SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policies and Procedures

Academic Advising

Students in Health Professions programs may be assigned a faculty advisor to assist the student's progress through the program. Advisors assist students in solving problems and/or finding alternatives or options. The advisor provides advice and opinions, facts or information, and clarifies policies for the student. Topics that may be addressed through faculty advising include academic issues, professionalism, program policies, study problems, time management and clinical progress, as well as the advisor's referral to other support systems in the university or community. It is the student's responsibility to meet with his or her advisor when encountering difficulties. In addition, it is highly recommended that students meet with their advisors at least once per academic session to review their progress, address issues and prepare for the upcoming academic session or for graduation. Further information about the department's policies and practices regarding faculty advisors is provided in each department's student manual/ handbook.

Admissions

The School of Health Professions strives to ensure the admissions process is fair and unbiased. Review of program applications uses an individualized, holistic review process to consider each program applicant. As part of the admissions review policies and procedures, all applicants will submit an online application by the programs' reported deadlines through the programs' designated application service, where they will report all required and additional information for review. During review, applicants may be evaluated based on multiple performance and experience-based criteria; these may include overall GPA, science or prerequisite GPA, standardized test scores such as GRE, pending or completed prerequisite coursework, hours of community service, hours of health care experience, shadowing hours, history of military service, and affiliation with a medically underserved region. Individual admission items, information, or a combination of these will not guarantee an invitation to interview, admission or selection into School of Health Professions' programs.

Information received by university officials regarding individual applicants outside of the formal admissions process or system will not be considered in the admissions review or selection process. Also, any faculty member will recuse themselves from admissions review in its entirety for that cycle for a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest.

Advancement, Probation, and Dismissal

Decisions about advancement, probation, suspension and dismissal will be made on the basis of academic performance and professional behaviors. Academic standards for advancement in the certificate or degree program are determined by the faculty of each department. Failure to meet the academic and professional standards may result in probation, suspension or dismissal from the program.

Continuation in a School of Health Professions program is dependent on maintenance of a minimum cumulative grade point average as set by the department. A student whose cumulative GPA falls below the minimum may be subject to academic probation. All decisions concerning probation or dismissal will be based on recommendations from the Student Progress Committee within the department. The faculty and the committee may recommend (1) academic probation; (2) repetition of the course when next offered; (3) suspension with repetition of the course when next offered; (4) repetition of the year or semester; or (5) dismissal.

In health professions education, professionalism is a required academic standard. Students who do not adhere to professional conduct standards may be subject to probation, suspension or dismissal from the certificate or degree program. Other standards and policies may be set forth by the faculty as described in their course syllabi or program handbook. Professional behavior and ethics standards from professional organizations may also be applied.

Students may be dismissed, suspended, or refused readmission at any time if circumstances of a legal, moral, health, social, or academic nature are considered to justify such action.

Grades

The standing of students in their work is expressed by the following grades:

A = Excellent
B = Above Average
C = Average *
D = Below Average (Note: some departments do not recognize a D grade; see individual departments for information regarding grading structure.)
F = Failure

* *some programs designate a grade of "C" as below average*

Grades for courses in which performance is graded an **S** (Satisfactory) or **U** (Unsatisfactory) are not used in computing the grade point average.

The grade point average is calculated using the following grade points:

A = 4 points
B = 3 points
C = 2 points
D = 1 point
F = 0 points

In some programs, students have the option of seeking exemption from certain courses in the curriculum if they have successfully completed an equivalent course in the curriculum at another college or university or demonstrated mastery of the course content via an appropriate content or practicum examination. The grade of CR (Credit) is recorded for a course(s) for which the student has been exempted. A minimum of 25% of the baccalaureate coursework and a minimum of 33% of graduate coursework must be taken at the health science center to receive a degree from the institution.

Advanced Standing

Individuals may have acquired academic credit in allied health professional courses from other accredited programs, schools and universities. Some individuals may acquire knowledge through experience and on-the-job training. When such persons apply for admission into the School of Health Professions, an attempt is made

to grant academic credit for equivalent educational courses, equivalent knowledge acquired from experience and/or successful completion of appropriate board certifying agency examinations.

