



# New England College of Optometry



STUDENT HANDBOOK 2017-18

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# Closing or Delay usually due to Inclement Weather

## Beacon Street Campus:

Notices of academic program closure or delay usually due to inclement weather will be:

- listed on the following Boston local television news channels and their websites: WBZ (ch. 4), WCVB (ch. 5), WHDH (ch. 7), WFXT (ch. 25), and NECN (ch. 13);
- indicated on the College website with a dated notation of “open” or “closed”;
- sent to all College student emails with a dated notation of “open” or “closed”;
- recorded as a voice message on the College’s main telephone number: 617-266-2030.

## Clinical Sites:

A student assigned to **clinic** is expected to contact his/her 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 his/her screening cancelled if the NECO Beacon Street Campus is closed regardless of the status of the screening site.

A student assigned to an **observation** will have his/her observation cancelled if the NECO Beacon Street Campus is closed. The student is expected to contact his/her preceptor to cancel the observation for that day and reschedule his/her observation at the earliest available time.



## Quick Reference & General Information

**Academic Calendar:** The Office of Academic Affairs is responsible for annually coordinating and publishing the academic year calendar. The calendar can be found on the College intranet. All students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with important academic dates. Final year students taking clinical rotations follow the calendar at their clinical site.

**Access to Beacon Street Campus:** Your NECO student photo ID card is required to enter the buildings at all times and is to be worn while in the buildings. Failure to bring the student photo ID card may result in access being denied. You are required to wear your student photo ID card while you are on the premises. If you forget your ID, you must go to the Front Office to sign in and obtain a temporary guest pass which is to be worn while you are in the building. Further information can be found under “ID Usage and Beacon Street Campus Access”.

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

**Change of Address or Name:** Students are responsible for notifying the Registrar’s Office immediately in writing (no emails, faxes or telephone calls) of any address, telephone and/or name changes. Student Address Forms are available in the Registrar’s Office. Students should contact the Registrar’s Office with regard to a name change as this will require appropriate legal documentation to accompany the request.

**Class Schedules:** The Office of Academic Affairs creates and distributes class schedules. The schedules are posted on the College intranet.

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

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

**Faxes/Scans:** Faxing and/or scanning related to College/Clinic business can be done in the Office of Student Services.

**Grade Reports:** Grades are ordinarily mailed out to the student’s local address usually within 3-4 weeks after the term ends. Students wanting their grade reports to go to another address must bring a pre-addressed business envelope (aka: #10) to the Registrar’s Office a week before finals end.

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

**Hours of Operation at Beacon Street Campus:** The buildings are open Monday through Friday from 6 AM to 10 PM and Saturday through Sunday from 8 AM to 4 PM. Please also see “Access to Beacon Street Campus” with regard to method of entry allowed.

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

**Immigration Information:** Foreign students should direct their questions to Ms. Glenda Underwood in the Registrar's Office at 617-587-5581 or email at [underwoodg@neco.edu](mailto:underwoodg@neco.edu). An appointment may be needed to clarify the disposition of the information or to process documents.

**Immunization Documents for Students:** If you need a copy of your immunization records, want further information (See 'Immunization Requirements' in the Student Handbook) or have questions, please contact the Office of Student Services at 617-587-5593.

**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.

**I-20 Validation:** Foreign students must have their I-20 forms signed every year in order to re-enter the United States. Students need to come to the Registrar's Office at the beginning of the second week of classes in the Fall Term to schedule an appointment. An appointment sheet will be available for students to sign up for a meeting that does not conflict with their schedule.

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

**MBTA (T) Passes:** Discounted passes may be purchased during the first week in September and the first week in January. Please contact the Office of Student Services at 617-587-5593 for further information and exact deadlines. You may also purchase passes at the Back Bay and Government Center train stations. For more public transportation information, call the T at 617-222-5000 or go to their website: [www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com).

**Midterm and Final Exam Schedules:** Exam schedules are created and distributed via email by the Office of Academic Affairs. The schedules are also posted outside the Academic Affairs Office and can be found on the College intranet.

**National Board of Examiners in Optometry:** Information on licensing exams can be found at the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) site, [www.optometry.org](http://www.optometry.org). This is also where you may order board exam scores to be sent to state licensing offices. The telephone number is 800-969-3926.

**Notary Public:** Ruth Joress ([joressr@neco.edu](mailto:joressr@neco.edu)) in the Business Office is a notary public at the College. Please email her to make an appointment. Do not sign any forms until you are told to do so by the notary.

**On Campus Work-Study, Loans and Scholarships:** On campus work-study jobs are posted on the Financial Aid Office's webpage, [www.neco.edu/admissions/financial-aid](http://www.neco.edu/admissions/financial-aid), as are timesheets and other required forms. Call Ms. Joann Reed if you have any questions: 617-587-5649 or email [reedj@neco.edu](mailto:reedj@neco.edu). Information about financial aid in general, scholarships, loans, applications, and the Emergency Loan can also be found at the above website or in the Financial Aid Office.

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

**Optometry Licensing Information:** 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 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 [www.arbo.org/dir\\_of\\_boards.php](http://www.arbo.org/dir_of_boards.php).

In addition, the NBEO site contains a directory of board addresses, telephone numbers and web sites at [http://www.optometry.org/state\\_board.cfm](http://www.optometry.org/state_board.cfm).

**Prints/Copies:** Printers and copiers are located in the Library and the Kamens Room. Students have an annual allotment of 1,000 prints/copies per academic year.

Students wanting to print over their annual allotment of 1,000 prints/copies per year can add funds to their account at any time using PayPal. This can be done from either a computer or smartphone. The Printing Policy and Uniflow Printing Instructions are provided on the NECO Portal under the IT section. Please direct all inquiries to the IT Department at [helpdesk@neco.edu](mailto:helpdesk@neco.edu) or 617-587-5591.

Account balance at the end of each academic year will be rolled over into the next academic year allotment. Any credits remaining upon graduation will be forfeited.

**Room Reservation:** To reserve a room for a student related meeting/function, please see Jessica Bonitatibus in the Student Services Office.

**Servery:** The servery is located in the lower level of the College and is open when classes are in session. The hours of operation are M-F 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM. The menu and hours of operation are subject to change.

**Student Parking:** Parking for students is not available during normal business hours. After hours M-F 5PM-10PM and on weekends 8AM-4PM students may park where space is available. All vehicles will be required to have a guest pass while parked in the lot. Guest passes are available at the Front Office.

**Student Photo Identification Card:** All students are issued a photo ID card free of charge upon matriculation. The student photo ID card is used to gain entrance to the College and as the College's library card. Students are required to use it to gain entrance to the College and to wear it at all times while in the College's buildings. Loss of the photo ID card must be reported immediately to the Front Office. This office will also issue a new photo ID card.

**Textbooks:** The Library creates and distributes the course textbook listing which is posted on the College intranet.

**Transcripts:** Students order NECO transcripts through the Registrar's Office. The Transcript Policy and printable forms are available on the NECO Portal. Students receive five free transcripts within an academic year. The Registrar's Office has a three to five working day turnaround time for all requests.

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



**Usage of Perfumes and Colognes:** Please be aware that some individuals have allergic reactions to perfumes and colognes. Please minimize your use.

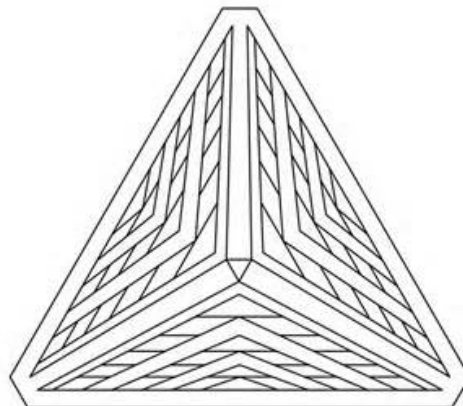
**Vending Machines:** Beverage and snack machines are located in the lower level near the Campus Store.

