DREXEL UNIVERSITY
Pennsylvania College of Optometry

Academic Handbook

Accelerated Scholars

Doctor of Optometry Degree Program

Class of 2029

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For the purposes of this document, the following definitions apply:

Term/Acronym	Definition
“University”	Drexel University
“College”	Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Drexel University
“PCO”	Pennsylvania College of Optometry
“Dean”	The Dean of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Drexel University
“Office of the Dean”	The Dean, Associate Deans, and professional staff of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Drexel University
“Scholars Program”	Doctor of Optometry – Accelerated Scholars Program
“Student Handbook”	This document, the Scholars Program Student Handbook
“CAP”	Committee on Academic Promotion
“Course Coordinator”	This is the term used within PCO and course syllabi. This is synonymous with “Instructor of Record” by Drexel University
“Course Instructor”	This term is used within PCO to denote any faculty member participating in the course, including but not limited to the Course Coordinator.
“PCS”	Patient Care Supplemental

1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1. This Academic Handbook applies to students enrolled in the Doctor of Optometry – Accelerated Scholars Program (Scholars Program). This handbook is published for students, faculty, and staff, all of whom are held responsible for reading and adhering to this document.

1.2. The faculty and administration of the Scholars Program and the Pennsylvania College of Optometry (PCO) at Drexel University, in conjunction with the Committee on Academic Standards and Assessments, and the Office of the Dean, have developed this document to uphold the academic standards for all students enrolled in the Scholars Program.

1.3. Unless otherwise stated, the Dean of the College is the individual charged with rendering final interpretations of the Scholars Program Academic Handbook and deciding whether to grant exceptions.

1.4. This handbook operates within, and is subject to, University policy; in the event of any conflict, University policy controls. This handbook, in turn, takes precedence over course syllabi and other program documents,

except where a syllabus imposes an additional, course-specific requirement not addressed elsewhere in the handbook. Any conflict not resolved by this hierarchy shall be resolved by the Dean.

1.5. This Academic Handbook is effective for the class of 2029.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. The Dean is the Chief Executive Officer of the College and, in conjunction with faculty, is charged with the management and oversight of the college's programs, curriculum, and other academic matters. The faculty, in conjunction with the Office of the Dean, creates and modifies the curriculum and obtains appropriate approval from the University.

2.2. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, the Chief Academic Officer of the College, and their staff are charged with the administration of all aspects of the didactic program.

2.3. The Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs and their staff are charged with the administration and integration of all internal and external patient care courses within the program, along with the management of the educational operations of The Eye Institute and its affiliated clinics.

2.4. The Director(s) of the Scholars Program in conjunction with the Chief Academic Officer and Dean are charged with the oversight of all aspects of the Scholars Program.

2.4.1. They are charged with the execution of the Scholars Program didactic curriculum in conjunction with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the execution of the clinical curriculum in conjunction with the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs, and the Director of the Externship Program as appropriate.

2.4.2. The Director(s) of the Scholars Program, in conjunction with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs are responsible for monitoring the progress of students, and developing modified programs, which may include a transition to the Doctor of Optometry Traditional Program, when it is deemed necessary for academic or personal reasons.

2.4.3. The Director(s) of the Scholars Program in conjunction with the Office of the Dean are charged with the administration of matters related to admissions, registration, and student advising.

2.5. The Executive Director of Clinical Operations in conjunction with the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs is responsible for all patient care and operations of the clinics.

2.6. The Office of the University Registrar at Drexel University is responsible for maintaining all students' permanent academic records.

3. FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. Faculty are responsible for monitoring student performance throughout the term and providing students with performance feedback consistent with the course grading outline and syllabus.

3.2. A syllabus is distributed for each course and will describe the course instructor(s), description, pre-requisites, purpose, statement of expected learning, materials, assignments and assessments, competencies, sequence, and academic expectations.

3.3. Faculty are required to use their University email account when communicating with students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

4. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. The student is responsible for understanding and adhering to all requirements stated in this Academic Handbook.

4.2. Student Responsibilities Regarding Electronic Communications:

4.2.1. The student is required to check their University email accounts twice daily during the weekdays (Mon.-Fri.), as some correspondence from faculty instructors and administrators may be time-sensitive. Additionally, all students are expected to check their University email accounts daily during weekends, breaks, holidays, and other unassigned times.

4.2.2. All students are required to use their University email accounts when communicating with faculty, staff, and administrators. Administrators, faculty and staff are not responsible for reading or responding to any email not sent from a University email account.

4.2.3. Letters and related communications regarding student academic standing (e.g., Academic Warning, Probation, Dismissal) will be sent electronically to a student via their University email account.

4.3. Students are required to log into DrexelOne regularly to review their Student Checklist, financial tasks, and academic updates, as failure to complete these items may result in account holds.

4.4. Students must adhere to the requirements set out by the Drexel University Health Insurance & Immunization Office.

5. ACADEMIC CALENDAR AND CLASS SCHEDULES

5.1. The academic calendar, supplied by the Office of the University Registrar, provides the start and end dates of each term, as well as other important dates.

5.1.1. University holidays are listed on the University website.

5.2. Any travel or other commitments scheduled on days reserved for academic activities are made at the student's own risk, as these dates are necessary for mandatory classes, laboratories, examinations, or other educational activities.

5.3. The Weekly Class Schedule is created, maintained, and distributed electronically by the Office of the Dean. The Weekly Class Schedule is released prior to the start of the term and includes University holidays. This weekly schedule is released as a supplement to course syllabi.

5.3.1. The Weekly Class Schedule is updated by the Office of the Dean as necessary. Students should monitor the Weekly Class Schedule, as it is subject to change.

5.4. Schedule changes including time, location, and/or delivery method of didactic activities and examinations may be requested by a cohort. A request(s) may or may not be granted.

5.4.1. The majority of the cohort must participate in the vote for changes to be considered.

5.4.2. The schedule changes will be considered when 75% of the vote is in favor of the change. De-identified verification of the voting outcomes may be requested.

5.4.3. Change requests meeting the 75% threshold should be emailed by a designated class representative to the Education Program Manager, the Director(s) of the Scholars Program, and the course coordinator(s).

5.4.4. Changes should be requested no later than the first Friday of the term.

5.4.5. If granted, changes will be confirmed by email to the designated class representative and updated on the Weekly Class Schedule.

6. ATTENDANCE

6.1. Student attendance at all instructional activities is expected.

6.2. Student attendance at all examinations and assessments is mandatory.

6.3. Course coordinators have the option to require mandatory attendance at lectures. Mandatory attendance will be communicated by the course coordinator in writing to the students either in the syllabus or a syllabus addendum. Students should reference the course syllabus for consequences related to absences from mandatory lectures or assignments.