All students graduating from the programs within the School of Health Professions must meet the same standards for graduation; the awarding of advanced standing does not signify a lesser quality education than that offered through regular course work. Rather, it is a method to provide credit to the student for those areas of the curriculum in which the student has already achieved the required knowledge, skills and competencies. Programs have identified the competencies that graduates must achieve in order to provide safe, high quality patient care and related services. Documentation of achievement of these competencies is required for program completion for all students.

Program specific policies and procedures have been developed to ensure that those individuals who receive advanced standing have achieved the requisite competencies and that the process adheres to university, school and departmental policies.

DEFINITION

Advanced standing is defined as a special and individually determined status granted to a student in a formal educational setting, who has already gained through other sources or through non-academic experiences, the knowledge, skills and professional attributes required by his or her professional program. Advanced standing may be granted by transfer credit and/or equivalency examinations for specific course work.

Grades in Clinical Rotations, Practicums, and Fieldwork Courses

Clinical Rotations, practicums, and fieldwork courses may be graded **S** (Satisfactory) or **U** (Unsatisfactory), or may be assigned a letter grade, depending on the departmental policy. A grade of **S** or other designation of an acceptable grade is assigned if the student successfully satisfies the criteria for clinical courses. Failure to satisfy the course criteria successfully may result in an **I** (Incomplete) or a **U** (Unsatisfactory) or a letter grade considered unsatisfactory based on departmental policy.

Criteria and time frame for removal of an **I** or **U** or other unsatisfactory grade in clinical courses are determined based on clinical documentation and consultation with the clinical supervisor/clinical instructor. Any unsatisfactory grade may require that the student complete an additional clinical affiliation rotation or other remediation that could extend the professional curriculum beyond the expected graduation date.

Incompletes

A grade of "**I**" (Incomplete) may be assigned when a student has not satisfactorily completed all course requirements by the conclusion of the course due to non-academic reasons such as illness, family emergency or other non-academic matters. Unless the student has been granted a leave of absence, all incomplete work must be completed within one year, at which time the grade will be changed to the appropriate letter grade. When the course is completed, the course grade issued by the instructor will be submitted to the Office of the University Registrar using a Change of Grade Form. If the course work is not satisfactorily completed within the designated time, the “I” grade will be changed to an “F” grade. When an "I" is issued pending a grade in a course that is a prerequisite for another course, the "I" must be removed before the student is allowed to enroll in the next sequential course.

Dropping or Adding Courses

Students may add or drop courses prior to the official census date. The census date varies by program and semester so students must refer to their specific academic calendar. If a student drops one or more classes (but not all classes) before the census date, a grade will not be assigned; however, if a student drops all classes a grade of W will be assigned for all courses. When a student withdraws after the first class day, a grade of W will be assigned for all courses

Any courses that are approved to be added or dropped outside of the official web registration dates must be documented on a completed and signed electronic Add/Drop form.

Students adding or dropping a course may be subject to additional tuition and fees or may be eligible for a refund.

A student may drop a course and receive a grade of **W** (Withdraw) on his/her transcript if an official electronic Add/Drop form is signed and processed **after** the census date and before the final course exam or, if there is no final course exam, before the final class meeting for the course.

A student can be administratively dropped from a course when the course instructor makes that recommendation to the department chair and can show circumstances warrant such action. If approved by the department chair, a grade of **W** will be assigned.

It is the student's responsibility to drop a course by the appropriate deadline. If a student fails to drop a course, even if the student does not attend the course, he/she may receive a grade of **F** in the class or the grade earned up the point of nonattendance. Faculty and staff will not drop a student from a course automatically for nonattendance; the student must initiate the process and complete any necessary steps to ensure that the class is dropped.

Students who want to drop all classes after the semester begins should refer to the *Withdrawal from Program/University* found below.

Withdrawal from Program/University

Special circumstances may require a student to voluntarily withdraw from a program. A student may withdraw from a program (drop all courses for which they are enrolled during a specific semester) and receive a grade of **W** (Withdraw) on his/her transcript if the withdrawal is completed before the final course exam or if there is no final course exam, before the final class meeting for the course. Withdrawal requests must be approved by the department chair.

Student who wish to withdraw from a program must meet with their faculty advisor and the department chair, fill out the electronic withdrawal form and obtain all required signatures.

Any student who does not remain continuously registered and who has not obtained an official leave of absence or registered in absentia for the period of non-attendance may be deemed to have voluntarily withdrawn from a program and surrenders his/her right of matriculation. Re-enrollment following program withdrawal requires the student reapply through regular admissions procedures.