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

## Office/Department Telephone Guide

<u>Office/Department</u>	<u>Telephone #</u>	
Academic Affairs Office	617-587-5587	
Admissions Office	617-587-5580	
Bioscience Department	617-587-5590	
Business Office	617-587-5583	(notary public)
Campus Store	617-587-5600	
Clinical Education Office	617-587-5566	
College Main Number	617-266-2030*	(Beacon Street Campus)
Financial Aid Office	617-587-5582	
Front Office	617-266-2030 ext 0	(Reception, Lost and Found, Mail)
Human Resources Office	617-587-5599	
Information Technology Office	617-587-5591	
Library	617-587-5589	
NECO Center for Eye Care Commonwealth	617-262-2020*	
NECO Center for Eye Care Roslindale	617-553-2108	(reception)
President's Office	617-587-5584	
Primary Care Department	617-587-5594	
Registrar's Office	617-587-5581	
Specialty & Advanced Care Office	617-587-5595	
Student Services Office	617-587-5593	(room scheduling for students)
Vision Science Department	617-587-5588	

\*All parties at these locations can be reached by calling the appropriate number and accessing the automated directory for the individual, department or office that you want.



## The NECO Library

Located on the garden-level of the 424 Beacon Street campus, the NECO Library offers a full range of information services. A member of Fenway Libraries Online, a local library consortium, the library shares its catalog with nine other local special and academic libraries. These libraries are open to current NECO students, and students are able to borrow many materials from most of the other FLO libraries. A NECO ID is needed to visit the other libraries, borrow books or request articles.

Open 70+ hours a week, the library's service desk circulates physical reserve materials in support of the current term course offerings (additionally, the library provides access to online reserve materials, accessible via the College's learning management system). These varied materials include books, articles, notes, lens sets, skulls and calculators, among other items. From this desk, library staff members support users in locating relevant materials and learning research techniques. The library also loans iPad Minis for use on campus, as well as chargers, adapters, and peripherals for various devices. For more details regarding the library's borrowing policies, please visit <http://www.neco.edu/library/policies/borrowing-materials>.

Students are registered in the library's system when they arrive for orientation. A NECO ID card with a 14-digit barcode sticker on the back is required both for borrowing physical materials and for accessing online resources from off campus. If at any point a student's ID card is replaced, it is necessary to stop by the service desk to receive a replacement barcode sticker as well.

The library's website, [www.neco.edu/library](http://www.neco.edu/library), is a 24/7 gateway to the library's vast collections. From this site you can search the library's online and print holdings, including databases, scholarly articles, eBooks, print journals and print books. You can also easily request materials that the library does not own. The library regularly announces new services and resources on this site as well.

Contact information:

[www.neco.edu/library](http://www.neco.edu/library)

617-587-5589

[library@neco.edu](mailto:library@neco.edu)

[www.flo.org](http://www.flo.org)

# ***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

American Optometric Association PAC

American Optometric Student Association

Beta Sigma Kappa

Canadian Association of Optometry Students (CAOS)

College of Optometrists in Vision Development

Contact Lens Society

La Vista

Lions Club

Massachusetts Society of Optometrists

National Optometric Student Association

Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation Association

Performance Vision Club

Public Health Club

Private Practice Club

Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity

Descriptions can be reviewed at <http://www.neco.edu/student-life/student-organizations>.

If you have further questions, please contact Jessica Bonitatibus, Coordinator of Student Services, at [bonitatibusj@neco.edu](mailto:bonitatibusj@neco.edu).

## Student Council

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

The Student Council positions are open to any student who meets the GPA requirements (See 'GPA Requirement to Hold Student Office/Committee Member' section) and are elected by the entire student body at the end of the year.

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

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

Student Council works toward making change to Optometric legislation and organizes activities such as the NECO Olympics, the Halloween party, the Eye Ball, and the yearbook. At the fall budget meeting, the Executive Council members allocate funds from student activity fees to the various 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. One of the secretaries 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 rights to speak or to vote, unless otherwise invited.

If you have any questions concerning the Student Council, contact Barbara McGinley.

# ***EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES***

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

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

## **Degree Requirements**

Students are required to apply to the Registrar's Office for the award of any degree at the College.

Students eligible for a first professional degree (OD), graduate degree (MS) or a specially devised curriculum for an undergraduate optometry degree should contact the Registrar's Office six months in advance of when they are expected to complete their program to complete a Diploma Application if they have not received prior notification from the Registrar's Office.

A student who has not earned a bachelor's degree prior to enrolling in the four-year first professional 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 he/she has not received a bachelor's degree and is requesting to be evaluated for eligibility to receive the College's bachelor's degree. Because a student is not eligible for the bachelor's degree after graduation from the College, any deficiencies in the undergraduate course requirements must be completed prior to receipt of the Doctor of Optometry degree.

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

1. Hold no prior bachelor's degree;
2. Have successfully completed (C or above) at least twelve semester hours of Social Science and twelve 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.

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

- **Curriculum Requirements** – All didactic and clinical requirements for the degree must have been completed successfully.
- **Academic Requirements** – A minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.000 with no outstanding grades of Failure, Remedial, or Incomplete is required in a first professional program. For a graduate program a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.000 is required with no outstanding grades of Failure or Incomplete. For a joint first professional and graduate program a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.000 in the graduate program and a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.750 in the first professional program is required with no outstanding grades of Failure or Incomplete in either program. (The cumulative GPA is not a rounded number. Example: a cumulative GPA of 1.999 does not qualify a student in a first professional program to graduate.)

- **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 and Campus Store, library charges and/or other fees.
- **Financial Aid** – A student who has received financial aid must have an exit interview with a member of the Financial Aid Office.

## Student Status Policies and Procedures

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

All grades, including Incomplete, In Progress, and Remedial are considered for purposes of determining academic standing and academic progress. Academic standing and academic progress will only be calculated once per term following the grade submission deadline.

### Academic Standing

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

### Academic Progress

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

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

- Academic Warning,
- Academic Probation,
- Clinical Probation,
- Disciplinary Probation,
- Modified Status,
- Inquiry Status.

### Academic Distinction

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

### **Academic Warning**

A student in a first professional program will be placed on academic warning when his/her cumulative GPA falls within the range of 2.000 – 2.200. The student will receive a written notice, which may be transmitted via the student's NECO email from the Registrar when he/she is placed on academic warning for the first time and at the end of the academic year if the student remains on academic warning.

### **Resolution of Academic Warning**

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

### **Academic Probation**

A student in a first professional program only will be placed on academic probation for one or more of the following:

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

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

- student's cumulative grade point average is below the minimum grade point average of 3.000 required for advancement to the next year or graduation,
- student's term grade point average is 1.600 or below in any one term,
- student has earned two grades of "F" in one term.

A student in the combined OD/MS program will be placed on academic probation for one or more of the following:

- student's MS cumulative grade point average is below the minimum grade point average of 3.000 required for advancement to the next year or graduation,
- student's OD cumulative grade point average is below the minimum grade point average of 2.750 required for advancement to the next year or graduation,
- student's term grade point average is 1.600 or below in any one term for either program,
- student has earned two grades of "F" in one term for either program.

A student in the combined OD/PhD program will be placed on academic probation for one or more of the following:

- student's OD cumulative grade point average is below the minimum grade point average of 2.750 required for advancement to the next year or graduation,
- student's term grade point average is 1.600 or below in any one term,
- student has earned two grades of "F" in one term.

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

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

### **Resolution of Academic Probation**

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

Academic probation in a graduate program will be resolved when the student's cumulative GPA is 3.000 or above and any requirements set by the Director of the Graduate Program, the SAC and/or the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs has been met.

Academic probation in the OD/MS program will be resolved when the student's OD cumulative GPA is 2.750 or above and MS cumulative GPA is 3.000 or above and any requirements set by the Director of the Graduate Program, the SAC and/or Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs has been met.

