

Division of Physician Assistant Studies

Professional and Undergraduate Programs Drug Screen Policy

Overview

Academic programs at the Health Sciences Center have an obligation to protect the public and to respect students' privacy rights. Accordingly, this policy is designed to balance those interests. Students involved in direct patient care or handling prescription medications as part of clinical rotations who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs may put patients' safety at risk.

Students are not permitted to unlawfully possess or use illegal drugs, prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, or alcohol while participating in direct patient care or handling prescription medications as part of the academic program. Prohibited substances include amphetamines, benzodiazepines, cocaine, barbiturates, cannabinoid or synthetics, heroin, MDMA, methadone, opiates, oxycodone, phencyclidine, and propoxyphene.

It is the responsibility of every student to be aware of the risks associated with alcohol use and abuse. Students are required to conduct themselves in accordance with School and University policies, and federal, state and local laws regarding alcohol consumption. It should be understood that possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages by individuals under the age of 21 is a violation of state liquor laws. Likewise, it is illegal for anyone to provide alcoholic beverages to persons under the age of 21.

Students are permitted to take medications that may affect urine drug screen results, when legally prescribed to the student. Students taking legally prescribed medications that may affect urine drug screen results or that may impair their alertness or cognition must notify their academic program and provide appropriate documentation as described in the Legally Prescribed Medication section. Students may not be under the influence of alcohol while performing patient care duties or handling prescription medication.

Initial Drug Screening

All students will undergo a urine drug screen prior to matriculation or the initiation of the first clinical experience in their program. The Assistant Director of Clinical Education for Professional and Undergraduate Programs will provide students with instructions for contacting Certiphi Screening via a secure website to make arrangements and pay for the drug screening.

The Assistant Director of Clinical Education for Professional and Undergraduate Programs will have access to Certiphi inquiry results via a secure website with a unique username and password. The Assistant Director of Clinical Education for Professional and Undergraduate Programs will prepare a report on any positive results of drug testing for review by the Vice Dean for Professional and Undergraduate Programs. The Vice Dean will review and initial the drug screen reports.

Additional Drug Screening

Students may be required to undergo repeat drug screening whenever such testing is required by program on an annual basis or required by a clinical site. At the discretion of the program's committee on academic standards, students may also be required to undergo drug screening for reasonable suspicion, such as direct observation of an individual engaging in drug-related activity; direct observation of the individual demonstrating physical symptoms of being under the influence; a pattern of erratic behavior; conviction of a drug-related offense; sudden change in performance, including excessive absenteeism; or information received from a credible source (note: student reports of an individual's drug use must have other substantiation to meet the standard for reasonable suspicion). Any additional drug screening will be done at the student's expense.

Prior to beginning each clinical rotation, the student will be notified if an additional drug screen is required by the site and will receive instructions for completion of the testing. Students are responsible for contacting Certiphi to make arrangements and pay for the drug screen.

When repeat drug screen is required, the student will not be permitted to begin the clinical rotation until the drug screen result is available. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that drug testing is completed in a timely manner. Upon request, the student will provide access to his or her drug screen result from the Certiphi site to the clinical education site.

Negative Dilute Drug Screen

In the event of a negative dilute drug screen, the student will be required to repeat the drug screen at their own expense. In the event of two consecutive negative dilute drug screens, it will be considered a positive result.

Positive Drug Screen

In the event of a positive drug screen, the Vice Dean will refer the case to the program's committee on academic standards for consideration and recommendations. In the interim, student may be subject to temporary administrative removal from clinical site while the committee meets.

Following review by the program's committee on academic standards, students with a positive drug screen not due to a legally prescribed medication may be subject to one or more of the following penalties:

- Placement on program probation
- Deceleration (required repetition of a portion of the didactic or clinical phase of the program) with a delay in graduation
- Dismissal from the program

Students with a positive drug screen not due to a legally prescribed medication will be referred for counseling and/or a provider support program within one week of the notification of the positive drug screen result. A student's return to academic studies is contingent upon full compliance with the recommended counseling and/or provider support program. Documentation of successful completion and/or continued compliance with the counseling/support program will be maintained in the student's permanent program record. WVU's Student Assistance Program (SAP) offers drug and alcohol counseling for students. Student should contact the Carruth Center at 304-293-4431 to schedule an appointment.

Legally Prescribed Medication

In cases where a legally prescribed medication results in a positive drug test, the student must follow the process outlined by Certiphi to provide appropriate documentation.

Applicable ARC-PA Standards

Fifth Edition (Effective September 1, 2020)

A3.01 Program policies must apply to all students, principal faculty and the program director regardless of location. A signed clinical affiliation agreement or memorandum of understanding may specify that certain program policies will be superseded by those at the clinical site.

A3.02 The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply its policies and practices to all students.

Approved: July 2022

Next Review: July 2023