6.4. Where attendance is mandatory, absences alone may result in a course grade of Failure (F), as specified in course syllabi. Initiating a course failure due to attendance is determined by the *Tardiness and Absence Document* and is evaluated by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and/or the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs.

6.5. A student who misses a substantial amount of any course may be required to take a Leave of Absence from the College or complete a course re-enrollment. (See Section 15) The allowable number of absences (excused and unexcused) accrued before requiring a Leave of Absence is evaluated by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and/or the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs. Determinations are made based upon an evaluation of the proportion of time dedicated to the course or patient care activity in the College curriculum.

6.5.1. Students placed on involuntary academic Leave of Absence may appeal this decision to the Dean. The decision of the Dean is final; there are no further appeals.

6.6. In the event of extremely inclement weather conditions or other emergency situations, information will be provided about university closing via the Drexel University DrexelALERT system. Students should consult the University website for weather related procedures and information.

7. ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

7.1. Concerns related to the academic environment should be initially discussed with the instructor and, if necessary, the Director(s) of the Scholars Program.

7.2. In the event that the Director(s) of the Scholars Program is the course coordinator or is otherwise a direct participant in the concerns, the situation should be discussed with the Office of the Dean.

7.3. Students are expected to maintain professional conduct in all academic environments. Inappropriate conduct may be referred to the University

Office of Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards Care, regarding a violation of student professional behavior.

8. PATIENT CARE ASSIGNMENTS

8.1. Students are expected to adhere to *The Drexel University Pennsylvania College of Optometry Clinic Professionalism Document*.

8.2. Students are expected to maintain professional clinical appearance:

8.2.1. FIGS brand of Graphite gray, any style of scrubs.

8.2.1.1. If the scrubs are personalized, block signature with white lettering is required and should be “First Name Last Name, Student Doctor” or “First Name Last Name”.

8.2.1.2. Scrubs should be accompanied by clean athletic shoes.

8.2.1.3. Solid black, grey, or white long sleeve shirts are permissible under scrubs.

8.2.1.4. SOSH jackets or White coats are permissible over scrubs.

8.2.2. Business attire with business attire shoes.

8.2.2.1. White coats are permissible over business attire.

8.3. A student’s patient care assignments and clinical privileges may be withdrawn for any of the following reasons:

8.3.1. Decision of CAP for academic and/or clinical deficiencies.

8.3.2. Decision by the Drexel University Health Insurance & Immunization Office.

8.3.3. Decision by the PCO Department of Clinical Compliance.

8.3.4. Decision of the University Office of Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards Care regarding a violation of student professional behavior.

8.3.5. Nonpayment of tuition and fees.

8.3.6. Decision by the Dean regarding other matters deemed appropriate.

9. EXAMINATIONS

9.1. EXAMINATION GENERAL GUIDELINES

9.1.1. Examinations provide the opportunity for instructors to assess students' knowledge and for students to demonstrate academic progress and competence.

9.1.2. Examination and assessment details for a course will be included in the course syllabus, which will be distributed at the beginning of each academic term.

9.1.2.1. The course syllabus will include the relative weights to be given to various examinations and assessment tools used in determining the final grade.

9.1.3. The *PCO Rules for Taking Examinations* are referenced in each course syllabus. Each student is responsible for understanding these Rules. Questions or concerns should be directed to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

9.1.3.1. Infractions of the *PCO Rules for Taking Examinations* are considered serious offenses. Violation of these rules will be addressed using the University *Academic Integrity Policy.*

9.2. EXAMINATIONS: SCHEDULES

9.2.1. Examination schedules are established and issued by the Office of the Dean.

9.2.2. Examination schedules are subject to change for unanticipated reasons. In the event of a change, students will be notified accordingly in a timely manner.

9.2.2.1. In the event of extremely inclement weather conditions or other emergency situations, information will be provided about University closure or delays via the Drexel University DrexelALERT system.

9.2.3. The College will make reasonable efforts to modify student clinic schedules during the program’s designated final examination week to support appropriate examination preparation.

9.3. EXAMINATIONS: ATTENDANCE

9.3.1. A student must be registered for any given course before they may take the course examinations. The Office of the University Registrar is responsible for ensuring that only registered students receive a grade in a particular course.

9.3.2. Students are required to sit for all examinations as scheduled. If a student is unable to sit for the examination, they must immediately notify the Director(s) of the Scholars program and impacted course coordinator.

9.3.2.1. Guidelines and protocols for applying for excused absences should follow the *Tardiness and Absence Document*.

9.3.2.2. Unexcused absences will result in a grade of zero (0) for the exam.

9.3.2.3. The course coordinator will determine the make-up date and the format of any make-up examination.

9.4. NATIONAL BOARD EXAMINATIONS

9.4.1. Passage of the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) is not required for graduation. However, passage of Part I - Applied Basic Science, Part II – Patient Assessment and Management, and Part III – Patient Encounters and Performance Skills is required in most states for licensure. Therefore, it is recommended that all students register and sit for the NBEO examinations if they plan to practice in the U.S.

9.4.2. A student should consult the NBEO website www.optometry.org for general information about exam content and registration procedures. Students are responsible for registering for the NBEO examinations by the deadlines posted on the NBEO website.

9.4.3. Students in the Accelerated Scholars Program are first eligible for each Part of the NBEO according to the following schedule:

Part I – Applied Basic Science Examination: March administration during Year 2

Part II – Patient Assessment and Management Exam: November/December administration during Year 3

Part III – Patient Encounters and Performance Skills: Summer of Year 2 through early Spring during Year 3

9.4.4. See the *Externship Course Handbook* for guidelines related to NBEO scheduling during externships.

9.4.5. Each student is required to authorize the NBEO to release their scores to the College, since these scores provide information vital to the College's ongoing curricular assessment efforts and accreditation requirements.

10. STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

10.1. DIDACTIC GRADING AND EVALUATION

10.1.1. At the conclusion of a didactic course or term, grades are rendered for each enrolled student.

10.1.1.1. Per the University's *Grade Reporting Policy,* for classes with enrollment less than 50, grades will be due 48 hours after the final exam.