Academic probation in the OD/PhD program will be resolved when the student's OD cumulative GPA is 2.750 or above and any requirements set by the Director of the Graduate Program, the SAC and/or Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs has been met.

### **Clinical Probation**

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

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

The student will receive a written notice, which may be transmitted via the student's NECO email, from the Registrar each time he/she meets a requirement to be placed on clinical probation.

However, this may not be the final action as any student placed on clinical probation may be required to meet with the SAC.

### **Resolution of Clinical Probation**

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

### **Disciplinary Probation**

A student will be placed on disciplinary probation if he/she is found in violation of any policies under 'Student Rights and Responsibilities'. A letter will be placed in the student's file. If the student is involved in subsequent violations, he/she will be eligible for dismissal and will meet with the Student Affairs Committee.

### **Resolution of Disciplinary Probation**

Disciplinary probation will be resolved if the student meets the conditions set forth in his/her retention letter from the Student Affairs or other appropriate committee. The appropriate committee will determine on an individual basis if the letter(s) with regard to disciplinary probation will remain in the student's file permanently and if 'Disciplinary Probation' or other notation will be transcribed on the student's transcript.



### **Modified Status**

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

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

### **Student Request for Modified Program**

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

### **Inquiry Status**

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

## **Requirements for Student Advancement**

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

For a professional program:

- 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.

For a graduate program:

- 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 his/her 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.

For OD/MS program:

- 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 his/her 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.

For OD/PhD program:

- A student must have at least a 2.750 OD cumulative GPA at the end of each academic year.
- A student must meet all program requirements, both OD and PhD, for that year which is confirmed by his/her PhD graduate advisor to the NECO Director of Graduate Studies.
- 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 in the OD program.

## **Satisfactory Academic Standing/Progress and Financial Aid Eligibility**

A student will be placed on Financial Aid Warning after two consecutive terms on Academic and/or Clinical Probation. During the Financial Aid Warning term a student will receive federal financial aid for which he or she is otherwise eligible. If the Academic or Clinical Probation is not resolved at the end of the Financial Aid Warning term, the student will be required to meet with the Student Affairs Committee. If allowed to continue in the program, he/she will be placed on Financial Aid Probation and is eligible for one more term of federal financial aid. At the end of the Financial Aid Probation term, the student, who has not been removed from Academic and/or Clinical Probation and is allowed to continue in the program, will no longer be eligible for federal financial assistance.

Once Academic and/or Clinical Probation is resolved or the specified modified program requirements are met, the Financial Aid Warning or Probation is lifted. The student may regain eligibility for federal financial aid after all issues are resolved.

Please refer to the Financial Aid Handbook for further details.

## **Dismissal Policies and Procedures**

### **Academic Dismissal**

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

- when the term GPA is 1.60 or below,
- when the cumulative GPA is below 2.000,
- following two consecutive terms on academic probation,
- when a grade of “F” is earned in a course,
- when a grade of “F” is earned in a course retaken to resolve a grade of “F”,
- when the requirements for advancement are not met,
- or when additional modified status requirements have not been met.

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

- when the term GPA is 1.60 or below,
- when the cumulative GPA is less than 3.000,
- following two consecutive terms on academic probation (not including an intervening summer session),
- when missing MS program requirements by their expected due dates,
- when requirements for advancement are not met,
- or when additional modified status requirements have not been met.

A student in the combined OD/MS degree program may be subject to dismissal from either or both programs:

- when the term GPA is 1.60 or below for either program,
- when a grade of “F” is earned in a course,
- when a grade of “F” is earned in a course retaken to resolve a grade of “F”,
- when the OD cumulative GPA is less than 2.750,
- when the MS cumulative GPA is less than 3.000,
- following two consecutive terms on academic probation (not including an intervening summer session),
- when missing MS program requirements by their expected due dates,
- when requirements for advancement are not met,
- or when additional modified status requirements have not been met.

A student in the combined OD/PhD degree program may be subject to dismissal from either or both programs:

- when the term GPA is 1.60 or below for the OD program,
- when two grades of “F” are earned in the same term,
- when the OD cumulative GPA is less than 2.750,
- following two consecutive terms on academic probation (not including an intervening summer session),
- when missing PhD program requirements by their expected due dates,
- when requirements for advancement are not met,
- or when additional modified status requirements have not been met.

### **Clinical Dismissal**

A student in a first professional, combined OD/MS or combined OD/PhD degree program may be subject to dismissal:

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

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

## **Dismissal Hearing Policy and Procedure**

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

As part of the review, the SAC will consider the student's academic record, clinical record, Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) recommendation, if applicable, and all pertinent information provided by the student such as:

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

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

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

### **Appeal of Dismissal**

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

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

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

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

## Consequences of Dismissal

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

- an interview with the Associate Dean of Students,
- an exit interview with a member of the Financial Aid Office,
- an exit interview with a member of the Business Office to determine the student's unpaid balance.

And the following will occur:

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

## Grading Policies and Procedures

### Academic Grading

#### Explanation of Grades

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

#### Grade of I (Incomplete)

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

### **Resolution of I Grade**

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

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

A student in the MS program who has an incomplete in the final course of the MS program only will 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 Students 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 probation for the term or in the student being eligible for dismissal.

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

A student who has earned a grade of “F” must make arrangements for resolving this grade with the instructor of record. If the instructor has specified on the grade sheet which resolution option will be allowed, this will be indicated in the failure letter to the student.

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

### **Resolution of F Grade**

A grade of “F” may be resolved by repeating the entire course at the next regularly scheduled course offering OR by taking a special examination within 5 weeks following the term in which the grade of “F” was earned. The instructor of record will have the right to decide which of these options is to be chosen for each student.

#### Repeat Course to resolve an “F”

A student, who needs to repeat the course to make up the “F” grade, will be referred to the SAC for a dismissal hearing.

When a student repeats the course in which an “F” was earned, both grades will be transcribed on the student’s transcript and will be used for GPA calculation.

In extenuating circumstances, a reasonably equivalent course may be allowed with the approval of the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs or designee.

#### Retake a Special Examination to resolve an “F”

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

If taking a special examination does not satisfactorily resolve the grade of “F”, the student will be required to meet with the SAC as described above in Repeat Course to resolve an “F”.

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

A student may audit a course with the recommendation of 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.

### **Exemption from Courses**

A student may be exempted from a course only with the approval of the instructor of record. If the instructor finds that the student has sufficient educational background and successfully passes a test administered by the instructor, the student may be exempted from the course. If the student is granted an exemption, the course instructor must notify the Registrar and student in writing by the end of the third week of the beginning of the course 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.

### **Repeat of a Course**

A student may only repeat a course when an instructor requires the student to resolve a grade of “F”, when required by the Student Affairs Committee, or when placed in a modified program. Both grades will be transcribed on the student’s transcript and will be used for the GPA calculation.

A student may not elect to repeat a course to improve academic performance and GPA.

If placed in a modified program, the SAC or Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs may decide to not have the grade of the first course count toward the GPA calculation. This must be in writing as part of the modified program.

### **Withdrawal from Courses**

A student is not normally allowed to withdraw (drop) 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.

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

## Clinical Grading

### Explanation of Grades

H =	Honors	(Outstanding)
P =	Pass	(Performing at expected levels)
RM =	Remedial	(Performing below expected levels)
RMP =	Remedial to Pass	(Remedial, passed next clinical course)
RMF =	Remedial to Fail	(Remedial, did not pass next clinical course)
F =	Failure	(Inadequate)
I =	Incomplete	(Adequate; requirements not completed)
AU =	Audit	
W =	Withdrawal	
NC =	No Credit	(No credit or grade given)
IP/WIP =	In Progress	

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

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

### Grade of F (Failure)

A student who earns a grade of "F" in a clinical course involving patient care will be required to meet with the SAC for a dismissal hearing. The student is required to contact the Associate Dean of Students with regard to his/her performance. The Associate Dean of Students will review all students receiving a Failure grade with regard to the program of remediation, circumstances and specific needs.

