Instructor of Record (IOR) to discuss their concerns and seek clarification or resolution.

Step 2: Department Chair

If the issue is not resolved after discussion with the IOR, the student may then appeal to the Department Chair responsible for the course. The Department Chair will review the complaint and may choose to include the IOR in the discussion to help facilitate a resolution. The Chair may also review the student's coursework and, if warranted, assign a revised grade. Once the review is complete, the Department Chair will notify the student of the outcome and any applicable next steps via their NECO email.

Appeal of Grade Resolution

If the student remains dissatisfied with the Department Chair's decision, they may submit a written appeal to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs within three (3) business days of receiving the Department Chair's decision. The appeal must include:

- A written explanation of the concern
- Supporting documentation or evidence
- The student's signature and date

The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will review the documentation and involve appropriate faculty and administrators as needed. A final decision will be communicated to the student via NECO email. The decision of the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs is final.

Grade Point Average (GPA) Calculation

The term and 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, Clinical, Incomplete, and In Progress grades are not used in the calculation of the GPA.

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

Course Information and Policies

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

Course Evaluation Requirement

At the end of each term, students are required to complete evaluations for each didactic and clinical course in which they are enrolled. Types of evaluations include but are not limited to: lecture, lab, seminar, clinical site, preceptor, and instructor. Students will have two weeks to complete their course evaluations through Meditrek, www.meditrek.com, a confidential evaluation site.

Failure to submit the assigned surveys on time for each course will result in a grade of Incomplete for the corresponding course. For example, if a student does not complete their lab evaluations for Course X, they will receive a grade of Incomplete for Course X for the term. If the grade of Incomplete is not resolved within the deadline given by the Registrar, a grade of Remedial (RM) for clinical courses or Fail (F) for didactic courses will be submitted and remain on the student's permanent transcript.

Students should direct all questions to the Office of Academic Affairs, academicaffairs@neco.edu.

CPR, AED and Epi-pen Certification

All students are required to maintain certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), in the use of automated external defibrillation (AED), and in the use of an Epi-pen. Students will not be allowed to participate in clinical assignments without proper certification.

Mandatory certification courses for CPR, AED, and Epi-pen will be arranged for students by the Office of Clinical Education.

Attendance and Tardiness Policies

Students are expected to attend all classes and are required to attend all labs, clinical assignments, mandatory meetings, and trainings. Students looking to be excused from any mandatory events must submit an Absence Request Form (located on the NECO Portal website) at least 30 days in advance. In some cases, the Office of Academic Affairs may require supporting documentation. When considering an absence request, we consider the purpose of the request, the frequency of previous requests from the student, and the student's academic standing in the program. Not all absence requests will be approved. There are certain timeframes that will be announced via email or in the Academic Calendar that students will not be allowed to be absent from or switch any clinic assignments, exams, lab sessions, or mandatory classes, trainings, meetings.

The College encourages student engagement in professional activities. However, it's important to acknowledge that a student's priority is to their studies and their responsibility to patient care. Students looking to attend professionally related or corporate sponsored events must submit an Absence Request Form at least 30 days in advance, have a GPA of at least 2.500*, and may not be on academic warning, probation and/or Inquiry status. Eligible students will be allowed one leave for professional activities per term. Exceptions may be considered for extraordinary circumstances, and evaluated on a case-by-case basis

by the Dean of Academic Affairs. Exceptional cases may be approved if the student holds an official role in the event and maintains a GPA above 2.80. The student's role must be outlined as part of the absence request.

Students who receive an excused absence are responsible for making up any missed assignments or material, switching lab sections and informing the Instructor of Record (IOR) of the switch, and notifying their impacted professors of their confirmed excused absence from the Office of Academic Affairs. A student will not be granted an excused absence because of travel plans or personal events that coincide with the Academic or Clinical Site Calendars.

Unauthorized absences, deemed unexcused by the Office of Academic Affairs, are considered unprofessional conduct. This includes but not limited to: not adhering to absence procedures, leaving a clinic assignment without permission, unauthorized switches in clinic or lab assignments, and unexcused absences from mandatory assignments. Please refer to the 'Unprofessional Conduct' section for additional information.

In case of emergent or unexpected absences, like illness or personal emergency, students must inform the instructor and/or preceptor about the absence, and fill out an Absence Request Form within three (3) business days. Documentation will be required for unexpected absences.

Midterm and Final exam periods are published in the Academic Calendar prior to the start of each academic year and are considered mandatory academic events. All students are required to attend and be fully prepared to take exams on the dates scheduled by the Office of Academic Affairs. No exceptions for personal travel, avoidable scheduling conflicts, or other non-emergency situations will be made.

Absence requests for midterm or final exams will be considered only in cases of documented, serious illness or personal emergency. Students must notify the Office of Academic Affairs at academicaffairs@neco.edu prior to the exam start time to request an unexpected absence. If an emergency prevents prior contact with Academic Affairs before the exam, students are expected to notify the College as soon as possible.

All requests to be excused from a midterm or final exam must be reviewed and approved by the Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs. A mandatory meeting with the Dean will be required. Approval is not guaranteed and is granted solely at the discretion of the Dean, based on their interpretation of the policy.

If the absence request is due to a serious illness, a physician's note must be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs on the same day the absence request is made. The documentation must be on official letterhead and include the following:

- The date of evaluation
- A statement confirming the student was medically unfit to take the exam
- The expected date of recovery or return
- The physician's signature

Incomplete, vague, or backdated documentation will result in the request being denied, and the absence will be considered unexcused.

If an absence request is approved, the Instructor of Record (IOR) will determine the format of the make-up exam, which may differ from the original (e.g., essay, oral, or alternative assessment). The exam modality and timing are non-negotiable.

The Office of Academic Affairs will determine if the absence is excused and notify the IOR by email, with the student copied on the message. If approved, the student must reschedule the missed exam immediately upon return. For final exams, a temporary grade of Incomplete will be issued until the exam is completed in accordance with the "Resolution of Incomplete Grades" policy.

Students who fail to follow this policy will forfeit the opportunity for a make-up exam and may receive a grade of zero, with no obligation on the part of the instructor to provide an alternative exam. Students are expected to make every effort to attend all scheduled exams and avoid missing them. The Office of Academic Affairs will track all students who missed exams each semester and report them to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs. Repeated exam absences will result in an investigative meeting with the Dean of Academic Affairs.

*Exception: students that entered their academic program between Fall 2019 and May 2022 must have a GPA of at least 2.4000

Clinical Attendance and Tardiness Policies

Attendance is mandatory for all clinical assignments including clinic orientation. If a student is looking to be excused from clinical assignment, they must obtain their preceptor's and/or site director's permission prior to submitting an Absence Request Form. Requests for an excused absence should be submitted 30 days in advance of the anticipated date(s). Students seeking an excused absence from a clinical assignment must make every effort to obtain a switch with a classmate to insure coverage for patient care. In the event a switch cannot be found, the clinic's director must approve of the absence prior to submitting an Absence Request Form.

A student who misses orientation may be delayed from starting their clinical assignment. Additional clinic time for missed orientation will be added to the student's overall minimum hours needed at a rate of three hours make-up per hour missed and may be assigned during school break/vacations.

Punctuality is expected for all clinical assignments. Students must notify their assigned clinic and preceptor of unavoidable delays. Failure to do so may be considered unprofessional and could result in referral to the Student Affairs Committee. The preceptor has the right to inform the Office of Academic Affairs and/or Clinical Education if a student has more than one incident of tardiness. Preceptors also retain the right to have students make up the time missed from clinic due to tardiness.

Students are required to follow the attendance policies of their clinical site as well as those outlined in the Patient Care course syllabus.

Students are prohibited from scheduling time off for Part III boards during the first or last week of a clinical rotation, and are required to obtain approval from their clinical preceptor/site director. Students may schedule one day of travel time prior to the administration of Part III of the board exam and one day after administration of the exam.

Third-year students in the Four-year OD program are expected to fulfill their clinical assignments during the examination periods. The exception is midterm week of Spring term, where students will be required to attend clinic on the first Saturday of the week yet have the remainder off to attend exams.

The following students will not have clinical assignments during exam periods, Thanksgiving (Thursday only), and spring break: first-year and second-year students in the Four-year OD program, first-year and second-year students in the AODP program, first-year students in the MS/OD China program, and first-year students in the ASIP program. Final-year students participating in clinical rotations do not follow the holidays or breaks shown on the Academic Calendar. They follow their clinical site's attendance and time off policies as well as the Patient Care course syllabus. Students who agree to switch an assignment are subject to the same attendance/absence policies and procedures.