Dean's Honor List

Students in certificate or bachelor’s degree programs in the School of Health Professions with a grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or greater for an academic semester or session may qualify for inclusion on the Dean’s

Honor List. In addition to the minimum GPA, Dean's honor students must complete at least nine semester credit hours during a regular semester or five semester credit hours during a summer session.

Graduation with Honors

Honors designations are awarded to students graduating from the baccalaureate programs based upon the following scale:

Cumulative GPA 3.5 – 3.69: *Cum Laude*
Cumulative GPA 3.7 – 3.89: *Magna Cum Laude*
Cumulative GPA 3.9 – 4.00: *Summa Cum Laude*

Distinction in Research

The distinction acknowledges students who demonstrate a dedicated commitment to enriching their education with independent research while maintaining high academic standards during school. Applications are due January 31 of the first year of the students academic program (MLS, OT, PA, PT, RC, SLP). Applicants will receive notification of their application by March 1. The distinction is awarded upon graduation from the program.

Requirements include;

- Maintain minimum GPA of 3.5 throughout program (*if fall below 3.5 then allowed one probationary semester*)
- Mentor must be a UTHSCSA faculty member
- Only one student accepted per SHP program
- Attendance at SHP research lunch and learns and the SHP research retreat (begins after acceptance in the program and continues until December research retreat). Faculty mentor will also have to attend
- Abstract submission and acceptance to conference (state, national or international)
- Present research overview at the SHP Distinction Committee meeting prior to symposium
- Present research at Distinction in Research lunch time symposium in Spring of graduation year

Professional Conduct

Professionalism relates to the intellectual, ethical, behavioral and attitudinal attributes necessary to perform as a health care provider. Students are expected to:

- Demonstrate sound judgment commensurate with the level of training and experience.
- Serve all patients without discrimination.
- Recognize and respect the role and competencies of other professionals and cooperate with them to provide effective health care.
- Exhibit concern primarily for the patient's welfare rather than for a grade.
- Exhibit an attitude of respect, concern and cooperativeness toward peers, staff and faculty.
- Hold in confidence the details of professional services rendered and the confidences of any patient.
- Achieve the highest degree of honesty and integrity by communicating and behaving in an honest, ethical manner.
- Practice the highest standards of academic integrity and promptly report breeches of academic integrity or ethical misconduct by others.
- Accept responsibility for own work and results; demonstrate willingness to accept suggestions or improvement.
- Maintain physical, mental, and emotional composure in all situations.
- Abide by the regulations and policies of the program and clinical training sites.
- Practice appropriate personal grooming and hygiene.
- Practice appropriate safety and aseptic techniques.
- Provide the patient with relevant information to enable the patient to participate in making decisions regarding her/his condition, prognosis, and treatment options.
- Refuse to participate in or conceal any unlawful, incompetent, or unethical practice.

Professional Attire

Students in the School of Health Professions programs must dress at all times in a manner consistent with a professional image while on campus and at practicum sites. Appropriate attire for clinical rotations, practicums, or other clinical/educational settings will vary, depending upon department requirements, facility environments, local customs and expectations. It is the student's responsibility to inquire about dress expectations and to comply with them.

Professional Characteristics and Demeanor

Health Professions students are regarded as professional persons and are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Professionalism relates to the intellectual, ethical, and behavioral attributes necessary to perform as a health care provider. Students are expected to perform at a professional level when interacting with other students, faculty, staff, health care professionals, patients and their families, and the general public when representing the institution at clinical sites and community activities. A breach of professional conduct may be considered grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal from the program.

Additional guidelines for professional conduct may be issued by Health Professions departments and/or professional organizations. Students are responsible for knowing and adhering to these.

HIPAA and Patient Privacy

Health science center students have a legal and ethical responsibility to safeguard the privacy of all patients and protect confidentiality and security of all health information. Protecting the confidentiality of patient information means protecting it from unauthorized use or disclosure in any format — verbal, fax, written or electronic. Patient confidentiality is a central obligation of patient care. Any breaches in patient confidentiality or privacy is considered unprofessional conduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

The laboratory component of some courses may use students as simulated patients. Practicing the medical history and physical examination may place students in close contact with their peers and lead to the sharing of personal information and physical findings. Similarly students may use personal experiences in patient role-playing exercises. All shared and personal medical information and physical examination findings are to be treated with utmost confidentiality. Failure to protect the confidentiality of any information related to the activities

in a course or clinical rotation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or dismissal.