10.1.2. Unless otherwise specified in a course syllabus, the default Scholars Program grading scale is:

Grade	Range	Grade Points Earned/Term Hour	Grade Interpretation
A	93.00 - 100.00	4.00	EXCELLENT Indicates exceptional achievement
A-	90.00 - 92.99	3.70	
B+	87.00 - 89.99	3.30	GOOD Indicates superior achievement
B	83.00 - 86.99	3.00	
B-	80.00 - 82.99	2.70	
C+	77.00 - 79.99	2.30	ADEQUATE Indicates acceptable achievement
C	73.00 - 76.99	2.00	
C-	70.00 - 72.99	1.70	MARGINAL - Credit earned but below desired standards
F	< 59.99	0.00	UNSATISFACTORY/FAILURE - No Credit Earned

Other Designations (carrying no Quality Points):

Grade	Grade Points Earned/Term Hour	Grade Interpretation
H	0.00	HONORS – Indicates outstanding performance; credits earned
P+	0.00	HIGH PASS – Indicates performance exceeding most expected competencies or requirements
P	0.00	PASS – Indicates performance meets all competencies or requirements; credits earned

P-	0.00	LOW PASS – Indicates performance that inconsistently and/or minimally meets expected competencies or requirements; credits earned
AU	0.00	AUDIT
INC		INCOMPLETE
IP		IN PROGRESS
GNS		GRADE NOT SUBMITTED
W		WITHDRAWAL

10.1.3. No arbitrary percentage of the class will be designated to receive any particular grade category.

10.2. TRAINEESHIP, CLERKSHIP, AND INTERNSHIP CLINICAL GRADING AND EVALUATION

10.2.1. At the conclusion of a clinical course, grades are rendered for each enrolled student as follows:

Grade	Grade Points Earned/Term Hour	Grade Interpretation
H	0.00	HONORS – Indicates outstanding performance in all competencies or requirements; credits earned (credits earned)
P+	0.00	HIGH PASS Indicates performance exceeding most expected competencies or requirements (credits earned)
P	0.00	PASS Indicates performance meet expected competencies or requirements; (credits earned)
P-	0.00	LOW PASS Indicates performance that consistently and/or minimally meets expected competencies or requirements. Students earning a Pass- during the final term of internships will be required to begin their externships on campus (credits earned)
F	0.00	FAILURE Indicates performance below expected competencies or requirements. Reenrollment in the course is required. (no credits earned)
INC		INCOMPLETE
IP		IN PROGRESS
GNS		GRADE NOT SUBMITTED
W		WITHDRAWAL

10.2.2. Students must achieve a Pass (P) or higher in the evaluation they receive for the Patient Care course in the term prior to the start of externship training. If a grade of Low Pass (P-) or Failure (F) is achieved, the student will complete their assigned clinical rotation on campus until it is determined that eligibility for an off-campus externship rotation is achieved.

10.2.2.1. A grade of Low Pass (P-) or Failure (F) on a traineeship or internship evaluation may result in enrollment in a Patient Care Supplemental course (see section 12.14).

10.2.2.2. The grades of Low Pass (P-) and higher will not be awarded quality points and, therefore, will not be calculated into the grade point average. However, the grade of Failure (F) will carry zero (0) quality points and will be computed in the grade point average.

10.2.3. No arbitrary percentage of the class will be designated to receive any particular grade category.

10.3. EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM CLINICAL GRADES

10.3.1. At the conclusion of a clinical course, grades are rendered for each enrolled student as follows:

Grade	Grade Points Earned/Term Hour	Grade Interpretation
H	0.00	HONORS – Indicates outstanding performance in all competencies or requirements; credits earned (credits earned)
P	0.00	PASS Indicates performance meets expected competencies or requirements; (credits earned)
F	0.00	FAILURE Indicates performance below expected competencies or requirements. Enrollment in a Patient Care Supplemental course may be required. Reenrollment in the course is required. (no credits earned)
INC		INCOMPLETE (refer to Section 10.4)
IP		IN PROGRESS
GNS		GRADE NOT SUBMITTED
W		WITHDRAWAL

10.3.2. For the Externship Program, achieved clinical grades will be recorded on the transcript as Honors (H), Pass (P), or Failure (F).

10.3.2.1. A grade of Failure (F) on an externship evaluation may result in on-campus Patient Care Supplemental course (see section 12.14).

10.3.2.2. The grades of Honors (H) and Pass (P) will not be converted to quality points and, therefore, will not be calculated into the grade point average. However, the grade of Failure (F) will carry zero (0) quality points and will be computed in the grade point average.

10.3.3. No arbitrary percentage of the class will be designated to receive any particular grade category.

10.4. INCOMPLETE GRADES

10.4.1. Students are expected to complete a course during the academic term in which the course was taken. However, a student, for reasons beyond their control, may be unable to complete the coursework and thus, may have the opportunity to obtain an Incomplete (INC) for the course under specific conditions and guidelines.

10.4.2. Incomplete grades must be resolved within 30 calendar days after the end of the term in which the Incomplete grade (INC) was received.

10.4.3. The Dean may grant an extension for resolution of the Incomplete grade if written documentation is provided by the student confirming that “extenuating circumstances” exist.

10.4.4. All Incomplete (INC) grades must be removed prior to beginning external clinical rotations. In this instance, the start date or end date of the clinical rotation may be delayed.

10.4.5. Once the student has completed the required course work, the course coordinator will submit the student’s final grade.

10.4.6. The course coordinator, with the approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, will authorize the Office of the University Registrar to change the grade from Incomplete (INC) to the final grade based upon the course syllabus grading guidelines.

10.4.7. If the student fails to remove the Incomplete (INC) grade within the time allowed, the course coordinator, with the approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, will authorize the Office of the University Registrar to change the grade to a Failure (F).

10.5. IN PROGRESS GRADES (IP)

10.5.1. In Progress (IP) is a temporary grade status denoting the natural continuation of a course beyond the End of Term dates laid out by the Drexel Academic Calendars.

10.5.2. All In Progress (IP) grades should be resolved by the course coordinator as a grade change submission at the end of the final examination.

10.5.2.1. Grade submissions should be completed within 48 hours of the final examination (per the University *Final Grades Policy).*

10.6. GRADE NOT SUBMITTED (GNS)

10.6.1. Grade Not Submitted (GNS) is a temporary grade status denoting the course coordinator did not submit a grade by the grade submission deadline. This is not a grade.

10.6.2. In the case of “GNS” appearing on a transcript, the student should reach out to the Director(s) of the Scholars Program and the course coordinator for resolution.

10.7. WITHDRAWAL (W)

10.7.1. Due to the lock-step nature of the program, the student may not withdraw from a required course(s).

10.7.2. The student may not withdraw from the entire curriculum without the approval from Director(s) of the Scholars Program and the Office of the Dean. The attempt to avoid a sub-standard grade is not an acceptable reason for withdrawal.

10.7.3. During externships, withdrawal from any internal or external clinical assignment, or any changes in the contract signed with the Office of the Externship Program, are subject to the approval of the Director of the Externship Program and the subsequent approval of the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs. Completion of the Patient Care course is expected.

10.7.4. For information about withdrawal from the College or University, see Section 16.

10.8. FAILING GRADES (F)

10.8.1. A failure (F) in a required course must be removed by the passing of the course through remediation (see section 12) or re-enrollment (see section 12.12), within one term of the conclusion of the term in which the grade was earned.

10.8.1.1. A student on academic probation may be offered a course remediation in an attempt to remove the Failing (F) grade. The remediation examination will be scheduled in conjunction with the Office of the Dean.