Examination Procedures and Protocols

The following procedures and protocols have been established in an effort to ensure examination integrity and fairness to all students. The goal of this policy is to deter cheating and define appropriate testing conditions and behaviors. Students found in violation of these procedures and/or protocols may be eligible for dismissal from the College.

Procedures and protocols

- All students shall conduct themselves in a professional manner and abide by the Code of Ethics agreements that students signed during orientation.
- Students are not permitted in the examination room before the proctor allows them.
- Students are allowed a 15-minute grace period to arrive to the exam room after the exam has begun. Thereafter, students will not be allowed to take the exam at that time and must report to the Office of Academic Affairs or contact the office at academicaffairs@neco.edu.
- While waiting to enter the room, please keep your voices to a minimum to avoid disruption of an ongoing exam.
- Students will be assigned to an examination room and may be assigned to a seat.
- The proctor has the right to ask any student to change seats before and/or throughout the exam. These requests are standard protocol and may not indicate a problem.
- During an examination, a student must keep their eyes on their own exam to avoid unnecessary wandering of eyes.
- Under no circumstances is a student allowed to borrow anything from a classmate or communicate in any form with another classmate during the examination.
- Upon completion of an exam, a student must upload the exam, quietly collect personal belongings, show the proctor confirmation of successful exam upload, and vacate the exam vicinity. The exam vicinity includes all areas where conversation may be overheard by other students still in the exam room. These include, but are not limited to: hallways, restrooms near the exam room, rotunda, and atrium.
- Only one student at a time will be allowed out of the exam room for restroom purposes and the student's name may be noted by the proctor. Restrooms will be randomly checked for study materials during exam week.
- All personal belongings must be left in a locker, on a hook in the hall, or put away on the ground underneath your seat. These include, but are not limited to:
 - bags, backpacks, purses;
 - coats, hats, gloves, caps;
 - hooded clothing (cannot be placed over the head during an examination and may be subject to inspection);
 - books, notes;

- cell phones, smart wrist devices, and all other electronic devices (which must be turned off);
 - calculator cover;
 - food and drinks (except water as specified below); and
 - “good luck” pieces.
- The following items are permitted at the student’s desk:
 - NECO student photo ID;
 - Pencils and pens;
 - Rulers, compass, protractor;
 - Permissible calculator* without cover (if required for exam); and
 - Clear bottle of water without label.

*Permissible calculators include only those in the Texas Instruments 30X-series. A calculator must be used by only the owner and may not be given to another student. Students are responsible for their calculator being in proper working order; proctors do not have calculators for students. Proctors may inspect calculators during the exam. The allowance of a calculator during the examination is at the discretion of the course instructor.

Tardiness and Examinations

Students arriving late to an exam will not be granted additional time or a makeup exam unless there are extenuating circumstances and it is approved by the office of Academic Affairs.

If a student arrives late to an exam but within 15 minutes of the start of the exam, they will be allowed to join the exam already in progress assuming that no students have already completed the exam and left the room. In the event that a student has already completed the exam and left the room, the late student will need to be referred to the Office of Academic Affairs.

If students arrive more than 15 minutes late to an exam, they must immediately report to the Office of Academic Affairs who will determine appropriate action based on extenuating circumstances and possibility of prior offenses. Repeat offenders may be subject to a grade penalty determined by the Instructor of Record.

Cheating on an examination/inappropriate behavior:

- Giving an answer to an exam question
- Looking at other students’ answers even if you don’t change your own answer
- Using or possessing unapproved materials during exams such as cheat sheets, notes, formulas, or personal items
- Using a calculator that is not within the Texas Instruments 30X-series
- Possessing or using any unapproved electronic device, including smart devices
- Exhibiting behaviors deemed inappropriate by the proctor(s) or course instructor

Midterm and Final Exam Schedules

Exam schedules are created and distributed via email by the Office of Academic Affairs. The schedules are also posted on the NECO portal.

Graduation and Degree Requirements

The Registrar's Office is responsible for awarding NECO's degrees. All students must submit an application to graduate. The Registrar's Office sends out the Application to Graduate to all final year students once they have been audited.

There are three conferral periods per academic year with one Commencement ceremony. When students complete their requirements, they will be recommended for their degree to be conferred upon the next conferral date. The Commencement Ceremony takes place on the May conferral date. The conferral dates for the 2025-2026 academic year are as follows:

September 1, 2025
 December 15, 2025
 May 17, 2026

Bachelor of Science in Optometry Degree

A student who has not earned a bachelor's degree prior to enrolling in the four-year first professional degree program may apply for the Bachelor of Science in Optometry degree. At the beginning of the second year of study, the student must submit a written request to the Registrar stating that they have not received a bachelor's degree and is requesting to be evaluated for eligibility to receive the College's bachelor's degree.

A student is not eligible for the bachelor's degree after graduation from the College therefore, any deficiencies in the undergraduate course requirements must be completed prior to receipt of the Doctor of Optometry degree. BS degrees will be conferred simultaneously with the Doctor of Optometry.

In order to be eligible for the bachelor's degree, a student must:

1. Hold no prior bachelor's degree;
2. Have successfully completed (C or above) at least twelve (12) semester hours of Social Science and twelve (12) semester hours of Humanities at the undergraduate level (Information regarding the categorization of courses may be obtained from the Registrar's Office.);
3. Have successfully completed two years of study at the New England College of Optometry;
4. Have not yet received the Doctor of Optometry degree.

Requirements to Graduate

Degrees will be conferred pursuant to the following requirements being met:

- **Curriculum Requirements:** All didactic and clinical requirements for the degree must have been completed successfully.
- **Academic Requirements***
 - First Professional Degree Program: A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.000 with no outstanding grades of Failure, Remedial, or Incomplete is required
 - Graduate Degree Program: A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.000 is required with no outstanding grades of Failure or Incomplete.
 - OD/MS Dual Degree Program: A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.000 in the graduate program and a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.750 in the first professional program is required with no outstanding grades of Failure or Incomplete in either program.

- **Professional Conduct Requirement:** No student will be allowed to graduate with charges or pending actions.
- **Thesis Requirement for MS Graduate Program only:** An approved thesis must be defended and submitted.
- **Requirements for MS/OD China Program only:** The award of the MS degree in China and passing Part I of the NBEO board exam are required prior to the OD degree being awarded.
- **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, library charges and/or other fees.
- **Financial Aid:** A student who has received financial aid must complete an online Exit Interview prior to graduating.

*The cumulative GPA is not a rounded number. Example: a cumulative GPA of 1.999 does not qualify a student in a first professional degree program to graduate.

Commencement Participation

NECO holds a Commencement Ceremony once a year in May. Students may only participate in one Commencement Ceremony, unless they are in the OD/MS Dual Degree program in which they are not receiving their degrees at the same time.

Students who are earning their degree in September or December will be able to participate in the May Commencement Ceremony with their current cohort. A diploma will be issued and “official conferral” will be transcribed on their transcript on the next conferral date once all degree requirements are complete.

REGISTRAR’S OFFICE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Forms & Documents

The Registrar’s Office has all student forms available on the Registrar page of the NECO Portal. Students can find forms to update their name, addresses, request enrollment letters, transcripts, and submit the application to graduate.

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 via the NECO student portal. The Registrar’s Office has a three to five business day turnaround time for all requests. Canadian students should submit their deferment forms to the Financial Aid Office.

Change of Name and Address Policy

A student is required to provide the Registrar with their 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 such as the library consortium 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 Academic Affairs.

A student's name of record includes first name, middle initial(s) or middle name(s) if applicable and the family name. The College will change the name of currently enrolled students on its official records upon receipt of a request in writing accompanied by evidence of the legal basis for the change. A record of the previous name will be maintained, but all official documents will be released under the new name. The College will not record name changes for former students. Note: The diploma is awarded using the student's legal name of record in the format submitted by the student on a graduation application.

Students can find the change of address forms and the name change form on the NECO Portal.

NECO Preferred First Name Policy

New England College of Optometry recognizes individuals may prefer to use first names other than their legal first name to identify themselves. To foster an inclusive environment that encourages self-expression, current students and employees may use a preferred first name on campus. We strive to have this name used wherever a legal name is not necessary. For identity verification purposes, individuals may not change their legal last name.