### Resolution of F Grade

The resolution of an "F" grade depends on the outcome of the SAC dismissal hearing. If a student is allowed to continue, the student will be placed on modified status and is required to contact the Associate Dean of Students to discuss his/her program of remediation .

Before further advancement in the clinical program is allowed, the student will have to satisfactorily complete a course of remediation and achieve a grade of "P" or above in the repeated clinical course. Upon completion of the remedial course work and repeated clinical course, the student will be reviewed by the SAC and further action will be taken by the SAC if necessary.

### Grade of RM (Remedial)

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

### Resolution of RM Grade

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



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

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

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

A clinical course can only be taken for a grade of audit if required as part of a student’s modified degree program due to his/her modified or probationary status. A student is required to meet the same attendance standards as a student taking the course for credit. The above attendance and satisfactory progress must be verified by the clinical preceptor in order for the course to be transcribed.

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

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

### **Resolution of I Grade**

A student receiving a grade of Incomplete is required to contact the Instructor of Record of Clinical Programs or his/her 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 3 weeks following the term in which the Incomplete was given. The student and the Instructor of Record of Clinical Programs 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 of Record of Clinical Programs may request an extension by contacting the Registrar before the deadline has passed.

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

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

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

## **Exemption from Clinical Courses**

There is no exemption from or substitutions for clinical courses involving patient care. 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. The Office of Clinical Education publishes a list of clinical affiliates annually.

## **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 3 weeks before the last day of the student's present clinical assignment or 3 weeks before the first day of the student's next clinical assignment. Permission to withdraw from a clinical course will only be given by the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs 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 and the Office of Clinical Education.

If a student withdraws from a clinical course without permission by not attending clinic 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.

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

## **Submitting Grades**

Final grades are due from the instructor of record on the date specified by the Registrar. The instructor of record can designate another faculty member to submit grades and must inform the Registrar as to who this is. The instructor of record must submit the original Grade Sheet or approved spreadsheet that is signed and dated. Grade sheets can be hand delivered or placed in a sealed envelope for mailing to the Registrar's Office.

## **Change of Grade Policy**

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

### **Change of grade for I (clinical or didactic) or F (didactic)**

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

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

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

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

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

All grade changes must be submitted to the Registrar's Office in person or in a sealed envelope. An Email that provides the same information as a 'Change of Grade Form' and has a valid (pen to paper) signature can be submitted if encrypted. Please contact the Registrar or Assistant Registrar for clarification and appropriate email address. Faxes are not acceptable.

### **Notification of Grades**

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

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'.

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

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

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

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

Quality points are awarded per credit hour as follows:

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

For students who started their degree program after February 24, 2011:

One credit hour is equivalent to:

15 hours of lecture per term  
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 per term  
and a minimum of 15 hours of out of class student work per term

Course load for first professional degrees:

Fall Term and/or Spring Term is defined as:

Full time: usually 16 or more credit hours

Half time: at least 8 and up to 15.99 credit hours

Part time: less than 8 credit hours

Each term in the final year, March Term and/or Summer Term is defined as:

Full time: 9 or more credit hours

Half time: at least 4.50 and up to 8.99 credit hours

Part time: less than 4.50 credit hours

Course load for stand-alone graduate degrees per term:

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

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

## **Course Offerings**

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

## **Attendance and Tardiness Policies**

Students are expected to attend all classes and are required to attend all laboratory sessions, clinical assignments (Patient Care I, II, III, IV) and mandatory classes, training, or meetings. Absences often require prior approval. Students should review the 'Absence Policies and Procedures' to see which procedure applies to them.

Students who agree to a clinical/lab switch with classmates and/or additional/volunteer clinical assignments are subject to the same attendance/absence policies and procedures.

### **Additional Attendance Requirements for Clinical Assignments:**

- Attendance at clinic orientation each term is mandatory. A student who misses orientation may be delayed from starting his/her clinical assignment. Additional clinic time for any clinic days missed because of missed orientation will be added to the student's overall minimum hours needed at a rate of two hours make-up per hour missed and may be assigned during school break/vacations.
- Attendance is mandatory for all clinical assignments in Patient Care I, II, III and IV. This includes scheduled screenings and observations that comprise Patient Care I. Students should review the 'Absence Policies and Procedures' as well as the Patient Care I syllabus for information regarding planned or unplanned absences.
- Patient Care II, III, and IV students are required to follow the attendance policies at the clinic to which they are assigned. Please refer to page 1 of the Student Handbook for specific reference to "closing or delay usually due to inclement weather".
- Third year students in the 4 year OD program are expected to fulfill their clinical assignments throughout midterm and final exam weeks. Exams will be scheduled in the morning so that students can make afternoon clinic assignments. The last day of exam week is considered as a clinic day, including Saturdays.
- First and second year students in the 4 year OD program, first 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 will not be assigned to clinical assignments during midterm and final exam weeks.
- First, second and third year students in the 4 year OD program, first 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 will not have clinical assignments during Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring Breaks.
- Final year students taking clinical rotations do not follow the academic calendar in regards to scheduled holidays or breaks. They follow the calendar at their clinical site.

### **Tardiness for Clinic Assignments:**

Punctuality is expected for all clinical assignments. The student must notify his/her assigned clinic and preceptor of unavoidable delays. Failure to do so will be considered an unauthorized absence. More than one incident of tardiness may be considered unprofessional conduct and may be brought before the Student Affairs Committee.

## Absence Policies and Procedures

A student who will be missing one of the following must submit a digital “Absence Request Form” to the Academic Affairs Office (this form is located on the homepage of the Moodle website):

- Clinic Assignment\*
- Examination
- Lab Session (includes lab switches)
- Mandatory Class, Training or Meeting
- More than three days of academic activity including regular classes

\*A student, who will be missing any clinical assignment, must obtain his/her preceptor’s permission to be absent from clinic before applying for an excused absence.

There are *three types of absences*:

### 1. Expected Absences which include:

- Religious Observance
- Jury Duty
- National Boards
- Planned Medical Leave
- Academic Event/Meeting

A student with an expected absence needs to submit the “Absence Request Form” with appropriate documentation at least 45 days in advance to the Academic Affairs Office. Not all requests for expected absences will be approved.

**NOTE:** There are certain timeframes that will be announced via email or in the Academic Year Calendar that students will not be allowed to be absent or switch any clinic assignments, exams, lab sessions, or mandatory classes/training/meetings.

### 2. Unexpected Absences which include:

- Illness (ex. Flu)
- Personal/Family Emergency

A student with an unexpected absence must:

- 1) Contact instructor/preceptor to inform them of their unexpected absence.
- 2) Fill out a digital “Absence Request Form”. The “Absence Request Form” should be submitted with documentation preferably within three business days or as instructed by the Academic Affairs Office. If a clinical assignment is being missed, the student must also follow the clinic’s absence policy.

**3. Unauthorized Absences:** An unauthorized absence is considered unprofessional conduct. An unauthorized absence includes, but is not limited to:

- not following the procedures with regard to expected and/or unexpected absences
- leaving a clinic assignment without permission
- an unapproved clinic and/or lab assignment switch
- an unexcused absence

## Student's Responsibilities for Excused Absences

If a student is granted an excused absence, the student assumes all responsibility for:

- obtaining and completing missed assignments and examinations,
- switching laboratory sections, with written notification of the switch to relevant instructors,
- making every effort to switch clinical assignments with a classmate to insure coverage for patient care and completion of his/her own clinical requirements.

A student should review the additional information and/or a requirement listed below that apply to his/her expected or unexpected absence. A student will not be granted an excused absence because of travel plans or personal events that are in conflict with the Academic or Clinical Site Calendars. The Office of Academic Affairs will notify all parties as to whether or not the absence has been approved with regard to didactic coursework.