10.8.2. A student who falls under academic dismissal (see section 11.5.4) will not be offered a course remediation or re-enrollment unless reinstated to the program in the same class by the CAP (see section 14).

10.8.3. If the grade of failure (F) is not remediated within the specified timeframe, the student will be dismissed from the College for academic reasons. Any exceptions are determined on a case-by-case basis and require written approval from the Dean and may include special academic stipulations as determined by the Dean, their designee, or the CAP.

10.8.4. All failures (F's) must be successfully remediated prior to beginning externship rotations.

10.9. AUDIT (AU) (Supplement to the University *Audit Option Policy*)

10.9.1. A course taken on an audit basis will not count toward the fulfillment of degree requirements.

10.9.2. Tuition and fees will be applied.

10.9.3. Since the credit hours attempted and quality points will not be awarded for an audited course, it will not affect the student's grade point average.

10.9.4. This non-credit registration is recorded as "AU" on the student's transcript.

10.9.5. In certain instances, the CAP, and/or the Office of the Dean, may require a student to audit a course or a component already taken.

10.9.6. A student may elect to officially audit any course within the curriculum by obtaining written permission from the course coordinator and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and registering for the course.

10.9.7. The student is required to provide the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs with written approval from the course coordinator no later than the fifth (5th) business day of the term.

10.9.8. The Office of the Dean will notify the course coordinator and the Director(s) of the Scholars Program when a student has approval to audit a course.

10.10. GRADE MEDIATION AND ADJUDICATION (Supplement to Drexel University *Grade Appeals Policy*)

10.10.1. Students must begin by following the appeal process within the College.

10.10.2. At any time during a course, a student who has a concern about a reported grade should first discuss the course grading and determinations with the coordinator. If the student does not receive a response from the course coordinator within two (2) business days, the student may contact the Director(s) of the Scholars Program. If the student does not receive a response from the Director(s) of the Scholars Program within two (2) business days, the student may approach the Office of the Dean.

10.10.3. When a student and Course Coordinator disagree regarding a course grade:

10.10.3.1. The student may appeal the grade decision in writing to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for a didactic course or to the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs for a patient care course.

10.10.3.2. The student has three (3) business days from the University's Grades Due in Banner date (published on the Academic Calendar) to bring concerns to the Associate Dean to begin the mediation process.

10.10.3.3. The Associate Dean must resolve the grade decision within five (5) business days from the point of receipt of the mediation request.

10.10.3.3.1. The Associate Dean's decision may be made in conjunction with the Dean.

10.10.3.3.2. The decision on a grading dispute is final; there is no further appeal of the grade within the College.

10.10.3.4. In the event that the Associate Dean teaches the course in question, the student's written appeal is made to the Dean.

10.10.4. The original grade assigned by the course coordinator remains on the student's record while the appeals process is in progress, and will be changed only when, and if, the appeal is successful.

10.10.5. Any grade change will be recorded in accordance with section 10.11 "Change of Grade".

10.10.6. Copies of sequestered exams, reports, and/or presentations submitted by students are required to be retained by the course instructor for a period of one calendar year from the end of the term in which the grade was earned.

10.10.7. If a CAP hearing is necessary, all grade mediation issues must be resolved prior to the CAP hearing.

10.11. CHANGE OF GRADE

10.11.1. Once submitted to the Office of the University Registrar, no grade may be changed without the mutual consent of the course coordinator and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

10.12. GRADE-POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

10.12.1. The cumulative grade-point average is calculated utilizing only courses taken within the Scholars Program.

10.12.2. Cumulative GPA = all earned quality points (to date) divided by the number of earned credits with assigned quality points

11. ACADEMIC PROGRESS EVALUATION

11.1. MIDTERM ACADEMIC PROGRESS EVALUATION

11.1.1. The performance of all students registered within a course are evaluated by the course coordinator at a point approximately mid-way into each academic term.

11.1.2. The name of any student who has been evaluated as “weak” or “failing” will be provided to the Office of the Dean.

11.1.2.1. “Weak” students are defined as those earning a “C-“ at the midpoint of the term.

11.1.2.2. “Failing” students are defined as those earning below a “C-“ (per section 10 there are no Ds available in Scholars Program) at the midpoint of the term.

11.1.2.3. The Office of the Dean will compile this information and present it at the Midterm Academic Progress meeting.

11.1.3. Following the Midterm Academic Progress meeting, the Office of the Dean will notify the student in writing that their performance is unsatisfactory.

11.1.4. Actions to resolve academic difficulties may include:

11.1.4.1. The student may request or be required to meet with the course coordinator, applicable course instructors, and/or the Director(s) of the Scholars Program.

11.1.4.2. The course coordinator and/or the Director(s) of the Scholars Program may also require tutoring for students experiencing academic difficulty.

11.1.5. Midterm evaluations/grades are not part of the student's permanent record and are not used in the determination of academic standing.

11.2. END OF TERM ACADEMIC PROGRESS EVALUATION

11.2.1. The performance of all students registered within a course will be evaluated by the course coordinator at the end of each term.

11.2.2. During the end-of-term academic progress meeting, the course coordinator, in conjunction with the Director(s) of the Scholars Program, and representative(s) from the Office of the Dean will review the performance of each student in each cohort in the Scholars Program.

11.3. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENT

11.3.1. **Satisfactory Academic Standing** – A student who passes each course and attains both a term grade point average and a cumulative grade point average (GPA) greater than or equal to 2.30.

11.3.1.1. To maintain satisfactory academic standing:

11.3.1.1.1. A student should speak with the course instructor regarding their performance when experiencing academic difficulty.

11.3.1.1.2. The student should contact the University's Center for Learning and Academic Success regarding academic support.

11.3.1.1.3. Tutoring services are available and may be recommended by the course instructor or the Director(s) of the Scholars Program.

11.3.1.1.4. The student should contact the Elkins Park Counseling Center regarding personal counseling opportunities or other related needs.

11.3.1.2. A student must be in good academic standing prior to beginning an external clinical rotation.

11.3.1.3. Under normal circumstances, all Scholars Program didactic course and clinical requirements will be completed in 36 months and no more than 48 months, inclusive of potential approved Leaves of Absence. A course of

study longer than 48 months must be approved by the Director(s) of the Scholars Program, in consultation with the Office of the Dean as deemed appropriate.

11.4. **Academic Warning** – An academic warning is an indication to the student that their academic performance is in danger of falling below the minimum acceptable academic expectations for the Scholars Program. A student is placed on academic warning when:

11.4.1. Their term GPA and/or cumulative GPA falls below 2.50 but is higher than 2.30.

11.5. **UNSATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

11.5.1. Unsatisfactory academic progress includes a status of “Academic Probation”, or “Academic Dismissal”. The student will be notified in writing of this change in status by the Office of the Dean.