Academic Integrity

Students in the School of Health Professions are expected to be above reproach in all professional and academic activities. Policies on academic dishonesty and integrity will be strictly enforced; students who fail to conform to standards of academic integrity and scholastic honesty are subject to disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on examinations or assignments, plagiarism, falsifying data or results, presenting another person's work as one's own without giving proper credit or citation, knowingly recording information in the medical record which is incorrect or inaccurate or providing inaccurate or misleading information in writing or orally to instructors, preceptors or medical personnel caring for patients. Violations of academic integrity standards may result in severe penalties including probation, suspension or dismissal from the university. Academic dishonesty is a form of unprofessional conduct, and as such, allegations of academic dishonesty will be reviewed by the departmental Student Progress Committee. Any student found to be cheating on an examination may receive a "0" for the examination and will be subject to formal disciplinary action, which may include probation, suspension or dismissal from the program. Failure to report incidents involving academic dishonesty on the part of another student will be considered unprofessional conduct and may also result in disciplinary action. To avoid charges of academic dishonesty, consult with the department chair or faculty member about expectations. Procedures for dealing with charges of academic dishonesty or cheating are described below (see Unprofessional Conduct).

Unprofessional Conduct

Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate professional characteristics and behaviors in all activities related to their training and education. Examples of critical errors in professional conduct and judgment include, but are not limited to: (1) failure to place the patient's safety and welfare as first priority; (2) failure to maintain physical, mental and emotional composure; (3) consistent ineffective/inefficient use of time; (4) failure to be honest with patients, faculty and colleagues; (5) critical errors in judgment which may place patients or others at risk; (6) scholastic dishonesty in any form; (7) failure to maintain patient privacy and confidentiality; (8) failure to serve all patients without discrimination; (9) failure to abide by regulations and policies set forth by the university, program and its clinical and organizational affiliates.

Procedure for Unprofessional Conduct

In general, for issues that are not satisfactorily resolved between the instructor or preceptor and student, the following guidelines should be followed for unprofessional conduct:

Step 1. The student will have been identified as violating an established standard of professional conduct, judgment or ethical behavior, and the department chair or program director will have been notified.

Step 2. The department chair or program director will meet with the individual(s) making the allegation and the student's faculty advisor to review the available information and determine the veracity of the allegations.

Step 3. The department chair, student and faculty advisor, whenever possible, will meet as promptly as possible after the alleged incident. The department chair will report to the student the facts and available information and will seek to authenticate or clarify the allegations where possible. If it is determined that there is no basis for the allegation, no further action will be taken.

Step 4. If it is determined that there is a basis for the allegation and that further investigation is necessary, a preliminary hearing of the departmental Student Progress Committee will be convened to review the allegations and recommend a course of action. The department chair will inform the student and the Dean in writing of the preliminary hearing and the following: a) date b) name of student c) nature of the allegations d) date of alleged incident/occurrence e) behaviors or attributes that allegedly violate standards: skill, behavior, judgment, ethical values or unprofessional conduct. For additional information regarding professional conduct, see the current departmental student handbook.

Incidents in the Clinical Agency

Any incident affecting patient's or staff's well-being or the patient's prescribed care will be reported to the clinical instructor or preceptor immediately. An institutional incident report will then be completed following the policy of the health care institution or hospital in which the incident occurred. A duplicate of the hospital incident report will be requested. A memorandum of explanation from the clinical instructor or preceptor will be placed in the student's clinical file and the department chair, program director or clinical director will be notified immediately. Incidents involving gross errors in judgment or practice on the part of the student will constitute grounds for probation, suspension or dismissal from the program.

Drugs and Alcohol

The goals of the School of Health Professions are to provide the highest quality education, research, health care and service. To achieve these goals students must be able to fulfill their respective roles without impairment produced by intoxication or addiction to alcohol or other drugs. The unauthorized purchase, manufacture, distribution, possession, sale, storage or use of alcohol, illegal drugs or controlled substances by students while attending classes, or while on health science center property (or any property affiliated with the health science center including clinical affiliates), or sites used to provide community service, will be considered unprofessional conduct which may result in academic probation, suspension or dismissal. A controlled substance is any substance so defined by federal or state statute or regulation.