### Additional Information/Requirements with regard to specific reasons for absences:

#### **Absence to Attend Professionally Related Activities or Corporate-Sponsored Educational Programs/Events**

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

Student participation in professional activities is encouraged by the College. It must also be recognized that a student's priority is to his/her studies and his/her obligation to patient care.

#### **Absence Due to Jury Duty**

A student must submit a request at least 45 days in advance to the Office of Academic Affairs providing a photocopy of the Jury Duty Notice as well as documentation that all appropriate absence policies have been followed and authorized. A student must switch lab sessions and clinic assignments with classmates.

#### **Absence from and/or Switch of a Laboratory Session**

A student must obtain prior approval from the laboratory instructor, instructor of record or the appropriate department chair if the instructor(s) are unavailable prior to the start of the laboratory session. An Absence Request Form must be submitted if the student will be missing a laboratory session or requesting a switch.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Students who do not follow the procedures above will not be given an excused absence. The instructor of record is not required to offer a make up exam for this student. Options include recording a grade of 0 (zero) for the exam, requiring an alternative exam and/or other additional assignment, or other options at the discretion of the instructor of record.

The Office of Academic Affairs will keep a record of examinations missed by each student and will forward the records to the Associate Dean of Students each term. Habitual absences from examinations will not be tolerated and will be treated as unprofessional conduct.

### **Absence Due to National Boards**

A student 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. A student may not schedule time off for Part III boards during the first week of a clinical rotation. A student must obtain approval from his/her clinical preceptor in advance.

### **Absence from a Quiz**

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



### **Absence Due to Religious Observance**

In general, the College does not observe religious holidays.

Each student, upon notifying his/her instructor of record, lab instructor, clinical preceptor and clinical director at least 45 days in advance, shall be excused from class, lab or clinical assignment to observe a religious holiday of his/her faith.

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

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

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

A student, who is in good academic standing and has a cumulative GPA of 2.000 or above in a first professional program or a cumulative GPA of 3.000 or above in a graduate program, 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 his/her final year of a first professional program and/or in a graduate program, the Clinical Education Office and/or the Office of Graduate 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 and any terms and date of reentry relative to returning to the College as well as also notifying the appropriate offices.

Please note the following:

- The decision to grant the leave will be a function of consultation between the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs, the Director of Clinical Education if student is in his/her final year, the Director of Graduate Studies if student is in a graduate program, the Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, and any other appropriate individuals.
- A leave of absence may not be granted before all tuition and fees are paid in full and the student has met with the Financial Aid Office to discuss the effect of the leave upon financial aid arrangements.
- A leave of absence is usually not extended beyond one year. Ordinarily, a student is granted only one leave of absence.
- A student who returns to the College after a leave of absence may be required to take additional course work 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.

## Conditional Leave of Absence and Readmission

If a student is not eligible for a leave of absence as described above, yet presents extraordinary extenuating remediable circumstances, a conditional leave of absence may be requested. Examples of such circumstances could include illness or other medical/personal conditions. Documentation of the circumstances by a practitioner deemed to be qualified by the College must accompany the requests. 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 or therapy, must be adhered to.

If the student is in his/her final year of a first professional program and/or in a graduate program, the Clinical Education Office and/or the Office of Graduate 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 and any terms and date of reentry relative to returning to the College as well as also notifying the appropriate offices.

Please note the following:

- The decision to grant the conditional leave will be a function of consultation between the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs, the Director of Clinical Education if student is in his/her final year, the Director of Graduate Studies if student is in a graduate program, the Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, and any other appropriate individuals.
- A leave of absence may not be granted before all tuition and fees are paid in full and the student has met with the Financial Aid Office to discuss the effect of the leave upon financial aid arrangements.
- A leave of absence is usually not extended beyond one year. Ordinarily, a student is granted only one leave of absence.
- A student who returns to the College after a leave of absence may be required to take additional course work 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 who returns to the College after a conditional leave will 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 reclassified as to his/her level in the program or not being allowed to return.

## **Withdrawal**

A student in a first professional program may withdraw from the College by informing the Registrar in writing. This should be done at least two (2) weeks before Final Exams begin or three (3) weeks before the end of a final year clinical assignment. A student 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 must make an appointment with the Associate Dean of Students and have exit interviews with the Financial Aid and Business Offices.

A student in a graduate program may withdraw from the College by informing the Director of Graduate Studies in writing. The Director will notify the Registrar in writing and provide the student's withdrawal letter. A student must have exit interviews with the Financial Aid and Business Offices.

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

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

## **Reapplication after Withdrawal or Dismissal**

A student who has withdrawn or has been dismissed from the College must reapply by submitting new documentation to the College for readmission to the program. A student who withdraws or has been dismissed from the College must apply to the Admissions Committee for readmission but will not be readmitted without the recommendation of the Student Affairs Committee. The Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs 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 Rights and Responsibilities*

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

## **Student Ethics Policy**

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

All students are required to endorse the Code of Ethics, thereby agreeing to uphold the provisions of academic and professional conduct as well as the College and NBEO exam conduct. The NBEO ethics policy can be found at [http://www.optometry.org/pdf/ethics\\_policy.pdf](http://www.optometry.org/pdf/ethics_policy.pdf). Furthermore, the New England College of Optometry supports the ideals of the American Optometric Association Code of Ethics as a valuable guideline for future professional practice.

## **Misconduct Descriptions**

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

1. cheating on examinations,
2. not following 'Examination Procedures and Protocols',
3. copying and/or providing examination questions and/or answers to others,
4. plagiarism.

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

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

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

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

# **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy**

In order to promote and support the use of technology in the classroom and for taking essential assessments for your coursework, you need to bring an internet-ready device. This policy began in Fall 2016.

Instructors will vary on how frequently they require you to bring your device to their classroom. Many instructors require you use your device for examination purposes. A laptop that meets our minimum system requirements is essential to have for the start of your classes.

## **System Requirements:**

### Mac OS:

- CPU=Intel Processor
- RAM at least 4GB
- Hard Drive with at least 500GB
- Operating System OS X 10.9 Mavericks or higher

### PC:

- OS 64-bit Windows 8, Windows 10 or Windows 10 Creators
- RAM: highest recommended for operating system or 4GB
- Hard Drive with at least 500GB

### iPad:

- Hardware = iPad 4 or 5
- Operating System = iOS 7 or greater
- 500 MB of free space minimum

## **Backup Solutions:**

We strongly suggest you pay for a cloud based backup service such as Carbonite or CrashPlan. These services ensure regular, secure backups of all your data in the event of a drive failure or loss of property.

## **Guidelines for Classroom Use:**

- The primary purpose of the use of personal devices in the classroom is educational.
- The use of a personal device is not to be a distraction in any way to teachers or students in the classroom.
- NECO policy prohibits setting up proxies and downloading programs to bypass security.
- Students need written permission to take or distribute pictures or video of other students, faculty, or staff.

## **Questions:**

Contact Linda Mullally, Instructional Technologist: [mullallyl@neco.edu](mailto:mullallyl@neco.edu) | 617-587-5609

## 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.

### **Cheating on an examination/inappropriate behaviors:**

- giving any answer that is not your own,
- looking at other students' answers even if you don't change your own answer,
- using or possessing unapproved materials during examinations 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 phones and cell phones
- whispering or other behaviors deemed inappropriate by the examination proctors.

### **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 in.
- Students should arrive in a timely manner to review their seating and room assignments at least 10 minutes before the start of the examination. Entering the classroom when the examination begins or after the examination has begun is disruptive to others.
- While waiting to enter the examination room, please keep your voices to a minimum to avoid disruption of an ongoing examination.
- Once in the exam room, all personal belongings must be left at the front of the classroom. 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 phones and all other electronic devices which must be turned off,
  - calculator cover,
  - food/drinks except water as specified below,
  - “good luck” pieces

The following items are permitted at the student's desk:

- NECO Student Photo ID
- Pencils/pens
- Rulers, compass, protractor
- Permissible calculator\* without cover, if required for exam
- 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.

