

# 2021 General Policies Manual



Transforming Lives and Communities

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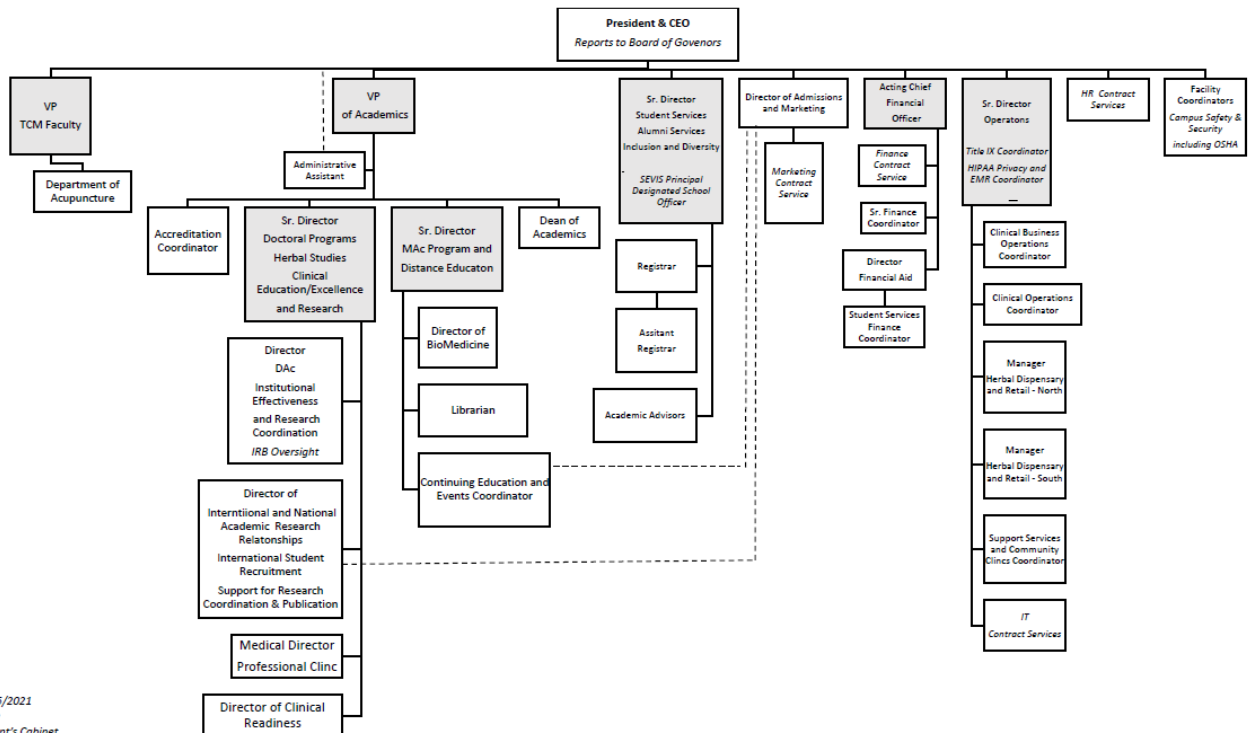
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# Institutional Information

## Organizational chart

Organizational Chart – June 2020



Updated Org Chart 1/25/2021  
Shaded areas designate  
members of The President's Cabinet

What is a policy?

AOMA Graduate School of Integrative Medicine (AOMA) establishes administrative policies to align operations, set behavioral expectations across the institution, and communicate policy roles and responsibilities. Administrative policies may be established if they:

- Support AOMA's mission and strategic goals;
- Apply institution-wide;
- Impact a substantial number of the AOMA population;
- Promote consistency, efficiency, and effectiveness and/or mitigate or manage significant institutional risk;
- Derive from the authority of the Board of Governors' policies, including specific delegated authority to manage the institution or comply with federal or state laws, rules, or regulations.

### ***Policy framework***

The president is responsible for establishing administrative policies by means of a comprehensive and strategic framework that provides:

- A means for determining the need for administrative policy;
- A consistent, transparent, and inclusive development process;
- An identified authority for approving administrative policy;
- A mechanism for regular review of policy need, compliance, and effectiveness;
- A consistent policy format and access to the policy library.

### ***Compliance***

Employees and students are responsible for knowing, understanding, and complying with administrative policies that relate to their position of employment or enrollment at AOMA. Policy owners are responsible for following the policy development and implementation process established by the president, communicating their policies properly, reviewing and updating their policies regularly, and monitoring their policies for compliance and effectiveness.

### ***Relationship of administrative policy with departmental policy***

Departments may develop their own policies, whether or not a corresponding administrative policy exists. If there is a corresponding administrative policy, they may adopt a more, but not less, restrictive local policy with the concurrence of the policy owner, except where an administrative policy specifically prohibits departments from establishing policies that differ from the corresponding administrative policy.

### ***Expedited process***

Policy owners may request a more expedited process from the chair of the president's Policy Committee through the administrative policy director. Special situations where this is likely may include a change in federal or state law, a significant and immediate financial opportunity, or a major institutional risk.

Official policies reside in the General Policies Manual. Relevant official policies are also published in the Employee Manual, Student & Clinic Manual, Financial Aid Manual, Safety & Security Manual, Governance Manual, Financial Practices Manual, Externship Manual, Institutional Research Manual, and the AOMA Catalog.

The process for revising existing or proposing new policies depends on the scope, as follows:

- Policies developed by the governing board generally deal with the institution as a whole and establish fundamental principles as a basis and guide for later action. Board policies are intended to be enduring rather than responses to particular issues. (Procedures to implement board policy are often developed and refined administratively.)
- Policies and procedures that are needed to administer the institution and its various units in accordance with federal and state legislation, reasonable administrative practice, and governing board policy are routed through the President's Cabinet and follow the processes for policy revisions or new policies outlined below.

- Policies applicable only to faculty, or that relate to academic rules and regulations are routed through existing approval processes within the Academic Council.
- Policies applicable only to students and student life are routed through existing approval processes within student services.
- Policies applicable only to financial transactions and recordkeeping are routed through the Finance Committee.

Those policies addressed outside of the process below must be communicated to the President's Cabinet to ensure coordination of all policy records. If in doubt as to the process for a particular new or revised policy, email [business.officer@aoma.edu](mailto:business.officer@aoma.edu).

## Policy Committee

The Policy Committee is appointed by the president to lead the review process for all new/revised AOMA-wide administrative policies. Currently, the Policy Committee is composed of members of the President's Cabinet, and includes the president, president emeritus, the master's and doctoral program directors, vice-president of faculty, vice-president of academics, special advisor to the president, and the senior director of finance. The representatives of admissions, student services, the registrar's office, finance office, clinical services, and retail operations, as well as the Faculty Senate will ensure coordination of those policies developed or revised outside of this process.

- Each policy revision must be authorized by the responsible cabinet officer.
- The originating department will complete the Revised Policy Review Form, and submit it to the responsible cabinet officer for presentation to the Policy Committee at cabinet meetings.
- Prior to submission of a new policy, it is the originating department's responsibility to research the General Policies Manual, as well as other published manuals (Employee, Student, Safety, etc.) for any existing policies that may already apply or could be adapted to include appropriate language.
- Revisions to policies for which multiple departments have responsibility must be discussed among the departments and be authorized by the responsible cabinet officers before the draft is submitted to the Policy Committee.
- If the proposed policy has ramifications for other departments, the originating department must consult with those units and obtain concurrence prior to submission.
- The Policy Committee will review the revised policy and determine if further legal oversight is required.
- Policies that require governing board approval or adoption will be brought before the board for consideration. Action on such policies will be reflected in the board's minutes and published in relevant manuals.
- Upon approval of the President's Cabinet and/or the governing board, as appropriate, the policy revision becomes official and the responsible cabinet officer(s) will notify the campus community.

- When steps one and two have been completed, the originating department will complete the New Policy Review Form, secure authorization of the responsible cabinet officer(s), and submit it to the Policy Committee.
- The Policy Committee will review the proposed policy, determine if further legal oversight is required, and forward it to the President's Cabinet for final review and approval.
- Upon approval by the President's Cabinet, the policy becomes official and the Policy Committee will notify the campus community.

The Policy Committee will answer questions and provide guidance and support throughout the process.

## Policy resources

Official policies and their associated procedures can be found in the following institutional documents:

- By-Laws of the Corporation
- Governance Manual
- AOMA Catalog
- Employee Manual
- Student & Clinic Manual
- Externship Manual
- Financial Aid Manual
- Safety & Security Manual
- Institutional Research Manual
- Financial Practices Manual

## Legal & Administrative

### Academic freedom

*Scope:* Faculty

The faculty, in collaboration with the administration, holds major responsibility for matters of curriculum. AOMA acknowledges that faculty members shall have academic freedom consistent with the AAUP 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom with 1970 Interpretive Comments (<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/1940statement.htm>), from which the following is adapted.

Academic freedom is the specific right of scholars and teachers within a university to pursue knowledge, to speak, to write, and to conduct research/scholarship activities without unreasonable or unwarranted restriction. It includes the freedom to be evaluated as a scholar or a teacher on the basis of legitimate intellectual criteria, not on personal views or beliefs, political preference, religious or other individual affiliations, except as said views and preferences could be demonstrated to adversely affect intellectual and professional achievement and performance.

Academic freedom includes the right, responsibility, and accountability of faculty members to conduct their activities in a spirit of *collegiality*, *collaboration*, and *respect* for all members of the AOMA community. Roles of faculty cannot be separated from the responsibilities that are unique to the mission of AOMA.

Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in research and publication of research results, subject to the adequate performance of their designated teaching duties. Faculty members are expected to conduct their assigned courses in a manner consistent with stated course objectives and course content and credit as approved. Within this framework, faculty members are entitled to freedom in the classroom in developing content and discussing topics as appropriate to the above.

Each faculty member is a citizen and member of a learned profession, and officer of the educational institution. When a faculty member speaks or writes as a citizen, he or she is exempt from institutional censorship or discipline. As scholars and educational officers, however, faculty members are admonished to remember that the public may judge the profession and the institution by the utterances of individual faculty members.

Each faculty member has the right to criticize and seek alteration of institutional regulations and policies through legal and existing shared governance means. The protection of academic freedom extends to all faculty members with full-time or part-time appointments to the institution regardless of rank, position, credentials, or title. However, academic freedom does



not allow for professional conduct that brings discredit to the institution, to the academic discipline, or to the individual in a manner that is illegal or unethical.

*Revised:* October 2006; updated January 2007

## Intellectual property

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students

This policy provides guidelines for the management of intellectual property resources produced by AOMA faculty, staff, administration, and/or students.

### *Definitions of terms*

“Intellectual property” refers to works that are typically eligible for copyright or patent protection, created when something new has been conceived or when a non-obvious result which can be applied for some useful purpose has been discovered using existing knowledge. Such works include but are not limited to literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works, computer software, multimedia presentations, teaching materials, online course “shells” and inventions.

“Creator” refers to the inventor, developer, author, or creator of a copyrightable work or a patentable invention.

“Work made for hire” is work prepared by an employee or student either:

- a. Within the scope of his or her employment; or
- b. A work specially ordered or commissioned for use as a contribution to a collective work, as a part of a motion picture or other audiovisual work, as a translation, as a supplementary work, as a compilation, as an instructional text, as a test, as answer material for a test, or as an atlas, if the parties expressly agree in a written instrument signed by them that the work shall be considered a work made for hire. For the purpose of the foregoing sentence, a “supplementary work” is a work prepared for publication as a secondary adjunct to a work by another author for the purpose of introducing, concluding, illustrating, explaining, revising, commenting upon, or assisting in the use of the other work, such as forewords, after-words, pictorial illustrations, maps, charts, tables, editorial notes, musical arrangements, answer material for tests, bibliographies, appendixes, and indexes. An “instructional text” is a literary, pictorial, or graphic work prepared for publication and with the purpose of use in systematic instructional activities.

“Nominal use of resources” refers to use of tools, materials, and other resources that are generally available to all institution personnel in the performance of normal job responsibilities, including office space, office equipment, library resources, and network resources.

“Substantial use of resources” refers to use of tools, materials, and other resources that are qualitatively and/or quantitatively beyond those which are normally provided to all institution personnel in the performance of normal job duties.

### *Ownership of intellectual property*

#### *Externally sponsored projects*

AOMA may negotiate grants and contracts with external sponsors such as business and industry, government agencies, and foundations that specify the ownership of intellectual property created as a result of the sponsored activity. Employees and students working on these projects will be notified in advance of any terms of ownership specified in the grant or contract.

#### *AOMA sponsored projects*

AOMA will own intellectual property created by employees and students who were assigned or employed specifically to create the intellectual property, or when the creation of the intellectual property required substantial use of AOMA resources, to include but not limited to uniform syllabi, handbooks, AOMA web pages, computer programs, artwork or electronic media created for AOMA, and online course “shells.” The institution retains ownership of materials created for AOMA publications including professional development documents.

#### *Teaching and classroom materials*

The creator will retain intellectual property rights to teaching and classroom materials, such as problem sets, lecture notes, hand-outs, lab manuals, class notes, and study guides not subject to the above restrictions. When the creator is an AOMA employee or student, the institution will be granted a non-exclusive, non-transferable, royalty-free, perpetual license to use, display, copy, and prepare derivative works of such materials for its internal use.

#### *Independent projects*

Intellectual property created by an AOMA employee that is not part of the creator’s employment responsibilities and that is produced on the employee’s own time without making more than nominal use of institutional resources shall be owned by the creator.

#### *Joint works*

When a work involves multiple creators including individuals who are not AOMA employees, the guidelines described above will be used to determine the institution’s interest in the resulting intellectual property.

#### *Logos, trademarks, and institution name*

AOMA owns all trademarks and service marks related to goods and services distributed by the institution. Identifying marks include but are not limited to, the name “AOMA Graduate School of Integrative Medicine,” “Academy of Oriental Medicine at Austin,” “AOMA,” the official seal, AOMA’s logo and derivative designs, and all future trademarks, service marks, and logos used by the institution.

### *Use of the institution name*

Employees are permitted to identify themselves using the name of AOMA in connection with activities outside AOMA environment that are consistent with AOMA's mission, vision, and values. Employees must ensure that AOMA's name is used in an appropriate context and in a manner that does not imply endorsement of a particular activity, product, service, or organization.

### *Administration of intellectual property*

#### *Use of copyrighted works*

It is the responsibility of the creator of any form of intellectual property to ensure that copyrights held by other entities are not infringed upon and that appropriate permission has been obtained for the use of copyrighted material.

#### *Disclosure*

Any employee who plans to create intellectual property developed nominally or substantially with institutional equipment, materials, facilities, or other resources during working hours, and who intends to copyright or otherwise merchandise the products of that work will make a written disclosure to their immediate supervisor, who will transmit the disclosure through the established chain of authority to the president. This excludes those projects that are AOMA sponsored projects.

#### *Compensation for commercial development*

In cases where commercial development results from intellectual property that has been developed making substantial use of AOMA resources but is not a "work for hire," the president will assign a special committee to work with the creator(s) of the work to determine reasonable compensation for the work. AOMA will endeavor to recover its costs (materials, equipment, facilities, and time) associated with the work before assigning special compensation for the creator.

#### *Textbooks and teaching materials produced for commercial distribution*

AOMA personnel who author textbooks or other materials for commercial distribution must not use their position within AOMA for personal gain by requiring purchase of the materials by students or AOMA.

*Revised: May 2009, May 2013 (updated format and corrected "academy" to "AOMA")*

## **Grievance policies**

There are a number of policies and procedures regarding grievances and dispute/issue resolution for faculty, staff, and students. Most of these are contained in this manual, and include:

- Professionalism
- Non-Discriminatory and Equal Opportunity
- Sex Discrimination/Sexual Harassment
- Intellectual Property

- Consensual Relationships
- Grade Appeal
- Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal ([Financial Aid Manual](#))
- Student Records and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Written Student Complaints

For details on how to complain about AOMA to the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, please see the section in this manual: [Complaints about alleged violations of ACAOM's Eligibility Requirements](#).

For details on how to complain about AOMA to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, please see the section in this manual: [Written Student Complaints](#).

*Revised:* June 2019

## Non-discrimination and equal opportunity

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students, applicants, contractors, visitors

It is the policy of AOMA to provide an educational and working environment that provides equal opportunity to all members of the AOMA community. In accordance with federal and state law, AOMA prohibits unlawful discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age (40 or older) or genetic information (including family medical history), disability, citizenship, and veteran status.

*Revised:* August 2007, May 2017

### *Definitions of terms (expanded for Title IX/Clery/VAWA Act)*

“Discrimination” is defined as conduct directed at a specific individual or a group of identifiable individuals that subjects the individual or group to treatment that adversely affects their employment or education because of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, citizenship, or veteran status.

