



| **STUDENT** Handbook

2026-2027



Alice L. Walton
School of Medicine

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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW & HISTORY

Founded in 2021, Alice L. Walton School of Medicine (AWSOM) is a nonprofit, four-year MD program enhancing allopathic medical education with the arts, humanities, and whole health principles. The School's culture embraces self-care, empowering students to care for their well-being and that of their patients.

The state-of-the-art medical education facility is located on the Crystal Bridges campus, also home to the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and Heartland Whole Health Institute.

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Students,

Welcome to Alice L. Walton School of Medicine. During your time here, it's our responsibility to help you grow both personally and professionally. The AWSOM team provides you with the resources needed to take the necessary steps to become a physician leader. This handbook is designed to guide you through your educational experience. Inside, you'll find essential policies, procedures, and guidelines to help you navigate each phase of your medical training. We encourage you to read it thoroughly and reach out to our faculty or staff whenever you have questions or need further guidance.

Sincerely,



Sharmila Makhija, MD, MBA
Founding Dean and CEO
Alice L. Walton School of Medicine

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

MISSION

Alice L. Walton School of Medicine trains physicians who are devoted to transforming the health of medically underserved and rural communities in Arkansas, its surrounding states, and beyond. AWSOM physicians make a difference by pioneering whole health principles, deploying contemporary technologies, and developing novel partnerships to bridge the gaps to high quality medical care and to promote health and well-being for all individuals and communities.

VISION

Equip and support physicians and health professionals to successfully tackle the healthcare challenges of the 21st century.

VALUES

- Empathy
- Self-Care
- Humanism
- Entrepreneurialism
- Community Focus

ACCREDITATION

Alice L. Walton School of Medicine has achieved preliminary accreditation with the [Liaison Committee on Medical Education](#) (LCME). AWSOM is certified as an institution of higher education in the state of Arkansas and is authorized to provide degree instruction leading to a Doctor of Medicine (MD) through the [Arkansas Division of Higher Education](#) (ADHE). AWSOM is seeking institutional accreditation with an organization with federal recognition as a Title IV gatekeeper.

Programmatic Accreditation: Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME)

Alice L. Walton School of Medicine (AWSOM) achieved preliminary accreditation with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). Students graduating from a medical school with preliminary accreditation are considered graduating from an accredited institution and eligible for graduate medical education and eligible to become licensed practitioners.

The school's next site visit is planned for academic year 2026-27 seeking provisional accreditation, followed by a site visit in 2029-30 in anticipation of full accreditation.

For more information on the LCME and AWSOM's accreditation status, please visit [LCME.org](https://www.lcme.org) or contact LCME@AAMC.org.

State Authorization: Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE)

Alice L. Walton School of Medicine (AWSOM) is certified as an institution of higher education in the state of Arkansas and is authorized to provide degree instruction leading to a Doctor of Medicine (MD) in the state of Arkansas through the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE).

AWSOM will seek recertification in academic year 2026-27.

The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Arkansas Division of Higher Education require disclosure to the public.

The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Arkansas Division of Higher Education require the following disclosure to the general public:

Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board certification does not constitute an endorsement of any institution, course, or degree program. Such certification merely indicates that certain minimum standards have been met under the rules and regulations of institutional certification as defined in Arkansas Code §6-61-301 (2023). The student should be aware that these degree programs may not transfer. The receiving institution determines the transfer of course/degree credit.

Institutional Accreditation: Higher Learning Commission

The Alice L. Walton School of Medicine is not currently accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The School is actively seeking candidacy status, which is a required pre-accreditation step in the HLC process. Achieving candidacy would allow the School to pursue initial accreditation; however, candidacy does not guarantee eventual accreditation. Students are not eligible for federal financial aid until the School achieves candidacy status and is approved for Title IV participation. More information about the Higher Learning Commission can be found at <https://www.hlcommission.org/>.

DISCLAIMER

The contents of this handbook are intended to provide students with an overview of the medical School's policies, procedures, and services. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, AWSOM reserves the right to make changes at any time to the policies, procedures, programs, or other content outlined in this handbook as deemed necessary by the administration. This handbook does not constitute a contract, expressed or implied, between AWSOM and any student. Students are responsible for staying informed of any updates or amendments to the handbook, which will be communicated through official AWSOM channels, including but not limited to e-mail, the School's website, and other designated platforms. For any questions or clarifications regarding the content of this handbook, students are encouraged to contact the Office of Student Affairs or the appropriate administrative office.

SECTION 2 – THE CURRICULUM

PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION

Program Title: Doctor of Medicine Program

Degree Title: Doctor of Medicine (MD)

The degree offered at Alice L. Walton School of Medicine is the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree. The MD program is a four-year post-baccalaureate degree with 178 weeks of instruction and 186 credit hours.

CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

Alice L. Walton School of Medicine offers a four-year MD program that enhances conventional medical education with a whole-person approach to care. The School's unique curriculum, ARCHES, features six elements longitudinally integrated into courses, clerkships, and electives throughout four years of instruction to proactively support a patient's whole health. The evidence-based curriculum takes inclusive and collaborative approaches to care designed to promote resilience, prevent disease, and restore health.

The ARCHES elements are further described below:

ART OF HEALING

Better care begins with empathy and communication. The Art of Healing emphasizes curiosity, care, connection, and creativity through sustained engagement with the health

humanities. Through the arts and humanities, students examine professionalism, professional identity formation, ethical reasoning, tolerance of uncertainty, communication, empathy, perspective taking, resilience, and cultural dimensions of healing. The course fosters reflective practice and humanistic clinical judgment while supporting students' development as physicians. Learning extends beyond the classroom through collaborations across the Crystal Bridges Campus and with other community partners.

RESEARCH

Research opens doors to tomorrow's medical discoveries. Students learn the basic principles of research and evidence-based medicine, including how to effectively locate, analyze, synthesize, and apply medical literature. In the process, they will be supported in developing the skills and practices needed to become life-long learners by fostering curiosity and inquiry. Students will design, implement, evaluate, and present a unique scholarly project. Scholarly endeavors will require them to define an area of interest, research the literature and existing resources, implement and evaluate their project, and disseminate their findings. To support them in this activity, students will have access to mentors from a variety of research and clinical venues.

CLINICAL

Students gain a head start on building confidence in their clinical skills and comfortability in the clinic. Early introduction to direct patient care starts in the first year with the Early Clinical Skills and Experiences course emphasizing comprehensive clinical skills and whole health principles. Within the course, students learn effective communication, history-taking, physical exams, clinical reasoning, and patient centered planning, and then apply those skills within the clinical setting. Students will gain proficiency in preventive care, diagnostics, and therapeutics, and are introduced to procedural skills through simulation before third-year clerkships. In subsequent years, students will build on this foundation through diverse clinical experiences, emphasizing teamwork and exposure to diverse care settings. Focused discipline specific patient care opportunities will be explored during fourth-year electives.

HEALTH SYSTEMS SCIENCE

Lasting impact starts with understanding the whole picture. Students are introduced to current health system structures, processes, and their impact, with a focus on developing skills to address them. This includes understanding social determinants of health, health care financing, policy, and errors, alongside systems-thinking and human-centered design

competencies. Students apply and practice skills like leadership and interprofessional collaboration. Principles of public, community, and population health are also integrated.