Places Where Preferred First Name May Be Used as an Alternative to you Legal Name

Your chosen name will appear in the following College systems:

- Jenzabar (SIS)
- Canvas (LMS)
- Class Rosters
- Internal Communications, where allowable
- Commencement Program

Places Where Legal Name Must Be Used

- Enrollment Inquiries and Verifications
- Financial Aid
- Health, Insurance and Medical Documents and Records
- When international students are applying for F-1 Visa
- Official Transcripts/Diplomas
- Payment/Billing
- Student and Employee Payroll systems

Submitting Your Preferred First Name

- Students can submit a request for a preferred name change to the Registrar's Office via the NECO portal
- Requests for preferred name will be reviewed by the Registrar to ensure the preferred name is not used for the purposes of misrepresentation
- You will receive a notification from the Registrar's Office either confirming or denying your request. Students may challenge a denied chosen name through the Associate Dean of Student Affairs whose decision is final.
- If you are a faculty or staff member of the college you must submit your preferred first name request to the Human Resources department in person.
- NECO reserves the right to deny or remove, with or without notice, a chosen name if it is used for inappropriate purposes including, but not limited to, misrepresentation, use of offensive language, including profanity or language which has the effect of mockery, or avoiding legal obligation. Students will be notified if the chosen name is not accepted.
- Updating chosen name in student systems identified in the chosen name policy can take upwards of a week.
- Using or changing a chosen name is not the same as legally changing a name through the courts. Student legal names will remain the same in all College related systems. Students wishing to pursue a legal name change should consult with the Registrar's Office.

Getting a New Student ID

Students who want a new NECO ID card with their preferred name, must bring the preferred name approval notification to the Front Desk and request a new card.

Updated IT Accounts

Once the preferred name has been approved and updated by the Registrar, the student will be contacted by the IT Department concerning the next steps for updating their IT accounts.

Student Schedules

The Academic Affairs Office creates and distributes class schedules. The schedules are posted on the NECO Portal. Students can also access their course schedules on the Registrar's page of the NECO portal.

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 1st of any year, and ending on August 31st 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 and complete the form by going through the process to apply for a NECO parking decal on the Facilities page of the Portal. NECO will file the forms on your behalf. It is recommended that you keep a copy for your personal files.

Transcript Policy

Official transcripts are available to all students. Official transcripts are printed on official paper and bears the seal of the College and the signature of the Registrar. Official transcripts contain all academic and clinical course work taken at the College. Official transcripts may not be released if the student or former student has a hold on their account.

Unofficial transcripts can be obtained via the NECO portal. Unofficial transcripts are printed on white paper with an UNOFFICIAL watermark on each page. Unofficial transcripts do not bear the seal of the College or the signature of the Registrar. They also contain all academic and clinical course work take at the College.

Official transcripts can be requested online via the [National Student Clearinghouse](#) (NSC). A transcript will only be issued after the student has made the request in writing either through the NSC. There is a three to five business day processing time for all transcript requests. Requests are handled on a first come/first serve basis. The 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, the transcript fee will be charged again.

Transcripts contain confidential academic information and are released in accordance with FERPA. Therefore, transcript requests will not be processed without a legal signature (or secured electronic authorization). When ordering online, the authenticating username and password serves as electronic authorization.

Annual Notification of Student’s Rights under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended, affords eligible students certain rights with respect to their education records. (An “eligible student” under FERPA is a student who is 18 years of age or older or who attends a postsecondary institution at any age.) These rights include:

1. **The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the College receives a request for access.** A student should submit to the Registrar, Dean, Head of the Academic department, or other appropriate official, a written request that identifies the record(s) the student wishes to inspect. The New England College of Optometry 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 school official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
2. **The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA.** A student who wishes to ask New England College of Optometry to amend a record should write to the Registrar, clearly identify the part of the record the student wants changed, and specify why it should

be changed. If New England College of Optometry decides not to amend the record as requested, New England College of Optometry will notify the student in writing of the decision and the student's right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. **The right to provide written consent before New England College of Optometry discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.** New England College of Optometry discloses education records without a student's prior written consent under the FERPA exception for disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is typically a person employed by the New England College of Optometry in an administrative, supervisory, academic, research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person serving on the board of trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the New England College of Optometry who performs an institutional service of function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent or a student volunteering to assist another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities for the New England College of Optometry. Upon request, the school also discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. **The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the New England College of Optometry to comply with the requirements of FERPA.** The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

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

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records without the consent of the student if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the student, FERPA regulations require the institution to record the disclosure. Eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A postsecondary institution may disclose PII from education records without obtaining prior written consent of the student to the following:

- Other school officials, including teachers, within the institution whom the institution has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in the FERPA regulations are met.
- Officials of another school where the student seeks enrollment or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the regulations.

- Authorized representatives of the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or state and local educational authorities, such as a state postsecondary authority who is responsible for supervising the university's state-supported education programs. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the regulations, in connection with an audit or evaluation of federal- or state-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf.
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid.
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of the school in order to (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction.
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions.
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes.
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- To appropriate officials or parents in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- Information the school has designated as "directory information."
- To a victim of an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or a nonforcible sex offense, subject to the requirements. The disclosure may only include the final results of the disciplinary proceeding with respect to that alleged crime or offense regardless of the finding.
- To the general public, the final results of a disciplinary proceeding, subject to the requirements, if the school determines the student is an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or non-forcible sex offense and the student has committed a violation of the school's rules or policies with respect to the allegation made against him or her.
- To parents of a student regarding the student's violation of any federal, state, or local law, or of any rule or policy of the school, governing the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance if the school determines the student committed a disciplinary violation and the student is under the age of 21.
- To the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), formerly Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), upon a specific request to NECO to verify F-1 status of international students.

Directory Information

The following information is considered directory information and may be released on request without the student's specific written consent: Student's name, local address, NECO email address, telephone number, date of birth, dates of enrollment, academic degree program(s), anticipated or actual date of graduation, honors and awards, enrollment status (full-time/part-time status) and year in school (Class Cohort). Students may opt-out of this by filling out the "Directory Information Opt-Out Form" located on the portal.

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 Associate Dean of Student Affairs, the Chair and Members of the Student Affairs Committee, the Director of Clinical Education, the

Director of the Accelerated OD, the Director of the Advanced Standing International and the Director/Committee of 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.

FERPA Consent to Disclose

Students have the option to grant a parent, guardian, or other third-party permission to parts of their student record. The student must submit the FERPA Waiver/Release form via the Registrar's page of the NECO Portal.

Licensing Exam Information

Information on licensing exams can be found at the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) site, www.optometry.org. This is also where you may order board exam scores to be sent to state licensing offices.

Please note that students are responsible for understanding the requirements of the states in which they plan to seek licensure. You are strongly urged to research your state's requirements at least five months before you graduate. The Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry provides a list of states with direct links to their licensing web sites, at <https://www.arbo.org/memberboards>. In addition, the NBEO site contains a directory of board addresses, telephone numbers and web sites at https://www.nbeo.org/state_board.cfm.

International Students

The Registrar's Office advises and assists all international F1 students at NECO. International students can contact registrar@neco.edu with questions and to schedule appointments.

International Student Information Portal

International students will find important and helpful information about maintaining F-1 Status, Social Security Numbers, I-20 information, traveling, CPT, OPT and more on the NECO portal.

Maintaining F-1 Status

It is your responsibility as an F-1 student to maintain your own legal status. Not following the rules can result in being removed from the U.S. or over severe penalties. Maintaining status includes the following guidelines:

1. Report to campus during the first week of classes.
2. Make sure that your immigration documents are valid at all times while in the U.S.
 - Your passport must be valid at all times while in F-1 Status
 - You must have an unexpired I-20 form
 - You must have an I-94 or entry stamps displaying 'F-1 D/S'
 - The F-1 Visa may expire while you are in the U.S. but it needs to be renewed if you intend to re-enter the U.S. on some future date
3. Report changes of your address or name to the PDSO immediately.
4. Pursue a full-course of study every term except during official school breaks.
5. Make normal progress toward your degree.

6. Keep Form I-20 valid at all times
7. Get a travel signature from the PDSO for travel outside of the U.S. every year
8. Obey all federal and state laws.
9. Follow employment regulations
10. Respect your dates of stay! After completing your studies, you will have up to 60 days of “grace period” to stay in the US. You must adhere to that time period, unless you have received prior authorization from the DSO. If you withdraw from NECO, your visa will be terminated and you will have 15 days to exit the country. If NECO administratively withdraws your record, you will have 48 hours to exit the country.