“Harassment” is defined as a form of discrimination, such as verbal or physical conduct that is directed at an individual or group because of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, or sexual orientation when such conduct is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to have the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's or group's academic or work performance, or of creating a hostile academic or work environment.

“Verbal conduct” is defined as oral, written, or symbolic expressions that:

- Personally describe or are personally directed at a specific individual or group of identifiable individuals;

- Are not necessary to an argument for or against the substance of any political, religious, philosophical, ideological, or academic idea.

Constitutionally protected expression cannot be considered harassment under this policy.

### *Reporting*

A person who believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy should report the incident to any AOMA official, administrator, or supervisor. A faculty member is not an “official, administrator, or supervisor” for this purpose unless that faculty member holds an administrative position. Students are encouraged to report such incidents to the director of operations; employees and campus visitors are encouraged to report to the human resources department. Incidents should be reported as soon as possible after the time of their occurrence. No person is required to report discrimination or harassment to the alleged offender.

### *Reporting responsibility*

Every supervisor, administrator, and AOMA official is responsible for promptly reporting incidents of discrimination and harassment in violation of this policy that come to their attention to either the director of operations or the human resources department.

### *Resolution options*

A person who believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy and seeks to take action may use either the informal resolution process or the formal complaint process, or both. The informal resolution and formal complaint resolution process described in this policy are not mutually exclusive, and neither is required as a precondition for choosing the other; however, they cannot both be used at the same time.

### *Informal resolution procedure*

Informal resolution may be an appropriate choice when the conduct involved is not of a serious or repetitive nature and disciplinary action is not required to remedy the situation. No formal investigation is involved in the informal resolution process.

A request for informal resolution must be made within 90 calendar days of the date of the alleged incident to either the director of operations or the human resources department, who shall determine whether the nature of the problem is such that it can be resolved by agreement on an informal basis, and if so, which office will do so. A request for informal resolution will not extend the 90-day time limit for filing a formal complaint.

Methods for informal resolution may include, but are not limited to, coaching the person on how to directly address a situation which is causing a problem; mediating the dispute with the parties; aiding in the modification of a situation in which the offensive conduct occurred; assisting a department or division with the resolution of a real or perceived problem; or arranging a documented meeting with the alleged offender that involves a discussion of the requirements of the nondiscrimination policy.

AOMA shall document any informal resolution. Such documentation shall be retained by the director of operations or human resources department as appropriate and will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. An informal resolution meeting shall not be considered a precondition for the filing of a written complaint.

### *Complaint resolution procedure*

#### *Definitions of terms*

A “complaint” is defined as a signed document alleging discrimination, including harassment under this policy.

“Complainant” is defined as a person who submits a written complaint alleging discrimination, including harassment under this policy.

“Respondent” is defined as the person designated to respond to a complaint. Generally, the respondent would be the person alleged to be responsible for the prohibited discrimination or harassment alleged in a complaint. The term “respondent” may be used to designate persons with direct responsibility for a particular action or those persons with administrative responsibility for procedures and policies in those areas covered in a complaint.

“Notification” takes place two days after the date of posting of any document in the United States mail, properly addressed, or upon the date of receipt of any document, when placed in the campus mail, properly addressed. Written communications to a complainant are properly addressed when sent to the address given in the complaint or the last address given since the filing of the complaint.

#### *Complaint*

A complaint alleging discrimination or harassment must be submitted in writing to the human resources department or the director of operations. The complaint must contain the following information:

- Name of the complainant(s)
- Contact information, including address, telephone number, email address
- Name of person(s) directly responsible for alleged violation(s)
- Date(s) and place(s) of alleged violation(s)
- Nature of alleged violation(s) as defined in this policy
- Detailed description of the specific conduct that is the basis of alleged violation(s)
- Copies of documents pertaining to the alleged violation(s)
- Names of any witnesses to alleged violation(s)
- Action requested to resolve the situation
- Complainant's signature and date of filing
- Any other relevant information

The following communications do not constitute a complaint and will not be investigated or resolved pursuant to the complaint resolution process:

- Oral allegations
- Email correspondence
- Anonymous communications
- Courtesy copies of correspondence or a complaint filed with others
- Inquiries that seek advice or information only
- Pre-complaint consultations and informal resolution activities

#### *Time limit*

A written complaint must be filed within 90 calendar days of the occurrence of the alleged violation. In the case of a currently enrolled student, if the last day for filing a complaint falls prior to the end of the academic term in which the alleged violation occurred, then the complaint may be filed within 30 calendar days after the end of that term.

#### *Acknowledgment*

Within five working days after receipt of a written complaint, the human resources department or the director of operations, as appropriate, will send the complainant(s) a brief acknowledgment of the complaint, stating that the complaint will be evaluated, and advising the complainant(s) that he or she will be contacted within a given time. The acknowledgment letter will include a copy of these complaint procedures.

#### *Complaint evaluation*

A formal investigation will be initiated if a complaint is complete, timely, within the scope of this policy, and articulates sufficient specific facts, which, if determined to be true, would support a finding that this policy was violated. AOMA may not proceed with a complaint investigation under a variety of circumstances, if, for instance:

- A person fails to provide a written, signed complaint;
- A complaint fails to describe in sufficient detail the conduct that is the basis of the complaint;
- The conduct described in the complaint is not covered by this policy;
- A complaint is not timely;
- The complainant(s) declines to cooperate in AOMA's investigation;
- The complaint has been withdrawn;
- An appropriate resolution or remedy has already been achieved, or has been offered and rejected.

If it is determined that AOMA will not proceed with a complaint investigation, the human resources department or the director of operations, as appropriate, will send a notification letter explaining the reason(s) to the complainant(s), with a copy to the alleged offender(s). The notification letter will also include a statement informing the complainant(s) that, within ten working days of the notification, he or she may appeal the determination not to proceed with a complaint investigation to the president. The request for appeal must be a signed, written document articulating why the decision to dismiss the complaint was in error. The president will respond within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal. If the decision to dismiss is upheld, that decision is final. If the decision to dismiss is overturned, the complaint is sent back to the

human resources department or the director of operations, as appropriate, for investigation in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

#### *Notification of respondent*

If it is determined that AOMA will proceed with a complaint investigation, the human resources department or the director of operations will give the respondent(s) written notification of the complaint investigation. The notification letter will include a copy of the written complaint. The notification letter will provide the respondent(s) an opportunity to submit a written response to the allegations within ten working days, unless unusual circumstances warrant additional time. The notification letter will include a statement advising the respondent(s) that retaliation against the complainant(s) is prohibited and will subject the respondent(s) to appropriate disciplinary action.

#### *Investigation responsibility*

The director of operations is responsible for conducting formal investigations of complaints against students alleging discrimination and harassment in violation of this policy. The human resources department is responsible for conducting formal investigations of complaints against non-students alleging discrimination and harassment in violation of this policy. If a complaint is directed against an individual who would otherwise play a role in investigating and attempting to resolve the complaint, the function assigned to that person by these procedures will be delegated to another person.

#### *Investigative process and findings*

The investigator will interview both the complainant(s) and the respondent(s) as well as persons who are considered to have pertinent factual information related to the complaint. The investigator shall also gather and examine documents relevant to the complaint. Facts will be considered on the basis of what is reasonable to persons of ordinary sensitivity and not on the particular sensitivity or reaction of an individual. Findings will be based on the totality of circumstances surrounding the conduct complained of, including, but not limited to, the context of that conduct, its severity, frequency, whether it was physically threatening, humiliating, or was offensive in nature.

#### *Representation*

During the complaint process, the complainant(s) and the respondent(s) may designate and thereafter be accompanied by an adviser of his or her choosing at meetings and interviews at which he or she is present; however, no representative may examine witnesses or otherwise actively participate in a meeting or interview.

#### *Submission of evidence*

During the complaint investigation process, the complainant(s) and the respondent(s) will provide the human resources department or the director of operations, as appropriate, with all documents relied upon regarding the issues raised in the complaint.



*Report of findings and recommendation: Complaints against non-students*

The investigator will provide a proposed statement of findings, copies of relevant documents, and any physical evidence considered to the vice-president of academics or other appropriate institutional leaders within 30 working days of receipt of the respondent's statement, unless unusual circumstances require more time. If a complaint is directed against a vice-president or institutional leader who would otherwise act on a complaint, the function assigned to that vice-president will be delegated to another person.

The appropriate vice-president or institutional leader will promptly notify the complainant(s) and the respondent(s) that the investigation has been completed and attach a copy of the proposed statement of findings. Student identifiable information, if any, which is confidential by law, will be redacted. Within ten working days from the date of notification, the complainant(s) and respondent(s) may each submit, for consideration by the vice president or other appropriate institutional leader, such comments and corrections as they may have.

Within 15 working days of the notification to the complainant(s) and respondent(s) that the investigation has been completed, the appropriate vice-president and the investigator shall meet to discuss the findings, and review the record, along with any comments and proposed corrections submitted by the complainant(s) and respondent(s).

Within 15 working days from that meeting, the vice-president shall take one of the following actions:

- a) Request further investigation into the complaint;
- b) Dismiss the complaint if the results of the completed investigation are inconclusive or there is insufficient reasonable, credible evidence to support the allegation(s);
- c) Find that this policy was violated.

If the vice-president/leader/administrator determines that this policy was violated, he or she, following consultation with the investigator or other knowledgeable persons as appropriate, shall determine a disciplinary action that is appropriate for the severity of the conduct. Disciplinary actions can include, but are not limited to, written reprimands, the imposition of conditions, reassignment, suspension without pay, and termination.

The vice-president shall inform the complainant(s) and the accused individual(s) and the appropriate unit head in writing of his or her decision, and shall attach a copy of the final statement of findings. Copies of the vice-president/leader/administrator's letter, the attached statement of findings, and relevant documents shall also be sent to the director of operations or the human resources department as appropriate.

*Report of findings and recommendation: Complaints against students*

The investigator will provide a proposed statement of findings, copies of relevant documents, and any physical evidence considered to the vice-president of academics or other appropriate institutional leader within 30 working days of receipt of the respondent's statement, unless unusual circumstances require more time.

The director of operations and the investigator shall meet within 15 working days to discuss the findings and review the record.

Within 15 working days from that meeting, the vice-president of academics or institutional leader shall take one of the following actions:

- a) Request further investigation into the complaint;
- b) Dismiss the complaint if the results of the completed investigation are inconclusive or there is insufficient reasonable, credible evidence to support the allegation(s);
- c) Find that this policy was violated.

If the vice-president of academics or institutional leader determines that this policy was violated, the vice-president or institutional leader, following consultation with the investigator or other knowledgeable persons as appropriate, shall determine whether to initiate a disciplinary action appropriate to the severity of the conduct. Disciplinary actions can include, but are not limited to, a documented warning, the imposition of conditions, probation, suspension, and dismissal.

As required by federal law, any disclosure of the findings and decision of the director of operations will be governed by the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

## *Miscellaneous*

### *Grievance of a disciplinary action*

Any employee disciplined pursuant to this policy may grieve that action by submitting a written grievance to the president's office within ten working days of the imposition of the disciplinary action. Ordinarily, the president will assign responsibility for review and action on the appeal of the vice-president's action to another vice-president; however, when required by unusual circumstances, the president may review and handle a grievance pursuant to this policy.

If the disciplinary action that is being grieved does not involve termination, demotion, or suspension without pay, the vice-president shall thoroughly review and finally decide the matter within 30 calendar days of its receipt unless unusual circumstances require more time.

If the disciplinary action that is being grieved involves the termination, demotion, or suspension without pay of an employee, the vice-president who is assigned to review the grievance shall follow the procedures for appealing such actions contained in that section. Complainants will be required to appear and testify at hearings that may be a part of such proceedings.

Any student disciplined under this policy has the right to an appeal. The student must give written notice of appeal to the president within 14 calendar days after all parties are notified of the decision. A timely notice of appeal suspends the imposition of the penalty until the appeal is finally decided. Interim action may be taken.

### *Retaliation prohibited*

A student, faculty member, or staff member who retaliates in any way against an individual who has brought a complaint pursuant to this policy or participated in good faith in an investigation of such a complaint, is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from AOMA.

### *Filing of false complaints*

Any person who knowingly and intentionally files a false complaint under this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from AOMA.

### *Effect on pending personnel actions*

The filing of a nondiscrimination or retaliation complaint will not stop or delay any evaluation or disciplinary action related to the complainant who is not performing up to acceptable standards or who has violated AOMA rules or policies.

### *Relationship of complaint process to outside agency time limits*

The filing of a discrimination or harassment complaint under this policy does not excuse the complainant from meeting the time limits of outside agencies.

### *Relationship to grievance procedure*

This complaint procedure shall also constitute the grievance procedure for complaints alleging unlawful discrimination. As used herein, “complaint” is synonymous with “grievance.”

### *Timeframes*

Timeframes mentioned in these procedures may be extended for good cause, such as holidays or when classes are not in session, or when it is necessary to complete an investigation due to difficulties reaching witnesses or parties to the complaint.

### *Documentation and confidentiality*

AOMA shall maintain documents related to complaints under this policy as required by law. The director of operations shall be primarily responsible for records related to complaints against students. The office of human resources department shall be primarily responsible for records related to complaints against non-students. The confidentiality of a complaint under this policy and all documents, correspondence, interviews, and discussions relating to the investigation of the information contained in a complaint will be maintained on a need-to-know basis to the extent permitted by law. Any person who knowingly and intentionally makes an unauthorized disclosure of confidential information contained in a complaint or otherwise relating to the investigation of a complaint under this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

*For assistance: Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the director of operations or the human resources department.*

## ADA and accommodations

Scope: Faculty, staff, students, and applicants for employment

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (PL 101-336) mandates equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in all public facilities, programs, activities, services, and benefits derived from them. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-112), as amended, and PL 93-516 mandate equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities in all programs, activities, and services of recipients of federal financial assistance. Both ADA and Section 504 are civil rights statutes that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, obligate colleges and universities to make certain adjustments and accommodations, and offer to persons with disabilities the opportunity to participate fully in all institutional programs and activities. AOMA adheres to these regulations and the Texas Commission on Human Rights.

### *Students requesting special accommodations*

If a student requests special accommodations due to a disability, the faculty member should consult with the dean of students and vice-president of academics to plan and implement a reasonable accommodation.

### *Disability accommodation for employees*

It is the policy of AOMA to provide equal access and opportunity to employees, applicants, students, and otherwise qualified persons with disabilities in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. AOMA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all aspects of the application process and the employment relationship.

Please see Disability accommodation for employees in the [Employee Manual](#) for procedures on requesting accommodations for a disability for applicants and employees.

Revised: August 2007; updated August 2013

## Sex discrimination/sexual harassment (Title IX and the Clery Act)

Scope: Faculty, staff, students, applicants, and visitors

It is the policy of AOMA to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, which prohibits discrimination based on sex (including sexual harassment and sexual violence) in the institution's educational programs and activities.

In accordance with federal and state law, AOMA prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, and sexual violence. This behavior will not be tolerated, and individuals who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. AOMA encourages students, faculty members, staff members, and visitors to promptly report discrimination based on sex (including sexual harassment and sexual violence).

## Definitions

“Sex discrimination” including sexual harassment, is defined as conduct directed at a specific individual or a group of identifiable individuals that subjects the individual or group to treatment that adversely affects their employment or education on account of sex.

“Sexual harassment” is any unwelcome direct or indirect verbal or physical conduct that is made a condition of employment or education, is a basis for employment or education decisions, or creates an offensive atmosphere that inhibits work or learning performance.

“Hostile environment” includes any situation in where there is harassing conduct that is sufficiently severe, pervasive/persistent, and patently offensive so that it alters the conditions of education or employment, from both a subjective (the alleged victim’s) and an objective (outside observer’s) viewpoint. The determination of whether an environment is “hostile” must be based on all of the circumstances. These may include:

- The frequency of the conduct
- The nature and severity of the conduct
- Whether the conduct was physically threatening
- Whether the conduct was humiliating
- The effect of the conduct on the alleged victim’s mental or emotional state
- Whether the conduct was directed at more than one person
- Whether the conduct arose in the context of other discriminatory conduct
- Whether the conduct unreasonably interfered with the alleged victim’s educational or work performance
- Whether the speech or conduct deserves the protections of academic freedom

“Physical conduct” that may constitute sexual harassment, depending on the totality of circumstances present, including frequency and severity, includes but is not limited to, unwelcome intentional touching or deliberate physical interference with or restriction of movement.

“Verbal conduct” is defined as oral, written, or symbolic expressions that personally describe or are personally directed at a specific individual or group of identifiable individuals, and are not necessary to an argument for or against the substance of any political, religious, philosophical, ideological, or academic idea.