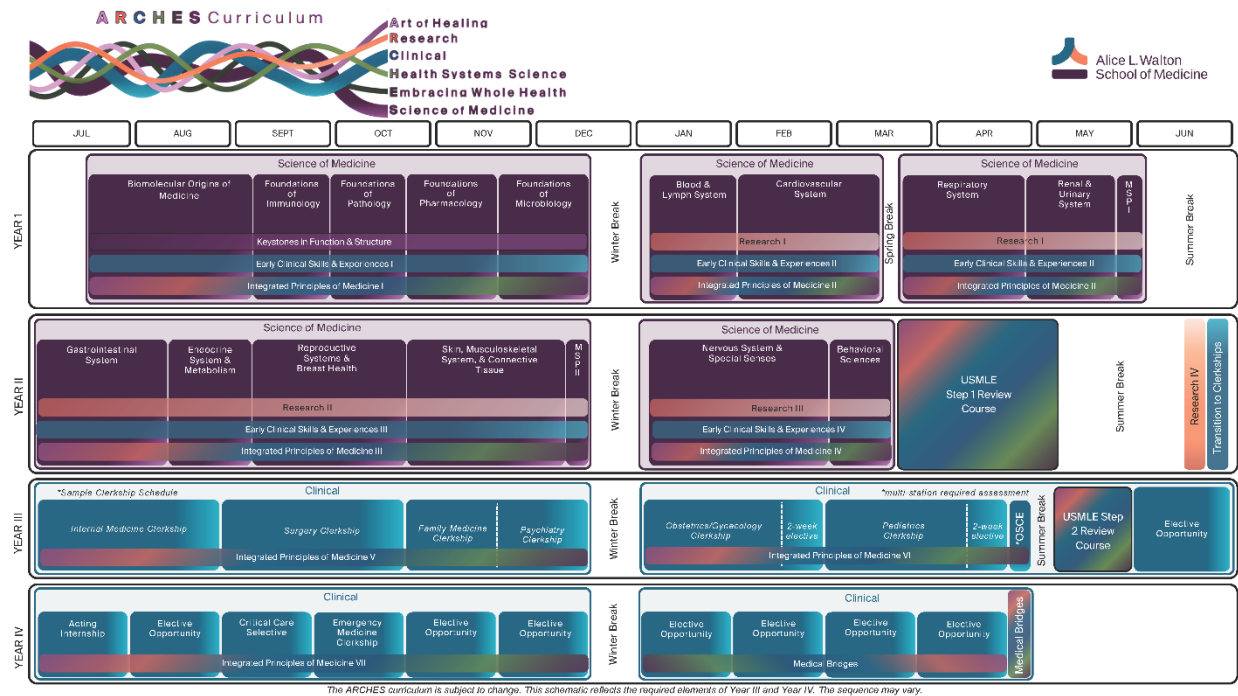
EMBRACING WHOLE HEALTH

Health primarily happens outside of the clinic. Whole Health principles and practices are incorporated throughout the four-year curriculum, teaching students to see beyond the walls of the doctor's office and into patients' lives. Students learn the fundamentals of whole-person care, taking the physical, behavioral, spiritual, and socioeconomic aspects of a person's life experience into account. They develop skills in shared decision-making, collaborative care planning, and interprofessional teamwork, grounded in respect for patient values, meaning, and life context. The curriculum emphasizes patient empowerment, relational presence, and the integration of conventional and complementary approaches within an evidence-informed framework. Through structured reflection, coaching, and applied clinical learning, students explore the role of personal well-being in sustaining effective clinical practice. This curricular thread prepares students to incorporate Whole Health principles into clinical care, community partnerships, and evolving health care environments, enabling students to advance the principles of Whole Health throughout their careers.

SCIENCE OF MEDICINE

Every doctor's knowledge starts with a strong foundation. The Science of Medicine thread anchors the ARCHES curriculum in the foundational biomedical sciences and connects them directly to clinical practice through a fully integrated, organ system approach. Foundational science concepts spanning genetics, biochemistry, immunology, microbiology, anatomy, cell biology, physiology, pharmacology, and pathology are taught in a horizontally and vertically integrated model so students continually revisit and deepen their understanding of normal and abnormal processes as they progress through courses, clerkships, and electives. During the preclerkship phase, the curriculum emphasizes active, student-centered learning through structured small group, partner, and individual activities, visual organization strategies, and simulation-based learning experiences. Instructional methods include case-based learning, facilitated group discussions, application exercises, pair share activities, and concept mapping. Students are encouraged to take charge of their education through AWSOM's flipped classroom model. Faculty intentionally weave foundational science learning into clinical reasoning and self-directed learning activities to reinforce understanding and support the development of lifelong learning skills and higher-order thinking that extend across all four years of the curriculum.

CURRICULUM MAP | [Link to Curriculum Map](#)



PERIODS OF STUDY (PHASES)

The ARCHES curriculum consists of four phases designed to provide a structured, progressive learning experience that ensures students build a solid foundation of medical knowledge and skills. This approach divides the medical education journey into distinct phases, each with specific goals and content tailored to the developmental needs of students at that stage. It also ensures a gradual, comprehensive learning experience, promoting a deep understanding of medical principles and preparing students for the complexities of medical practice. The specific phases are described below:

PHASES 1-2 (Pre-Clerkship Years)

Phase 1 pre-clerkship curriculum provides students with a strong foundation in the basic sciences, clinical skills and the opportunity to experience the clinical setting early in the

medical student journey. Students also take the Integrated Principles of Medicine (IPM) course that integrates the Art of Healing, Research, Health System Science, and Embracing Whole Health. During Phase 1, students gain foundational knowledge about the body. In Phase 2, students participate in integrated organ-system-based courses, which start halfway through the first year of training and extend to the second year. In this phase, students focus on each organ system's normal and abnormal functions. Additionally, students continue clinical skills training, exposure to the clinical setting, the IPM course, and complete a research project. The pre-clerkship years culminate with dedicated study and testing time for the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 1.

PHASE 3

Phase 3 begins with the Transition to Clerkships course and continued training in Integrated Principles of Medicine. Students experience a robust combination of inpatient, emergency-care, subspecialty, and disciplined-focused clinical clerkships. Core clerkships include Internal Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Family Medicine, and Emergency Medicine. Students also have dedicated time for USMLE Step 2 preparation.