11.5.2. When in unsatisfactory academic standing:

11.5.2.1. The student is required to speak with the course coordinator or their designee.

11.5.2.2. The student is required to meet with the Director(s) of the Scholars Program.

11.5.2.3. If the student has not already done so, it is highly encouraged to meet with a member of the Elkins Park Counseling Center.

11.5.3. **Academic Probation** – A student is placed on academic probation when:

11.5.3.1. A single term GPA falls below 2.30;

11.5.3.2. Their cumulative GPA at the end of a term falls below 2.30;

11.5.3.3. They earn a Failure (F) in any one course and a term GPA above 2.30.

11.5.3.4. They are remediating a course and until successful remediation is complete.

11.5.4. **Academic Dismissal** – A student will be dismissed from the Scholars Program when:

11.5.4.1. They are not granted the opportunity to remediate a failing grade; OR

11.5.4.2. The term GPA is below 2.30 for any two terms; OR

11.5.4.3. They earn a failing grade (F) in any two courses at any time in the program, whether in the same or different term(s); OR

11.5.4.4. They earn a failing grade (F) in any course at any time in the program and a term GPA below 2.30 for any term at any time in the program; OR

11.5.4.5. They earn a failing grade (F) in a remediation of a failed course; OR

11.5.4.6. Failure to undertake a necessary remediation in any course during the allotted time period or as stipulated by CAP may also result in academic dismissal.

11.5.4.7. Students who fail externship courses may be dismissed at any point during the term with approval of the Dean.

11.5.5. DISMISSAL FOR OTHER REASONS

11.5.5.1. The College assigns great importance to self-discipline, the ability to interact appropriately with others, and the ability to conduct oneself in a professional and ethical manner. Demonstration of deficiencies in any of these areas is viewed by the College as evidence that the student is not suited to a professional career and may constitute adequate cause for dismissal regardless of academic performance.

11.5.5.2. All non-academic matters are referred to the University Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for review (see the University's *Academic Integrity* Policy). It is the purview of the University Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards to refer cases back to the College for review.

12. REMEDIATION OF FAILING GRADES

12.1. Students on academic probation due to a failing grade (F) in a didactic course are required to remediate that course.

12.2. Remediation may include re-examination of the entire course material or an individualized area of weakness.

12.3. Official notification of remediation eligibility will be provided to the student by the Office of the Dean following the Academic Progress Meeting.

12.4. Students receiving one or more Failing (F) grades in any given course should take it upon themselves to begin preparation for potential remediation opportunities.

12.5. The highest grade that can be earned is a grade of “C+” (satisfactory) or “P” (pass), depending upon the grading scale utilized in the course syllabus.

12.6. A student remediating a “F” grade must earn a “C-“ or better on the remediation in order to successfully remediate the course. If a “C-“ or better is not earned, the student will be dismissed for academic reasons.

12.7. The new course grade earned is recorded on the transcript.

12.8. For all remediations, the original “F” grade will remain on the student’s permanent record and be used to determine future academic standing. The grade received on remediation will be used to calculate the GPA in place of the original "F." This treatment differs from re-enrollment, where the original grade remains on the transcript but is excluded from the cumulative GPA.

12.9. Students must successfully complete all necessary remediations within the subsequent term, on the predetermined remediation date(s) established by the Office of the Dean, typically occurring within the first three weeks of the subsequent term.

12.10. A student may be granted the opportunity to remediate a failing course grade as follows:

12.11.1. REMEDIATION BY SELF-STUDY

12.11.1.1. Students are expected to review their term course materials in preparation for remediation. The student is required to meet with the course instructor prior to the remediation to review the examination format and receive academic counseling regarding the course content.

12.11.1.2. Remediation by Self-Study typically includes re-examination. The content and format are determined by the course coordinator. Forms of remediation other than re-examination may be deemed appropriate by the course coordinator in conjunction with CAP and/or the Office of the Dean.

12.11.2. REMEDIATION BY DIRECTED STUDY

12.11.2.1. In circumstances when remediation requires instructor involvement, such as a course that includes a laboratory component, remediation will occur by directed study.

12.11.2.2. Remediation by directed study will occur within a time period specified by the course coordinator, and in no event later than the end of the subsequent term.

12.11.2.3. The student is required to meet with the course coordinator prior to the assessment to review the format and receive academic counseling regarding the course content.

12.11.2.4. This option is generally offered only once per course to a student during an academic year unless extenuating circumstances exist as identified by the CAP.

12.12. RE-ENROLLMENT

12.12.1. Students on academic probation due to a failing grade (F) in a Patient Care course are required to re-enroll in that course.

12.12.2. All traineeship, clerkship, and internship Patient Care courses (1-8) must be passed prior to beginning the externship.

12.12.2.1. Depending on the level of clinical deficiencies, a student may also be required to enroll in a Patient Care Supplemental (PCS) course (see section 12.14).

12.12.3. The new grade earned by re-enrollment is recorded on the transcript. For a re-enrollment, any grade may be earned as defined by the course syllabus.

12.12.4. The original grade earned will remain on the transcript but will not be used to calculate the cumulative GPA.

12.12.5. Tuition and fees will apply.

12.13. MODIFIED COURSE OF STUDY

12.13.1. Students may be eligible to participate in a modified course of study upon returning from a Leave of Absence or reinstatement through the CAP decision.

12.13.2. In special or extenuating circumstances, the Dean may determine a modified course of study.

12.13.3. The curriculum design and implementation for a modified course of study is the responsibility of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and/or the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs.

12.13.3.1. The Associate Deans are also responsible for oversight of students participating in modified course of study.

12.13.3.2. Students participating in modified course of study will have the opportunity to review their updated curriculum with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs prior to the reinstatement.

12.13.4. All grades earned in coursework completed on a modified course of study will be recorded on the transcript within the term they are taken and will be averaged into the Grade Point Average calculation.

12.13.5. If students on a modified course of study do not meet the terms outlined in this handbook for satisfactory academic progress, they may be academically dismissed from the Scholars Program and will be notified, in writing, by the Dean.

12.14. PATIENT CARE SUPPLEMENTAL

12.14.1. A Patient Care Supplemental (PCS) course is a custom designed course to meet the educational needs of an individual student. A student may be enrolled in such a course under a variety of circumstances including:

12.14.1.1. As part of a special program tailored to meet a student's personal or academic needs.

12.14.1.2. To assist a student in transition from an approved Leave of Absence.

12.14.1.3. As part of academic probation.

12.14.1.4. For remediation of third-year externs who have been identified as weak or failing by their preceptor or have failed to meet professional behavior standards at externship sites or a TEI rotation.