School of Health Professions students may not report for their clinical assignments and/or classes impaired by the use of alcohol or controlled substances. Such impairment will be considered unprofessional conduct and may result in academic probation, suspension or dismissal.

In cases where impairment is suggested, the student's instructor or preceptor shall dismiss the student from the class and/or clinical training site, assist the student in obtaining safe transport home or to a medical facility (if indicated) and notify the program director, department chair and associate dean of academic and student affairs for follow-up action.

Consumption of alcoholic beverages on health science center property is permissible only by prior written Presidential approval for specific events as described in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (see Section 8.2.3).

Nothing in this policy will preclude the medical or research use of alcohol or controlled substances. It is the underlying philosophy of the School of Health Professions that addiction to alcohol and/or other

drugs represents a disease state, and treatment of such problems is a legitimate part of medical practice. Students with an addiction to drugs or alcohol are encouraged to seek help through the Student Health Center or their personal health care provider. Students who seek help through the Student Health Center will not be punished for seeking such help. However, appropriate disciplinary procedures linked to performance criteria are not precluded.

Hospitals and other health care facilities often have policies requiring drug testing for employees, students and volunteers. Some facilities provide that students who test positive for drugs are ineligible to complete clinical, practicum or work assignments in that facility. Students should be prepared to comply with the policies and procedures at any assigned facility and may not request facility assignments in an effort to avoid drug screening requirements. Students who fail to report for clinical or practicum assignments or who are terminated from rotations because they violate the drug testing or drug use policies of the facilities will be subject to disciplinary action which may include dismissal from the program.

Student Professional and Community Service Requirements

Participation in service activities is an important attribute of the health science professional. A hallmark of outstanding students and alumni is the desire and ability to make meaningful service contributions. Community service activities may include volunteer activities (health fairs and clinics, health education, provision of health services to at risk or disadvantaged populations and other outreach education or clinical activities) and service on community boards, committees, work groups and other service activities that promote the health and well-being of the community and its members. Professional service may include participation in the provision of state, national or international activities to advance the quality, access and effectiveness of health care services provided by allied health professionals. Achievement of the School of Health Professions Excellence in Community and Professional Service Goal is demonstrated in part through: (1) student and faculty participation in community service activities; (2) student satisfaction with and appreciation for community service; (3) students and faculty who provide leadership and support to professional associations, boards and committees; (4) provision of community and professional continuing education to local, national and international audiences.

In order to support achievement of these service excellence goals and objectives, the School of Health Professions has developed a professional and community service recommendation for students as a part of their academic programs. As a requirement for program completion, each academic degree granting program may establish a minimum service requirement for each student enrolled in the program. Examples of activities that may be used to meet this requirement include participation in community health fairs; community health screening and/or health services; provision of community health education; participation in approved professional service and/or continuing education activities; and assistance with the delivery of seminars, lectures, workshops and related community or professional continuing education activities. This program requirement may be required for satisfactory course completion for at least one course in the student's prescribed course of studies. As an alternative, the requirement may be listed as a graduation requirement for the program in the catalog or program handbook.

Student Academic Appeal and Grievance Procedures

The health science center School of Health Professions student appeal and grievance procedures provide a mechanism whereby any student may obtain a review of a complaint of unfair treatment. The student appeals procedures should not be used to question a rule, procedure or policy established by an authorized faculty or administrative body. Rather it may be used to provide due process for those who believe that a rule, procedure or policy has been applied in an unfair or inequitable manner, or that there has been unfair or improper treatment by a person or persons. Students who are appealing an academic decision that could result in a dismissal from the university, may be allowed to continue to progress in the program until the issue is resolved. If the academic decision is upheld and the student is dismissed from the university they will be withdrawn from their current classes. The withdrawal will be dated effective upon denial of the appeal.

A student wishing to appeal an academic decision should follow the process summarized below, in the sequence indicated.