PHASE 4

Phase 4 begins in the fourth academic year and includes the final phase of Integrated Principles of Medicine (IPM) and time to meet other curricular requirements including a critical care selective and Acting Internship. During this final training phase, students will have some degree of flexibility with their learning. They will also be given time to interview for residency programs. Phase 4 also has a Medical Bridges course, which combines core skills typically required for residency and discipline-driven skills that students may select for additional experience. Phase 4 will conclude with an opportunity to acknowledge research awards and celebrate their four-year journey through the AWSOM curriculum.

MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM OBJECTIVES (MEPOS)

Medical Education Program Objectives (MEPOs) are specific, measurable goals that outline the knowledge, skills, and attitudes students must acquire by the end of their medical training. They ensure a consistent and comprehensive education, guiding curriculum development, student assessment, and program evaluation to produce

competent, ethical, and professional physicians. To this end, Alice L. Walton School of Medicine established the medical student competencies listed below:

Undergraduate Medical Education Competencies

- Patient Care
- Medical Knowledge
- Practice-Based Learning and Improvement
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills
- Professionalism
- Systems-Based Practice
- Technology
- Whole Health Practice

1. Patient Care

Demonstrates compassionate, effective, evidence-informed, and equitable patient-centered care.

- 1.1 Gathers relevant patient histories from multiple data sources as necessary.
- 1.2 Performs relevant physical examinations using appropriate techniques and tools.
- 1.3 Identifies patients in need of urgent or emergent clinical care, seeks assistance, and recommends initial evaluation and management.
- 1.4 Creates and prioritizes differential diagnoses.
- 1.5 Proposes hypothesis-driven diagnostic testing and interprets results.
- 1.6 Develops a patient-centered management plan using evidence-based information while integrating patient lived experiences, values, preferences, and goals.
- 1.7 Demonstrates basic procedural techniques.

2. Medical Knowledge

Applies and integrates foundational, clinical, and social sciences knowledge to improve health care for patients and populations.

- 2.1 Incorporates knowledge of basic science principles, psychosocial, social, and health system science, as well as humanities, needed for clinical practice.
- 2.2 Applies foundational knowledge for clinical problem-solving, diagnostic reasoning, and decision-making to clinical scenarios.
- 2.3 Demonstrates knowledge of research design, interpretation, and application to clinical questions.

3. Practice-Based Learning and Improvement

Integrates feedback, evidence, and reflection to adapt behavior, foster improvement, and cultivate lifelong learning.

3.1 Identifies opportunities for growth in one's own performance through feedback, self-assessment, and reflective practice.

3.2 Locates, critically appraises, and synthesizes information to support evidence-informed, patient-centered clinical decisions.

3.3

4. Interpersonal and Communication Skills

Effectively communicates and interacts with patients, caregivers, and the health care team to contribute to high-quality patient-centered care.

4.1 Collaborates with patients, caregivers, and team members to enhance the therapeutic relationship.

4.2 Communicates clearly, accurately, and compassionately in verbal, nonverbal, written, and electronic formats.

4.3 Demonstrates skills in educating patients, caregivers, peers, and team members.

5. Professionalism

Demonstrates integrity, respect, and ethical reasoning and promotes inclusion in all interactions to improve health care for patients, communities, and populations.

5.1 Demonstrates respect and compassion for patients, caregivers, families, and team members.

5.2 Safeguards patient privacy, and confidentiality.

5.3 Demonstrates integrity and ethical reasoning to guide behavior in decision-making and accountability of actions.

5.4 Completes duties and tasks in a thorough, reliable, and timely manner.

5.5 Recognizes personal well-being, self-awareness, and professional sustainability as integral to ethical practice and clinical performance.

6. Systems-Based Practice

Applies knowledge of the larger context of health, including its social and structural determinants, and of systems and resources within and outside of health care to optimize patient, community, and population health.

- 6.1 Recognizes social structures and drivers that influence healthcare delivery and health outcomes.
- 6.2 Contributes to healthy teams, learning environments, and systems by promoting dignity, and psychological safety for health and well-being.
- 6.3 Identifies patient safety concerns and systems issues to optimize patient-centered care.
- 6.4 Applies knowledge of local populations and community health needs, disparities, and resources.

7. Technology

Applies technological advancements to enhance clinical decision-making and patient care. It emphasizes using emerging technologies and data analysis tools to deliver personalized patient care and enhance patient outcomes.

- 7.1 Applies knowledge relevant to clinical problems using appropriate resources, including emerging technologies, to enhance clinical decision-making.
- 7.2 Demonstrates competence in employing technologies to access and analyze data to apply comprehensive patient-centered care.

8. Whole Health Practice

Applies a Whole Health operating philosophy that integrates individual, relational, cultural and systems-level factors to support healing, agency, and human flourishing for patients, professionals, and communities.