Verbal conduct that may constitute sexual harassment, depending on the totality of circumstances present, includes but is not limited to:

- Explicit or implicit propositions to engage in sexual activity
- Gratuitous comments, jokes, questions, anecdotes, or remarks of a sexual nature about clothing or bodies
- Gratuitous remarks about sexual activities or speculation about sexual experiences
- Persistent, unwanted sexual or romantic attention
- Subtle or overt pressure for sexual favors

- Exposure to sexually suggestive visual displays such as photographs, graffiti, posters, calendars, or other materials
- Deliberate, repeated humiliation or intimidation based upon sex

The examples on this list are rarely, if ever, necessary to an argument for or against the substance of any political, religious, philosophical, ideological, or academic idea.

Constitutionally protected expression cannot be considered harassment under this policy.

“Sexual assault” is any unwanted sexual contact (touching, kissing, fondling, or intercourse) committed without consent of the individual or against an individual who cannot reasonably consent.

“Consent” is:

- Ongoing – must seek consent for every step of sexual activity.
- An active agreement – must seek nonverbal (active participation) and verbal consent.
- Respectful and honest –
  - “Consent can be given by word or action, but nonverbal consent is less clear than talking about what you want and what you don’t. Consent to some form of sexual activity cannot be automatically taken as consent to any other sexual activity.”

“Stalking” is engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to:

- Fear for his or her safety or the safety of others; or
- Suffer substantial emotional distress.

(Source: 42 USCS § 13925(a))

“Dating violence” is any unwanted sexual contact (touching, kissing, fondling, or intercourse) committed without consent of the individual or against an individual who cannot reasonably consent.

- Violence committed by a person who:
  - Is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim
- Where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:
  - Length of relationship
  - Type of relationship
  - Frequency of interaction between persons involved in the relationship

(Source: 42 USCS § 13925(a))

- Texas Code 71.0021: “Dating violence” means an act by an individual that is against another individual with whom that person has or has had a dating relationship and that is intended to result in physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault or that is a threat that reasonably places the individual in fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or sexual assault, but does not include defensive measures to protect oneself.

“Domestic (family) violence” includes crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner; by a person who shares a child in common with the victim; who either has or is cohabitating with the victim; or another person similarly situated. (Texas Code 47.004)

### **Reporting**

A person who believes that he or she has been subjected to sex discrimination, including sexual harassment or sexual violence, should report the incident to any AOMA official, administrator, or supervisor. Students are encouraged to report such incidents to the Title IX coordinator; employees and campus visitors are encouraged to report to the human resources department. Incidents should be reported as soon as possible after the time of their occurrence. No person is required to report sex discrimination or sexual harassment to the alleged offender.

AOMA’s campus Title IX coordinator is the director of operations. AOMA’s Title IX deputy coordinator is human resources consultant. Current contact information for each can be found on the AOMA website at <https://aoma.edu/my-aoma>.

### **Referral responsibility**

Every AOMA employee is responsible for promptly reporting incidents of sex discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual violence, that come to their attention to the campus Title IX coordinator.

Appropriate training is provided to the Title IX coordinator and Title IX deputies.

### **Reporting options**

If you have been assaulted, victims of sexual misconduct are strongly encouraged to report the incident and to take advantage of institutional support services available to them. Every effort will be made to assist victims and to protect their rights. Services and rights available include the following:

- Sol Community Counseling 512-366-0954. Ask for the counselor on call. Both male and female counselors are available. They will return phone calls between the hours of 8am–10pm. For after hours or immediate crises, call 911 or the MHMR Hotline at 512-472-4357.
- The SafePlace Rape Crisis Center is available 24 hours a day. Call 512-267-SAFE.

Victims will be informed of the range of legal options available. Victims may do the following.

- Report to the institution (Title IX coordinator or deputy coordinator).
- Report to law enforcement (APD or other agency) by calling 911. This allows the victim access to Victim Assistance Program funds and services.

Although these entities might work together, the investigations are separate and parallel processes.

### **Confidentiality and reporting**

Different people on campus have different reporting responsibilities and different abilities to maintain confidentiality, depending on their roles.

*Confidential reporting options:* If you desire that the details of the incident be kept confidential, you should speak to Sol Community Counseling or off-campus rape crisis resources, who will maintain confidentiality. In addition, you may speak off-campus with members of the clergy and chaplains, who will also keep reports made to them confidential.

*Non-confidential reporting options:* You are encouraged to speak to institutional officials to make reports of incidents, including but not limited to the Title IX coordinator, vice-president of academics, director of student services, or any member of the President's Cabinet. You have the right and can expect to have incidents of sexual misconduct to be taken seriously by the institution when reported, and to have those incidents investigated and properly resolved through administrative procedures. Reporting does not mean that your report won't be confidential, but it does mean that people who need to know will be told, and information will be shared as necessary with investigators, witnesses and the accused. The circle of people will be kept as tight as possible to protect your rights and privacy.

Sexual discrimination and harassment, including sexual violence, by a faculty or staff member of a student is a serious matter. Filing a complaint against someone for such inappropriate behavior is equally serious. The institution's objective in these situations is to resolve the matter with care and concern for the best interests of the person filing the complaint, the person against whom the complaint is being filed, and the institution.

A vice-president will not be involved in the investigation or decision if the complaint is against the administrative officer.

### ***Resolution options***

A person who believes that he or she has been subjected to sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual violence and seeks to take action may use either the Informal resolution procedure or the formal Complaint resolution procedure, or both. The informal resolution and formal complaint resolution procedures are not mutually exclusive, and neither is required as a precondition for choosing the other; however, they cannot both be used at the same time.

Please also see the **Student code of conduct special provisions for sexual discrimination, harassment, or violence** in the **Student & Clinic Manual**.

### ***Miscellaneous***

#### ***Employee grievance of a disciplinary action***

Any employee disciplined pursuant to this policy may grieve that action by submitting a written grievance, within ten working days of the imposition of the disciplinary action, to the president's office. Ordinarily, the president will assign responsibility for review and action on the appeal of the vice-president's action to another vice-president; however, when required by unusual circumstances, the president may review and handle a grievance pursuant to this policy.



If the disciplinary action that is being grieved does not involve termination, demotion, or suspension without pay, the vice-president shall thoroughly review and finally decide the matter within 30 calendar days of its receipt unless unusual circumstances require more time. If the disciplinary action that is being grieved involves termination, demotion, or suspension without pay of an employee, the vice-president who is assigned to review the grievance shall follow the procedures for appealing such actions contained in that section. Complainants will be required to appear and testify at hearings that may be a part of such proceedings.

#### *Retaliation prohibited*

A student, faculty member, or staff member who retaliates in any way against an individual who has brought a complaint pursuant to this policy or participated in an investigation of such a complaint, is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from AOMA.

#### *Filing of false complaints*

Any person who knowingly and intentionally files a false complaint under this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from AOMA.

#### *Effect on pending personnel actions*

The filing of a sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or retaliation complaint will not stop or delay any evaluation or disciplinary action related to the complainant who is not performing up to acceptable standards or who has violated AOMA rules or policies.

#### *Relationship of complaint process to outside agency time limits*

The filing of a sex discrimination or sexual harassment complaint under this policy does not excuse the complainant from meeting the time limits of outside agencies.

#### *Title IX grievance procedure*

This complaint procedure shall also constitute the grievance procedure for complaints alleging unlawful sex discrimination required under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. As used herein, "complaint" is synonymous with "grievance."

#### *Time frames*

Time frames mentioned in these procedures may be extended for good cause, such as holidays or when classes are not in session, or when it is necessary to complete an investigation due to difficulties reaching witnesses or parties to the complaint.

#### *Documentation and confidentiality*

AOMA shall maintain documents related to complaints under this policy as required by law. The dean of students shall be primarily responsible for records related to complaints against students. The human resources department shall be primarily responsible for records related to complaints against non-students. The confidentiality of a complaint under this policy and all documents, correspondence, interviews, and discussions relating to the investigation of the information contained in a complaint will be maintained on a need-to-know basis to the extent permitted by law. Any person who knowingly and intentionally makes an unauthorized

disclosure of confidential information contained in a complaint or otherwise relating to the investigation of a complaint under this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

### *Consensual relationships*

Participation of a supervisor, teacher, adviser, or coach in a consensual romantic or sexual relationship with a subordinate employee or student in all cases creates a prohibited conflict of interest. See AOMA's Consensual relationships policy.

*Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Title IX coordinator.*

*Revised: August 2007, July 2015*

## **Drug-free environment**

*Scope: Faculty, staff, students*

AOMA is committed to complying with applicable laws and to maintaining a safe and productive environment for all staff, students, faculty members, patients, and visitors.

### ***Purpose***

In accordance with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended by the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989, Public Law 101-226, AOMA adopts the following policy to prevent the unlawful possession, use and distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by employees and students. AOMA's policy is in accordance with the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, part of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, is incorporated herewith.

### ***Standard of conduct***

It is the policy of AOMA that employees and students will be subject to criminal, civil and disciplinary penalties if they distribute, sell, attempt to sell, possess or purchase controlled substances while at AOMA, while performing in a work-related capacity or at any campus, clinic or activity.

Serving of alcohol or alcoholic beverages on AOMA's campus or at an AOMA event must be pre-approved by the president or his/her designee. At any event where alcohol is served, food and non-alcoholic beverages must be available.

AOMA explicitly prohibits the following:

- The use, possession, solicitation for, or sale of narcotics or other illegal drugs, alcohol, or prescription medication without a prescription on AOMA premises or while performing an assignment.
- Being impaired or under the influence of legal or illegal drugs or alcohol away from AOMA, if such impairment or influence adversely affects the employee's work performance, the safety of the employee or of others, or puts at risk AOMA's reputation.

- Possession, use, solicitation for, or sale of legal or illegal drugs or alcohol away from AOMA, if such activity or involvement adversely affects the employee's work performance, the safety of the employee or of others, or puts at risk AOMA's reputation.
- The presence of any detectable amount of prohibited substances in the employee or student's body while at work, while on the premises of AOMA, or while on AOMA business. "Prohibited substances" include illegal drugs, alcohol, or prescription drugs not taken in accordance with a prescription given to the employee.

### **Sanctions**

Employee or student violation of these standards of conduct could result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. An employee who is charged with a violation within AOMA may also be referred for criminal prosecution.

Employees and students should be fully aware that the college will impose sanctions in all cases where there has been a violation of any of the above standards.

Employees must abide by the terms of this statement and must notify Human Resources of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring at the workplace, or at a work site, no later than five (5) working days after such conviction.

AOMA will make a good faith effort to maintain a drug-free workplace. That effort will include information about drug awareness education programs, counseling available through the Sol Community Counseling center, and the implementation and strict enforcement of this policy.

*Revised: August 2007; updated May 2009*

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

*Scope: Faculty, staff, students, and outside agents*

FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, is a federal law that pertains to the release of and access to educational records. FERPA protects the privacy of a student's education records and applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the US Department of Education.

### **Applicability**

FERPA applies to all students. A "student" is defined as a person who is in attendance at an institution, regardless of the person's age. At the post-secondary level, parents have no inherent right to access or inspect their son's or daughter's educational records. The right of access is limited solely to the student.

Upon admission to AOMA, each student is provided the Authorization to Disclose Student Information form to complete if they wish to grant right of access to information to others.

Upon completion, this form is submitted to the registrar to place within the student's record. A student may at any time make changes to the disclosure authorization by obtaining and completing the Authorization to Disclose Student Information form from the registrar. In addition, every year in the spring term a notice is placed on the CAMS student portal alerting students of their FERPA rights and how to go about making any desired disclosure changes.

### ***Information covered under FERPA***

FERPA applies to personally identifiable information in educational records. This includes items such as the student's name, names of family members, addresses, personal identifiers such as social security numbers, and personal characteristics or other information that make the student's identity easily traceable.

- Information that directly identifies an individual;
- Information that indirectly – by combination with other released information – identifies an individual;
- Information that can be reasonably linked to an individual by a member of the AOMA community with no special knowledge;
- Information requested by an individual or organization that the school or government agency reasonably knows could be individually identified because of the requester's special knowledge.

In addition to educational records, AOMA takes great care in safeguarding each student's directory information. While, according to FERPA, an institution may disclose directory information without consent, AOMA chooses to not release any information without prior student authorization. AOMA designates the following information as directory information for students who are currently enrolled:

- Name
- Local address
- Email address
- Telephone numbers

While this information is solely available through the AOMA CAMS Student Portal, students can elect to have this information withheld from the student population. To withhold the release of the above information, a student must submit a written request to the registrar's office. This request, once submitted, is permanent and will remain in force until rescinded in writing by the student. Upon graduation or withdrawal from AOMA, a student's directory information is removed from the active student directory. Any appeal of this policy should be submitted to the registrar.

### ***Educational records***

"Educational records" are all records that contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by an educational agency or institution, or by a party acting on its behalf.

"Records" are any information recorded in any way, including handwriting, print, tape, film, microfilm, microfiche, and digital images.

### ***Access to student educational records***

According to FERPA, non-directory information may not be released without prior written consent from the student. Exceptions include appropriate AOMA administrators, faculty members, or staff members who require access to educational records in order to perform their legitimate educational duties; officials of other schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll; and in connection with a student's application for, or the receipt of, financial aid.

“Legitimate educational interest” pertains to appropriate AOMA administrators, faculty members, staff members, or contractors acting on behalf of AOMA, who require access to educational records, when such records are needed in furtherance of the educational or business purposes of the student or AOMA.

### ***Students’ rights under FERPA***

Under FERPA, a student has a right to:

- Inspect and review his or her educational records;
- Request to amend his or her educational records;
- Have some control over the disclosure of information from his or her educational records.

*Revised: August 2007*

## **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

*Scope: Faculty, staff, students, clinic supervisors*

As a healthcare provider and as an employer, AOMA is required to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). Congress passed HIPAA in an effort “to protect the privacy and security of individually identifiable health information.” AOMA’s HIPAA policy is posted in all clinics. All AOMA employees and students are required to receive training on HIPAA. All parties must be respectful of patient confidentiality. Information regarding a patient should never be discussed outside the clinic without omitting the protected health information of the patient. Identification information must always be deleted from all forms and documents when presenting a case outside of the clinic (such as in Clinic Theater).

Clinic staff, clinic supervisors, interns, observers, and visitors in the patient treatment and consultation areas must adhere to confidentiality requirements. The identity of, or information pertaining to, any patient seen in the AOMA clinic may not be revealed to any source without specific written permission from the patient. Texas law states that the patient must sign a written consent indicating his/her permission to release medical records to an insurance company, another practitioner, or an attorney. In cases where the patient may be mentally unable to give permission or is deceased, the patient’s legal representative may sign for the release of the patient’s records. Minors must have a parent’s or guardian’s signature on file. Patient information must never be given over the phone. All employees and students should be familiar with HIPAA principles and procedures as described in the HIPAA training. In addition,

interns, observers, and clinic supervisors should never discuss with the patient outside of a private treatment room their conditions, treatments, including herbal prescriptions, or other confidential health information.

*Revised:* August 2007

## **Conflict of interest**

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, board members

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of the Conflict of Interest policy is to protect AOMA's interest when contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of a board member or board committee member. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable federal or state laws or regulations governing conflicts of interest applicable to AOMA.

### ***Definition of terms***

An "interested person" is any board member or member of a committee with board-delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below.

A person has a "financial interest" if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

1. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which AOMA has a transaction or arrangement, or
2. A compensation arrangement with AOMA or with an entity or individual with which AOMA has a transaction or arrangement. Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are substantial in nature.

## ***Procedures***

### ***Duty to disclose***

In connection with any actual or possible conflicts of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence and nature of his or her financial interest to the governors and members of committees with board-delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

### ***Determining whether a conflict of interest exists***

After disclosure of the possible financial interest and the discussion, the interested person shall leave the board or committee meeting while the financial interest is evaluated and decided upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

### *Procedures for addressing the conflict of interest*

The chairperson of the board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.

After exercising due diligence, the board or committee shall determine whether AOMA can obtain a more advantageous transaction or arrangement with reasonable efforts from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably attainable under circumstances that would not give rise to a conflict of interest, the board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in AOMA's best interest and for its own benefit and whether the transaction is fair and reasonable to AOMA, and shall make a decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement in conformity with such determination.

### *Violations of the Conflict of Interest policy*

If the board or committee has reasonable cause to believe that a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such a belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

If, after hearing the response of the member and making such further investigation as may be warranted in the circumstances, the board or committee determines that the member in fact has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

### *Records of proceedings*

The minutes of the board and all committees with board-delegated powers shall contain:

- The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, if such person was present;
- The board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed;
- The names of the persons who were present for the discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement,
- The content of the discussion including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement; and
- A record of any votes taken in connection therewith.