12.14.2. A PCS course is a Pass (P)/Fail (F) course.

12.14.3. For additional information, please refer to the PCS syllabus.

12.14.4. Tuition and fees will apply.

13. REINSTATEMENT

13.1. ADMINISTRATIVE REINSTATEMENT WITHOUT APPEAL

13.1.1. A student who has been dismissed for academic reasons may be reinstated to the Scholars Program upon a consensus recommendation at an Academic Progress Meeting and with the approval of the Dean, without having to formally appeal to the CAP. Such reinstatement without formal appeal is uncommon and is not guaranteed.

13.1.2. A student will be notified in writing with the conditions of Administrative Reinstatement within three (3) business days of the date of completion of the Academic Progress Meeting.

13.2. APPEAL PROCESS FOR REINSTATEMENT

13.2.1. A student who has been dismissed based on their academic standing will receive a letter informing them of their standing within three (3) business days of the Academic Progress Meeting.

13.2.2. A student will have the right to request an appeal hearing with the CAP or waive the right to appeal. This decision must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs within two (2) business days of receipt of the dismissal letter, not including the day the letter is received.

13.2.3. If a student wishes to appeal the dismissal, the appeal should be addressed to the Chair of the CAP and submitted to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Included in this letter of appeal should be a written explanation of why the student feels that their appeal for reinstatement should be considered and granted by the CAP. The student must make themselves available to appear before the CAP.

13.2.3.1. Appeal hearings will be held as soon as possible after the request has been received from the student. The hearing will be scheduled based on availability of the CAP committee members and may include evenings and weekends.

13.2.3.2. The student must submit all other information and supporting documents in writing to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at least one (1) business day prior to their scheduled appeal.

13.2.3.3. The student may also make an oral presentation to the Committee during the appeal hearing; however, such a presentation is not required.

13.2.4. A student who fails to contact the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs within two (2) business days of receipt of their dismissal letter, not including the day the letter is received, will forfeit the right to their appeal and the dismissal will be final.

13.2.5. If the student chooses not to make a formal appeal, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs will ensure that a final notation of dismissal is recorded in the student’s Permanent Record File.

14. COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PROMOTION (CAP)

14.1. COMPOSITION OF THE CAP

14.1.1. The CAP is a standing committee appointed by the Dean.

14.1.2. The CAP hearing is composed of four faculty members—three voting members and one Chair of the CAP, who may serve as a tiebreaker.

14.1.2.1. At least one of the appointed faculty members must have substantial involvement (core or constructive faculty) within the Scholars Program.

14.1.2.2. The Dean may select a faculty member to serve as an alternate member of the CAP in the event of unavailability of a named CAP member, or for instances in which a CAP member has recused themself or has been disqualified.

14.1.2.3. Any member of the CAP may recuse or decline participation in any hearing.

14.1.2.4. The student may request the Office of the Dean to disqualify one faculty member of the CAP without stating a reason. A request to disqualify more than one member of the CAP requires a written explanation. Any request for disqualification must be submitted to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for review by the Dean at least two (2) business days in advance of their scheduled hearing.

14.1.2.5. Any representative from the Office of the Dean who is not designated as a voting member is a non-voting member of the CAP. If appropriate, the CAP may call upon representatives from the University for additional information.

14.2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CAP

14.2.1. The CAP is responsible for hearing appeals for reinstatement from any student who has been dismissed based on criteria outlined (see section 11).

14.2.2. The CAP will consider and may act upon the written petition and/or a personal appeal.

14.2.3. The CAP may review grades, NBEO examination scores, and summaries concerning professional development, letters of support, and any extenuating circumstance (i.e., events beyond the student’s control).

14.2.4. The Committee may also seek written or verbal statements of evaluation from faculty and staff regarding the student's academic record and potential, and/or ask such individuals to appear before the Committee.

14.2.4.1. The CAP will have access to the documents from any prior CAP hearing appeals as part of the review.

14.2.5. The CAP shall decide either to uphold the dismissal; or reinstate the student either immediately, or at a future date.

14.2.6. If the CAP's decision is for reinstatement, the prerogatives of the CAP may include, but are not limited to, requiring the student to:

14.2.6.1. Take a remediation examination(s);

14.2.6.2. Re-enroll in specific course(s);

14.2.6.3. Continue enrollment under a modified course of study;

14.2.6.4. Repeat specific courses or rotations even if previously passed;

14.2.6.5. Repeat an academic year of study;

14.2.6.6. Transition into the College's Doctor of Optometry – Traditional Program.

14.2.7. If the CAP's decision is for reinstatement, the prerogatives of the CAP may include, but are not limited to, recommending the student obtain academic counseling and/or tutoring.

14.3. The Director(s) of the Scholars Program will advise the student.

14.4. WHEN MEETING WITH CAP, THE STUDENT SHOULD BE PREPARED TO:

14.4.1. Present a written appeal in advance of the committee meeting that outlines any extenuating circumstances.

14.4.1.1. Unsatisfactory performance based on poor or unwise judgment (e.g., spending too much time on strictly non-academic activities such as working inside or outside the College, participation in student activities, and/or poor study habits) is not an acceptable explanation for poor academic performance.

14.4.2. Identify any steps toward self-help that the student has undertaken.

14.4.3. Clarify what plan of action the student would like the CAP to grant. The student should be aware that their wishes may not align with the ultimate decision of the committee.

14.4.4. State whether the student wishes to transition to the appropriate point in the Doctor of Optometry - Traditional Program.

14.4.5. The student has the right to provide written letters of support from faculty members or other directly relevant individuals.

14.4.6. During the appeal process students must continue attending all non-patient care and patient care activities unless otherwise prohibited.

14.5. CONDUCT OF CAP

14.5.1. The hearing shall be conducted in such a manner as to give the student the full opportunity to explain the reason for their unsatisfactory academic performance.

14.5.2. By appealing the dismissal, the student authorizes the committee to review relevant information including, but not limited to, grades, NBEO examination scores, faculty interviews, summaries concerning professional development, letters of support, and any extenuating circumstances (i.e., events beyond the student’s control).

14.5.3. Consideration is given to possible extenuating circumstances, (i.e., events beyond the student's control), which may have interfered with academic responsibilities and performance. Verifiable evidence of such circumstances is required to be submitted to the CAP as part of the written statement of appeal.

14.5.4. The primary focus of the CAP is to determine the student's potential for future academic success. Extenuating circumstances alone may not provide sufficient reason for reinstatement of the student. The CAP grants reinstatement only if the Committee is convinced that the student is capable of making marked improvement in their academic performance.

14.5.5. The appeal hearing will be conducted fairly and without unnecessary procedural restrictions. Minor deviations from prescribed procedures will not invalidate a decision or proceeding, unless those deviations significantly prejudice the student's outcome.

14.5.6. Requests for an extension to scheduling an appeal should be made in writing by the student, addressed to the CAP and submitted to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and/or their designee at least two (2) business days prior to their scheduled hearing. Extensions may be granted when the presence of extenuating circumstances has been established clearly, or when a strong case has been made that additional information pertinent to the appeal cannot be made available by the time the appeal would be heard normally.

