



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSCEP OP: 77.15, Working with Affiliated Entities - Student Drug Screening

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Operating Policy and Procedure (HSCEP OP) outlines that students enrolled in clinical programs are entrusted with the health, safety and welfare of patients. The safety and welfare of patients cared for by TTUHSC El Paso students is of primary concern in all TTUHSC El Paso clinical programs and its contracted affiliated entities that provide essential clinical experiences for TTUHSC El Paso students. Clinical rotations are an essential component of TTUHSC El Paso programs, and in conjunction with those clinical rotations, TTUHSC El Paso must also satisfy contractual obligations with those contracted affiliated entities, which may include student drug screening before commencement of clinical rotations.

REVIEW: This HSCEP OP will be reviewed by November 1 of each even-numbered year (ENY) by the Office of General Counsel, deans of each school (except the dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences), and the vice president for academic affairs or designee, with recommendations for revisions forwarded to the president by January 1 of the following year.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

I. Definitions

Student: For purposes of this policy, the term “student” applies only to students enrolled in the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine (PLFSOM), Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine (WLHSDM), or the Gayle Greve Hunt School of Medicine (GGHSON), who are participating in clinical experiences conducted in a health care setting through an affiliated entity.

Affiliated entity: For the purposes of this policy, “affiliated entity” is defined as a clinical organization and/or facility, such as a hospital, surgical center, outpatient clinic, diagnostic center, or other entity engaged in the direct provision of healthcare and related services. This specifically includes, but is not limited to, a healthcare entity sponsored and/or operated by TTUHSC El Paso, including Texas Tech Physicians El Paso

Medical Review Officer (MRO): A licensed physician responsible for receiving laboratory results, who has knowledge of substance abuse disorders and has appropriate medical training to interpret and evaluate an individual’s positive test results together with that individual’s medical history and any other relevant biomedical information

Break in enrollment: For the purposes of this policy, a break in enrollment shall be defined as not being enrolled for one full semester.

Positive drug screen: Any instance in which a drug screen report shows a positive result for one or more of the drugs included in the screen required by an affiliated entity.

Drug screen: The collection and analysis of blood, urine, hair, or saliva to detect the presence of the chemicals and contaminants left behind in the body due to drug use.

II. Background

A. TTUHSC El Paso enters into affiliation agreements with affiliated entities in order to provide clinical experiences for its students.

- B. An affiliated entity may establish more stringent standards for students intending to participate in a clinical rotation at their site(s) than those required by TTUHSC El Paso as part of its admission process. Affiliated entities may require students to, among other things, undergo and satisfactorily pass additional background checks and/or drug screens as a prerequisite to participating in a clinical rotation.
- C. Clinical rotations are an essential element in certain degree programs' curricula. Students who cannot participate in clinical rotations due to a positive drug screen may be unable to fulfill the requirements of a degree program.

III. **Clinical Placement**

- A. Placements at affiliated entities for clinical rotations will be based on the learning objectives as defined by each program. Determination of unacceptable results of a drug screen will be made by the affiliated entity. Any student placed with an affiliated entity who cannot fulfill the additional background checks and/or drug screen prerequisites of the affiliated entity must discuss the available options with their School's Office of Student Affairs or their designee.
- B. Affiliated entities may conduct their own drug screening. If the student fails the drug test and is consequently denied externship placement, they shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with TTUHSC El Paso policies, as well as the policies of the School or program in which they are enrolled.

IV. **Responsibility of the School**

The student's school shall:

- A. Notify the student of the requirements for any drug screen required by an affiliated entity, including the type(s) of drug screen required, associated deadlines, a list of approved drug screen testing vendors, and a completed authorization form for signature by the student (see [Attachment A, Consent for Drug Screening Authorization to Disclose Drug Testing Results](#)).
- B. Receive the student's drug screen test results, which shall be maintained in a secure and confidential file separate from the student's primary educational records.
- C. Notify and ensure the affiliated entities that all students have met their drug screening requirements prior to clinical rotations at their facilities.