### *Compensation*

A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from AOMA for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

### *Statements*

Each governing board member and member of a committee with board-delegated powers of AOMA shall sign a statement which affirms that such person:

- Has received a copy of the Conflict of Interest policy;
- Has read and understood the policy;
- Has agreed to comply with the policy.

### *Periodic reviews*

To ensure that AOMA operates in a manner consistent with its mission, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable and are the results of arm's-length bargaining.
- Whether business arrangements and arrangement with management service organizations conform to written policies, are properly recorded, reflect the reasonable payments for goods and services, further AOMA's mission, and do not result in impermissible private benefit.

### *Use of outside experts*

In conducting periodic reviews, AOMA may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the board of its responsibility for ensuring that the periodic reviews are conducted.

*Revised:* December 2007; updated May 2009, updated January 2013



## Written student complaints

Scope: Staff and students

Directives from the United States Department of Education and SACS standard 12.4 require institutions of higher education to establish procedures for resolving student complaints. Compliance requires the maintenance of records related to all written complaints from students along with a log recording a summary of the complaint, the person or office charged to resolve the complaint, and the resolution or actions taken in response to the complaint. A written complaint from a student received by an office for redirection to another appropriate office becomes the responsibility of the receiving office.

Records associated with the written complaint along with the information included in the log that contain personally identifiable information about students may be subject to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and should be protected against improper disclosure.

The records and logs are subject to examination by the United States Department of Education, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, and the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.

### *Definition of written student complaint*

Complaints are expressions of dissatisfaction or formal allegations against AOMA, its units, its faculty, and its students. Examples would include grade appeals, academic dishonesty, sexual misconduct, harassment and discrimination, disability, financial aid, and those issues specifically identified in the policies listed below.

### *Grievance policies and complaint resolution*

The various grievance policies include methods for resolving complaints. The nature of the student's complaint will follow the resolution procedures of the appropriate grievance policy. The following offices are required to maintain logs:

- Dean of students (includes student services, registrar, academic advising, financial aid)
- Academic program directors (includes library and clinical education)
- Director of operations, (includes operations, admissions, facilities, finance, veterans' affairs, clinic and retail operations, information technology)

Questions or complaints about this institution should be addressed to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: [www.theccb.state.tx.us/studentcomplaints](http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/studentcomplaints)

The web address for rules governing student complaints, Title 19 of the Texas Administrative Code, Sections 1.110-1.120:  
[http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac\\_view=5&ti=19&pt=1&ch=1&sch=E&rl=Y](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=19&pt=1&ch=1&sch=E&rl=Y)

For details on how to complain about AOMA to the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, please see the next section: Complaints about alleged violations of ACAOM's Eligibility Requirements.

*Revised:* October 2012, January 2013, January 2019, June 2019, March 2020

## Complaints about alleged violations of ACAOM's Eligibility Requirements

If a student, faculty or staff member has a complaint about AOMA that has to do with programmatic eligibility requirements with Accreditation Commission on Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM), the individual may contact ACAOM directly. While individuals may have many types of complaints, ACAOM's complaint policy is not a mechanism for adjudication of disputes between individuals and programs. As such, the Commission will only consider complaints that allege violations of ACAOM's Eligibility Requirements, Standards and Criteria for Accreditation, policies or procedures. [<http://acaom.org/policies/complaint-review-policy/>, page 1] The Commission is not and cannot be a post-institution resort for resolution of individual misconduct allegations.

AOMA encourages individuals with such complaints regarding compliance with ACAOM standards to come forward to academic and/or administrative leadership for resolution of the issue(s). For such matters that remain unresolved, the individual may contact the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM) at 8941 Aztec Drive, Eden Prairie, MN 55347 (952-212-2434).

## CPR training

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students

Designated faculty and staff must maintain current CPR certification, as required by position descriptions. Faculty and staff must provide a certificate of completion to the human resources department for their employment files. All students must complete a CPR course and submit certification of completion of the course to the registrar prior to beginning clinic internship.

*Revised:* August 2007; updated August 2013

## Substantive change

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students

AOMA notifies regulatory entities of institutional changes in accordance with each entity's substantive change policy. Regulatory entities requiring substantive change notification include: the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC); the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM); the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB); the Department of Education (DoE); the International Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), and the California Acupuncture Board (CAB).

When required, AOMA seeks approval from the appropriate regulatory body prior to the initiation of the change.

### ***Procedure***

The president/CEO or the SACS liaison (with the permission of the president/CEO) will notify the designated regulatory entity official of substantive changes. The SACS liaison will be familiar with policies and procedures, ensure that substantive changes are recognized and reported in a timely fashion, and consult agency personnel as appropriate. Compliance with this procedure is mandatory.

### ***Monitoring compliance***

Annually, the SACS liaison will review and report on compliance with this policy to the President's Cabinet. Proposed revisions to this policy and procedure will be reviewed at that time.

*Approved:* July 18, 2012; updated May 2017

## **Breast feeding accommodations**

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students

As part of the family-friendly policies and benefits, AOMA supports breastfeeding mothers by accommodating mothers who wish to express breast milk during the workday when separated from their newborn(s).

Any employee or student who is breastfeeding will be provided reasonable break times to express breast milk for her baby. Bathrooms are not acceptable for expressing breast milk. AOMA provides locations that are clean, safe, and provide access to sinks as water sources. South campus offers the Meditation Room in Building A. Also available are any of our clinic treatment rooms at our South or North campus that is not in use (simply notify the clinic staff and they will direct you). These locations offer shielded privacy, free from intrusion by others while the mother is expressing milk or breastfeeding her child.

Hygienic refrigerated storage of breast milk is available. The Human Resources department can provide details when storage is needed.

*Approved:* July 08, 2019

# Professionalism & Integrity

## Professionalism

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students

AOMA is committed to providing an environment where students and employees can explore new ideas and seek new opportunities. Part of this goal is accomplished by a focus on high-quality educational services in an environment that supports the ideals of quality, flexibility, accessibility, and diversity.

Towards the fulfillment of its mission, AOMA has the right and duty to protect students, faculty, and staff from conduct that interferes with its primary educational responsibility and to maintain professional standards among all of its members.

Employees and students at AOMA have rights to freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, petition, and association afforded to all persons under the U.S. Constitution. Similarly, each individual should afford the same rights to others. As willing partners in learning, it is expected that individuals will comply with AOMA's rules and procedures, as outlined in the various official publications of the school, including this Professionalism policy.

### *Preamble*

The objectives of the AOMA Professionalism policy are:

- To demonstrate the priority placed on professional behavior by AOMA;
- To provide students, faculty, and staff with a clear articulation of expectations regarding professionalism;
- To determine AOMA's authority regarding professionalism lapses;
- To identify procedures for managing professionalism issues;
- To identify exemplary professional behavior so that it may be recognized and used as a potential vehicle for peer-modeling;
- To identify lapses in professional behavior as early as possible and provide appropriate remediation;
- To provide a longitudinal approach (i.e. not course-by-course or year-by-year) to monitor behavior;
- To outline due process for students and employees.

### *Scope*

This policy applies to the following contexts:

- All classroom-based settings;
- All clinical settings that are part of the learning program (e.g. community clinics, clinics, community health centers, AOMA Herbal Medicine, Cureville, etc.);

- Other settings that are not part of the formal learning program, but contribute to the learning process. Examples include: faculty offices, administrative offices, Herb lab, Library, Mind/Body Center, informal classes, interactions with other members of the campus community, and AOMA-supported events.

### *Institutional responsibilities*

- AOMA must ensure all students, faculty, and staff are familiar with the objectives of the Professionalism policy and require them to adhere to its principles.
- When students and employees fall short of professional behavior expectations, AOMA must provide good and timely feedback regarding unprofessional conduct. These responsibilities of the institution extend throughout all educational contexts.
- AOMA should provide exemplars of professional behaviors.
- AOMA must make all students and employees aware that exemplary behavior will be recognized and that lapses, depending on the level of severity, will be met with varying degrees of sanction.
- AOMA must ensure that all staff, faculty, preceptors, residents, etc. working with students are familiar with the objectives of the Professionalism policy and must direct them to note any behavior that they view as either exemplary or contrary to the principles of the policy.
- AOMA must ensure accurate and timely documentation of all professionalism incidents and determine appropriate consequences.

Exemplary behavior is recognized officially by AOMA. Please see the [Student & Clinic Manual](#) for procedures regarding submission of examples of exemplary behavior in students, and the [Employee Manual](#) for procedures applicable to employee exemplary behavior.

Lapses in professional behavior will be addressed following the disciplinary processes outlined in the [Student & Clinic Manual](#) and the [Employee Manual](#) for their respective populations.

*Revised:* November 2011

## **Departmental cooperation and communication**

*Scope:* Faculty and staff

While AOMA has multiple departments with various functions, we are ultimately part of a larger organization with a greater vision. We encourage an atmosphere of mutual respect, cooperation, and open communication. Many of the departments have connecting points on common projects or goals. AOMA expects departments to support each other and to offer relevant information to other departments as appropriate to ensure effective communication and outcomes.

*Revised:* August 2007; updated August 2013

## Consensual relationships

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students

Considering the trust afforded a faculty or staff member by a student, a supervisor by a supervisee, or an intern or practitioner by a patient, AOMA's faculty, staff members, and interns recognize that they are expected to make decisions regarding their relationships with students, supervisees, and patients which will promote an atmosphere of mutual trust and avoid both conflict of interest and the appearance of conflict of interest.

Care must be exercised to ensure that personal relationships do not result in situations that might interfere with objective judgment. Employees who are in positions of authority are under a special obligation to preserve the integrity of their relationships in situations involving students and patients.

All employees are prohibited from having a romantic or outside relationship or permitting one to develop with any other employee or student who is subject to that person's supervision, directly or indirectly, even when both parties appear to have consented (as defined in the "Sex discrimination/sexual harassment" section of this manual) to the relationship. The same prohibition applies for any clinic practitioner or student intern in relation to their patients. Romantic relationships between any employee and any student are strongly discouraged, even if not expressly prohibited by this policy.

This policy is not intended to limit romantic or outside relationships among peers or colleagues; however, employees involved in such relationships are cautioned to avoid situations which may contribute to a hostile environment for other employees or students.

Violations will be considered by the appropriate administrative officer on a case-by-case basis. It is the duty of employees to consult with the appropriate administrative officer if there are questions about the application or effect of this policy to an existing or potential relationship in which they are or may become involved or in which employees they directly or indirectly supervise are or may become involved. Suspected policy violations may be reported by anyone to the vice-president of finance and operations, dean of students, the vice-president of student services and operations, or any other administrative officer.

If charges of sexual harassment are made, compliance with this policy shall not be a defense in any proceeding under AOMA's Sexual Harassment policy. If an investigation concludes that sexual harassment did occur, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with AOMA's sexual harassment policy.

If an investigation concludes that a violation of the Consensual Relationships policy did occur, disciplinary action, which may include immediate termination of employment, will be taken by the appropriate administrative officer.

Revised: May 2009, updated May 2011, January 2018

## Appropriate attire and hygiene policy

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students

Individuals are expected to behave in a manner that supports a professional, yet casual, atmosphere and dress in a manner appropriate for an educational and medical training institution. AOMA maintains the exclusive right to determine the standards of dress and grooming dictated by need, exposure to the public, safety, modesty, and common sense.

### Staff

At AOMA, the dress code is business casual. Additionally, all employees must ensure the following:

- Clothing and appearance must be neat and clean.
- Employee ID badges are required to be worn.
- Employees must practice good personal hygiene.

Personnel who work in the clinics are required to wear medical scrubs (color and style at your discretion) or to follow the same guidelines followed by student interns. Clinic and AOMA Herbal Medicine employees must also adhere to the following policies for dress and appearance:

- NO Sandals or open-toed shoes
- NO High heels (more than 2 inches)
- NO Excessive jewelry on hands, wrists, or face
- NO Perfumes or colognes
- NO Heavily scented body-care products

### Faculty

Instructors and clinic supervisors must dress in appropriate attire and refrain from wearing suggestive or otherwise distracting clothing. In any setting that resembles an actual treatment (e.g., student clinic, practicum class, and any hands-on bodywork instruction), faculty members must dress in attire that is suitable for a healthcare professional.

Clinic supervisors must wear white lab coats (or clean pressed scrubs) and nametags, identifying their name and status at AOMA. In the student clinic, supervisors must not wear jeans or shorts; sandals, open-toed shoes, or high heels; excessive jewelry on hands and wrists; or perfume, cologne, or heavily scented body-care products. Excellent personal hygiene and professional appearance is expected at all times; hands and nails must be clean and nails well-trimmed, and long hair must be tied back.

### Students

Casual dress is appropriate for didactic classroom activities. However, suggestive or otherwise distracting clothing is to be avoided. For bodywork and mind/body courses, instructors may suggest a specific type of dress.

Please read the **Clinic dress code** policy in the **Student & Clinic Manual** for details regarding personal attire and hygiene in the Student Clinic.

*Revised:* August 2007, March 2017

## Clinic environment

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, and students

We strive to maintain a peaceful, relaxing environment at AOMA. To that end, all students and employees should maintain a quiet and respectful voice in the clinical facilities. We ask that students and employees keep conversation to a minimum and avoid chatting in the clinic areas during clinic hours. Cell phones should be turned off or on vibrate when in the clinics.

*Revised:* August 2007; updated August 2013

## Plagiarism and cheating

*Scope:* Faculty and students

Plagiarism and/or cheating are serious offenses of academic and public life. Blatant or intentional plagiarism occurs when a person copies a passage almost word for word without identifying the source of the words or ideas. Unintentional plagiarism occurs when a person attempts to paraphrase the words of another, but the sentence structure, sequence of ideas, and key phrases noticeably resemble the original without giving due credit to the author.

Cheating is looking at or copying unauthorized sources during an in-class or online quiz, test, or exam, or during a take-home exam or assignment. It includes unauthorized submission of a paper or assignment used for another class. It also includes dishonesty of submitting work not created by the enrolled student or taking exams (in-class or on-line) by someone who is not the enrolled student.

Faculty may impose the following consequences in instances of plagiarism or cheating:

- *Blatant Plagiarism:* May mean (at the discretion of the professor) failure in the course.
- *Unintentional Plagiarism:* May (at the discretion of the professor) result in an automatic "F" for the assignment and may require that, in order to receive credit for the course, the student repeat the assignment (without credit) using proper documentation.
- *Cheating:* May result in an "F" for the assignment. It may also result in failure of the course and any other action deemed appropriate by the professor, department chair, and program director.
- *Repeated Plagiarism and/or Cheating:* are serious offences and may result in academic suspension.



Faculty must report all incidences of plagiarism or cheating to the program director.

*Revised:* May 2017, August 2018, October 2020

## Academic Policies

### Enrollment definitions

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students

A student's enrollment status is determined by the cumulative hours completed at AOMA and, if applicable, any transfer credit awarded. Students are classified by hours enrolled each term, progress through the program, and status determined at admission.

MAc full-time track students enrolled in 12 or more credits during a term are considered full-time students. MAc enrolled in 17 credits or more during a term are fast-track students. Herbal certificate students enrolled in 6 or more credits during a term are considered full-time students. DAc students enrolled in 7 or more credits (doctoral portion) during a term are considered full-time students. DAOM full-time track students enrolled in 6 credits during a term are considered full-time students. DAOM fast-track students enrolled in 9 or more credits during a term are considered full-time students. Any enrollment below this is considered part-time.

Students are expected to register each term and attend class continuously until they have completed the program, unless they have withdrawn from courses for the term through completion of the Withdrawal Request form. Failure to do so will result in the student being administratively withdrawn for the term and ultimately the program if one year of inactivity passes.

A degree-seeking student is a full-time or part-time student who has been accepted and matriculated into the program. A non-degree seeking student is a student who has been accepted for admission but is not seeking a degree.

*Revised:* December 2019

### Grades

*Scope:* Faculty, students

AOMA courses are offered for a letter grade or on a pass/fail basis. In the pass/fail grading system, a passing grade indicates that the student has achieved at least the minimum requirements and 70% competency of the course material; a failing grade indicates that the student has not met the minimum requirements and has not achieved at least 70% competency of the course material.