STUDENT POLICIES AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

How NECO Communicates with You

NECO has several official methods of communication regarding important deadlines, administrative business required for enrollment, institutional or legal requirements or updates, and exclusive opportunities. These official methods include your NECO email address. As a student, you are responsible for checking your NECO email account.

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.

Electronic Communications Policy

Please note: technology changes frequently. There may be more up to date policies than those contained within this printed resource. They can be found on the NECO Portal's Information Technology pages.

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. Material that is harassing, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory, or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate may not be sent by email or other methods of electronic communications.

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. The College does not routinely monitor the College's Systems, but does reserve the right to gain access to email in a student's account or to monitor internet use. However, group emails sent via the College established distribution lists may be monitored by college administrators.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy

Please note: technology changes frequently. There may be more up to date policies than those contained within this printed resource. They can be found on the NECO Portal's Information Technology pages.

In order to promote and support the use of technology in the classroom, NECO has decided to implement a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy. This is in lieu of requiring all students to purchase a particular device.

Just as you are required to purchase specific supplies and textbooks in order to gain a high-quality education, a mobile device will now be required to complement course instruction. Most importantly you will be required to bring an approved device to midterm and final examinations in several of your courses. You may already own a device that will meet the required specifications (see below), and several options are available.

Many of our instructors have already implemented technology in their classrooms with much success, and NECO would like to make this experience available to everyone. Instructors will vary on how and when devices will be used in their classrooms. Devices can also be used by students to access the library's collection of information resources from on-campus, in clinic, or wherever they may be.

Approved Devices

Because minimum system requirements change more frequently than this handbook is published, please refer to the NECO Student Portal for information about current device requirements. Minimum system requirements specific to Examplify are regularly updated.

Guidelines for Use

- The primary purpose of the use of personal devices at school is educational.
- The use of a personal device is not to be a distraction in any way to teachers or students. This includes attempting to setup proxies and downloading programs to bypass security.
- Students shall not record or distribute pictures or videos of students or staff without their express permission.

Questions around electronic devices for educational use should be directed to:

Emily Bouchard
Manager of Educational Technology Adoption
boucharde@neco.edu
617-587-5604

Cloud Storage Policy

GSuite & Google Drive

As cloud-based services become more widely used, faculty, students and staff are encouraged to leverage NECO's GSuite (formerly Google Apps) contract and Google Drive. Google Drive is a cloud-based file storage service provided by Google under our NECO GSuite contract. It lets you store and access your files anywhere – on the web, on your hard drive, or on the go. Change a file on the web, computer, or mobile device and the updated version is available on every device where you can access Google Drive. Your files are automatically synchronized and kept up-to-date. This service makes the secure sharing and collaboration much easier and allows for the storage and sharing of files up to 5 TB in size.

Google Drive lets you choose exactly who has access to your files with easy-to-use access controls. You can share just the one specific document or file with someone, or set up a folder in Google Drive so that specific people have access to an entire folder. How granular you get is up to you. We recommend making security easy to maintain by keeping the permissions you set up simple, set up a folder for each different group/community with whom you want to share documents.

HIPAA & FERPA Compliance

When properly administered and secured, Google Drive is HIPAA and FERPA compliant and NECO's GSuite contract is covered by a HIPAA Business Associate Agreement (BAA). The NECO Information Technology department discourages the use of third-party cloud storage platforms (i.e. Dropbox and Microsoft OneDrive) due to NECO IT's inability to manage top-level administrative settings on those platforms.

Avoiding HIPAA Violations when Storing Personal Health Information

Users who will be storing content containing personal health information (PHI) need to take extra precautions to avoid HIPAA violations. Please consult IT if you have any questions.

- Configure access controls carefully - never share documents outside our domain
- Use 2-factor authentication for access
- Use strong passwords - minimum of eight characters containing numbers and symbols
- Set the visibility of documents to private - prevents others from finding the files in searches
- Never put PHI in the titles of files - file names can sometimes be visible to prying eyes
- PHI is **not** permitted in Google Groups, Contacts or elsewhere.

Social Media Policy

NECO uses various Social Media channels to help build community within the online environment. Students are expected to uphold standards of professionalism within those communication challenges. The NECO [Social Media and Email Guidelines](#) can be found in the Marketing section of the NECO portal, which all students should review.

If students create any outside social media groups for communication, such groups will not be monitored by NECO staff for content and messaging. Choosing to participate in these groups is optional where you

can opt in and out at any point in time. NECO branding materials should not be used in these groups, and students should not imply that any group communication(s) represent NECO's views or policies.

Please be advised NECO follows federal requirements including FERPA and HIPAA to comply with confidentiality, legal privacy and property policies and laws. Please see the Social Media and Email Guidelines for further guidance on confidential or proprietary information. Individuals and groups should only share photos and content publicly of those whose explicit permission has been obtained. Media release forms can be found under Marketing on the Portal.

Students are encouraged to remain professional in any and all online communities to maintain a strong digital footprint. Your digital footprint matters as a future doctor. What you do online contributes to a portrait that is more public than you may realize. It is important that you know what kind of digital trail you are leaving and the possible impact of that trail.

Student Photo Policy

Photographs may be taken while on New England College of Optometry premises or at off College campus events. Students should be aware that by attending these events their picture may be taken and their likeness may be used by the College in the College's publications, internal promotional video boards and websites. All photographs and subsequent materials become the property of the College and there is no form of compensation for said photographic images.

Students who do not wish to have a photograph taken should advise the event planner of their wishes and should request the photographer not to take their picture; however, there is no guarantee that a picture will not be taken.

The College is not responsible for any photographs that are taken on College premises or at College events held off campus by unauthorized individuals.

Copyright Policy

The New England College of Optometry (the College) is dedicated to fostering an environment that strongly supports the research and teaching endeavors of its faculty, students, and staff. As a core principle, the College encourages its members to publish research papers, books, and other forms of scholarly communication without restriction, promoting the open exchange of knowledge within the optometric profession and the broader public.

To uphold this commitment, the College has established a [Copyright Policy](#) to provide guidance on copyright compliance for faculty, visiting faculty, staff, administrators, and students. This policy outlines best practices for the use of copyrighted materials across various formats, including but not limited to printed materials, digital media, sound recordings, and educational software. The College expects all members of its community to adhere to [United States Copyright Law – Title 17, United States Code, Sec. 101](#). The policy offers a summary of U.S. copyright law as it applies to educational settings, including but not limited to

classroom instruction, the Canvas Learning Management System, and library resources. It also provides guidelines and procedures for obtaining permission to use copyrighted works.

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 (“NECO” or the “College”) are preparing for a career in a profession which demands 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 wellbeing of all members of the college community, and to avoid any form of dishonesty.

By enrolling at NECO, all students endorse the Code of Ethics, listed below, thereby agreeing to uphold the provisions of academic and professional conduct as well as the College and NBEO exam conduct. The NBEO ethics policy can be found [here](#).

Furthermore, NECO supports the ideals of the American Optometric Association Code of Ethics as a valuable guideline for future professional practice. This can be found at <https://www.aoa.org/about-the-aoa/ethics-and-values?sso=y>.

Code of Ethics:

- Treating fellow students, faculty, patients and staff with respect,
- Maintaining honesty and integrity in the classroom, clinic, and off-campus activities,
- Keeping the welfare of the patient uppermost at all times,
- Advising the patient whenever consultation or referral seems advisable,
- Holding in professional confidence all information concerning a patient and using such data only for the benefit of the patient,
- Adhering to the National Board of Examiners in Optometry’s exam conduct, and
- Discouraging or preventing a colleague from wrongdoing.

To exemplify this standard of behavior, I will refrain from:

- Abusive behavior,
- Cheating or plagiarism,
- Falsifying clinical records,
- Organizing and/or participating in harassment or hazing,
- Unexplained absences from assignments or class,
- Unprofessional conduct related to patient care,
- Theft or destruction of the college’s, clinic’s, or a college member’s property,
- Violating any policy implemented by the College and
- Other conduct unbecoming a student at the College.