- Students will be randomly assigned to their examination room.
- The proctor has the right to ask any student to move from his/her seat to any other seat in the room before and throughout the duration of the examination. These requests are standard protocol and do not necessarily indicate a problem. If asked to move, collect your belongings and examination and move to the requested location quickly and quietly.
- During the examination, a student must keep his/her eyes on his/her own paper and 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.
- Once a student finishes the examination, the student should submit the exam to the proctor, quietly collect personal belongings from the front of the examination room and leave the examination vicinity. The examination vicinity includes all areas where conversation may be overheard by other students still in the examination room. These include, but are not limited to, hallways, restrooms near the exam room, rotunda and atrium.
- Except in emergencies, a student will not be allowed to leave the examination room until he/she has finished and submitted his/her examination. Feeding a parking meter is not viewed as an emergency reason to leave the examination room. A student should use restroom facilities before the examination starts. A student who urgently needs to use the restroom should use the one on the same floor as the examination and immediately return to the examination. Only one student at a time will be allowed out of the exam room for restroom purposes and the student's name will be noted by the proctor. Restrooms will be randomly checked for study materials during exam week. A student found wandering the building during an examination will be asked to explain their presence.
- A student should represent herself/himself accordingly to prevent her/his actions from being interpreted as cheating during any examination and to encourage others to adhere to these high standards of ethical academic behavior and professional conduct.

## **Course Evaluation Requirement**

Students must submit course evaluations through the web-based CoursEval system at the end of each term. Students will have two to three weeks in which to complete their course evaluations.

Students' grades will not be released until their course evaluations have been completed. Students should direct any questions with regard to how to complete course evaluations in CoursEval to the Office of Academic Affairs.

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

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

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

## **Unprofessional Conduct**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

An unprofessional conduct dismissal or suspension will always be permanently transcribed onto the student's transcript and record. An administrator or faculty member of the College has no authority to intimate that this transcription can be changed or eliminated.

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

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

- an interview with the Associate Dean of Students,
- an exit interview with a member of the Financial Aid Office,
- an exit interview with a member of the Business Office.

And the following will occur:

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

### **Falsification of Records**

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

### **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, rubella (2 doses of each vaccine are required); tetanus; diphtheria; acellular pertussis; varicella (2 doses), and the hepatitis B (3 dose series) vaccine. The College also requires a Mantoux PPD test for tuberculosis annually. The College mandates that students obtain all immunizations prior to enrollment.

Exemptions from immunizations can be made only for certain medical conditions, such as health circumstances which contraindicate immunization, pregnancy, or participation in a current sequence of immunizations. A written statement from a physician is necessary in all health circumstances.

Students will not be allowed to participate in clinical assignments which 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.

For questions regarding immunization requirements, please contact the Office of Student Services.

## **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.

CPR certification may be obtained prior to the first term of the first year if the expiration date is valid through the second year of study. The College only accepts Red Cross or Heart Association certification. Mandatory certification courses for CPR, AED and Epi-pen will be arranged for students by the Office of Clinical Education.

## **ID Usage and Beacon Street Campus Access**

All are required to swipe their ID cards to gain access to the Beacon Street Campus during normal hours. To maintain a safe environment for students and staff, each individual within the College community must adopt the following standards:

- All members of the College community will wear their IDs while on the Beacon Street campus which will identify them as a member of the College community.
- Any member of the College community not having an ID will be required to obtain a temporary ID/Guest Pass at the reception desk in the Front Office.
- Individuals who are in the building and are not recognized as a member of the College community must be escorted to the reception desk where they will be required to produce identification and the reason for being in the building so that a determination can be made as to their continuing presence.
- Individuals who refuse to wear their IDs or who manipulate the appearance of their IDs are undermining security in the building and will be required to meet with the President if faculty, the Vice President/Dean of Academic Affairs if a student or the HR Director if staff to explain their behavior. Ongoing refusal to follow the standard will result in disciplinary action, for faculty as stated in the faculty contract (meeting reasonable performance standards), for staff as stated in the Staff Handbook (refusal to carry out reasonable assignments) and for students as stated in the Student Handbook (unprofessional conduct).
- Please do not open entrance doors to the building for those you do not know.
- ID badges are the property of the College.

Plastic ID holders with a lanyard/clip are available at the reception desk in the Front Office.

## **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 Students 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 is paid or reimbursed by a corporation requires prior approval of the Office of Academic Affairs.

## Electronic Communications Policy

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

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 College established distribution lists may be monitored by College administrators.

## Copyright Policy

The New England College of Optometry ('the College') is committed to providing an environment that supports the research and the teaching activities of its faculty, students, and staff. As a matter of principle and practice, the College encourages all of its members to publish their papers, books, and other forms of communication without restriction in order to share openly their findings and knowledge with both the optometric profession as well as the general public.

In furtherance of this credo, the College has adopted a Copyright Policy that is intended to provide guidance for the members of the College community, including faculty, visiting faculty, staff, administrators, and students, in matters of copyright compliance when using a variety of creative works including, but not limited to: printed materials, digital media, sound recordings, and computer and educational software. The College expects that all members of the community adhere to the provisions of the United States Copyright Law – Title 17, United States Code, Sec. 101, <http://www.copyright.gov/title17/>. The Policy presents to the College community a summary of U.S. copyright law related to the use of copyrighted works in the classroom, in the CMS (Moodle) and the library as well as to provide guidelines and procedures for obtaining permission to use copyrighted works.

While the policy provides practical advice and procedures on copyright matters, legal advice should be sought if a member of the community feels clarification is needed. Members of the College community who willfully disregard the Policy do so at their own risk and assume all liability. Therefore, each member should not rely on this summary; rather he/she should read the Copyright Policy in its entirety at [neco.libguides.com/copyright](http://neco.libguides.com/copyright).

## **Course Proprietary Policy**

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

## **Peer to Peer (P2P) Policy**

The College respects the intellectual property rights of those who created either digital music, art or literature.

The College has adopted a policy for its staff, faculty and students to block all P2P file sharing applications at its firewall to prevent illegal downloading as well as to preserve the network bandwidth so that the College internet access is neither compromised nor diminished. In a limited number of cases, permission to use P2P may be granted.

If a system is detected to have engaged in unauthorized P2P activity on the network, wired or wireless, a block will be immediately put in place on that application. Engaging in unauthorized P2P traffic on the College wired or wireless network is considered a clear violation of the College's policy (unprofessional conduct) and may result in dismissal.

All network users, whether or not they have obtained approval to use P2P applications, understand that they are solely responsible for all risk(s) and possible copyright infringement while connected to these P2P sites when using the College wired or wireless network and agree to hold the College harmless. [http://www.neco.edu/pdfs/general/P2P\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.neco.edu/pdfs/general/P2P_Policy.pdf)

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

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

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the College receives a request for access. Students should submit to the Registrar, Dean, Head of the Academic or Clinical Departments/Offices, or other appropriate official, a written request that identifies the record(s) he/she wishes to inspect. The College official will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the College official 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. The student may ask the College to amend a record that he/she believes is inaccurate or misleading. A student who wishes to ask the College to amend a record should write the College official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record the student wants changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the College decides not to amend the record as requested, the College will notify the student in writing of the decision and advise the student of his/her 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 the College discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception that permits disclosure without consent is the disclosure to college officials with legitimate educational interests. A college official is defined as a person employed by the College in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the College has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks. A school official has a legitimate education interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibilities for the College.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the College to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

As of January 3, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education's FERPA regulations expand the circumstances under which your education records and personally identifiable information (PII) contained in such records – including your Social Security Number, grades, or other private information – may be accessed without your consent. First, the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or state and local education authorities ("Federal and State Authorities") may allow access to your records and PII without your consent to any third party designated by a Federal or State Authority to evaluate a federal- or state-supported education program. The evaluation may relate to any program that is "principally engaged in the provision of education," such as early childhood education and job training, as well as any program that is administered by an education agency or institution. Second, Federal and State Authorities may allow access to your education records and PII without your consent to researchers performing certain types of studies, in certain cases even when we object to or do not request such research. Federal and State Authorities must obtain certain use-restriction and data security promises from the entities that they authorize to receive your PII, but the Authorities need not maintain direct control over such entities. In addition, in connection with Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems, State Authorities may collect, compile, permanently retain, and share without your consent PII from your education records, and they may track your participation in education and other programs by linking such PII to other personal information about you that they obtain from other Federal or State data sources, including workforce development, unemployment insurance, child welfare, juvenile justice, military service, and migrant student records systems.