Step 1. In the academic community, the responsibility for course development, course delivery and the assessment of student achievement rests primarily with the course instructor. Any student who has a complaint of inappropriate treatment related to a course should first seek to resolve it informally with the course instructor. If the course instructor is the department chairperson, or if the complaint does not pertain to a specific course, the student should seek resolution with the department chairperson at the outset. Furthermore, complaints or appeals regarding decisions made by the student progress committee of the department would initially go to the department chairperson.

a. A student with such a complaint must request reconsideration, in writing, of the application of a rule, procedure, policy or unfair or improper treatment within five (5) working days following the incident that forms the basis for the complaint (e.g., five days after grades are posted).

b. The instructor will meet with the student (or speak with the student via telephone for those students who are unable to come to the instructor's office). The instructor will notify the student in writing of his/her decision regarding the complaint. As noted above, complaints not related to a specific course or instructor should be directed initially to the department chairperson, who will then meet with the student. In such cases, the department chairperson will notify the student in writing of his/her decision regarding the complaint.

Step 2. If resolution is not achieved informally, as described in Step 1, the student should seek resolution with the chairperson of the department in which the course is offered within five (5) working days following notification by the instructor of his/her decision.

a. The chairperson will meet with the student (or speak with the student for those students unable to come to the chairperson's office) following receipt of the student's request for resolution to discuss the problem or complaint.

b. The chairperson will notify the student of his/her decision in writing following the meeting or discussion.

c. As noted above, (see Step 1), if the complaint does not pertain to a specific course or relates to a decision made by the Student Progress Committee, the student should seek resolution with the department chairperson at the outset.

Step 3. If the issue was not resolved in Step 2, the student may submit a written appeal, describing the nature of the complaint and reasons for seeking an appeal to the Student Progress Committee of the department within five (5) working days following notification by the department chairperson of his/her decision. This would include complaints or appeals regarding decisions originally made by the Student Progress Committee.

a. The student may appear before the committee in person to make an oral statement and answer questions from the committee. The student will not be allowed to be present during committee deliberations.

b. The committee may request that the course instructor or faculty member named in the grievance appear before the committee to make an oral statement and answer questions. The instructor or faculty member named in the grievance may not be present during committee deliberations.

c. Following review of information provided, the committee will notify the student of its decision.

Step 4. If the issue was not resolved to the students satisfaction in Step 3, the student may submit a written request seeking a hearing to the dean within five (5) working days of receiving the department progress and promotion committee decision. The written request should include a description of the complaint and the reason the student is seeking an appeal.

a. The dean or his/her designee[1] will meet with the student following receipt of the written request.

b. Following the meeting with the student, the dean may render a decision, or choose to appoint a panel to investigate the grievance and make a recommendation to the dean.

c. Following review of the information provided and any recommendations from the panel (should one be appointed), the dean will then notify the student of his/her decision. The decision of the dean is final and may not be appealed.

[1]The dean may delegate authority to complete this step of the appeals process to the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs.

Clinical Policies and Procedures

Clinical Hours

Students may be expected to travel outside of San Antonio to complete clinical rotations required for graduation. Students are responsible for travel to and from any clinical sites at their own expense.

Although all efforts are made to schedule clinical rotations well in advance, there may be times when the clinical site is changed with little notice due to challenges outside of our control. Students will be required to modify previously scheduled clinical rotations if unexpected changes occur.

COVID-19 Vaccinations Required by Clinical Affiliates

UT Health San Antonio (UTHSA) **does not require COVID-19 vaccinations.** However, most UTHSCA clinical affiliates do require proof of vaccination for students to be placed in clinical training rotations within their facilities. In some cases, clinical affiliates MAY offer vaccination exemptions for medical or religious reasons. If desired, such exemptions must be obtained by the student directly from the clinical site.

If a student is unable to meet clinical training requirements at assigned clinical affiliates, the student may be unable to continue in the program curricular sequence and thus be unable to complete the program.

Attendance

Because of the nature and complexity of the health professions programs, students are expected to attend every class, laboratory, conference, demonstration, meeting, clinical assignment and other assigned activities included as a component of the curriculum. The once-a-year offering of most courses and step-by-step format of the curriculum allow minimal or no opportunity for make-up sessions. Attendance requirements for classes, laboratories and clinic are the option and prerogative of the course instructor and specific program. The policy regarding attendance is outlined in each course syllabus and may be found in the department's student manual/handbook; policies are generally reviewed by the course instructor at the first class meeting.