Unprofessional Conduct

A student who is alleged to have violated the Code of Ethics and/or any other College policies and procedures (other than the Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Policy) may be charged with Unprofessional Conduct. A complaint of unprofessional conduct may be made by any member of the College Community. There are two types of unprofessional conduct a student can be charged with, academic misconduct and/or professional misconduct. All parties who are involved in an unprofessional conduct complaint have the right to have a fair and impartial investigation, determination and appeal. Following the investigation, the College reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of a student at any time for good and sufficient reason(s). The College also reserves the right to place a student on leave from the institution pending an investigation.

Academic Misconduct Descriptions

Academic Misconduct is a misrepresentation of one's own academic work. It includes but is not limited to:

1. Cheating on examinations,
2. Not following 'Examination Procedures and Protocols',
3. Copying and/or providing examination questions and/or answers to others,
4. Theft of an examination or examination answers, and
5. Plagiarism.

Professional Misconduct Descriptions

Professional Misconduct includes but is not limited to the following:

1. Deliberate acts of disrespectful behavior toward faculty, staff, students, and/or patients;
2. Organizing or participating in harassment or hazing;
3. Behavior that puts the health and safety of the community, or patients at risk;
4. Failure to abide by standard clinical policies and procedures;
5. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of patient records;
6. Theft or destruction of college/clinic property and/or property belonging to members of the college's community;
7. Failure to read and respond to faculty or administrative communications when requested; and
8. other conduct unbecoming a future health professional and student at the College.

Unprofessional Conduct Proceedings

Any member of the College Community who considers a student's conduct to be unprofessional, may submit a written complaint to the Chair of the Student Affairs Committee (SAC). When applicable, a supervisor and/or course instructor should be consulted before submitting a complaint. The SAC Chair will review the complaint and form an investigative committee to look into the complaint. The investigation committee is a SAC subcommittee and usually consists of the SAC Chair, a student member and one other SAC faculty member. The SAC investigation may include, but will not be limited to:

- interviewing those who filed the complaint, the student being accused of unprofessional conduct and any witness(es)
- gathering documentary and/or other information in relation to the charges
- gathering relevant documents and/or other information which may be available to the College

The student will receive written notice from the Registrar via their NECO email of the complaint against them and informing them they have been placed on Inquiry Status pending an SAC investigation. The student will be entitled to the following:

- Written notice of the charges against them
- Name of the person(s) filing the complaint, if known
- Opportunity to review a copy of the complaint (if available)
- Time and place of their meeting with the investigation committee
- Opportunity to present their perspective on the incident(s), provide relevant questions to be asked of the complainant and witnesses (if available) through the investigation committee and present witnesses on their behalf.
- Opportunity to review the information being presented to the SAC subcommittee at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting with the SAC.
- Request a hearing advisor to provide support during the hearing processes. This advisor must be a member of the NECO community and may not be a witness. The advisor may not advocate or speak on behalf of the student during any meeting or hearing.

After the SAC subcommittee's investigation, their recommendations will be sent to the full SAC in an expeditious manner for decision. The SAC Chair, in coordination with the Office of Academic Affairs, will notify the student in writing via NECO email as to the results of the inquiry and actions, including sanctions, if any, to be taken. SAC sanctions can include but are not limited to dismissal of the charges, dismissal from the College, suspension, disciplinary probation, and/or a program of remediation.

Appeal of SAC Decision for Unprofessional Conduct

A student may submit a written appeal of the SAC's decision to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs within three (3) days of receiving the SAC outcome letter. This appeal should include the date, the reason(s) for the appeal, information or statements supporting the reason for appeal, and the student's signature. The document must be emailed directly to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and/or designee. The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and/or designee will serve as a reviewer of appeals.

An appeal will only be considered for three specific reasons:

1. If a student demonstrates that the SAC did not follow the decision process in a manner that materially impacted the outcome;
2. If the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs finds that *new* extenuating evidence exists that was not available at the time of the hearing
3. The SAC sanction is disproportionate to the violation

The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will act in an expeditious manner after receipt of a written appeal. A committee of faculty and/or administrators may be elected to assist with this decision at any point of the process including input from the SAC and/or other involved parties as appropriate.

If the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs deems that the appeal is justified, they will advise the student in writing by NECO email and may, among other actions, adjust the finding or request that the SAC committee re-open the investigation as it relates to the specific issue appealed. If the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs does not feel that the appeal is justified, the student will be advised in writing by NECO email. The decision of the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will be final.

A student who is appealing a decision will be allowed to attend didactic courses and labs and clinical assignments unless told otherwise by the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and/or their designee.

Grade Submission During Unprofessional Conduct Hearings

If the complaint of unprofessional conduct involves didactic or clinical work for credit, no final grade or credit may be awarded until the conclusion of any SAC proceedings. Pending conclusion of any investigation of unprofessional conduct, grades and/or work for credit shall be denoted as 'Incomplete' by the Registrar. If an unprofessional conduct charge is made after the final grade has been awarded, the grade may be changed due to the resolution or conclusion of any resulting discipline proceedings, notwithstanding the grade or credit having been awarded.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's work as one's own, whether intentionally or accidentally. It can occur by not citing a source or incorrectly citing it, making it appear as if information came from an author other than the one who produced or cited it. Plagiarism can also involve fabricating sources or data.

At NECO, plagiarism is considered academic misconduct and violates the Ethics Policy. Any student who commits academic misconduct will be subject to disciplinary action by the Student Affairs Committee.

When writing documents, it is important to properly credit any sources used for information. Verbatim text must be placed in quotation marks and accompanied by a citation. Paraphrased text should also be cited. Images used in documents also require a citation. If you need help with citation, visit the library or contact them by email at library@neco.edu. The library staff can assist you in using various citation managers and tools to create citations. They can also teach you where to find images that are copyright-compliant.

NECO encourages students to make use of our citation resources such as the library's citation guide (available at <https://library.neco.edu/services/citing>).

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.

Course Proprietary Policy

No instructor may be audio-taped, video-taped, or photographed without their 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.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 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 defines a disability as “any mental or physical condition that substantially limits an individual’s ability to perform one or more major life activities” as compared with the average person in the general population. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, performing manual tasks, caring for one’s self, working and learning.

The ADA also requires an institution of higher education to provide reasonable accommodation to a qualified individual with a documented disability, provided that the accommodation does not create undue hardship to the school. Reasonable accommodation is the provision of aids or modification to testing, services or a program of study, which allows access by individuals with disabilities. An undue hardship refers to any accommodation that would be unduly costly, substantially disruptive or that would fundamentally alter the nature of the program. Both matriculated and non-matriculated students may request reasonable accommodations from NECO.

The College strictly adheres to the provisions of the ADA. Applicants and students seeking to discuss educational needs related to their disability and/or to complete NECO’s process for requesting accommodations are encouraged to contact the Center for Academic and Professional Achievement (CAPA) (capa@neco.edu).

If you believe you have been discriminated against with regard to the ADA, please contact CAPA immediately.

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. Examples of such conduct include but is not limited to: whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. 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 for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment. See Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 269 § 17 for more information (<https://malegislature.gov/laws/generallaws/partiv/titlei/chapter269/section17>).

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. See Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 269 § 18 for more information (<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartIV/TitleI/Chapter269/Section18>).

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 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, gender 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 an unhealthy environment; sexual harassment creates a hostile environment: both negatively impact 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, gender 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 Associate Dean of Student Affairs. Any student who has been harassed is encouraged to tell the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, a member of the Title IX team or a staff member in CAPA. 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.

The following are resources:

- Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination
 - <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-against-discrimination>
- Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition
 - <https://www.masstpc.org/>

Sexual Harassment

Definition of Sexual Harassment

“Sexual harassment” means sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions; or
- Such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment.

The definition of sexual harassment is broad and in addition to the above examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work place environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to male or female workers may also constitute sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct which if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Unwelcome sexual advances - whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or verbal references to sexual conduct, innuendoes of a sexual nature; comments on an individual's body, comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
- Leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and
- Discussion of one's sexual activities.

Reporting a Violation of This Policy

Any student who observes or is subject to discrimination, harassment or retaliation is advised and encouraged to report the offensive incident to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, a member of the Title IX team, or a staff member in CAPA. Reports of discrimination, harassment or retaliation will receive immediate attention by College administrators.

The notice does not have to be in writing and does not need to be formal. These individuals are also available to discuss any concerns students may have and to provide information about the College's policy on harassment and our complaint and investigation process. College staff and faculty are responsible for taking necessary measures to prevent discrimination, harassment and retaliation and for informing their own supervisors, department heads, and/or the Director of Human Resources of observed or reported incidents or complaints.