LETTER GRADE	MEANING	PERCENT GRADE	QUALITY POINTS
A	Very good to excellent	90–100%	4
B	Average to good	80–89%	3
C	Below average but acceptable	70–79%	2
F	Fail	69% and below	0
P	Pass		
W	Withdrawal		
WP	Withdrawal with passing grade (does not impact student GPA)		
WF	Withdrawal with failing grade (impacts student GPA)		
T	Credit by transfer		
CE	Credit by examination		
AU	Audit (no credit for course)		

### Calculating grade point average

Grade point average (GPA) is used to determine successful progression through the program as well as academic standing, successful and negative. GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of quality points by the total number of graded credit hours attempted. When calculating GPA, only the highest grade for a course is computed in the cumulative GPA. Repeated courses will have a 'R' listed next to the original attempt at passing the course.

#### Example of GPA calculation:

Letter grade	Credits x Quality points		Total
A	3	4	12
B	3	3	9
F	1.5	0	0
C	2	2	4
A	3	4	12
Total credits	12.5	Total quality points	37
Total quality points (37)/total attempted credits (12.5) = 2.96 GPA			

### Graded A, B, C, F versus P, F and emergencies with institution-wide impact

The majority of master and doctoral courses are grading with an A, B, C, or F earned, and affect the GPA as described above. In rare cases, a course may be pre-designated as pass-fail in which case a P has no effect on the GPA and an F has a negative impact as described above.

When an emergency situation has an institutional-wide impact, AOMA leadership may decide to implement temporary provisions for students to opt for a pass grade rather than the earned A, B, or C. In such cases, students must make that decision within seven (7) days of the close of the term after course grades have been finalized. The registrar will make the change and record in the student's request in the student's permanent record.

Emergency situations include, but are not limited to, pandemics and area-wide damage and destruction by severe-weather. Decision to provide this temporary pass-fail provision may be made by recommendation of faculty to the president's cabinet, who will make final decision. This is on a term-by-term basis.

### **Clinical evaluation**

Clinical evaluation forms have a five-point rating scale:

	Equivalent Percentage %
1. Unsatisfactory – not good enough; not satisfactory	≤ 69%
2. Needs work – marginal; not very good	70–79%
3. Competent – having adequate ability; legally qualified or adequate	80–89%
4. Proficient – well advanced in occupation, or branch of knowledge	90–96%
5. Excellent – superior; very good of its kind; eminently good	97–100%

MAc graduation minimum and entry into the DAOM is level 3 (competent).

### **Grade reports**

Final grades for all coursework and clinical instruction are available for view via the CAMS student portal at the end of each term. Although official, these reports are not to be considered equivalent to official transcripts, which are maintained in the student's official record in the registrar's office.

### **Repeating a course**

Students must receive a grade of at least 70% to receive credit for a course and continue to the subsequent course in a series. In the event the prerequisite course is not passed, the student will not be allowed to continue the series and will be dropped from the subsequent course.

*Revised:* August 2007, April 2016, April 2020

### **Grade appeals**

*Scope:* Faculty, students

Any student who wishes to appeal a grade must follow the procedure outlined below. All academic rights and privileges of faculty members and students are to be honored in this process. Since the grading process involves the instructor's judgment of academic performance, the only issue under consideration in this process is whether or not the student can present clear evidence that the assignment of the grade was based on one or more of the following:

- The application of grading standards other than those described in the course syllabus;
- The application of grading standards different from those applied to other students;
- A grade assignment based on factors not related to the student's performance;
- Failure to provide the student with equivalent opportunities to complete course assignments;

- Error(s) of fact in the computation of the course grade.

### ***Course assignment grades***

Grades received on individual course assignments may not be appealed. However, students who believe that they have received a grade on a course assignment that is in error are entitled and encouraged to seek review of that grade. The student must first address their concerns with the faculty member of the course and attempt to resolve the issue at that level. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved, the student is required to notify the department director in writing of the situation and describe the grounds for the alleged discrepancy. The department director will then meet with the faculty member and the student to discuss the student's concerns and negotiate a resolution. At his or her discretion, the department director may meet privately with either party prior to the resolution discussion. The department director will then notify the student and faculty member in writing of the outcome, and a copy of this letter will be placed in the student's file.

### ***Course grade appeal***

Students who believe that they have received a course grade in error may appeal the course grade. There is a 30-day limit after the official grade has been posted for this appeal, with the exception of a mathematical error in computation of the grade based on the scores of the assignments, tests, and other components. Faculty are required to keep grading components for 30 days after completion of the course. Final exams for each course are kept on file in the registrar's office for one year.

To appeal, the student must first address their concerns with the faculty member of the course and attempt to resolve the issue at that level. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the student must submit a written request for appeal with the program director. This request may be filed at any time after course grades are assigned during the term but must be received by the program director no later than five working days from the end of the term. Upon receipt of a written request for appeal, the program director will notify the vice-president of faculty. An Appeal Committee will be empaneled by the vice-president of faculty, consisting of the vice-president as chair of the committee, and three faculty members. The vice-president of faculty will notify the program director, student, and faculty member in writing of the date of the appeal hearing.

### ***Appeal Committee meeting***

A student may bring representation to the appeal committee meeting provided that he or she has notified the vice-president of faculty in advance of the intent to bring representation and of the identity of the representative; however, the chair may decline the participation of a representative if his or her presence is deemed inappropriate or in violation of FERPA guidelines. The representative may provide advice and counsel to the student, but may not speak unless asked to do so by the appeal committee. During this meeting the student gives testimony as to the circumstances of the situation and grounds for appeal. At this time, the student will provide any and all evidence substantiating their claim.

The faculty member will then provide testimony and materials. The committee may call additional witnesses, question them, and/or request additional materials from any party. Upon conclusion of the hearing, the committee will adjourn to private session for deliberation. Decisions are rendered based on a simple majority. In cases of a tie vote, the chair will cast the deciding vote. The chair sends written notification to the program director of the committee's decision and the program director sends a letter to the student, faculty member, and the student's department director, communicating the decision of the committee. All decisions made by the Appeal Committee are final and no grade may be officially recorded until the appeal process is completed.

*Revised:* August 2007, November 2011

## Academic standing

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students

### **MAc academic standing**

A MAc student must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.0 to be in good academic standing and eligible for graduation. Any failed course must be repeated for credit and a student may not continue to the next level of coursework having failed the prerequisite.

A MAc student who seeks admission into the DAc program must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 to be considered in good academic standing and to be eligible for admission to the DAc.

### **MAc academic probation**

A MAc student whose GPA falls below 2.0 in any term will be placed on academic probation for the following term. If during this time a student's grades improve and his or her term GPA is at or above 2.0, the probation will be lifted and student status updated to good academic standing. Term GPA is determined by the analysis of grades in core classes. Core classes are didactic courses with a department code of AT, HT, and WS. If a student's grades do not improve over the term, he or she will be placed on academic suspension.

### **MAc academic suspension**

A student placed on academic suspension must withdraw from his or her studies for at least one full term. To return, the student must submit a letter of intent to the program director at least three months before the start of the term for which enrollment is being sought (six weeks if the suspension is from the spring term and the student seeks readmission for the fall term). The letter should include the circumstances leading up to the suspension, what the student has accomplished during the suspension, and what his or her plans are for ensuring success in the program if allowed to enroll in the requested term. The student should show evidence of how he or she will be successful in the program if allowed to return to complete his or her studies.

The Academic Council will decide whether to allow the student to return and when he or she may begin taking courses again. If approved, the student must maintain a GPA at or above 2.0 during the following term and during *each* of the following four terms in which the student is enrolled or he or she will be dismissed from the program.

The Academic Council may impose other conditions that must also be met. Core classes will be considered in the analysis of the improvement of GPA (i.e., didactic courses with a department code of AT, HT, and WS).

### ***Dismissal and expulsion from the MAc program***

There are several standards for showing academic progress. Failure to meet AOMA's standards may result in dismissal or expulsion from the MAc program. Some of these include:

- A student who fails the benchmark written exam three times will be dismissed.
- A student who is placed on academic probation more than three times will be dismissed.
- A student who fails any course three times, including grades of F, AF, and WF, will be dismissed.
- A student who breaks the conditions of his or her re-enrollment after suspension will be dismissed.
- A student may be dismissed or expelled from the program as a result of a decision by the Misconduct Advisory Committee.

There are numerous case-dependent situations not covered above that might call for dismissal or expulsion from the program. Some of these include the following:

- Patterns of enrolling in and dropping classes, regardless of the effect on GPA.
- Deteriorating health of the student, such that continuing in the program may be dangerous to the student or others, or will interfere with successful completion of the program.
- Other patterns of behavior or lack of academic progress that in the professional judgment of the faculty will greatly interfere with a student's ability to complete the program and become a competent licensed acupuncturist.

After a period of one year, a dismissed student may apply for readmission to the program under the terms outlined in the most current catalog. An expelled student will not be considered for readmission into the MAc program or any other program AOMA may offer. All decisions to dismiss or expel a student are final. Appeal is only available if compelling new information is brought forward via the student services office. The student may contact the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM).

Students receiving educational assistance from sources outside the school (e.g., Texas DARS, Veteran's Administration, Federal Financial Aid, etc.) should be aware that the agency sponsoring the assistance will be notified of any change in the student's academic status.

### ***Doctoral academic standing***

A doctoral student must maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 (80%) to be in good academic standing and eligible for graduation. Any failed class, earning a grade below a 70%, must be repeated for credit, and a student may not continue to the next level of coursework having failed the prerequisite. Students should consult the Course Descriptions section of the AOMA catalog for prerequisite information. Grades will be reviewed by the DAOM program director at the completion of each course, along with a GPA review at the end of each term.

### ***Doctoral academic progress***

The DAOM program is a two-year program, although a learner may take up to four years to complete the program. The doctoral portion of the DAc may take one to four years to complete based on elective choices. The combined MAC-DAc has an eight-year time limit. Academic progress is a combination of good academic standing and timely progression through the program to be able to graduate within the four-year limit. If a learner takes longer than four years, he or she may reapply to the program under the current catalog.

### ***Doctoral remediation plan***

A doctoral student who earns below a C (70%) in any course or clinical rotation will be placed on a remediation plan. A remediation plan will be decided on a case-by-case basis and may include additional work. The DAOM program director will work with the faculty member(s) involved to create the remediation plan.

### ***Doctoral academic probation***

A student whose GPA falls below 3.0 on any GPA review will be placed on academic probation for the following academic quarter. Probation includes a remediation plan. If the student's grades improve, the remediation plan is completed, and his or her GPA is at or above 3.0 on the next review, the probation is lifted. If the student's grades do not improve, or the remediation plan is not completed, he or she will be placed on academic suspension.

### ***Doctoral academic suspension***

Suspension from one of the doctoral programs is a serious event. The length of suspension is contingent on which program requirements have been completed, the pre-requisite structure, and when the next required courses are offered again. The suspension may be as long as a year. To return to the program, a student must submit a letter of intent to the program director. This letter must be submitted at least three months before the start of the residency week for which return is being sought. The letter should include the circumstances leading up to the suspension, what the student has accomplished during the suspension, and what his or her plans are for ensuring success in the program if allowed to enroll in the requested term. The student should show evidence of how he or she will be successful in the program if allowed to return to complete his or her studies.

The conditions leading to the suspension will be taken into consideration for reinstatement or dismissal from the program.



The Academic Council will decide whether to allow the student to return and when he or she may begin taking courses and clinics again. If approved the student must maintain a GPA at or above 3.0 during the following two-week residency period. The Academic Council may impose other conditions that must also be met, such as a remediation plan.

### ***Dismissal and expulsion from a doctoral program***

There are several standards for showing academic progress. Failure to meet AOMA's standards may result in dismissal or expulsion from the doctoral program. Some of these include:

- A student who is placed on academic probation more than once may be dismissed.
- A student who fails to satisfactorily complete a remediation plan may be dismissed.
- A student who breaks the conditions of return after suspension may be dismissed.
- A student may be dismissed or expelled from the program as a result of a decision by a Misconduct Advisory Committee.
- A student who fails any course two times, including grades of F, AF, and WF, will be dismissed.

There are numerous case-dependent situations not covered above that might call for dismissal or expulsion from the program. Some of these include:

- Patterns of enrolling in and dropping classes, regardless of the effect on GPA.
- Deteriorating health of the student such that continuing in the program may be dangerous to the student or others, or will interfere with successful completion of the program.
- Other patterns of behavior or lack of academic progress that in the professional judgment of the faculty will greatly interfere with a student's ability to complete the program and become an advanced practitioner of acupuncture and Oriental medicine.

After a period of one year, a dismissed student may apply for readmission to the program under the terms outlined in the most current catalog. An expelled student will not be considered for readmission into the doctoral program or any other program AOMA may offer. All decisions to dismiss or expel a student are final. Appeal is only available if compelling new information is brought forward via the student services office. The student may contact the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM [www.aacom.org](http://www.aacom.org)).

Students receiving educational assistance from sources outside the school (e.g., Texas DARS, Veteran's Administration, Federal Financial Aid, etc.) should be aware that the agency sponsoring the assistance will be notified of any change in the student's academic status.

*Revised: August 2007, November 2011, April 2016, February 2017*

### **Obtaining transcript copies**

Currently enrolled students may obtain unofficial transcripts by accessing the CAMS student portal, meeting with an academic advisor, or requesting printed versions in person with the registrar. Alumni and former students may obtain unofficial copies of transcripts at no charge by submitting a request in writing to the registrar or collecting in person from the registrar.

Official transcripts are obtained by completing a Transcript Request form and submitting the \$15 fee per transcript. For graduated MAc students, official graduate transcripts are provided automatically to NCCAOM at no charge. One additional no-charge official graduate transcript will be provided upon request for licensure in a state of the graduate's choice.

## Class size

Scope: Faculty, staff, students

In order to ensure an optimal learning environment, AOMA's faculty and administration take into consideration the nature of each course, subject matter, and curricular level when determining the appropriate class size. Additionally, when more than one section of a given course is offered, a reasonable attempt is made to balance the total enrollment for the course between the sections. Generally, MAc class sizes range from eight to thirty-six students. Classes with fewer than eight students will typically not be held. On rare occasions, a course may be offered although it does not meet the minimum class size requirements. Such decisions are not at the students' or instructors' discretion, but, rather, are made by the administration based on a consideration of all factors mentioned above.

Doctoral classes are restricted to the size of the cohort.

*Revised: August 2007, April 2016*

## Course cancellation

Courses that do not meet the minimum enrollment qualifications may be cancelled. Students enrolled in a course that is cancelled will be notified via email and every effort will be made to accommodate students affected by a cancelled course.

*Revised: August 2007, April 2016*

## Attendance

*Scope:* Students

Students are expected to be in class on time, remain in class for the full duration of each session, and attend all scheduled class sessions. Courses in a professional program depend on informed and active discourse between the instructor and students. Absences are therefore detrimental to the achievement of objectives for the absent student as well as for his or her classmates. Tardiness or early departures have a similar effect, causing disruptions in the progression of a class.

### *Didactic course absences*

MAc students may miss up to three three-hour sessions in a 36-hour course; one three-hour session in an 18-hour or 24-hour course; and three hours in a 12-hour course without a penalty. If a student misses more than 25% of the course, the student will be dropped from the course as of that date and the course grade determined as outlined in the [Student & Clinic Manual](#).

Due to the nature of the doctoral residency weeks, doctoral students should work with their instructors and doctoral program director if absences become necessary.

### *Practical course absences*

MAc students may miss only two three-hour classes without penalty. If three are missed, the final grade will be lowered one letter. If a student misses more than three classes, he or she will be dropped from the course as of that date, and the course grade determined as outlined in the [Student & Clinic Manual](#).

### *Mind–body courses*

MAc students may miss only two one-hour classes. If a student misses more than two classes, he or she will be dropped from the course as of that date, and the course grade determined as outlined in the [Student & Clinic Manual](#).

AOMA does not distinguish between *excused* and *unexcused* absences. Additionally, *instructors reserve the right to impose stricter attendance requirements for individual courses if they believe such an amendment is necessary for the achievement of the course objectives.*

Instructors must note any attendance policy changes in the course syllabus, and students will be expected to adhere to the attendance requirements as outlined for that particular course.

*Revised:* August 2007, April 2016

## Tardiness and early departure

*Scope:* Students

Tardiness is defined as entering the classroom after instruction has begun; early departure is defined as leaving before instruction has concluded. Each instance of tardiness or early departure will be

counted as one instructional hour missed. Three instances of tardiness, therefore, are equivalent to one missed class. Excessive or extended time out of the classroom may also count as tardiness.

*Revised:* August 2007

## Make-up exams

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students

The following outlines the policy and procedures set for students who miss an exam (or quiz) and are enrolled in a course where the instructor allows make-up exams. Please note: *This is a general policy. It is within each instructor's academic freedom to set their own course policy regarding missed exams. Some instructors may not allow for make-up exams, some may require alternative assignments, some may decide on a case-by-case basis, and others may have other policies.* The only valid reasons for a class or clinic absence or missing an exam is illness or accident, death or imminent death in immediate family, conflicts with religious obligations, required court appointments, or medical appointments that cannot be scheduled except during class time. Personal reasons such as vacation, leisure travel, seminar attendance, over sleeping, forgetting when an exam is given, not feeling prepared for an exam, stuck in traffic, etc., do not constitute extraordinary or extenuating circumstances for missing any class, clinic, or exam.