Excused absences may be granted by the course director, program director or department chair in cases of illness or personal emergency (e.g., extended hospitalization, death in the family). Excused absences are considered on an individual basis and verification of the reason for the absence may be required. Unexcused absences may be considered sufficient cause for course failure. Prolonged absences for any reason may not be remediable. The faculty is not required to provide make-up or additional sessions for classes missed by students, regardless of the reason for the absence. Students are responsible for all material presented when they are absent and are responsible for arranging with the course director to make up missed work, if allowed.

Attendance is a professional attribute that the faculty expects every student to demonstrate. Repeated or multiple absences, unexcused absences and tardiness will be considered unprofessional conduct and may result in faculty review and penalties, including probation, suspension or dismissal from the program. Course grading requirements may include participation and any absence is considered non-participation. The ability of the graduating health professions student is dependent on the sum of her or his experiences during the educational and training period.

Leave of Absence

Under unusual circumstances, such as prolonged illness or injury, a student may request a leave of absence from a certificate or degree program. The request must be made in writing to the department chair. On recommendation from the department's faculty or Student Progress Committee, the department chair may grant a leave of absence for a period not to exceed one year. If a student is granted a leave of absence before the end of the academic term, a grade of "I" (Incomplete) may be recorded for each course that has not been completed. The student will be required to complete these courses under conditions prescribed by the faculty or the Student Progress Committee. Specific procedures for requesting a leave of absence may be established by each department within the above guidelines.

Withdrawal from a Certificate or Degree Program

Permission for withdrawal from a certificate or degree program in the School of Health Professions may be granted by the dean or associate dean with the concurrence of the faculty. The student who wishes to withdraw must complete the Student Clearance e-Form (see withdrawal procedures (https://registrarhelp.uthscsa.edu/m/87977/l/1237047-

how-to-take-a-leave-of-absence-or-completely-withdraw-from-the-university/) on the Office of the University Registrar Web site), submit the e-form for the required signatures, and obtain authorized signature clearance from each area listed on the lower portion of the form.

Before leaving the program, the student should arrange for an exit interview with the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs. An additional exit interview is also required for students who are receiving financial aid.

In the case of withdrawal before the end of the academic semester or session, a grade of "**W**" will be recorded for each course not completed. In the case of withdrawal at the end of the academic semester or session, the appropriate grade will be recorded for each completed course.

Readmission

An application for readmission by a student who has previously withdrawn or has been dismissed from a certificate or degree program is subject to certain requirements, procedures and readmission considerations. Although the university is under no obligation to readmit any student who has withdrawn or been dismissed, a student may seek reentry for further study by *petitioning for readmission*. Students who have been granted a leave of absence are eligible to return to their program as stipulated in their approved leave of absence. Students who have withdrawn and have not been granted a leave of absence or those who have been dismissed from a program are eligible for readmission consideration as described below.

Students who wish to petition for readmission should submit to the chair/program director a written request to return to the program at least three months prior to the semester in which they wish to reenter. The written request to return should include a self-analysis of the reasons for withdrawal or dismissal, an indication of how the student spent the interim time, steps the student may have taken for remediation and why the student will be successful when readmitted. Upon receipt of the request, the chair/program director will appoint a committee of the faculty to consider the request. The committee will make a recommendation to the Chair/Program Director and Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs who will make the decision regarding whether an individual may return to the program. The chair/program director will outline the conditions of return and notify the student of the decision and conditions for return.

The recommendation will be based on, but not limited to the following criteria:

a. The student's academic history

b. Consideration of any special circumstances unique to the student that may have generated the withdrawal.

c. Consideration of any remedial steps or professional activities the student may have taken since his or her withdrawal.

d. Availability of space within the program to accommodate a returning student.

Students approved for readmission will be subject to the tuition, fees and other program and graduation requirements as described in the university catalog and student program handbook in effect at the time of readmission. Readmission may be contingent on the student's completion of specific additional activities, such as repeating specified coursework, remedial course work, returning on academic probationary status and (in certain cases) re-taking the entire curriculum. Requirements for return will be stated in the readmission letter provided to the student by the chair/program director. Should the repeat of specific courses be required, these courses will be retaken during the semester in which they are normally offered. Students who are readmitted must meet all program standards of progress to include obtaining a satisfactory grade (as defined by the program) for any courses which must be repeated. Additional return conditions may be required based on specific program policies and procedures.

A student whose petition for reentry is denied may formally reapply to the professional program through the regular program application process; reapplication does not assure acceptance in any subsequent year.