Investigation

When the College is notified of an alleged violation of this policy, it will promptly investigate the allegation in a fair and expeditious manner. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. The College's investigation will include an interview with the person reporting the possible violation of this policy and with witnesses when appropriate. The College will also interview the person alleged to have committed the violation. When the College has completed its investigation it will, to the extent appropriate, inform the person reporting the violation and the person alleged to have committed the violation of the result of that investigation.

Disciplinary Action

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, then the College will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct and, where appropriate, will impose disciplinary action. Such action may range from counseling to termination of employment, and may include such other forms of disciplinary action as the College deems appropriate under the circumstances.

The College recognizes that, in some instances, an investigation of a report of discrimination, harassment or retaliation may result in a determination that no such conduct occurred and may even have been intentionally falsely made. If an investigation reveals that a student has maliciously or intentionally made a false accusation, the student will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Retaliation

Retaliation against an individual who has reported in good faith any conduct prohibited by this policy, and retaliation against individuals for participating in or cooperating in good faith with an investigation of a violation of this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the College.

Any individual found to have engaged in retaliation that is prohibited by this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Students are encouraged to report any retaliation promptly.

Additional Remedies

In addition to the College's internal investigation procedures, a student may file a formal complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or other state or local antidiscrimination agency, listed below. Using the College's internal discrimination, harassment or retaliation investigation process will likely result in a quicker resolution and does not prohibit a student from filing a complaint with outside agencies. (300 days to file a claim for each agency below).

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC")
 John F. Kennedy Federal Building
 Government Center
 4th Floor, Room 475
 Boston, MA 02203
 Telephone: (800) 669-4000
 Fax: (617) 565-3196
 TTY: (800) 669-6820

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination ("MCAD")
 Boston Office
 One Ashburton Place, Sixth Floor, Room 601
 Boston, MA 02108
 Telephone: (617) 994-6000
 Fax: (617) 994-6024 TTY: (617) 994-6196

Title IX and VAWA Protections

NECO takes sexual harassment, gender discrimination and sexual violence seriously. As a student, faculty member, staff member, or visitor you may be protected under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and/or the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013.

NECO's Title IX Policies can be found [here](#), and more information on Title IX and VAWA can be found on the [NECO Portal](#).

The decision to file a formal report or complaint about sexual violence and sexual assault is a personal choice. We're here to help you understand your options and the resources available, whether you decide to report or not. If you decide not to file a formal report, resources are still available to you for counseling,

academic support and other needs. Behavior that is covered by Title IX, Title VII, and/or VAWA includes, but is not limited to:

Gender discrimination

Inappropriate language, humor and/or jokes, or common expressions that target or are discriminatory toward a specific gender (including pregnancy or childbirth), sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, gender transition, transgender status, or gender variance.

Sexual assault

- Nonconsensual sexual contact
- Nonconsensual intercourse
- Taking sexual advantage of a consensual or nonconsensual person

Sexual harassment

- Displaying inappropriate sexual images that are offensive and unwelcome
- Unwelcome, gender-based verbal or physical conduct
- Exchanging sexual images, sexual acts or dating for grades or advancement

Domestic/Dating Violence

- Intimate partner violence, committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim.

Other behaviors

- Stalking — Unwelcome, continuous and menacing pursuit directed at a specific person electronically or in person that would cause a reasonable person to either fear for the person's safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress.
- "Sexting" — Unwelcome text messaging or sexual comments and/or images
- Cyberbullying — Use of an electronic medium to target and psychologically torment a person

The New England College of Optometry, seeks to foster an environment that supports its educational mission and is committed to providing a safe learning, and working environment for all members of the college community that is free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct and related violence. NECO does not discriminate on the basis of sex, gender, or sexual orientation in its education programs or activities and prohibits specific forms of behavior that violate Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX") and/or all other applicable state and federal laws.

What is Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) states that "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." It protects individuals from sexual, discrimination, harassment, and violence. This includes protection from being retaliated against for filing a complaint of discrimination or harassment. The law covers sex-based discrimination against students, faculty, and staff.

TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972, 20 U.S.C.A. § 1681 ET. SEQ.

NECO also complies with all obligations under the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 ("VAWA") and the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act ("Clery Act").

NECO provides a variety of confidential and non-confidential support resources, reporting options and complaint procedures to those persons who believe they have been subjected to sexual misconduct, relationship violence and stalking. NECO will work closely with those persons to provide referrals to law enforcement and support resources. The college prohibits retaliation and provides appropriate interim measures including changes to academic and co-curricular activities, transportation, dining, and employment situations as well as no contact orders. In keeping with its obligations under Title IX, the college is committed to promptly, fairly, and equitably investigating complaints, ensuring the safety of the Complainant, and providing remedies and resources. Sanctions (Students and Student Organizations) and Discipline (Employees) for violations of this policy will be administered after an investigation by the college and a finding that an individual or student organization is responsible for violating the policy. The Title IX Coordinator/deputy coordinator will oversee the initial response and assessment of reports, the investigation and resolution process.

NECO also complies with Massachusetts laws that protect individuals from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, as well as on the basis of gender identity. Questions or concerns about possible discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity under state law may also be directed to a Title IX Coordinator or deputy coordinators listed below:

Elizabeth Perreault
Director of Human Resources/Title IX Coordinator
perreaulte@neco.edu
Phone: 617-587-5787
Mobile: 857-919-0645

Mollie Forman
Compliance and Safety Manager/Deputy Title IX Coordinator
formanm@neco.edu
Phone: 617-587-5618
Mobile: 857-301-2777

Dr. Gary Chu
Vice President, Professional Affairs/Deputy Title IX Coordinator
email: chu@neco.edu
Office: 617-587-5541
Mobile: 617-834-3245

Simone Jadcak
Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging/Title IX
Confidential Recourse Provider
Email: jadcaks@neco.edu
Office: 617-587-5541
Mobile: 617-834-3245

All training provided to Title IX coordinators by Institutional Compliance Solutions
<http://icslawyer.com/community-access/community-access-higher-ed/>

You may also report concerns to the following confidential hotlines:

- NECO Confidential telephone hotline- 617-587-5753
- NECO Confidential email- voice@neco.edu

Community Resources

Boston Police	617-343-4250	If you experience sexual harassment, gender discrimination, or sexual violence, we encourage you to reach out right away – we are here to help.
Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC)	800-841-8371 (24-hour hotline)	BARCC offers free, confidential services to sexual assault survivors, their friends and families. It also operates a 24-hour confidential hotline that provides survivors of sexual assault with telephone counseling and personal support. The Center also maintains a referral network of survivor support groups (call 617-492-RAPE or 617-492-7273).
Victim Rights Law Center (VRLC)	115 Broad Street Boston, MA 02110 617-399-6720	VRLC is dedicated to serving the legal needs of sexual assault victim. The VRLC provides free legal services, legal training and technical assistance.
<u>Jane Doe Inc.</u> (Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence)	P.O. Box 960849 Boston, MA 02196 617-248-0922 info@janedoe.org	Jane Doe Inc. is an interactive service locator tool to find sexual assault and domestic violence resources in your area and a map of service providers across Massachusetts.
Casa Myrna Vasquez	451 Blue Hill Ave. Boston, 02121 617-521-0100	Case Myrna provides Boston's most comprehensive range of programs to address domestic and dating violence.
Fenway Health Violence Recovery Program (VRP)	617-927-6202	VRP provides counseling, support groups, advocacy, and referral services to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) victims of bias crime, domestic violence, sexual assault, and police misconduct.
Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence	617-338-2355 (24-hour multilingual helpline)	Multilingual helpline is staffed by trained advocates who together speak a total of 12 Asian languages and dialects including Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin, and Taiwanese), Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Nepali, Punjabi, Callers to ATASK receive crisis intervention, safety planning,

Fenway Health

LGBT Helpline (ages 25+): 617-267-9001;
Toll-Free: 888-340-4528;

emotional support, and information about domestic violence and restraining orders.

Through Fenway's Helplines, you can receive help, information, referrals, and support for a range of issues including anti-gay/lesbian harassment and violence.

Government Agencies

Individuals who believe that they have been subjected to prohibited conduct may file a formal complaint with either or all of the government agencies set forth below.