V. **Responsibility of the Student**

The student shall:

- A. Pay for the cost of any and all drug screens required by an affiliated entity to which they may be assigned.
- B. Have the opportunity, but will not be required, to disclose the use of any substances or prescription medications they believe may result in a positive drug screen. Students who wish to make such disclosures should contact their school's senior academic officer for student affairs or their designee.
- C. Complete the drug screen prior to the deadlines provided by the school and meet the guidelines of the affiliated entity. Failure to complete the drug test prior to the deadlines may result in an additional expense to the student, and/or delay in, or denial of, rotation at the affiliated entity.

- D. Use a drug screen vendor from the designated vendors provided to the student by their school and/or the affiliated entity. Results from a vendor not designated by the school and/or the affiliated entity will not be accepted and the student shall be required to have the drug screens conducted by an approved vendor.
- E. Sign a valid consent and authorization form consenting to the drug screen and authorizing the vendor to report the results to the person designated by the school to receive such results under this policy (see [Attachment A, Consent for Drug Screening Authorization to Disclose Drug Testing Results](#)).

VI. **Student Refusal to Consent to Drug Screen**

Any student who fails or refuses to consent to a drug screen required by an affiliated entity to which the student has been assigned by their school shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the TTUHSC El Paso Student Handbook/Code of Professional and Academic Conduct, any pertinent school policies, and this institutional policy. Based on noncompliance with drug screening under this policy, students may be unable to complete the degree/certificate program in which they are enrolled due to the inability to participate in required clinical experiences, and may be subject to dismissal on that basis.

VII. **Period of Validity – Drug Screen Results**

- A. Unless there is a break in enrollment, (or unless otherwise required by an affiliated entity, drug screen test results shall generally be considered valid for the time the student is enrolled in a given degree and/or certificate program within the school, unless that school requires annual screening for program success.
- B. Depending on the number of outside clinical rotations a student may participate in, and depending on the requirements of each affiliated entity to which the student is assigned to meet their learning objectives, students may be required to undergo drug screens more than once.

VIII. **Drug Screen Results**

- A. **Diluted Specimen.** Should the vendor report that a drug screen specimen was diluted, precluding an accurate screen, the student will be required to complete a new drug screen.
- B. **Negative Drug Screen Results.** The school that receives the student’s drug screen test results may release negative drug screen test results to the student.
- C. **Positive Drug Screen Results**
 - 1) Any student with a positive drug screen will not be placed at any clinical rotation pending review and outcome of any appeal through the vendor.
 - 2) The student has the right, at their expense, to request an independent review of any positive drug screen by an independent MRO provided by the vendor. There may be an additional charge if a review by the MRO is requested, and the student is responsible for all costs related to such reviews. If a student pursues a drug screen appeal, the independent MRO and vendors must be Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) accredited/licensed and conduct business in Texas.
 - 3) Any appeal based on a positive drug screen is solely between the student, the MRO, and the vendor. The student’s school will not become involved in the appeal of a positive drug screen.

- 4) If, after review by the independent MRO, there is no valid medical basis that would cause or contribute to the positive drug screen, the test results will stand.
- 5) A student with a positive drug screen will be referred to the school's Office of Student Affairs for disciplinary action in accordance with school's policies and procedures.

IX. Confidentiality of Records

Drug screen reports and all records pertaining to the results are considered confidential information with restricted access to the extent allowed by law. Faculty and staff who are designated to handle student drug screening reports have a legitimate educational interest in accessing the information contained in education and medical records.

X. Re-admission

- A. Any student who withdraws or is dismissed due to a positive drug screen without medical validation will only be eligible for re-admission to any TTUHSC El Paso program of study in accordance with the re-admission policies of the school(s) and program(s) to which they apply.
- B. If accepted for re-admission, the student must, at their own expense, provide a negative drug test and satisfactory documentation of completion of any remedial action required by the school.

XI. Right to Change Policy.

TTUHSC El Paso reserves the right to change, modify, amend or rescind this policy in whole or in part at any time.