- 8.1 Evaluates and integrates conventional, complementary, and integrative strategies using a safety-focused, evidence-informed framework to support whole-person health across body, mind, meaning, and community.
- 8.2 Uses engagement with the arts and humanities to enhance observational capacity, narrative understanding, and interpretation of lived illness experience within a Whole Health framework.

GRADING SYSTEM

Students are assigned grades based on a competency-based system, consisting of Pass/Fail (P/F) for all pre-clerkship courses, and the additional grades of Honors (H) for clerkship courses. Specific grades and definitions are as follows:

Pre-Clerkship Curriculum (Phase I & Phase II)

Student performance in the pre-clerkship phases will have one of the following grades assigned.

- **Pass (P):** The student met the passing standards as outlined in the course syllabus.
- **Fail (F):** The student did not meet the requirements to pass the course as outlined in the syllabus on the first attempt or during remediation.
- **Incomplete (I):** This is a temporary grade recorded when a student has not completed a required component of a course by the end date.
- **Withdrawal (W):** If the student withdraws from the institution while enrolled in a course.

Clerkship Curriculum (Phase III)

In addition to the grades assigned during the pre-clerkship curriculum, the following grade is available to measure student performance:

- **Honors (H):** The student has demonstrated exceptional performance as outlined in the course/clerkship syllabus.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

AWSOM has a single graduation standard for all students. All the following requirements must be met to graduate with an MD degree.

1. Academic Coursework – Successfully complete all courses, clerkships, M3 OSCE, and electives with a passing grade.
2. Competency Requirements—Demonstrate proficiency in all AWSOM medical education program objectives (MEPOS), including achieving professionalism standards.
3. Licensure Examinations – Pass the USMLE Step 1 before commencing clerkships and the USMLE Step 2 (CK) as per institutional deadlines within three attempts.
4. Timeframe for Completion – Complete all MD degree requirements within a six-year period from the date of matriculation.
5. Administrative Compliance—Meet all financial obligations, maintain up-to-date immunizations and health clearances, and complete mandatory training and attestations, such as HIPAA and safety protocols.
6. Degree Conferred – Recommendations for graduation are made by the Student Promotions Committee, and approval is obtained from the Faculty Assembly.

Community Engagement

Students are highly encouraged to participate in a variety of community engagement activities throughout their time as medical students. Service-learning opportunities are available at various points across the curriculum. Community engagement and service-learning experiences are designed to complement and reinforce students' educational programming while also supporting meaningful engagement with the community.

Activities may include working with peers, staff, and faculty to complete service projects, develop public-facing educational materials, or support local partners in serving the community. Students are encouraged to select organizations or communities that align with their personal values and interests and to contribute through volunteerism. Participation, including hours and locations, is documented via GivePulse, a community engagement and volunteer activity tracking platform.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Academic Year 2026 - 2027

Fall

- July 6: Fall Semester Begin
- **July 13 - July 17:** M1 Orientation Week (Mandatory Attendance)
- July 17: White Coat Ceremony
- September 7: Labor Day (AWSOM Offices Closed)
- November 25 – November 28: M1 & M2 Fall Break
- November 26: Thanksgiving Day (AWSOM Offices Closed)
- December 24: Christmas Eve (AWSOM Offices Close at Noon)
- December 25: Christmas Day (AWSOM Offices Closed)
- December 28: Last Day of Fall Semester

Spring

- January 4: Spring Semester Begins
- January 18: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- March 15 – March 19: M1 Spring Break
- May 31: Memorial Day (AWSOM Offices Closed)

- July 2: Last Day of Spring Semester

Academic Year 2027 - 2028

Fall

- July 6: Fall Semester Begins
- July 12 – July 16: M1 Orientation Week (Mandatory Attendance)
- July 16: White Coat Ceremony
- September 6: Labor Day (AWSOM Offices Closed)
- November 24 – November 26: Fall Break
- November 25: Thanksgiving Day (AWSOM Offices Closed)
- December 24: Christmas Day Observed (AWSOM Office Closed)
- December 30: Last Day of Fall Semester

Spring

- January 3: Spring Semester Begins
- January 17: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- March 13 – March 17: M1 Spring Break
- May 29: Memorial Day (AWSOM Offices Closed)
- June 30: Last day of Spring Semester

Note: School closures and holidays may not apply to clerkships and/or clinical electives.

SECTION 3 - PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is of the utmost importance in the medical profession and begins in medical School. Students will be evaluated not only on their academic performance but also on their ability to behave and communicate professionally with faculty, peers, and patients. The Student Code of Professional Conduct encapsulates the expectations, and students are expected to attest to their understanding and willingness to abide by them.