- United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
JFK Federal Building Room 475
Government Center
Boston, MA 02203
800-669-4000
- Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)
One Ashburton Place Room 601
Boston, MA 02108
617-994-6000
- United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights
5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02109
Telephone: 617-289-0111
Facsimile: 617-289-0150
TTY: 1-800-877-8339

File a Formal Complaint

NECO has designated grievance procedures designed to provide prompt and equitable methods of investigation into concerns regarding sexual harassment and other sexual misconduct.

You may file a formal complaint alleging a violation of the college policies by submitting the complaint to the NECO Title IX Coordinator at voice@neco.edu

Please remember that your formal complaint must be in writing. In addition, your formal complaint:

- Must be a document or electronic submission
- Contain your physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicates that you are the person filing the formal complaint
- Allege sexual harassment against an alleged harasser and request that the college investigate the allegation(s)

- State the name of the alleged harasser (if known) and describe with reasonable specificity the incident(s) of alleged harassment, including the date and place of such incident(s)
- Must be in your own words, and may not be authored by others, including family members, advisors, or attorneys
- Should have an attached list of any sources of information (for example, witnesses, correspondence, records, and the like) that the you believe may be relevant to the investigation. Your complaint should not be delayed if such sources of information are unknown or unavailable
- At the time of filing your formal complaint, you must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program at NECO

Get more information and support

To report a Title IX/Title VII violation, please contact our Title IX Coordinator. NECO provides an Annual Security Report that includes additional information regarding definitions of prohibited conduct, counseling and assistance resources available and the sexual violence prevention and awareness programs available to all members of the University community. The latest Annual Security Report is published on the NECO website [here](#).

Nondiscrimination Policy

New England College of Optometry does not discriminate with regard to any of its policies, practices, or activities involving students on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law.

New England College of Optometry (NECO) does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including in admission and employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX at New England College of Optometry may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, the Office of Civil Rights, or both. The New England College of Optometry Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedure may be located at: <https://www.neco.edu/consumer-information/> Reports or complaints of sex discrimination or sex-based harassment may be made in person, over email, phone, the HR Hotline 6170587-5753, or online via the College employee and student portals. Reports or complaints may or may not be anonymous.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination and Title IX:

Elizabeth Perreault
 Director of Human Resources and Title IX Coordinator
 New England College of Optometry
 424 Beacon Street
 Boston, MA 02115
 617-587-5787 | perreaulte@neco.edu

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

Boston Office
 Office of Civil Rights
 US Department of Education
 5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor

Boston, MA 02109-3921
617-289-0111
OCR.Boston@ed.gov
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>

Grievance Policy

NECO is committed to fostering a positive and supportive environment for all members of its community. To ensure the continued development and enhancement of high-quality programs and services, the College has established a fair and equitable process for addressing concerns and resolving disputes that fall outside the scope of existing policies and procedures.

The College holds regular meetings to address student concerns that impact the student experience and to provide opportunities for students to constructively work on areas of improvement. These include:

- Ongoing town halls with the College Leadership
- Student Leadership meetings:
 - Between the Student Life Committee of the Board of Trustees and College Leadership
 - Between Student Council and College Leadership
 - Between the President of the Student Council and the President of the College

The grievance policy outlines the procedures that students must follow to address concerns or disputes they may have with the institution, faculty, staff, patients, or other students. New England College of Optometry (NECO) will review and respond to student complaints that fall outside the scope of other established policies. Retaliation or penalization against students for filing a grievance is strictly prohibited.

For didactic and/or clinic concerns specifically related to grading, please see the Grade Appeal Policy in this handbook

Procedure

This process provides a structured opportunity for students to voice concerns, promote institutional accountability, and contribute to continuous improvement across the College's operations, programs, and services.

Step 1: Pre-File

Students who believe they have a valid concern are encouraged to first gather any relevant supporting documentation. They should then arrange a meeting with the individual(s) involved to address the issue directly. If the student is unable or uncomfortable doing so, they may submit a formal grievance through the appropriate institutional channels.

Step 2: Filing a Grievance

If meeting with the individual(s) involved does not resolve the issue, or if the student is unable or uncomfortable doing so, they should arrange a meeting with the Director of the Center for Academic and Professional Achievement (CAPA) to discuss the concern. If the concern involves the Director of CAPA, the

student should instead arrange a meeting with the Associate Dean of Student Affairs. This meeting should occur as soon as possible.

Step 2: Investigation

The Director of CAPA will consult with the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, as appropriate. If either individual is the subject of the complaint, they will be excluded from the investigative process. An investigative committee will be formed based on the nature of the grievance and will include a designated chair. The committee may consist of faculty, staff, and/or students, and will conduct a thorough, impartial, and timely investigation.

Step 3: Resolution

Once the investigation is complete and a determination has been made, the Chair of the Investigative Committee will notify the student of the outcome and any applicable next steps via their NECO email. Possible outcomes may include: resolution of the concern with no further action, implementation of remedial measures, referral to additional support services, or disciplinary action—depending on the nature of the findings and as deemed appropriate.

Appeal of Grievance Resolution

A student may appeal the Investigative Committee's decision by submitting written documentation of their concern and arranging a meeting with the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs within three (3) business days of being informed of the resolution.

The appeal letter must include:

- The date of submission
- The reason(s) for the appeal
- The student's signature

This document must be emailed directly to the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs and their designee. Together, they will serve as reviewers of the appeal and may involve the appropriate faculty and administrators to evaluate the matter and determine next steps.

The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will act in an expeditious manner after receipt of a written appeal. A committee of faculty and/or administrators may be elected to assist with this decision at any point of the process including input from other involved parties as appropriate.

The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs will determine whether the appeal is justified and will notify the student in writing via their NECO email. If the appeal is upheld, the notification will include the student's status, any applicable curriculum changes, and/or conditions required for continued enrollment. The decision of the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs is final.

Institutional Record of Student Complaints

In compliance with federal regulations and accrediting bodies, a Student Complaint Log is maintained in the office of the Associate Dean of Student Affairs. Any student submitting a complaint in writing to the attention

of the Office of the President, Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs, or Associate Dean of Student Affairs will have their complaint entered into this log and preserved for review by future accrediting teams.

In order to have a complaint entered into the Student Complaint Log, the student must complete the following:

1. The complaint must be addressed to the Office of the President, Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs, or Associate Dean of Student Affairs.
2. The complaint must be signed by the student.

The Student Complaint Log will include the date of the complaint, the nature of the complaint, steps taken to resolve the complaint, and the final decision to resolve the complaint, including any referral to outside agencies.

In order to maintain privacy, any request to view the log by accrediting bodies will require that the names contained in the log complaints will be masked prior to inspection by the accrediting body. No actual documents will be shared with the accrediting body without the express permission of the complainant.

The Associate Dean of Student Affairs reserves the right to record a complaint received by other means; however, NECO is only required to act upon complaints submitted through the formal procedure above.

Smoke-Free Environment

NECO is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all members of the community. Smoking and Vaping, including combustible tobacco and marijuana products such as cigarettes, cigars, and pipes, and e-devices such as Juul, Bo and other electronic marijuana or nicotine delivery systems by students, faculty, staff, guests, visitors, and contractors is strictly prohibited on all NECO property.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy

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

Although some state laws permit the use of medical and recreational marijuana, NECO must comply with federal laws regarding the use of controlled substances. Federal law prohibits marijuana use, possession, distribution, and/or cultivation at educational institutions. Such activity is therefore not allowed in any on any NECO property, nor is it allowed at any NECO-sponsored event or activity off campus or any student organization event activity.

The odor of marijuana or any other prohibited substance may suffice to constitute a violation of the below policy. All student prescription medication should be stored in its original, labeled container and kept in a secure location. Any alleged violation of the controlled substances/drugs policy will result in the immediate disposal and/or confiscation of substances and the confiscation of any prohibited devices, in addition to other appropriate sanctions.

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 age documentation before serving alcohol.

Functions planned for students by employees or students at which alcohol will be served must be pre-approved by the Dean of Academic Affairs at least one month before event. See On-Campus Event Alcohol Policy for more information.

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.

On-Campus Event Alcohol Policy

Alcohol will only be approved for consumption or distribution at signature, institutionally-sponsored events that promote NECO-wide community building, or enhance NECO's standing in the local or optometric community.

The distribution or consumption of alcohol on campus is prohibited unless:

- At an event approved by NECO as involving alcohol;
- Where required by law or NECO policy an alcohol permit is procured from the city, or served by a licensed caterer/bartending service; and
- Following the guidelines NECO sets.