Area-wide emergency situations may require exceptions for numerous individuals. Examples may include, but are not limited to, power outages, internet outages, dangerous driving conditions and road closures, pandemics, fire, tornadoes, hurricanes, acts of war or terrorism, and so forth.

2021 began the use of the Brightspace as the learning management system (LMS). With its robust Quizzes tool, instructors can create and manage online exams—whether given in the classroom or remote locations, during scheduled class times or during an alternative date-time the instructor deems appropriate. During campus closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, paper-based closed book exams had to evolve. The Brightspace Quizzes tool provides the best solution.

The LMS allows for special access for individual students, including but not limited to:

- A student with documented ADA accommodations as identified by student services and conveyed to faculty – most often this is special accommodation is either:
  - More time to complete an exam or quiz than has been allocated, or,
  - Quiet space outside of the classroom
- Illness or injury preventing a student from taking the quiz or exam at its scheduled date-time

The special access function in the Quizzes tool allows more time for a student to complete the exam, or an extended period when the student can access and take the exam, or both.

Therefore, there is **no longer a valid reason** for prior methods of handling written make-up exams that used to include:

- Instructors provided the registrar with paper-based exams and names of students who missed the exam
- Students paid the make-up exam fee in finance and schedule the date-time with the registrar
- Registrar provided list of students and exams to library where the exams were proctored by the librarian
- Completed exams were returned to the registrar who then returned them to the instructors

This resource intensive handling of missed written exams is **no longer an option**. After pandemic restrictions are lifted and exams can resume on-campus, they should remain electronic and on Brightspace , unless a student has a specific ADA accommodation that requires paper-based exams. If an instructor insists on paper-based exams, any special accommodations and missed exams are the sole responsibility of the instructor to handle.

#### Practical Exams

By their nature, practical exams must be completed in-person and proctored by the instructor and/or other faculty or teaching assistants the instructor has arranged. If a student misses the practical exam, the student is responsible for communicating with faculty for scheduling and completing the missed exam. The student is *solely* responsible for arranging the make-up of the practical portion of any examination with their instructor (the make-up fee must be paid and proof given to the instructor). This fee covers the added expense of additional time required of the faculty.

Missed examinations, written or practical, must be completed *prior* to the next scheduled meeting of the course or, if the missed exam is a final exam, before the beginning of the following term. *If an exam is missed prior to a break week, the exam must be completed during break week and scheduled in the same manner as a regular makeup exam. Final exams taken as make-up exams during break week may delay receipt of financial aid for the following term. Only the instructor can approve a make-up exam to be taken prior to its scheduled classroom administration, or after the deadline described above.*

Please note that during the summer term, classes usually meet twice a week; this significantly changes the timeline of when exams must be completed. Make-up exams must still be completed before the next meeting of the class unless an instructor approves otherwise.

#### **Procedures**

Any student who needs to schedule a practical make-up exam may do so by one of two methods:

1. *Scheduling in-office:* A student may visit the finance office in person at least 24 hours in advance of their requested exam date, complete the required form, and submit payment of the \$40 fee.

OR

2. *Online:* A student may submit their request through online payment of the \$40 fee through the AOMA website, and email submission of the completed request form. The form and proof of payment must be submitted at the same time and be received at least 24 business hours in advance of the desired date. Business hours are 9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. *If an individual is submitting payment on your behalf in an online transaction, you must notify AOMA so that staff know that your exam fee has been paid and by whom.*

Online Fee Payment: <http://store.aoma.edu/category/fees.html>

Download Request Form: <https://aoma.edu/students/registrar/transcripts-and-forms>

Email to: [MakeUpExamRequest@aoma.edu](mailto:MakeUpExamRequest@aoma.edu)

On the day of the exam, the student will report to the designated testing room as arranged by the instructor. Failure to arrive on time or failure to complete the make-up practical exam may result in a failed exam grade as determined by the instructor. Re-scheduling the make-up practical exam may result in another make-up exam fee.

*Exceptions to this policy must be submitted directly to the instructor of the course, who, if approved, must submit to the registrar via email the terms of rescheduling the exam. When appropriate, the practical make-up exam fee must still be paid.*

### ***Waiver of Make-up Exam Fee***

Under rare, unique, and dire circumstances, a student may apply for a waiver of make-up exam fee(s) to the President's Cabinet for consideration. Special situations that the cabinet will consider include, but are not limited to, hospitalization of student or student's dependents, death in immediate family, or an acute, sudden, severe illness. The waiver request may not be considered until after the student has completed the make-up (the student should complete the make-up in a timely manner regardless of submitting a waiver request). A completed waiver request should be submitted to student services.

For a waiver request, the student must submit the following:

- 1) student name, waiver request date, term-year
- 2) course(s) exam(s) and date(s) missed with dates of make-up exams
- 3) special circumstances for why the exams were missed
- 4) brief explanation of why a waiver is in need, and
- 5) and supporting documentation that demonstrates special circumstances and need.

Revised: April 2016, February 2019, February 2021

## Due process

*Scope:* Students

It is the policy of the AOMA to provide students with a prompt and fair hearing of disputes. The purpose of the following procedure is to provide a system through which alleged injustice(s) may be resolved. Students are hereby provided with protection through orderly procedures against unsubstantiated academic evaluation and/or allegations of student misconduct. All academic rights and privileges of faculty members and students are to be honored in this process.

Please refer to **Grade appeals** in this section and the **Due process for misconduct allegations** in the **Student & Clinic Manual**.

Revised: August 2007, November 2011

## Notice to applicants and enrollees regarding criminal history

*Scope:* Students

SUBJECT: Statutory requirement to notify applicants and enrollees of potential ineligibility for an occupational license due to conviction of an offense.

### Statutory authority:

HB1508, effective September 1, 2017, amended Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 53, require institutions provide notice regarding the consequences of a criminal conviction by an applicant and/or enrollee on their eligibility for an occupational license.

### Who must give notification:

AOMA provides an educational program, Master of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (MAc), which prepares an individual for issuance of an initial occupational license – a licensed acupuncturist (LAc). On January 8, 2018, AOMA was informed of this new statute.

An “occupational license” is a license, certificate, registration, permit, or other form of authorization required by law or rule that must be obtained by an individual to engage in a particular business or occupation.

### Who must receive notification:

Each applicant to and enrollee in an educational program which prepares an individual for issuance of an initial occupational license must be notified regarding potential ineligibility.

The notification requirement applies for enrollees and applicants on or after September 1, 2017.

The notification must be given to each applicant and enrollee regardless of whether they have been convicted of an offense.

Required notification:

Notification to program enrollees and applicants must include:

1. The potential ineligibility of an individual who has been convicted of an offense for issuance of an occupational license on completion of the educational program;
2. The current guidelines issued by the applicable licensing authority (See, Texas Occupations Code, Sec. 53.025). In particular, the licensing authority's guidelines must state the reasons a particular crime is considered to relate to a particular license and any other criterion that affects the decisions of the licensing authority.

A "licensing authority" is a state agency or political subdivision that issues an occupational license [for LAc occupational license, the licensing authority is the Texas State Board of Acupuncture Examiners, a subset of the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners];

3. Any other state or local restriction or guideline used by the licensing authority to determine the eligibility of an individual who has been convicted of an offense for an occupational license issued by the licensing authority; and
4. The right of an individual to request a criminal history evaluation letter (See, Texas Occupations Code, Sec. 53.102).

An individual may request a licensing authority to issue a criminal history evaluation letter regarding the person's eligibility for a license issued by that authority if the person:

- 1) is enrolled or planning to enroll in an educational program that prepares a person for an initial license or is planning to take an examination for an initial license; and
- 2) has reason to believe that the person is ineligible for the license due to a conviction or deferred adjudication for a felony or misdemeanor offense.

The request must state the basis for the person's potential ineligibility.

Potential offenses that may make an applicant ineligible for an LAc license may include, but not be limited to, (Texas Administrative Code, Title 22, Part 9, Chapter 190, Subchapter B, Rule §190.8):

- Any felony;



- Any offense in which assault or battery, or attempt of either is an essential element;
- Any criminal violation of the Medical Practice Act or other statutes regulating or pertaining to the practice of medicine;
- Any criminal violation of statutes regulating other professions in the healing arts that the licensee is licensed in;
- Any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude (as defined below);
- Bribery or corrupt influence;
- Burglary;
- Child molestation;
- Kidnapping or false imprisonment;
- Obstruction of governmental operations;
- Public indecency; and
- Substance abuse or substance diversion.

“Misdemeanors involving moral turpitude, within the meaning of the Act, are those that involve dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, deliberate violence, or that reflect adversely on a licensee’s honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness to practice under the scope of the person’s license.”

For details on laws and rules governing acupuncture in Texas, please see:  
<http://www.tmb.state.tx.us/page/laws-main-page>

Revised: January 2018

## Technology Policy for Remote and Distance Education

*Scope:* Students, Faculty

### ***Preamble: Background***

Ever since AOMA implemented its Student Information System, CAMS, and its student and faculty portals (~2010), a certain amount of technology has been needed by individuals (students, faculty, and staff). A minimum of internet access (hard-wired, WIFI, cellular, etc.), an email address that is routinely checked, and a functional device (computer, tablet, or smart phone) has been unofficial assumptions. AOMA provides campus-wide WIFI for internet access, a computer with connection to overhead projection in every classroom for teaching and presenting, and several computers in the library for students and guests. Staff also are provided with computers with internet access and copier-printer-scanner, and the faculty offices have two computers that also have internet access as well as a dedicated copier-printer-scanner.

In 2020, in response to the novel coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), and in accordance with guidance from our regional and programmatic accreditors (SACSCOC and ACAOM, respectively) and the Department of Education (DoE), AOMA began delivering all course lectures via Zoom. As of March 17, 2020, all courses have been held online and AOMA has the authority to continue through December 31, 2020. Clinical instruction has proven more challenging, but virtual clinics began for students in late March. Pursuant to developing needs, AOMA’s

academic leadership and faculty began the search for a formal platform for more robust online distance education. A platform was chosen (D2L's Brightspace) along with a third-party add-on for controlled electronic exam taking (Proctorio), a feature very important to the faculty teaching at the master's level, in order to prepare students for the national board exams. This feature requires students who are taking closed book exams to have their camera on them as a means of validating their identity, and as a means to assess the exam taker for potential of behaviors consistent with cheating. Therefore, this new policy addresses emergent technology requirements for students and faculty.

### ***Technology Policy for Remote and Distance Education***

Students and faculty must have the technological capacity to participate in courses and clinics, such as to listen to lectures, access content, produce assignments, and take assessments, if and when, they are done online as hybrid distance education. Hybrid, also called blended, is a combination of live synchronous sessions either on campus or in a virtual classroom (for lecture, presentations, discussions, and activities) and asynchronous (for assignments and assessments done at student's pace and timeframe). AOMA faculty decided to keep the majority of content delivery as synchronous, but will be making use of the many features of the LMS to improve the learning experience and outcomes of the students.

#### ***Minimum Requirements for Graduate Programs at AOMA***

- **Minimum list:** For content delivered by faculty and received by students
  - Email address that is checked routinely – AOMA can supply one
  - Reliable internet access – currently needed for CAMS Portal, Zoom, and D2L access
  - Smart device -with camera and microphone (for attendance by facial recognition and active engagement in discussions and activities) during synchronous live sessions
    - Desk or laptop computer, or
    - iPad or Tablet
    - Smart phone

Faculty should have the capacity to manage platforms like Zoom for taking attendance, and should be familiar with screen-sharing and other features designed for delivering engaging and quality class sessions; have an operational camera and microphone; and the ability to create and grade assessments and assignments, and enter attendance and grades in the CAMS faculty portal

- **Participation** in discussions with and by students
  - Minimum list (above)
  - Participants' computers, tablets, and smart phones must have operational camera and microphone
- **Asynchronous assignments**

- Minimum list required (above) to access CAMS Portal and D2L access (a minimum of internet access (hard-wired, WIFI, or cellular, etc.) and a functional device (computer, tablet, or smart phone)
- Appropriate device to complete the assignment (smaller mobile devices, such as smart phone, may not be appropriate)
- Laptop or desktop computer with citation manager imbedded in word processor is necessary for doctoral assignments requiring literature reviews and citing of sources
- **Closed Book Exams**
  - Minimum list (above) with reliable internet
  - Laptop or desktop computer that has camera for identification of test taker and assessment of student behaviors during the test to mitigate cheating

Device that allows completing online electronic assessment (exams)

Students and faculty are required to have the appropriate devices and reliable internet access. Existing students and faculty are “grandfathered-in” up to the start of the summer 2021 term which is the start of the 2021-22 academic year.

#### *AOMA resources for students on-campus*

AOMA’s library has several computers for student use. They have been adapted to include a camera for online closed book exams. Students must provide their own noise-cancelling headphones. AOMA also has a small number of laptops and tablets that may be loaned for in-class on-campus use only. The numbers and availability of such devices will vary based on inventory and student needs.

#### *Technology Functionality and Internet Access Issues*

From time-to-time internet access may be variable in terms of quality and reliability, software may malfunction, as well as the device(s) being used. Students must immediately notify the appropriate faculty or staff as soon as issues arise. Faculty should also immediately contact the program director or a staff in the student services department for assistance. There is a direct line to D2L (24 hours /7 days /365 days a year) for tech support for students, faculty, and staff.

#### *Student identity, privacy, and fees*

Prospective students must provide a photo identification (ID) such as a driver’s license or passport. New students’ photographs are loaded into CAMS and faculty can see each student’s likeness in the faculty portal. When synchronous classes are held online, faculty will use facial recognition for verifying student identity for attendance. For online exams in Brightspace using Proctorio, the students must confirm their identity by holding their ID to their computer camera for Proctorio to take a picture of it before proceeding with the exam.

Students enrolled in courses held online have the same privacy rights and protections as students enrolled in face-to-face in-person courses. Students can only access online courses in which they are enrolled using school-supplied log-in name and student-provided password.

When classes are held synchronously, their identity will be known to other students in the same class, just as they would in-person classes. If a faculty member has assignments which involve use of discussion boards, only the students in the class and the instructor have access to those entries. Only the instructor has access to the students' submitted assignments, quizzes, and grades – with the exception of the super administrators of Brightspace who are AOMA academic staff.

There are no additional fees for hybrid courses utilizing Brightspace.

Revisions: June 2020, August 2020, September 2020

## Remote proctoring of online quizzes and exams

*Scope:* Students, Faculty

### *What is Remote Proctoring and Proctorio?*

Used by schools of higher education, remote proctoring refers to the use of software to proctor exams intended to be secure and closed book. AOMA subscribes to Proctorio® as an external learning tool to work within the learning management system, Brightspace (see more below).

Proctorio is an automated remote proctoring software that works within the **Google Chrome** browser to monitor activity during exam/quizzes. It is integrated directly into Brightspace's quizzes tool and offers a flexible service of ID Verification, computer lock down, secure browser settings, admin and faculty controls, content protection, recording of the exam via video and audio, exam analytics, and more.

*You can learn about technical requirements at <https://proctorio.com/system-requirements>. \*\**

### *Purpose of Remote Proctoring with Proctorio*

Due to campus closures prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, many instructors proctored their exams virtually using Zoom, or created new open book exams for student assessment. As the pandemic continued, many AOMA Faculty expressed a desire to resume using closed book exams for many of the MAc courses, which can now be achieved with Brightspace and Proctorio.

The remote proctoring can provide for the following:

- Ensure student honesty and integrity as to who is taking the exam
- Ensure student honesty and integrity as to non-cheating behaviors, and encourage academic integrity
- Ensure the integrity of the exam stay intact (not copied, printed, saved, share, etc.).
- Prepare students for NCCAOM exams (closed book and computer based)
- Protect students from allegations of cheating

### ***Safety and Security of Computers and of Recordings***

To use Proctorio, both faculty and students need to install the Proctorio extension in their Chrome browser (instructions provided here : <https://getproctorio.com/> ). Adding the Proctorio extension to the Chrome browser does NOT load any software onto the local hard drive.

If an instructor sets up Proctorio to Clear Cache after the exam is completed by the learner, it only clears the exam cache from Chrome – it does not affect anything within the computer, nor any other cache from other browsing sessions. Clearing cache prevents anyone from accessing exam content after the fact.