14.5.7. The appeal hearing will be private. The Chair of the CAP will determine the number of persons to be admitted to the hearing. Those attending will treat all information confidentially.

14.5.8. The hearing shall be electronically recorded. The recording remains the property of the University and will be secured by the Office of the Dean. If the student appellant wishes to obtain a transcribed copy of the hearing, a written request must be submitted to the Office of the Dean. A fee may be charged to cover the transcription expense.

14.5.9. The student shall be notified in writing of the action of the CAP, including all requirements set forth by the Committee, within three (3) business days following the hearing. Should the CAP require further information or time for deliberation, the student will be informed of the date by which a decision is to be rendered beyond the three (3) business days.

14.6. Failure to appear before the CAP at a prescribed time results in forfeiture of the student's opportunity to meet with the CAP.

14.7. The Dean will be informed of the conditions put forth by the CAP.

14.8. APPEALING A DECISION BY THE CAP NOT INVOLVING DISMISSAL

14.8.1. This section pertains to any student who has been asked to remediate or re-enroll in a course, assume a modified program, or repeat an academic term or year.

14.8.2. The request must be made in writing by the student in a letter addressed to the Dean.

14.8.3. This letter of appeal must be received by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs within two (2) business days of receiving their decision, not including the day of the student's receipt of the letter notifying them of the actions of the CAP. The letter should clearly delineate the reason for the appeal.

14.8.4. The Dean must consider every case in which a student requests an appeal.

14.8.5. The Dean will commence consideration of the appeal within three (3) business days after receipt of the letter of appeal, not including the day the appeal is received by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

14.8.6. The Dean will consider and rule on the appeal. In some circumstances, the student may be included in the appeal meeting to be requested and arranged by the Dean or their designee.

14.8.6.1. The Dean may serve alone or may select up to three (3) members of the faculty, administrative staff or others, as they deem appropriate, to serve as an Appeals Advisory Committee to gain the benefit of their input prior to rendering a final decision.

14.8.7. The Dean's decision on the appeal may uphold, modify, or reverse any previous decision.

14.8.8. The student shall be notified in writing of the decision of the Dean concerning the appeal.

14.8.9. The Dean's decision will be made within five (5) business days, not including the day the student's letter of appeal is received by the PCO Office of Academic Affairs.

14.8.10. Should the Dean require additional time for deliberation, the student will be informed of the date by which a decision is to be rendered beyond the allotted business days.

14.8.11. The decision of the Dean regarding the appeal of a decision of the PCO Committee on Academic Promotion not involving Dismissal is final.

14.9. APPEALING A DECISION BY THE CAP INVOLVING DISMISSAL

14.9.1. The Office of the Dean will obtain and provide the academic record and documentation compiled by CAP of each dismissed student at the appeal hearing, if applicable.

14.9.2. A student may appeal to the Dean only when the decision of the CAP is to uphold a dismissal.

14.9.3. The request must be made in writing by the student in a letter addressed to the Dean and is limited to an administrative review, indicating alleged improprieties in the process/hearing by/before the CAP, or new information that was unavailable to the student at the time of the hearing before the CAP. The request is not to be used for additional fact finding. New information, which was available but not presented to the CAP by the student, will not be considered.

14.9.4. This letter of appeal must be received by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs within two (2) business days, not including the day of the student's receipt of the letter notifying them of the actions of the CAP.

14.9.5. The Dean may serve alone or may select up to three members of the faculty, administrative staff or others, as they deem appropriate, to serve

as an Appeals Advisory Committee to gain the benefit of their input prior to rendering a final decision.

14.9.6. If convened, the Appeals Advisory Committee shall commence to consider the appeal within three (3) business days after receipt of the written notice of the appeal, not including the day of receipt of the appeal letter by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. In the absence of the Dean, the Provost of the University will appoint a designee to assume these responsibilities.

14.9.7. The review will be carried out using all available documents, records of the CAP, and, if necessary, testimony by the CAP Committee Chair or other individuals, as deemed appropriate by the Dean or the Appeals Advisory Committee.

14.9.8. The student may be given the opportunity to appear in person before the Dean and the Appeals Advisory Committee, if convened.

14.9.9. Upon completion of their investigation and deliberation, the Dean shall render their decision in writing to the student. The student shall be notified of the decision in writing within five (5) business days of having filed the request for appeal with the PCO Office of Academic Affairs, not including the day the appeal is received. Should the Dean require additional time for deliberation, the student will be informed of the date by which a decision is to be rendered.

15. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

15.1. The Scholars Program follows the Drexel University *Leave of Absence Policy- Office of Graduate Studies*.

15.2. RETURN FROM A LEAVE OF ABSENCE

15.2.1. The student must notify the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in writing of their intent to return to the College. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs will review the student's request in conjunction with the Office of the Dean.

15.2.2. Upon approval to return from a Leave of Absence, regardless of the type, the student's permanent record and status is reviewed by the Office of the Dean in order to determine the student's entry point into the curriculum.

15.3. A repeat of a course or portion of the curriculum previously completed successfully, or other academic and/or clinical conditions may be required or applied if deemed educationally necessary. Additional tuition/fees for repeated work will apply.

15.4. Students are not permitted to engage in any educational activities until their program of study has been determined by the Office of the Dean, as stipulated above, and recorded in their academic record.

16. WITHDRAWAL (Supplement to the University's *Withdrawal from the University Policy*)

16.1. The following sets forth guidelines for student "withdrawal" from the University. The sections that follow describe policies and administrative actions to protect the interests of students and of the University. Unusual issues, not anticipated by these guidelines, undoubtedly will arise and will be managed appropriately to individual circumstances.

16.2. A student may withdraw voluntarily from the University at any time. A student who wishes to withdraw must personally meet with the Office of the Dean and must notify the Director(s) of the Scholars Program in writing of the withdrawal and indicate the reason(s) for doing so.

16.3. Withdrawal from the Program is completed only after all requirements associated with the withdrawal process from the University are successfully completed.

17. STUDENT RECORDS (Supplement to the University's *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Policy*)

17.1. STUDENT RECORDS AND FILES

17.1.1. All student records are maintained by The Office of the University Registrar.

17.1.2. It is institutional policy that the material contained in the student records is confidential, with transfer of such information within the school permissible only for legitimate academic purposes. The College complies with the provisions of the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and as subsequently amended.

17.2. EXAMINATION OF STUDENT RECORDS

17.2.1. A student must follow the Office of the University Registrar policies for examining student records.

18. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

18.1. Graduation and the awarding of the Doctor of Optometry degree are contingent upon the satisfactory completion of both academic and behavioral/professional requirements.

