

Policies of the University of North Texas Health Science Center	Chapter 07 – Student Affairs, Education and Funding
07.104 Participation in Special Environments	

Policy Statement.

Education at the Health Science Center takes place in special environments that can be dangerous. Classrooms, laboratories and clinical facilities may contain hazardous physical and chemical environments. Failure to participate in required classes could result in consideration for dismissal from the Health Science Center.

Application of Policy.

This policy applies to all UNTHSC students.

Definitions.

None

Procedures and Responsibilities.

<u>Procedure / Duty</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>
<p>1. Working and studying in these special environments may require the student to make an informed decision concerning continued participation. Examples of this are: 1) students who believe they are allergic or sensitive to certain chemicals that are used in the teaching environment, and 2) students who are pregnant and concerned about potential hazards to the developing fetus. Students who fall into these two categories should take the following steps:</p>	UNTHSC Student and Academic Department

A. Chemical Sensitivity

Hypersensitivity or reactivity to chemicals in the teaching environment is a rare event. However, when a student believes he/she is allergic or sensitive to certain chemicals, he/she should contact the Office of Student Affairs.

1. The Office of Student Affairs will inform the student of potential options. These may include:

- a. At the student's expense, obtain an evaluation by a Board Certified Allergist to determine risks of exposure. The Office of Student Affairs may, upon request, assist the student in obtaining an appointment.

- b. Reducing exposure to the chemicals by wearing extra clothing, gloves, and an appropriate mask.

2. Students generally have three class days after notifying the Office of Student Affairs in which to make a decision regarding continued attendance or taking additional measures of protection. During this period, absences from that specific class or lab will not be counted. The student, however, is still held responsible for the material covered during the absence. After three class days, if the student has not made a decision in writing to the Office of Student Affairs, further absences from course will be counted against his/her attendance record, which could result in consideration for dismissal.

B. Pregnancy

Pregnancy poses special problems concerning exposure to chemical agents in the teaching environment, as well as risk of infections while on clinical rotation. Not all of the possible effects of many agents on fetal development are known. The Health Science Center does not know and cannot determine all of the potential risks of a particular teaching environment to a developing fetus. If the student chooses to continue in the course, she does so of her own volition knowing that options do exist. These are listed below:

1. If a student advises the Course Director that she is (or may be) pregnant, the student will be directed to the Office of Student Affairs where she will be given information on options available to her.

2. The student has three working days in which to make her decision regarding continued enrollment or other actions. During this period, absences are not counted against her attendance record. The student will, however, be held responsible for the material covered during her absence. After three working days, if the student has not made her decision in writing to the Office of Student Affairs, further absences from courses may result in consideration for dismissal.

OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE PREGNANT STUDENT

- a. At her own expense, obtain clothing and an appropriate filter mask to reduce her exposure to the potentially harmful chemicals.

- b. Apply in writing for an extension to time limitation relative to the degree program through the Office of Student Affairs.

- c. Request a Leave of Absence.

2. Student Involvement in Patient Care

Students are required to obtain and provide documentation indicating that they do not have conditions that would endanger the health and well being of patients. Students must also be able to demonstrate that their health and abilities will enable them to meet the defined health and technical standards of their individual program. These are normally provided at the time of application for admission or upon registration, as students are required to present proof of current immunizations prior to matriculation.

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3. Cultural Sensitivity

Students are encouraged to consider the personal cultural values, ethics, and religious beliefs of others and themselves when involved in providing patient care. When possible, these values and beliefs are accommodated. However, the mission of the institution cannot be compromised in order to accommodate an individual student's personal beliefs. For the complete policy as it pertains to students of the Health Science Center, please see Human Resource policy 5.13 under "Policies and Procedures" in the Human Resources policy manual.

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4. Patient Confidentiality

During the course of study, students will come into contact with a patient's confidential information. There are laws governing the release of confidential patient information to others. In general, students are permitted to discuss patient information with medical and healthcare personnel who are directly involved in providing the patient's care. However, students are cautioned to be sensitive to their surroundings and

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the appropriateness of such discussions. Patient information should be discussed only in an environment which maintains strict confidentiality. Students should not divulge a patient's confidential information without the patient's written permission to do so.

5. **Performing Patient Care Activities**

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Student involvement in patient care is permitted when authorized by the assigned preceptor. The student's preceptor is responsible for supervising the student when he or she is assigned patient care activities and other related duties. Student preceptors may not permit students to perform any medical services without appropriate supervision, which is defined as the preceptor being physically present or immediately available to provide guidance to the student.

Since students are not licensed health care providers, they can not be given responsibilities for patient care that would otherwise exceed their capabilities as a student or violate other legal restrictions. Students may not take the responsibility of or replace qualified staff. Supervised patient care activities should not exceed the student's stage of learning. Under no circumstances are students permitted to write patient care orders independently. Under no circumstances should assigned patient care related activities exceed those that a graduate in that profession would otherwise be expected to perform.

While on clinical rotations, students may not accept payments, stipends, or any other remuneration for services they perform as a part of their educational program. Students may not be employed to perform patient care related services at any private or public medical practice, clinic, or institution, during any time in which they are present as a student and assigned to that practice, clinic, or institution.

Notifying Patients of Student Status

Students must wear their Health Science Center identification badge (card) at all times while involved in delivering patient care. Medical and PA Students are required to wear the "short" white lab coat with the appropriate institutional patch firmly attached during all patient care interactions. Students must take reasonable steps to disclose their status a "student physician," "physician assistant-student," "graduate student," or

“public health student” while involved in delivering patient care. It falls upon the student to inform the patient or their legal guardian of the distinctions between a student and a licensed graduate, when asked to do so.

Community Service and Volunteer Work

Students are encouraged to remain active in the community through community service and volunteer work. Providing medical services and patient care services at charitable, humanitarian, or community service activities, such as “Health Fairs” is permitted when such services are assigned and appropriately supervised, and approved by their respective educational program. Participating in volunteer activities that do not involve providing medical services do not require prior approval.

References and Cross-references.

Human Resource Policy 05.513

Forms and Tools.

All student related policies can be found online at:

<http://www.hsc.unt.edu/policies/PoliciesList.cfm>

UNTHSC Catalog: <http://www.hsc.unt.edu/catalog/>

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