The photo of the learner's ID and the recordings of the learner's exam are not accessible by Proctorio. Only the AOMA's instructor(s) for the course and super administrators can see the photo ID and exam session recordings. Proctorio software may flag suspicious behaviors, but it is up to the instructor to view and take any action as deemed necessary.

In all cases, all federal, state, and accreditation regulatory laws and rules concerning protection of student information (e.g. FERPA), will be adhered to and kept in compliance. AOMA faculty will not be liable for the use of the technology AOMA has chosen for course management (CAMS student information faculty portal, Brightspace learning management system, and Proctorio remote proctoring) as long as they adhere to internal guidelines and external regulations.

### ***When Student IDs are Required***

Some exams will require the person taking the exam to verify he/she is the student enrolled in the course and who will be receiving credit for the quiz/exam. This is important for high-stakes exams such as the competency exams as well as closed book exams in various courses. This is also an accreditation requirement for any distance education activity.

Acceptable IDs include:

1. AOMA Photo ID – with photo and name
2. State issued unexpired driver's license or identification card\*
3. Unexpired Passport (US or by another nation) \*
4. Some other photo ID to show you photo with your name\*

\* identification characteristics that may be blocked by the learner includes DL or passport unique #, birth dates, etc.

### ***Use of Brightspace for Exams Post-COVID19 Pandemic***

Use of Brightspace for quizzes and exams, with or without Proctorio, will not cease once exams can return to in-person in the classroom. Brightspace allows for a higher level of analytics that are nearly impossible to achieve with paper-based exams.

- Learner advantages
  - Develop comfort with taking exams on a computer (like NCCAOM)

- For courses that use Brightspace and Proctorio, exams can be taken at the learner's convenience, rather than during class time.
- Make-up exams can be taken at a time convenient for the learner, thus making the standard make-up exam fee and the need to take the exam in the library unnecessary.
- If set-up, most quiz/exams can be automatically graded and student may be able to see score immediately after submitting the exam
- Instructor Advantages
  - Most exam questions can be automatically graded
  - Exam results can be set to automatically export to gradebook
  - Access to analytics for each student, each exam, and each question
- For each question item, analytics can be used to determine
  - The quality of the question
  - The quality of the instruction prior to the exam
  - ...And many other details
- Each question item can be tagged to:
  - Course learning objectives
  - Program learning outcomes
  - NCCAOM Exams' content outlines
  - ACAOM program competencies

...and any other that may be defined by the instructor and/or administration in the future.

Revisions: October 2020

## Audio and/or Video Recording of Lectures and other Course Activities

Taking notes of classroom lectures and discussions can be an aid to comprehension and retention of the material. As such, this forms part of the recognized and accepted practice of students. AOMA also recognizes that there are valid personal and academic reasons for allowing and using lecture recordings as study tools. The following policy prioritizes learning, controlling, and regulating the recording (audio/video) of lectures; and sets out the rules and regulations surrounding the recording and use of lectures by students, faculty, and staff. This policy applies to all members of the AOMA community.

### Definitions

- "Recording" means a video or audio replication or photographic image recorded on devices including, but not limited to, audio recorders, video recorders, cell phones, smartphones, digital cameras, computers, media players, online platforms (Zoom, Brightspace, etc.) or other devices or online services, which record images or sound.

- "Uploading" means the action or process of transferring data to another computer system.
- "Downloading" means receiving and saving data.
- "Lectures or classroom lectures" means any representation—no matter what form—including, but not limited to, audio, video, or other documentary means shared in the context of classroom lectures, demonstrations, presentations, and hands-on activities, including student presentations. The policy applies to all documents and materials used and/or distributed throughout the duration of a course, whether in-person or online.

## **Students**

### *Making of recordings*

- Students shall not make any recording (audio or video) of a classroom lecture without having obtained prior written permission from the instructor.
- Permission to record is typically granted at the discretion of the instructor for the sole purpose of accommodating a student's particular needs and is intended for the purposes of private study.
- Students who have obtained permission to record a lecture must do so in a manner which ensures the privacy of other students present.
- Students who have obtained permission to record a lecture shall respect all related intellectual property rights in accordance with applicable laws and AOMA policies (see below for additional information).

### *Use of recordings*

- Recordings of lectures made by students shall not be shared, reproduced or uploaded to any publicly accessible web environment or used for any purpose not specifically authorized by the instructor.
- Recording of lectures shall not be made, used, distributed for any commercial purposes or compensation.
- Students who have access to authorized recorded lectures (e.g., via Brightspace) may use such recordings only for personal or group study and shall not reproduce, share, or upload the recording to any publicly accessible web environment.
- Dissemination of any recordings and/or other course materials is strictly prohibited. Any violation of this Policy shall be treated as a violation of the applicable AOMA policy, including policies specific to Professionalism, Intellectual Property, Student Rights and Responsibilities, Student Code of Conduct, Copyright Laws, and so forth.

## **Instructors**

- Instructors may record, or have recorded, their lectures (by audio and/or video) for their own personal use or for the purposes of exchanging with colleagues.

- Instructors may record their own lectures, using AOMA-owned and sanctioned technology, and make such recordings available to students in the closed Brightspace environment, for purposes of private or group study. Instructors should not upload their recordings and/or course materials to third-party sites (e.g., Google Drive), to any publicly accessible web environment (e.g., YouTube), or to a personal website without written approval from the appropriate program director.
- Instructors shall ensure, when allowing and/or making recordings, that student privacy is assured and, where required, shall warn the students/guests beforehand and obtain consent of students and/or any other third-party present (e.g., guest lecturer). Such privacy must be assured especially in the case of sensitive information being shared (ex: a clinical context).
- It is recommended that instructors include, in their course outlines, information for students regarding the appropriate use of recorded lecture material or, at minimum, provide students with a link to this policy.

Created: January 2021



## Information Management

### Official communications

*Scope:* Students, faculty, staff

The AOMA administration disseminates campus communications via email, campus bulletin boards, the AOMA website, and the CAMS student and faculty portals. These announcements may include national board examination updates, class schedules, and student services information. Students must maintain an email address for official communications from various offices, including finance, financial aid, and registrar.

*In the event of a significant emergency or dangerous situation involving an immediate threat to the health or safety of the campus community, AOMA administration employs the AlertMedia system for immediate alerts and notifications to the campus community. This system sends automated messages to email addresses and phone numbers AOMA has on file at the start of each term. All students should ensure their contact information is current and accurate via the CAMS student portal and all employees should ensure their current number is accurate with HR.*

*Revised:* March 2010, March 2017

### Student records and transcripts

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, and students

Student records and transcripts are maintained confidentially, and students may request permission to inspect their academic records at any time. Student records are the property of AOMA.

No one outside of AOMA shall have access to, nor will AOMA disclose, any information from a student's educational records without the written consent of the student. No transcript or any other document will be issued on behalf of any student or graduate who has an outstanding financial obligation to AOMA.

Procedures for obtaining copies of transcripts can be found in Obtaining transcript copies.

*Revised:* August 2014

## Identity theft and information security

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students, contractors, consultants, and temporary workers

The risk to AOMA, its employees, and customers from data loss and identity theft is of significant concern to the institution and can be reduced only through the combined efforts of every employee and contractor.

The institution adopts this sensitive information policy to help protect employees, customers, contractors, and the institution from damages related to the loss or misuse of sensitive information.

This policy will:

- Define sensitive information;
- Describe the physical security of data when it is printed on paper;
- Describe the electronic security of data when stored and distributed; and
- Place the institution in compliance with state and federal laws regarding identity theft protection.

This policy enables AOMA to protect existing customers, reduce risk from identity fraud, and minimize potential damage to the institution from fraudulent new accounts.

The program will help the institution:

- Identify risks that signify potentially fraudulent activity within new or existing covered accounts;
- Detect risks when they occur in covered accounts;
- Respond to risks to determine if fraudulent activity has occurred and act if fraud has been attempted or committed;
- Update the program periodically, including reviewing the accounts that are covered and the identified risks that are part of the program.

### ***Definition of sensitive information***

“Sensitive information” includes the following items, whether stored in electronic or printed format:

- Credit card information, including any of the following: Credit card number (in part or whole), credit card expiration date, cardholder name, cardholder address.
- Tax identification numbers, including Social Security numbers, business identification numbers, employer identification numbers.
- Payroll information, including, among other information paychecks and paystubs.
- Medical information for any employee, temporary worker, and customer, including but not limited to doctor names and claims, insurance claims, prescriptions, any related personal medical information.
- Other personal information belonging to any employee, temporary worker, and customer, examples of which include date of birth, address, phone numbers, maiden name, names, customer number

Institutional personnel are encouraged to use common sense judgment in securing confidential information to the proper extent. If an employee is uncertain of the sensitivity of a particular piece of information, he or she should contact his or her supervisor.

### ***Hard copy distribution***

Each employee and contractor performing work for the institution will comply with the following policies:

- File cabinets, desk drawers, overhead cabinets, and any other storage space containing documents with sensitive information will be locked when not in use.
- Storage rooms containing documents with sensitive information and record retention areas will be locked at the end of each workday or when unsupervised.
- Desks, workstations, work areas, printers and fax machines, and common shared work areas will be cleared of all documents containing sensitive information when not in use.
- Whiteboards, dry-erase boards, writing tablets, etc. in common shared work areas will be erased, removed, or shredded when not in use.
- When documents containing sensitive information are discarded, they will be placed inside a locked shred bin or immediately shredded using a mechanical shredding device. Locked shred bins are labeled "Security Container." Institution records, however, may only be destroyed in accordance with the institution's **Records retention policy** in the **Financial Practices Manual**.

### ***Electronic distribution***

Each employee and contractor performing work for the institution will comply with the following policies:

- Internally, sensitive information may be transmitted using approved institution email. If feasible, all sensitive information must be encrypted when stored in an electronic format.
- Any sensitive information sent externally must be encrypted and password protected and sent only to approved recipients. Additionally, a statement such as this should be included in the email:  
"This message, including attachments, contains confidential information and is intended only for the individual(s) named. Any use by others is strictly prohibited. If you are not the named addressee, do not disseminate, distribute or copy this email. Please notify the sender immediately by email if you have received this email by mistake and delete this email from your system."

AOMA maintains an identity theft prevention program and procedures to be followed by employees and other parties with potential access to such information, including a "red flags" training program.

### ***Additional identity theft prevention program***

If the institution maintains certain covered accounts pursuant to federal legislation, the institution may include the additional program details.

### *Covered accounts*

A covered account includes any account that involves or is designed to permit multiple payments or transactions. Every new and existing customer account that meets the following criteria is covered by this program:

- Business, personal, and household accounts for which there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of identity theft; or
- Business, personal, and household accounts for which there is a reasonably foreseeable risk to the safety or soundness of the institution from identity theft, including financial, operational, compliance, reputation, or litigation risks.

### *Red flags*

The following red flags are potential indicators of fraud. This short list is by no means exhaustive. Any time a red flag, or a situation closely resembling a red flag, is apparent, it should be investigated for verification.

- Alerts, notifications, or warnings from a consumer reporting agency;
- A fraud or active duty alert included with a consumer report;
- A notice of credit freeze from a consumer reporting agency in response to a request for a consumer report; or
- A notice of address discrepancy from a consumer reporting agency as defined in §334.82(b) of the Fairness and Accuracy in Credit Transactions Act.

Red flags also include consumer reports that indicate a pattern of activity inconsistent with the history and usual pattern of activity of an applicant or customer, such as:

- A recent and significant increase in the volume of inquiries;
- An unusual number of recently established credit relationships;
- A material change in the use of credit, especially with respect to recently established credit relationships; or
- An account that was closed for cause or identified for abuse of account privileges by a financial institution or creditor.

### *Suspicious documents*

Suspicious documents include, but are not limited to:

- Documents provided for identification that appear to have been altered or forged;
- The photograph or physical description on the identification is not consistent with the appearance of the applicant or customer presenting the identification;
- Other information on the identification is not consistent with information provided by the person opening a new covered account or customer presenting the identification;
- Other information on the identification is not consistent with readily accessible information that is on file with the institution;
- An application appears to have been altered or forged, or gives the appearance of having been destroyed and reassembled.

### *Suspicious personal identifying information*

Personal identifying information is suspicious if it is inconsistent when compared against external information sources used by the institution. For example:

- The address does not match any address in the consumer report;
- The Social Security number (SSN) has not been issued or is listed on the Social Security Administration's Death Master File; or
- Personal identifying information provided by the customer is not consistent with other personal identifying information provided by the customer. For example, there is a lack of correlation between the SSN range and date of birth.

Personal identifying information can also be suspicious when that which is provided is associated with known fraudulent activity, as indicated by internal or third-party sources used by the institution. For example, the address on an application is the same as the address provided on a fraudulent application.

Another example of suspicious personal identifying information is when the information provided is of a type commonly associated with fraudulent activity, as indicated by internal or third-party sources used by the institution. For example:

- The address on an application is fictitious, a mail drop, or a prison; or
- The phone number is invalid or is associated with a pager or answering service.

Further examples of suspicious identifying information include:

- SSN provided that is the same as that submitted by other persons opening an account or other customers;
- The address or telephone number provided is the same as or similar to the address or telephone number submitted by an unusually large number of other customers or other persons opening accounts;
- The customer or the person opening the covered account fails to provide all required personal identifying information on an application or in response to notification that the application is incomplete;
- Personal identifying information provided is not consistent with personal identifying information that is on file with the institution;
- When using security questions (mother's maiden name, pet's name, etc.), the person opening the covered account or the customer cannot provide authenticating information beyond that which generally would be available from a wallet or consumer report.

### *Unusual use of, or suspicious activity related to, the covered account*

Some examples of unusual use of, or suspicious activity related to, a covered account are as follows:

- Shortly following the notice of a change of address for a covered account, the institution receives a request for new, additional, or replacement goods or services, or for the addition of authorized users on the account.

- A new student account is used in a manner commonly associated with known patterns of fraud patterns. For example, the student fails to make the first payment on their payment plan or makes an initial payment but no subsequent payments.
- A covered account is used in a manner that is not consistent with established patterns of activity on the account. There is, for example:
  - Nonpayment when there is no history of late or missed payments;
  - A material change in registration/tuition charges or usage patterns.
- A covered account that has been inactive for a reasonably lengthy period of time is used (taking into consideration the type of account, the expected pattern of usage and other relevant factors).
- Mail sent to the customer is returned repeatedly as undeliverable although transactions continue to be conducted in connection with the customer's covered account.
- The institution is notified that the customer is not receiving paper account statements.
- The institution is notified of unauthorized charges or transactions in connection with a customer's covered account.
- The institution receives notice from customers, victims of identity theft, law enforcement authorities, or other persons regarding possible identity theft in connection with covered accounts held by the institution.
- The institution is notified by a customer, a victim of identity theft, a law enforcement authority, or any other person that it has opened a fraudulent account for a person engaged in identity theft.

#### *Responding to red flags*

Once potentially fraudulent activity is detected, an employee must act quickly as a rapid appropriate response can protect customers and the institution from damages and loss.

- When potentially fraudulent activity is detected, gather all related documentation and write a description of the situation. Present this information to the designated authority for determination.
- The designated authority will complete additional authentication to determine whether the attempted transaction was fraudulent or authentic.

If a transaction is determined to be fraudulent, appropriate actions must be taken immediately.

Actions may include:

- Canceling the transaction;
- Notifying and cooperating with appropriate law enforcement;
- Determining the extent of liability of the institution;
- Notifying the actual customer that fraud has been attempted.

#### *Periodic updates to the plan*

At periodic intervals, as required, the program will be reevaluated to determine whether all aspects of the program are up-to-date and applicable in the current business environment. Periodic reviews will include an assessment of which accounts are covered by the program.

As part of the review, red flags may be revised, replaced, or eliminated. Defining new red flags may also be appropriate. Actions to take in the event that fraudulent activity is discovered may also require revision to reduce damage to the institution and its customers.

### *Program administration*

#### *Involvement of management*

- The Identity Theft Prevention Program shall not be operated as an extension to existing fraud prevention programs, and its importance warrants the highest level of attention.
- The Identity Theft Prevention Program is the responsibility of the governing body. Approval of the initial plan must be appropriately documented and maintained.
- Operational responsibility of the program is delegated with an effective date of May 1, 2009 to the senior director of finance.

#### *Staff training*

- Staff training shall be conducted for all employees for whom it is reasonably foreseeable that they may come into contact with accounts or personally identifiable information that may constitute a risk to the institution or its customers.
- The human resources coordinator is responsible for ensuring identity theft training for designated employees and contractors.
- Designated employees must receive annual training in all elements of this policy.
- To ensure maximum effectiveness, employees may continue to receive additional training as changes to the program are made.