18.2. The student must satisfactorily complete the entire curriculum in the Scholars Program with a cumulative grade point average of 2.30 or higher. The student must also satisfactorily pass all didactic courses and satisfactorily complete all required clinical activities.

18.3. The student must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the faculty the professional attributes necessary for the practice of optometry, consistent with the trust that society places in health-care providers.

18.4. The University reserves the right to place on probation, suspend, or expel from the institution any student who willfully violates any rule or regulation of the College/University or the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or other state, Federal, or local government whether or not convicted in a criminal court.

18.5. Students are responsible for understanding all requirements for graduation and completing them within the time dictated by the Program.

18.6. Upon satisfactory completion of the above academic and professional standards set by the College/University, along with the optometry curriculum, the faculty and Dean of the College of Optometry will recommend candidates to the Drexel University Provost for the degree of Doctor of Optometry.

18.7. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with all University requirements for graduation, including application for graduation, with the appropriate timeline.

19. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

19.1. Students in the Scholars Program are subject to the University's Academic Integrity Policy and the Drexel University Code of Conduct.

19.2. Conduct constituting an academic integrity violation includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication or falsification of academic or clinical data, and the use of generative artificial intelligence tools where such use is prohibited by the course syllabus or by University policy.

19.3. Suspected violations arising in a course are reported by the course coordinator to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and referred to the University Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for review under the University's Academic Integrity Policy.

19.4. Sanctions imposed under the University's Academic Integrity Policy are separate from, and in addition to, any academic action taken under this Student Handbook, including referral to the CAP.

19.5. A student found responsible for an academic integrity violation may not withdraw from the course to avoid the academic consequences of the violation. If the sanction includes a failing grade for the course, that grade is recorded in accordance with University policy.

19.6. Students are expected to maintain professional standards in all communications, including social media and other public online activity. Students may not post patient information, patient images, or examination content, and may not represent themselves as speaking on behalf of the College or the University.

20. TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

20.1. The Doctor of Optometry degree requires the demonstrated ability to perform the essential functions of the profession. Students must meet the technical standards of the Program, with or without reasonable accommodation, at the time of matriculation and throughout their enrollment.

20.2. The technical standards address observation and sensory ability; communication with patients, faculty, and other members of the health-care team; motor and tactile function sufficient to perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures safely; intellectual, conceptual, integrative, and quantitative ability; and behavioral, emotional, and professional maturity.

20.3. A student who requires accommodation in order to meet the technical standards must register with the Drexel University Office of Disability Resources. Accommodations are determined through the interactive process administered by that office and are not applied retroactively.

20.4. A student who is unable to meet the technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, will be referred to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the Director(s) of the Scholars Program for review, which may include referral to the CAP.

21. HEALTH, SAFETY, AND CLINICAL COMPLIANCE

21.1. Participation in patient care is contingent upon the student's completion and continued maintenance of all health and compliance requirements of the College, the University, and The Eye Institute and its affiliated clinics.

21.2. These requirements include the immunization and health-screening requirements administered by the Drexel University Health Insurance & Immunization Office, maintenance of health insurance, privacy training under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), occupational safety and bloodborne-pathogen training, and any criminal background check, child-abuse clearance, or drug screening required by a clinical site.

21.3. A student who has not satisfied these requirements may be removed from patient care assignments. Time missed for this reason is treated as an unexcused absence and may delay progression through the clinical curriculum.

21.4. A student who sustains a needlestick, sharps, or other exposure incident, or who is injured while engaged in patient care, must report the incident immediately to the supervising clinical faculty member and complete the incident-reporting procedures of the clinical site.

21.5. Externship and other off-campus clinical sites may impose additional health, safety, screening, or credentialing requirements. Students are responsible for satisfying site-specific requirements by the deadlines set by the site and the Director of the Externship Program.

22. NONDISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND TITLE IX

22.1. Drexel University prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of any characteristic protected by law, and prohibits sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and retaliation. The University's civil rights policies apply to all students enrolled in the Scholars Program.

22.2. Concerns and reports are directed to the Drexel University Office of Civil Rights Compliance, which administers the University's civil rights policies, including those arising under Title IX. A student may make a report regardless of whether the student also seeks an academic remedy under this Student Handbook.

22.3. Faculty and professional staff of the College who receive a report of discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct are required to share that report with the Office of Civil Rights Compliance.

22.4. A student who is a party to a civil rights matter may request supportive measures, including academic adjustments, through the Office of Civil Rights Compliance.

23. STUDENT GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

23.1. A student who wishes to raise a concern that is not governed by the academic appeal procedures of this Student Handbook should first raise the concern with the course coordinator or the clinical faculty member involved.

23.2. If the concern is not resolved, the student may submit it in writing to the Director(s) of the Scholars Program, and thereafter to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs or the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs, as appropriate. The student may submit a written appeal of that determination to the Office of the Dean, whose decision is final.

23.3. Concerns alleging discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct are addressed by the Office of Civil Rights Compliance, and concerns alleging violations of the Code of Conduct are addressed by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards, rather than under this section.

23.4. A student who believes the Program is not in compliance with the standards of its accrediting body may file a complaint with the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education. Filing such a complaint does not substitute for the procedures described in this section.

23.5. Retaliation against a student for raising a good-faith concern or complaint is prohibited.

24. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

24.1. Students in the Scholars Program have access to the student support resources of both the College and the University, and are encouraged to seek assistance early.

24.2. Academic support, including tutoring and academic coaching, is arranged through the Director(s) of the Scholars Program in conjunction with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

24.3. Counseling and wellness services are available through the The Counseling Center - Elkins Park Campus, and medical care is available through the Drexel Student Health Center. Use of these services is confidential and is not reported to the Program.

24.4. Registration, billing, financial aid, and enrollment transactions are administered through Drexel Central.

25. FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS AND FINANCIAL AID IMPLICATIONS

25.1. Tuition, fees, refunds, and financial aid are administered by the University. Students are responsible for satisfying all financial obligations to the University.

25.2. A change in enrollment status, including remediation, a modified course of study, re-enrollment in a course, a leave of absence, or withdrawal, may affect tuition charges, refund eligibility, financial aid eligibility, and loan deferment or repayment.

25.3. Eligibility for federal financial aid requires that a student maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by University policy. That standard is administered by the University and is separate from the academic standings described in this Student Handbook.

25.4. A student considering a leave of absence, withdrawal, remediation, or a modified course of study should consult Drexel Central before submitting a request, in order to understand the financial and financial aid consequences.

25.5. Because the Program is lock-step, a change in enrollment status may extend a student's time to degree and increase the total cost of the Program.

26. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (Supplement to the University *Disability Resources*)

26.1. The University complies with federal and state regulations regarding students with disabilities. For all information on students with disabilities, please refer to the Drexel University Office of Disability Resources.