STUDENT CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The Alice Walton School of Medicine (AWSOM) is committed to educating health professionals who embody ethical behavior and professionalism. Recognizing that

professional conduct is fundamental to medical training, students pledge to adhere to all regulations and standards set by the school. Professionalism is regarded as an academic competency, and failure to meet these standards may impact a student's progression and graduation, just like other academic requirements. These expectations align closely with those of the medical profession, preparing students to meet the responsibilities and ethical standards they will face in their future careers.

Professional behaviors include the following:

- Compassion, Respect, and Altruism – Exhibit empathy, compassion, respect, and a commitment to prioritizing the well-being of others through thoughtful, emotionally intelligent interactions.
- Ethical Principles and Moral Reasoning - Consistently uphold ethical principles and demonstrate sound moral reasoning in decision-making and interactions.
- Self-Awareness - Actively engage in self-reflection and utilize tools to develop self-awareness, recognizing personal strengths, limitations, and biases.
- Detail Orientation - Exhibit meticulous attention to detail and conscientiousness, ensuring precision in documentation, communication, and patient care.
- Accountability - Demonstrate responsibility and accountability to patients, society, peers, the medical profession, and oneself by fulfilling obligations reliably and transparently.
- Integrity - Uphold honesty, trustworthiness, and ethical consistency in all professional and personal actions, whether public or private.
- Confidentiality - Safeguard patient confidentiality and respect privacy in all professional interactions, in compliance with legal and ethical standards.
- Situational Awareness – Ability to perceive, understand, and respond effectively to the surrounding environment
- Commitment to Diverse Needs - Recognize and respectfully respond to the diverse cultural, social, and individual needs of patients, peers, and the community.
- Resiliency and Adaptability - Maintain composure and flexibility in the face of challenges, adapting to changing circumstances while prioritizing professional responsibilities.

- Collaboration and Teamwork - Actively contribute to collaborative environments, demonstrating respect, communication, and shared responsibility in team-based settings.

Specific examples of professionalism include:

- Submit original work for all assignments and learning tasks.
- Admit errors and avoid knowingly misleading others in any academic or clinical setting.
- Respond promptly to official communications, comply with attendance standards (including call duties), and meet all mandatory deadlines.
- Show respect for faculty, valuing their teaching role, and provide constructive feedback on courses and instructors.
- Collaborate effectively in teams, respecting contributions, sharing responsibilities equitably, and fostering a cooperative environment.
- Conduct research ethically, adhering to principles of integrity and accountability.
- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity, maintaining confidentiality and privacy in all professional interactions and communications.
- Recognize personal limitations in knowledge, skills, or emotional state, seeking supervision or help before acting when necessary.
- Take responsibility for personal well-being, asking for help or notifying supervisors when unable to perform tasks safely or effectively.
- Engage respectfully with colleagues, avoiding offensive language, gestures, or behavior, and treating everyone with fairness regardless of background or identity.
- Promote equity and inclusivity, actively contributing to a positive and supportive learning environment.
- Maintain a professional appearance, dressing appropriately for the patient population or learning activity (consulting instructors if unsure).
- Comply with school policies, demonstrating adherence to established rules and expectations.
- Report violations of the Student Code of Professional Conduct promptly to school administrators.

Examples of unprofessional behavior includes:

- Cheating in any academic, clinical, or research context.
- Lying or knowingly providing false information.
- Falsifying documents, including academic, research, or patient records, in any format.
- Committing plagiarism or submitting work that is not your own, unless explicitly part of an instructor-defined group exercise.
- Participating in academic or clinical activities under the influence of non-prescribed substances (including alcohol) or misusing prescribed medications.
- Engaging in romantic or sexual relationships with patients or their family members, regardless of consent or request.
- Disrupting the learning or clinical environment through behavior that interferes with others' work, learning, or patient care.
- Accessing or sharing unauthorized information, including academic, administrative, patient, or research records, through any means.
- Misrepresenting oneself as a licensed or certified health care provider.
- Discriminatory Behavior, including treating others unfairly based on race, gender, religion, or other protected characteristics.
- Harassment, such as engaging in verbal, physical, or psychological harassment of colleagues, patients, or others.
- Breaching Confidentiality by sharing private patient, peer, or institutional information without appropriate authorization.

SCOPE OF THE STUDENT CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The Student Code of Professional Conduct serves to foster the professional growth of all students in the School of Medicine. These guidelines establish expected standards of conduct while acknowledging that they cannot foresee every possible instance of unprofessional behavior. Actions deemed unprofessional, even if not explicitly outlined in this code, may still result in academic sanctions. Each case will be evaluated within its specific context, considering the severity and recurrence of any infractions. Importantly, students must recognize that professionalism in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings is integral to academic performance.