The address of the office that administers FERPA is:

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

## **Student Directory Information Policy**

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

## **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 Students, 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.

## **Name and Address Policy**

A student is required to provide the Registrar with his/her local address and telephone number, permanent address and telephone number, and legal name while in attendance at the College. The student is responsible for notifying the Registrar's Office immediately in writing of any changes. A student's name, address and telephone number are considered directory information and will be available to individuals affiliated with the College 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 name of record in the format submitted by the student on a diploma application. Nicknames may not be used.

## **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 or did not agree on the 'NECO Photo and Video Release Form' 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.

## **Emergency Notification System**

The College has an Emergency Notification System that alerts students, faculty and staff with regard to critical situations in or near the College's campuses. The system utilizes voice, text and email technologies. In the event of an emergency, the system will employ all methods to alert the College community. The system is not intended for routine school closings due to inclement weather.

## **Student Award Disclosure Policy**

NECO offers a limited number of scholarships from private donors and its endowment, and 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. 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 Students 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 Students and the Director of Financial Aid.

Students who receive endowed scholarships, those 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, a notice to the student's hometown newspaper, an announcement and photo on the College's website, or other form of communication. Students are allowed to participate in the awards programs only and opt out of publicity if they so desire. Again a written request to opt out of the publication of name and award and/or photo to both the Associate Dean of Students and the Director of Financial Aid is required. The opt out status from publicity will remain in effect unless a written rescission is received.

## **Hazing Policy**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts prohibits hazing. Hazing is defined as any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Consent of the individual is not available as a defense. The crime of hazing is punishable by a fine of not more than \$3,000 or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

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

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

## **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 are protected under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013.

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/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

### **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.

To learn more visit the website here:

[http://www.neco.edu/pdfs/general/Annual\\_Campus\\_Security\\_Report.pdf](http://www.neco.edu/pdfs/general/Annual_Campus_Security_Report.pdf)



## 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 Students. Any student who has been harassed is encouraged to tell either the Associate Dean of Students or the Director of Human Resources. Reports of harassment of any kind will be responded to immediately. Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process of handling harassment reports. Concerns related to sexual harassment are specifically addressed in the following policy.

The following are resources:

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, <http://www.mass.gov/mcad/>

Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition, <http://www.masstpc.org/>

## Sexual Harassment

### Introduction

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

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

### Definition

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

- Quid Pro Quo Harassment: submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment or academic standing; or submission to or rejection of such conduct is the basis for an employment or academic decision (salary, benefits, job status, assignments, grades, etc.);

- **Hostile Environment Harassment:** such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or academic environment.

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

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

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

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

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

### **The Sexual Harassment Committee**

The Sexual Harassment Committee is established to provide an avenue through which complaints of sexual harassment will be addressed. The committee is composed of 5 members, and is to include 3 females and 2 males. Staff members are appointed, and faculty members are elected, both for terms of 3 years; student members are elected annually. The Committee (Current committee is posted in NECO public folders under Faculty Committees.) consists of:

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

### **Reporting Allegations of Sexual Harassment**

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

the identification of the complainant and alleged harasser (respondent) in order for an effective investigation and appropriate resolution to occur.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Disciplinary Action or Sanctions**

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

Committee (committee route) recommends the sanction. The appropriate supervisor is informed so that the sanction may be promptly administered.

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

### **Policy Dissemination and Training**

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

### **Consenting Relationships**

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

## **The Americans with Disabilities Act**

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

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

Associate Dean of Students  
New England College of Optometry  
424 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02115  
617-587-5593

If you believe you have been discriminated against with regard to the ADA, please contact the Associate Dean of Students immediately.

## **Nondiscrimination Policy**

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

Associate Dean of Students  
New England College of Optometry  
424 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02115  
617-587-5593

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

Boston Office  
Office of Civil Rights  
US Department of Education  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
5 Post Office Square  
Boston, MA 02109-3921  
Telephone: 617-289-0111  
Facsimile: 617-289-0150  
Email: [OCR.Boston@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Boston@ed.gov)

## **Grievance Procedure**

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

Any student, who feels he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation or veteran's status (including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972), should detail the grievance in writing to the Associate Dean of Students. If, within ten days, the Associate Dean of Students has been unable through informal efforts to resolve the issue to the mutual satisfaction of all, he/she will appoint a Grievance Committee. The Director of Human Resources will Chair the Committee and will randomly pick a committee of two members from the Faculty and/or administration and two members from the Student Council. The Grievance Committee will meet within fifteen days from the date the written grievance is received by the Associate Dean of Students. The Grievance Committee will issue its response to the student grievance within fifteen days from its meeting referred to in the previous sentence, and the decision of the Grievance Committee will be final.

# **Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy**

## **Introduction**

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

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

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

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

## **Standards of Conduct**

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

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

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

Functions planned for students by employees or students at which alcohol will be served must be pre-approved by the Associate Dean of Students.

At all College functions, non-alcoholic beverages must be provided and located in a visible area separate from alcoholic beverages.

Food must always be available at all College functions where alcohol is served.

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

## **Disciplinary Action**

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

Disciplinary action will be imposed on students who violate the Drug & Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy and may include immediate suspension or dismissal from the College as well as affect the student's eligibility for financial aid. Please see [www.FAFSA.gov](http://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 his/her driver's license suspended for a period of 90 days.

A person who falsifies age documentation or misrepresents his/her 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 drunkenness may be taken into protective custody for at least 5 hours.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Health Risks**

#### Alcohol abuse:

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

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

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

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

- Drug & Alcohol Hotline - (800) 327-5050 or helpline-online.com
- High Point - (800) 233-4478
- ADCare Recovery - (617) 227-2622

### **Smoke-Free Environment**

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

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



## **Student's Personal Property Policy and Responsibility**

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

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

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

The College also maintains ongoing security records in compliance with the Campus Security Act of 1990. Students may obtain information regarding safety and security from the Facilities Department. This information is made available to students through the College website under 'About' then 'Policies, Reports & Information' and is updated with the U.S. Department of Education each academic year.

## **Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act of 2000**

The Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act requires institutions of higher education to advise the campus community of where it can obtain the information about registered sex offenders provided by the State. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Sexual Offender Registry Board (SORB) can be contacted at (978) 740-6400 or at [www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/sorb](http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/sorb). This Act also requires the sex offender already required to register in a State to provide notice, as required under State law, to each institution of higher education in the State at which the person is employed, carries on a vocation, or is a student.

## **Clery Act Campus Crime Reporting**

The New England College of Optometry annual security report is released by October 1 of each year. For purposes of this report, College refers to both the New England College of Optometry and its clinical teaching affiliate, New England Eye Institute, Inc. The report is issued in compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, Title II of Public Law 101-542, as amended through 2008, as well as the Violence Against Women Act (Public Law 113-4). For further details please refer to 34 CFR 668.46 and the related subsections found therein.