The full policy and process can be found on the Room Reservations page in the Operations section of the NECO portal.

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 the College and affect the student's eligibility for financial aid. Please see www.FAFSA.gov for further information.

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 in possession of alcohol, who is not accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, may be fined not more than \$50 for the first offense and not more than \$150 for a second or subsequent offense. The above minor may also be arrested without a warrant by a police officer and if convicted, will have their driver's license suspended for a period of 90 days.

A person who falsifies age documentation or misrepresents their age for the purpose of possessing or consuming alcohol is subject to a fine of \$300.

Anyone delivering or serving alcohol to a person under 21, or for the use by someone under 21, is subject to a fine of up to \$2,000 or imprisonment for not more than one year or both.

The fine for operating a motor vehicle while drinking an alcoholic beverage may result in a fine of not less than \$500 nor more than \$5,000 or by imprisonment for not more than two and one-half years, or both such fine and imprisonment.

A person 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 \$1000, 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.

A person suspected of public intoxication 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
- ulcers
- liver & stomach cancer
- bone degeneration
- increased heart rate
- personality disorders
- blackouts
- alcoholism
- heart disease

Illicit Drug Use

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

Counseling and Treatment Services

All students are required to purchase or have an equivalent health insurance plan. Mental health services are considered essential health benefits and should include behavioral health treatment, behavioral health inpatient services, and substance abuse treatment. Please visit the Center for Academic and Professional Achievement to discuss insurance plans purchased through the school and local agencies providing behavioral health treatment options. For emergency service, call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.

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.

- National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence: provides education, information, help, and hope to the public. It advocates prevention, intervention, and treatment through a nationwide network.
- Drug & Alcohol Hotline - (800) 327-5050
- Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education - Find a treatment center, learn how to get help and information for family and friends.
- High Point - (800) 233-4478
- ADCare Recovery - (617) 227-2622

Weapons on Campus

NECO prohibits the use, possession, storage, and sale of weapons and ammunition—including replicas—on NECO property, in NECO-owned vehicles, and at NECO-sponsored events, except by sworn law enforcement officers. For the purpose of this policy, weapons include:

- All items defined by MGL c.269 § 10 and Boston Municipal Code, Chapter 16, Section 45.1 as dangerous weapons, plus additions listed in this policy;
- Flammable, explosive, or corrosive materials not inventoried and properly stored for research or academic use;
- Additional items not explicated in this policy if determined to be an emergent danger to the NECO community.

Prohibited Items

Examples of prohibited items include, but are not limited to:

- Firearms, whether loaded or unloaded, and regardless of whether the owner carries a firearms permit;
- BB/pellet guns, flare guns, and replica guns;
- Ammunition, even in the absence of a firearm;
- Knives, including switchblades, with blades over 2.5 inches in length (unless used for college-sponsored culinary or maintenance activities);
- Double edged or hunting knives;
- Swords or axes;
- Martial arts-style weapons like nun-chucks and shuriken;
- Metallic knuckles;
- Fireworks and other explosives, including sparklers;
- Tasers and other electrical weapons.

Any item, including innocent items, when used in a dangerous fashion such as an assault and battery, may be considered a dangerous weapon under this policy.

Self-Defense Spray

Mace, OC spray, or pepper spray carried for self-defense may not be discharged on NECO property. However, it may be brought on campus if:

- It is kept secured on the owner's person or in a location controlled by the owner (e.g. personal backpack, assigned locker, etc.);
- The owner is over 18 years old;
- The owner is not prohibited from carrying self-defense spray by state or federal law.

Disciplinary Action

Prohibited items may be confiscated, and violators may be subject to criminal prosecution and/or referral for disciplinary action under this Handbook, up to and including expulsion.

Off-Campus Disturbances

NECO's jurisdiction and discipline shall be limited to conduct that adversely affects the NECO community or the pursuit of its objectives. NECO may choose to review or initiate the disciplinary process against a student:

- If a student is charged with an off-campus conduct violation of federal, state, or local laws; or
- When a student's behavior off-campus interferes with the rights of others, reflects adversely on NECO, or results in a criminal charge.

The circumstances of the case shall be reviewed by the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs to determine whether the student may be subject to further disciplinary action and/or determine the status of the student.

Students may be accountable to both civil and criminal authorities, in addition to NECO, for acts that constitute violations of law or any College policy. Although NECO may choose to withhold adjudication pending further investigation or resolution of civil or criminal charges, disciplinary action at NECO will normally proceed, concurrently with these civil or criminal proceedings and will not be subject to challenge on the grounds that civil or criminal charges involving the same incident have been dismissed or reduced. When a student has been charged by a civil authority for violation of law, NECO will neither request nor agree to special consideration for the student solely because of their status as a student.

CAMPUS SECURITY POLICIES

Solicitation Policy

The College maintains relationships with many corporations in the health care field. Newly instituted healthcare industry guidelines and recent Commonwealth of Massachusetts laws have strict rules defining what types of sponsorship can be permitted between health care corporations and providers, students, and teaching institutions. There are penalties to both the corporation and the benefiting individual or institution for violating these laws.

Companies are not permitted to solicit on college property unless authorized by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs or the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs. The College does not provide lists of students, NECO email addresses, or residence addresses to external corporate groups. Student groups requesting direct corporate support must first notify the Development Office. Travel to meetings that are paid or reimbursed by a corporation requires prior approval from the Office of Academic Affairs.

Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act of 2000

The federal Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act requires institutions of higher education to issue a statement advising the campus community where state law enforcement agency information concerning registered sex offenders may be obtained. The act also requires registered sex offenders to provide to appropriate state officials notice of each institution of higher education in that state at which the offender is employed, carries on a vocation, volunteers services, or is a student.

You can obtain information on registered sex offenders living and working in the immediate area by contacting your local police department. General information about the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Sex Offender Registry Board can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/sex-offender-registry-board>, or by calling 978-740-6400.

Clery Act Campus Crime Reporting

New England College of Optometry's Annual Security Report, in compliance with the Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act, is released by October 1st of each year.

The report includes the College's policies concerning campus safety and security, such as alcohol and drug use, crime prevention, the reporting of crimes, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and other matters.

The College's Annual Security Report also includes crime statistics for the previous three years on campus, on property owned or controlled by the College, and on public property within, or immediately adjacent to and accessible from, the campus. The College maintains crime statistics for its main campus, as well as two NECO Center for Eye Care clinics under lease or other occupancy arrangements. Since the College does not maintain residence halls on or off campus, the statistics should not be relied upon for any reportable events related to areas where students might reside.

To access the report please visit <https://www.neco.edu/consumer-information/>, or the Facilities page of the Portal. To request a printed version, email facilities@neco.edu.

Reporting Incidents

Everyone is responsible for keeping NECO a safe and secure environment. If a health or safety related incident occurs, an incident report (available on the Portal) should be completed within 24 hours. If you aren't sure whether what occurred is a reportable incident, submit the form anyway.

If you need immediate help or want guidance before submitting an incident report, we strongly encourage you to contact a Campus Security Authority (CSA). CSA's are College officials specially trained in responding to and properly documenting crimes and safety incidents. See the Operations page of the Portal for the current list of CSAs.

If a CSA learns of a crime committed on or adjacent to campus, they are obligated to report it; however, if anonymity is requested, they are not required to report the identity of the survivor, unless required by other

state or federal laws. NECO strongly encourages full reporting, especially in cases where the community may be at risk.

See the section on "Title IX" for information on reporting sexual or gender-based misconduct.

Emergency Action Plan

NECO maintains an Emergency Action Plan (EAP), which contains information vital to the response phase of emergency management. Students receive training on emergency procedures during first year orientation, with additional training and messaging as needed.

In any emergency requiring assistance from local fire, police, or medical response teams, once you have ensured your personal safety, contacting 911 is the first priority. Next make sure you or someone nearby informs Operations that 911 has been called.

If an evacuation is required, all students should follow instructions from Evacuation Officers and vacate the property immediately. Once outside, immediately move away from the building to a designated muster point, and do not leave the area until you have been accounted for, or reenter the building until given explicit permission from the designated Fire Marshall.

Every emergency is different, and circumstances can change quickly. Students should follow the EAP to the best of their ability, while remaining flexible and prepared to change course if needed. In all emergency situations, students should be alert to their surroundings and follow instructions from College officials.

For detailed emergency procedures, please refer to the EAP posted on the Operations page of the Portal. Email facilities@neco.edu with any questions.