This code applies to all aspects of a student's academic and professional pursuits within health professions programs. While it is not designed to govern private conduct unrelated to their studies, students should be mindful of society's high expectations for medical professionals. Behavior inconsistent with these expectations, even outside the academic setting, may come to the school's attention and prompt a review by the Student Performance Committee.

The code also extends its authority to students throughout their enrollment and beyond graduation in matters related to credential certification, transcript issuance, and degree verification. Any violations of the Student Code of Professional Conduct—whether by current students or graduates—may result in significant sanctions, including dismissal from the School of Medicine or revocation of a degree.

PROFESSIONAL DRESS GUIDELINES

As representatives of the medical profession, all medical students at AWSOM are expected to convey a professional demeanor, not only in their behavior but also in their dress and appearance. A professional image conveys credibility, trust, respect, and confidence to one's colleagues and patients. Students are expected to maintain a neat and clean appearance, and dress in attire that supports educational learning, patient safety and comfort that is consistent with the clinical or learning environment (and when in doubt, ask the instructor for guidance). When patient contact is part of the educational experience (including interactions with standardized patients), students are expected to dress professionally and wear a clean white coat unless otherwise instructed by AWSOM faculty. Site-specific dress codes may apply for compliance with institutional infection control, legal, and safety requirements. Medical students are expected to wear their AWSOM identification badges to all academic functions and on the premises of AWSOM.

STATEMENT ON CLINICAL SHADOWING EXPERIENCES

If students choose to explore clinical interests and opportunities outside of the formal curriculum, we want to provide clarification to ensure shared understanding.

- Clinical shadowing refers to voluntary and optional observational experiences that students may independently pursue.
- Clinical shadowing is not required or coordinated by AWSOM and not considered part of the official curriculum.
- Shadowing is not permitted during scheduled class time or required academic activities. Students are responsible for attending all required curricular

sessions. Failure to meet attendance or academic expectations may have professional or academic consequences.

- Shadowing opportunities may only be pursued after successful completion of the first semester.
- Shadowing is observational only and should not involve hands-on clinical care, documentation, or independent patient interaction.
- Shadowing experiences are not covered by the AWSOM student liability coverage

AWSOM recognizes students may seek shadowing experiences as part of personal career exploration. This statement of guidance is intended to clarify expectations while maintaining appropriate academic and professional boundaries. Questions about curricular clinical experiences or required clinical education components should be directed to the Office of Curricular Affairs.

SECTION 4 – FACILITIES

CAMPUS OVERVIEW

Located in the heart of Bentonville, Arkansas, the newly constructed Alice L. Walton School of Medicine sits on the 134-acre Crystal Bridges Campus, also home to the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and Heartland Whole Health Institute. Nestled in the Ozark woods, the campus has more than five miles of multi-use trails, allowing students to easily access nature, art, downtown Bentonville, and the greater Northwest Arkansas region.

The 154,000-square-foot AWSOM facility includes learning halls, small group rooms, a library, clinical teaching spaces, dedicated simulation areas, a café, administrative offices, a student lounge and amenities, and parking for vehicles and bicycles.

CLASSROOMS

The flexible nature of the learning spaces throughout the building allows students and faculty to utilize the space to meet learning objectives as they see fit. The second floor of AWSOM includes two large learning spaces accommodating up to 96 students, two medium classrooms for up to 24 students that can be converted into one classroom for 48 students, and nine multipurpose small group rooms. An additional finished space on the second floor is designed to be outfitted as a third large classroom to accommodate the School's growing capacity.

CLINICAL SKILLS CENTER

The Clinical Skills Center is 16,900-square-foot facility on the first floor used for teaching and assessment of clinical skills and includes 12 clinical examination rooms with a central

observation space, four debriefing rooms, two patient triage rooms, and one point-of-care testing room. The exam rooms are fully equipped to emulate a real clinic environment with ultrasound and other diagnostic devices to perform patient-centered history, physical examination, and shared clinical assessment on standardized patients (SPs). All exam rooms are equipped with audio-visual hardware to enable live streaming and recording, providing students the opportunity to observe and receive formative and summative feedback of their communication and clinical skills while working with SPs and faculty. Task trainers are available for use in small activity groups to support clinical skills prior to practice on SPs. Simulated electronic medical record software is provided for documentation, note-taking, and order and review of screening/diagnostic laboratory tests and imaging.