The report includes the College's policies concerning campus security, such as the policies concerning 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 statistics for the previous three years concerning reported crimes that occurred on campus, in certain off-campus buildings or property owned or controlled by the College and on public property within, or immediately adjacent to and accessible from the campus. <http://www.neco.edu/pdfs/general/annualcampussecurityreport2015.pdf>.

## Information Security Policy

The College complies with federal law regarding information security as required by the Gramm Leach Bliley Act. The full text of the Information Security Policy is located on the 'Online College Catalog' listing at <http://www.neco.edu/about/facts/NECO-online-catalog>.

## Massachusetts Nonresident Driver Requirement

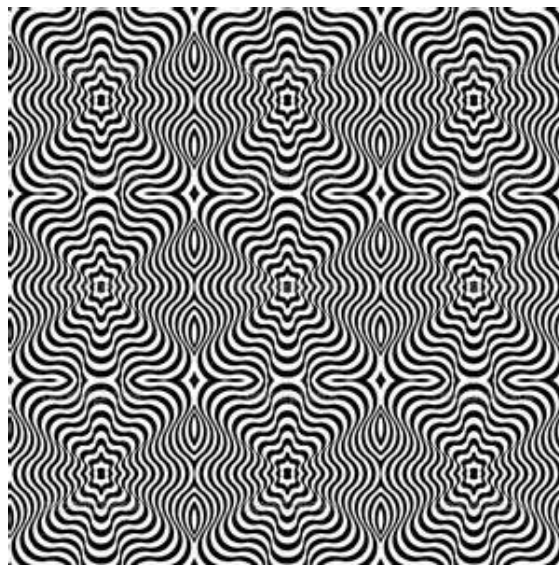
If you are a nonresident enrolled as a full time student at a school or college in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts who operates a motor vehicle in Massachusetts that is registered in another state or country during any period beginning on September 1<sup>st</sup> of any year, and ending on August 31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

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

You may download this form at: [www.massrmv.com/rmv/forms/20098.pdf](http://www.massrmv.com/rmv/forms/20098.pdf). Instructions are located at the top of the form. The Registrar's Office recommends that you keep a copy for your personal files.

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

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



# Tuition, Fees, Payment Policy and Refund Policy

## Tuition Fees

For the 2017-2018 Academic Year, the Board of Trustees of the New England College of Optometry has set the annual tuition rate as follows:

- \$40,638 – all years of the Four Year OD Degree Program
- \$50,015 – first year of Accelerated OD Degree Program
- \$30,477 – second year of Accelerated OD Degree Program
- \$30,480 – third year of Accelerated OD Degree Program
- \$55,376 – first year of Advanced Standing International Program
- \$40,638 – second year of Advanced Standing International Program
- \$20,319 – per session Accelerated OD China Program
- \$20,319 – per year of Master of Science in Vision Science Degree Program
- \$1,270 – 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 fees are subject to change without notice.

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

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

Exempted Course Tuition Charges: A student in a degree program who is exempted from a course will not receive a change in tuition.

Extended Program Tuition Charges: A student whose program is extended will be subject to applicable tuition and fee charges.

A student in the MS degree program has a grace period of two terms, usually summer and fall, from his/her 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 he/she is paying full time tuition charges for the OD program.

## Fees and Expenses

Annual fees include a student activity fee of \$350 and an individual health insurance fee of \$1,597 for all students which will only be waived if other insurance has been deemed acceptable.

One time fees for all first year students in all programs include a \$300 laboratory fee, a \$1,250 equipment fee, and a \$10 fee for Massachusetts Society of Optometry membership.

Additional fees include a Course Notes and Printing Fee which is assessed every year except for a student's final year. It will cover 1,000 prints/copies per year, as well as any course note packets that are printed. The fee is \$100 for each and every year for all students in all degree or special programs except for the final rotation year.

Fees and expenses are subject to change without notice.

### **Payment Policy**

All tuition and fees are due and payable on or before the first day of classes of each term, except for first-year students, which are due by August 15<sup>th</sup> of the year of entry. Students may not register or attend classes if tuition and fees are not paid in full or appropriate arrangements have not been made with the Chief Financial Officer at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the term. The College does not accept credit cards for the payment of tuition and fees. 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 is as follows:

<u>Withdrawal Date</u>	<u>Percentage of Tuition and Fees* Refunded</u>
Prior to the 1 <sup>st</sup> day of the academic period	100%
During the 1 <sup>st</sup> week	90%
During the 2 <sup>nd</sup> to 3 <sup>rd</sup> weeks	50%
During the 4 <sup>th</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup> weeks	25%
After 6 weeks	0%

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

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

\*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.

A refund on 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 his/her insurance once he/she is enrolled, unless he/she joins the military. A student should only contact the Student Services Office with regard to health insurance questions or concerns.

# Transcript Policy

1. A transcript may not be released to a third party if the student or former student has not met his/her financial or other outstanding obligation to the College. Further information is available in the Hold On Services Policy.
2. A transcript will be issued only on the written request and authorization of the student or former student concerned. This written request (**no emails or faxes**) must provide the following information. For Students only: Properly completed forms taken off of the NECO portal can be submitted as an attachment through your NECO email. Read instructions.
  - full name while attending the College (not married/divorced present name)
  - present address, cell/daytime telephone number & email (in case we need to contact you)
  - dates of attendance and/or degree(s) received with graduation date(s) if applicable
  - last four digits of Social Security Number and date of birth for verification only
  - address(es) where the transcript(s) should be mailed
  - signature of student or former student and date
  - full payment, if applicable
3. Only academic and clinical course work taken at the College as well as any transcribed administrative or disciplinary information will appear on the transcript.
4. There is a three to five working day turnaround time for all transcript requests. Requests are handled on a first come/first serve basis.
5. FEES: There is no charge for transcripts for students while attending the College and until the end of the month in which a student graduates unless more than five transcripts are requested within one academic year. If you submit a transcript fee in error, the fee will not be returned. Students who have requested more than five official or unofficial transcripts within one academic year will be charged \$10.00 for each additional transcript.

There is a charge of \$10.00 for each official or unofficial transcript for former students and must be included with the written request. A check drawn on a bank within the United States should be made out to “New England College of Optometry”. Payment is also acceptable by submitting a ‘money order’ or ‘postal order’ in U.S. currency especially from foreign countries.
6. The student or former student is responsible for providing the correct address for mailing of a transcript. If an additional transcript has to be sent because of an address error by the student or former student, the transcript fee will be charged again.
7. **OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT** – An official transcript, which is so designated and bears the seal of the College and the signature of the Registrar, is sent only to educational institutions, state boards, National Boards, research institutes, Departments of the Federal Government, and other authorized agencies and institutions. **PLEASE NOTE:** The policy of the College does not allow an official transcript to be sent or given directly to the student or former student even in a signed and sealed envelope.  
**UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT** – An unofficial transcript, which is so designated and does not bear the seal of the College or the signature of the Registrar, is sent to the student, former student and other individual parties.

## SUBMIT WRITTEN REQUESTS WITH FEE, IF APPLICABLE, TO:

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

NOTE: All transcript requests are sent out by USPS (United States Postal Service) unless a prepaid FedEx envelope/label accompanies the request. The College will not be responsible for couriers who will not pick up from the College.

## Hold on Services Policy

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

Outstanding obligations include, but are not limited to:

- tuition and fees
- clinic and campus store charges
- library late fees and book replacement charges
- unreturned borrowed equipment
- institutional loan defaults (Perkins, HPSL, LDS, Fund for Education, Saval Loans, etcetera)
- HEAL student loan default
- collection fees
- returned check fees

Withheld services include, but are not limited to:

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

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

## Accreditation

The New England College of Optometry is accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) of the American Optometric Association and by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Both ACOE and NEASC 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 NEASC since 1976.

For further information see <http://www.neco.edu/about/facts/accreditation-information>.

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