#### *Oversight of service provider arrangements*

- It is the responsibility of the institution to ensure that the activities of all service providers are conducted in accordance with reasonable policies and procedures designed to detect, prevent, and mitigate the risk of identity theft.
- A service provider that maintains its own identity theft prevention program, consistent with the guidance of the red flag rules and validated by appropriate due diligence, may be considered to be meeting these requirements.
- Any specific requirements should be specifically addressed in the appropriate contract arrangements.

*Revised: May 2009, May 2017*

## Information Technology (IT) Security

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students, contractors, consultants, and temporary workers

### *User Requirements*

The first line of defense in data security is the individual AOMA user. AOMA users are responsible for the security of all data which may come to them in whatever format. AOMA is responsible for maintaining ongoing training programs to inform all users of these requirements.

Challenge Unrecognized Personnel - It is the responsibility of all AOMA personnel to take positive action to provide physical security. If you see an unrecognized person in a restricted AOMA office location, you should challenge them as to their right to be there. Any challenged person who does not respond appropriately should be immediately reported to supervisory staff.

Unattended Computers - Unattended computers should be locked by the user when leaving the work area. AOMA policy states that all computers will have the automatic screen lock function set to automatically activate upon 15-30 minutes of inactivity. Users are not allowed to take any action which would override this setting.

Home Use of AOMA Corporate Assets - Only computer hardware and software owned by and installed by AOMA is permitted to be connected to or installed on AOMA equipment. Only software that has been approved for institutional use by AOMA may be installed on AOMA equipment. Personal computers supplied by AOMA are to be used solely for business purposes. All users and contractors must read and understand the list of prohibited activities that are outlined below. Modifications or configuration changes are not permitted on computers supplied by AOMA for home use.

### *Prohibited Activities*

Personnel are prohibited from the following activities. The list is not inclusive. Other prohibited activities may be referenced elsewhere in this document.

- Crashing an information system. Deliberately crashing an information system is strictly prohibited. Users may not realize that they caused a system crash, but if it is shown that the crash occurred as a result of user action, a repetition of the action by that user may be viewed as a deliberate act.
- Attempting to break into an information resource or to bypass a security feature. This includes running password-cracking programs or sniffer programs and attempting to circumvent file or other resource permissions.
- Introducing, or attempting to introduce, computer viruses, Trojan horses, peer-to-peer ("P2P") or other malicious code into an information system.



- Exception: Authorized information system support personnel, or others authorized by the AOMA Information Security Officer, may test the resiliency of a system. Such personnel may test for susceptibility to hardware or software failure, security against hacker attacks, and system infection.
- Browsing. The willful, unauthorized access or inspection of confidential or sensitive information to which you have not been approved on a "need to know" basis is prohibited. AOMA has access to patient level health information which is protected by HIPAA regulations which stipulate a "need to know" before approval is granted to view the information. The purposeful attempt to look at or access information to which you have not been granted access by the appropriate approval procedure is strictly prohibited.
- Personal or Unauthorized Software. Use of personal software is prohibited. All software installed on AOMA computers must be approved by AOMA.
- Software Use. Violating or attempting to violate the terms of use or license agreement of any software product used by AOMA is strictly prohibited.
- System Use. Engaging in any activity for any purpose that is illegal or contrary to the policies, procedures or business interests of AOMA is strictly prohibited.

### *Electronic Communication, E-mail, Internet Usage*

As a productivity enhancement tool, AOMA encourages the use of electronic communications. However, all electronic communication systems and all messages generated on or handled by AOMA owned equipment are considered the property of AOMA – not the property of individual users. Consequently, this policy applies to all AOMA employees, students, and contractors, and covers all electronic communications including, but not limited to, telephones, e-mail, voicemail, instant messaging, Internet, fax, personal computers, and servers.

AOMA provided resources, such as computer workstations or laptops, computer systems, networks, e-mail, and Internet software and services are intended for business or educational purposes. However, incidental personal use is permissible as long as:

- 1) it does not consume more than a trivial amount of employee time or institutional resources,
- 2) it does not interfere with staff productivity,
- 3) it does not preempt any business or educational activity,
- 4) it does not violate any of the following:
  - a) Copyright violations – This includes the act of pirating software, music, books and/or videos or the use of pirated software, music, books and/or videos and the illegal duplication and/or distribution of information and other intellectual property that is under copyright.
  - b) Illegal activities – Use of AOMA information resources for or in support of illegal purposes as defined by federal, state or local law is strictly prohibited.
  - c) Commercial use – Use of AOMA information resources for personal or commercial profit is strictly prohibited.

- d) Political Activities – All political activities are strictly prohibited on AOMA premises. AOMA encourages all of its employees and students to vote and to participate in the election process, but these activities must not be performed using AOMA assets or resources.
- e) Harassment –AOMA strives to maintain a workplace free of harassment and that is sensitive to the diversity of its employees and students. Therefore, AOMA prohibits the use of computers, e-mail, voicemail, instant messaging, texting and the Internet in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others, or harmful to morale. For example, the display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, and cartoons is strictly prohibited.
- f) Junk E-mail - All communications using IT resources shall be purposeful and appropriate. Distributing “junk” mail, such as chain letters, advertisements, or unauthorized solicitations is prohibited. A chain letter is defined as a letter sent to several persons with a request that each send copies of the letter to an equal number of persons. Advertisements offer services from someone else to you. Solicitations are when someone asks you for something. If you receive any of the above, delete the e-mail message immediately. Do not forward the e-mail message to anyone.

Generally, while it is **NOT** the policy of AOMA to monitor the content of any electronic communication, AOMA is responsible for servicing and protecting AOMA’s equipment, networks, data, and resource availability and therefore may be required to access and/or monitor electronic communications from time to time. Several different methods are employed to accomplish these goals. For example, an audit or cost analysis may require reports that monitor phone numbers dialed, length of calls, number of calls to / from a specific handset, the time of day, etc. Other examples where electronic communications may be monitored include, but are not limited to, research and testing to optimize IT resources, troubleshooting technical problems and detecting patterns of abuse or illegal activity.

AOMA reserves the right, at its discretion, to review any employee’s files or electronic communications to the extent necessary to ensure all electronic media and services are used in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations as well as AOMA policies.

Users should structure all electronic communication with recognition of the fact that the content could be monitored, and that any electronic communication could be forwarded, intercepted, printed or stored by others.

### *Internet Access*

Internet access is provided for AOMA users and is considered a great resource for the organization. This resource is costly to operate and maintain, and must be allocated primarily to those with business, educational, administrative, or contract needs. The Internet access provided by AOMA should not be used for entertainment, viewing the sports highlight of the day, games, movies, music, social media, etc.

Users must understand that individual Internet usage can be monitored, and if a user is found to be spending an excessive amount of time or consuming large amounts of bandwidth for personal use, disciplinary action will be taken.

### ***Reporting Software Malfunctions***

Users should inform the appropriate AOMA personnel when the user's software does not appear to be functioning correctly. The malfunction - whether accidental or deliberate - may pose an information security risk. If the user, or the user's manager or supervisor, suspects a computer virus infection, the AOMA computer virus policy should be followed, and these steps should be taken immediately:

- Stop using the computer
- Do not carry out any commands, including commands to <Save> data.
- Do not close any of the computer's windows or programs.
- Do not turn off the computer or peripheral devices.
- If possible, physically disconnect the computer from networks to which it is attached.
- Inform the appropriate personnel or AOMA ISO as soon as possible. Write down any unusual behavior of the computer (screen messages, unexpected disk access, unusual responses to commands) and the time when they were first noticed.
- Write down any changes in hardware, software, or software use that preceded the malfunction.
- Do not attempt to remove a suspected virus!

### ***Report Security Incidents***

It is the responsibility of each AOMA user to report perceived security incidents on a continuous basis to the appropriate supervisor or security person. A User is any person authorized to access an information resource. Users are responsible for the day-to-day, hands-on security of that resource. Users are to formally report all security incidents or violations of the security policy immediately to the Information Security Officer (ISO).

Reports of security incidents shall be escalated as quickly as possible. Each incident will be analyzed to determine if changes in the existing security structure are necessary. All reported incidents are logged, and the remedial action indicated. It is the responsibility of the ISO to provide training on any procedural changes that may be required as a result of the investigation of an incident.

Security breaches shall be promptly investigated. If criminal action is suspected, the AOMA Information Security Officer shall contact the appropriate law enforcement and investigative authorities immediately, which may include but is not limited to the police or the FBI.

### ***Transfer of Sensitive/Confidential Information***

When confidential or sensitive information from one individual is received by another individual while conducting official business, the receiving individual shall maintain the confidentiality or sensitivity of the information in accordance with the conditions imposed by the providing individual. All employees must recognize the sensitive nature of data maintained by AOMA and hold all data in the strictest confidence. Any purposeful release of data to which an employee may have access is a violation of AOMA policy and will result in personnel action; it may also result in legal action.

### *Transferring Software and Files between Home and Work/School*

Personal software shall not be used on AOMA computers or networks. If a need for specific software exists, submit a request to your supervisor or ISO. Users shall not use AOMA purchased software on home or on non-AOMA computers or equipment unless authorized.

AOMA proprietary data, including but not limited to patient information, student information, IT Systems information, financial information or human resource data, shall not be placed on any computer that is not the property of AOMA without written consent of the respective supervisor or ISO. It is crucial to AOMA to protect all data and, in order to do that effectively we must control the systems in which it is contained. In the event that a supervisor or department head receives a request to transfer AOMA data to a non-AOMA Computer System, the supervisor or department head should notify the ISO or appropriate personnel of the intentions and the need for such a transfer of data.

The AOMA Wide Area Network (“WAN”) is maintained with a wide range of security protections in place, which include features such as virus protection, e-mail file type restrictions, firewalls, anti-hacking hardware and software, etc. Since AOMA does not control non-AOMA personal computers, AOMA cannot be sure of the methods that may or may not be in place to protect AOMA sensitive information, hence the need for this restriction.

### *Internet Considerations*

Special precautions are required to block Internet (public) access to AOMA information resources not intended for public access, and to protect confidential AOMA information when it is to be transmitted over the Internet.

The following security and administration issues shall govern Internet usage.

Prior approval of the AOMA Information Security Officer or appropriate personnel authorized by AOMA shall be obtained before:

- An Internet, or other external network connection, is established;
- AOMA information (including notices, memoranda, documentation and software) is made available on any Internet-accessible computer (e.g. web or ftp server) or device;
- Users may not install or download any software (applications, screen savers, etc.). If users have a need for additional software, the user is to contact their supervisor;

- Use shall be consistent with the goals of the AOMA. The network can be used to market services related to the AOMA, however use of the network for personal profit or gain is prohibited.
- Confidential or sensitive data - including credit card numbers, telephone calling card numbers, logon passwords, and other parameters that can be used to access goods or services.

### **User Logon IDs**

Individual users may be assigned unique logon IDs and passwords. An access control system shall identify each user and prevent unauthorized users from entering or using information resources. Security requirements for user identification include:

- Each user shall be assigned a unique identifier.
- Users shall be responsible for the use and misuse of their individual logon ID.

### **Passwords**

#### **User Account Passwords**

User IDs and passwords are required in order to gain access to AOMA networks and workstations. All passwords are restricted by a corporate-wide password policy to be of a "Strong" nature. This means that all passwords must conform to restrictions and limitations that are designed to make the password difficult to guess. Users are required to select a password in order to obtain access to any electronic information both at the server level and at the workstation level. When passwords are reset, the user will be automatically prompted to manually change that assigned password.

### **Confidentiality Agreement**

Users of AOMA information resources shall sign, as a condition for employment or academic admission, an appropriate confidentiality agreement. The agreement shall include the following statement, or a paraphrase of it:

*I understand that any unauthorized use or disclosure of information residing on the AOMA information resource systems may result in disciplinary action consistent with the policies and procedures of federal, state, and local agencies.*

Temporary workers and third-party employees not already covered by a confidentiality agreement shall sign such a document prior to accessing AOMA information resources.

Confidentiality agreements shall be reviewed when there are changes to contracts or other terms of employment, particularly when contracts are ending, or users are leaving an organization.

*Added: April 2020*

## Social media

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, and students with access to AOMA social media sites

Employees and students who act as administrators for AOMA's social media pages will not post links or views that are political in nature unless they pertain to the field of Chinese medicine and/or integrative medicine.

### *Procedure*

Political posts pertaining to Chinese medicine and/or integrative medicine must be approved by the president before they can be published online.

*Revised:* July 2013, February 2017

## Solicitation and advertising

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students, outside agents

Solicitation or distribution of written materials, goods, or services by AOMA employees is prohibited at all times in all working areas on company premises. The sole exceptions to this policy are charitable and community activities supported and approved by AOMA.

Non-employees may not solicit or distribute written materials of any kind at any time on premises that are owned, leased, operated, managed, or controlled by AOMA, including AOMA Herbal Medicine.

AOMA bulletin boards are the only areas where any merchandise or notices may be placed. Such items must meet the guidelines established by the director of marketing and outreach who must approve any postings.

*Revised:* August 2007; updated August 2013

## Use of AOMA name or logo

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students

The name "AOMA" or "AOMA Graduate School of Integrative Medicine" or "Academy of Oriental Medicine at Austin" may not be used by any member of the AOMA community, including employees, students, clubs or organizations, or any business or individual, as a part of its title, name or designation, or in the title or name of any publication, or for advertising purposes of goods and services, or on a bank account, without prior written approval from the director of marketing and the president.

The following limitations are applied on the use of the AOMA logo and other graphic elements:

- Do not modify or recreate the AOMA logo under any circumstances;
- Do not extract any of the graphic elements contained in the AOMA logo to use separately;
- Never redraw or rescale the elements of the AOMA logo or add other graphic elements to it;
- Always use the authorized digital artwork provided by AOMA.

Authorized artwork can be obtained by contacting the director of marketing and outreach [marketing@aoma.edu](mailto:marketing@aoma.edu).

*Revised:* March 2017

## Camera usage and taking photos

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students, visitors, and outside agents

AOMA prohibits the use of any type of camera phone, cell phone camera, digital camera, video camera, or other form of image-recording device without the express permission of AOMA and of each person whose image is recorded. Outside news people, reporters, visitors, etc. are forbidden from taking pictures or video of any aspect of AOMA or AOMA Herbal Medicine without the approval of the director of operations or the president. Students cannot take pictures, images, scans, or other electronic captures of protected course materials such as quizzes and exams.

*Revised:* December 2007, May 2012, January 2019

## Library Policies

### Library privileges

*Scope:* Faculty, staff, students, alumni, and board members

The AOMA Library maintains a collection of books, journals, videos, CDs, and DVDs on Eastern and Western medicine. The library holds copies of over 10,000 books, journals, and other media, which are available for use. The librarian maintains an online catalog of library materials that allows patrons universal access. Registered and matriculating students, alumni, faculty, staff, and board members receive circulation privileges without cost. The general public may purchase annual library privileges for \$25.

The library maintains a periodical database contract. The EBSCO database includes two primary medical databases (Alt Health Watch and MedLine with full text), representing approximately 1700 journals and professional medical publications. Students and faculty have access online both on and off campus through use of a password. Passwords are given at new student orientation. For questions, please contact the librarian at 512-492-3032 or [library@aoma.edu](mailto:library@aoma.edu).

The library houses a collection of original Chinese language medical research journals and DVDs, which date from 1981, a unique component that serves to enrich AOMA's acupuncture and Oriental medicine program focus.

### Researching topics

Library staff members are happy to help locate items in the library or help research a specific topic of interest or necessity. A faculty member should notify the librarian in advance if he or she will need assistance with extensive research.

*Revised:* August 2007; updated August 2013

### Checking out library materials

To check out a book, library patrons give the library materials to the librarian on duty for processing. Circulating library materials may be renewed twice. Overdue library materials are not renewable unless the late fees are paid at the time of renewal. If material(s) are lost or damaged, the full replacement price of the item will be charged to the library patron. Library materials can be returned directly to the library during regular hours of operation.

### MAc, TCM certificate, and non-degree seeking students

Time allowed for checkout:

Books

21 days



Reference Materials	Library use only
Journals	Library use only
Audio, video tapes, CDs and DVDs	21 days

### ***Doctoral students***

Time allowed for checkout:

Books	One interim period
Reference Materials	Library use only
Journals	Library use only
Audio, videotapes, CDs and DVDs	One interim period

### ***Faculty and staff***

Time allowed for checkout for faculty and staff:

Books	One term (unless otherwise noted)
Videos/Audiotapes	21 days (unless otherwise noted)
Reference/Required Course Texts	Library use only
Journals	Library use only

### **Library late fees**

Overdue materials fine schedule:

Books, audio, videotapes, CDs and DVDs	\$0.15 per day
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All library debts must be paid before graduation.