SIMULATION CENTER

The School's Simulation Center is a 7,500-square-foot space located on the first floor of the medical school building and fully equipped to emulate a hospital setting. It has four high-fidelity simulation rooms, each with a control room for direct and indirect observation of scenarios, an interprofessional education support area, and four debrief rooms, allowing for student self-reflection following each scenario. The Simulation Center is equipped with an audio-visual recording system, 3D models, virtual, augmented, and mixed reality headsets, and high-fidelity mannequins, allowing students to train within a mock-sterile environment emulating settings such as emergency departments, operating rooms, labor and delivery, intensive care units, and outpatient clinic procedural settings.

MAKERSPACE

The Makerspace is a 460-square-foot space dedicated to 3D printing and postproduction. It is equipped with large 3D printers and several tabletop printers, workbenches for postproduction, and software that allows models to be modified and incorporated into virtual reality headsets.

ANATOMY RESOURCE CENTER

The Anatomy Resource Center (ARC) is a 3,010-square-foot space located on the first floor of the medical school building. The space offers an immersive experience that combines cutting-edge technology with hands-on learning. The ARC includes a comprehensive collection of 100 plastinated specimens, providing students with a detailed, realistic view of human anatomy. Additionally, the ARC is equipped with advanced tools, including

virtual reality, which brings anatomical structures to life, allowing students to delve into surface, regional, and cross-sectional anatomy, as well as embryology and histology, all within a dynamic and supportive environment.

STUDENT LOUNGE

The Student Lounge provides a welcoming, comfortable space designed to support student well-being and foster a sense of community. Equipped with various seating options and collaborative spaces, the Lounge offers students a relaxing environment for unwinding between classes, catching up on study materials, or connecting with peers. The Lounge also contains exercise/yoga space, recreation space, a mother's room, a quiet room, a theater, lockers, and an outdoor balcony. Amenities include complimentary coffee and tea, charging stations, and a kitchenette with refrigerators and microwaves. The Student Lounge is a hub for informal gatherings and a retreat where students can recharge and enjoy time with friends.

STUDY AND QUIET SPACES

Study and quiet spaces are located throughout the building and on all floors. Both group and private study rooms and open seating within the library are available. A large study room and a dedicated "quiet room" are located on the 3rd floor.

ADDITIONAL ON-SITE AMENITIES

In addition to the learning spaces and Student Lounge mentioned above, the AWSOM facility offers a gym, a wellness center, and a café.

COURSE MATERIALS

AWSOM does not require the purchase of textbooks or supplemental instructional materials as a condition of enrollment or course participation. All required learning resources are provided by the institution or made available through institutional access.

SAFETY & SECURITY

Student safety is a top priority at AWSOM. The facility is equipped with a security system with cameras, a campus-wide emergency notification system, a dedicated security control

room, emergency lockdown capabilities, security on-site during hours of operation, and 24/7 security monitoring. An ID badge is required to access specific floors within the building.

CLINICAL AFFILIATES

Students will have the opportunity to learn at local clinical affiliate sites during their required clinical experiences, including the following:

- [Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas, Rogers AR](#)
- [Washington Regional Medical Center, Fayetteville AR](#)
- [Arkansas Children's Northwest Hospital, Springdale AR](#)
- [Springwoods Behavioral Health, Fayetteville AR](#)
- [Veterans Administration Medical Center, Fayetteville AR](#)
- [Arisa Health, Springdale AR](#)
- [Highlands Oncology, Rogers AR](#)
- [Community Clinic, Springdale AR](#)

SECTION 5 – STUDENT SERVICES

AWSOM takes a comprehensive approach to medical student development, providing various supportive resources that maximize students' educational experiences and enhance their professional and personal growth as future physicians.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Learning Specialists empower students as independent, effective pre-professional and professional learners through timely, valuable, and relevant academic counseling support. Academic support services are available to all students and include one-on-one academic consultations, exam preparation support, and skills workshops. The Learning Specialists also provide structured support for USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 preparation, helping students develop longitudinal study plans, integrate foundational science concepts across systems, connect coursework to board-style questions, and refine test-taking approaches using NBME-aligned resources. Across all services, the focus is on promoting deep and durable learning and supporting students as they grow into confident, independent learners. Additional information about academic support is available on the Academic Support webpage. For specific questions, e-mail learningspecialist@alwmed.org.

Peer Tutoring is a structured, near-peer academic support program designed to reinforce foundational science concepts and promote early academic success. Trained peer tutors, selected for their content mastery, provide individual and small-group tutoring, offering timely, course-aligned support that complements faculty instruction and Learning Specialist services. Peer tutors focus on helping students clarify challenging material, connect concepts across systems, and apply knowledge in preparation for assessments, while also modeling effective study and learning strategies. The Learning Specialists are responsible for managing the tutoring program. Please contact them with any questions at learningspecialist@alwmed.org.

ACADEMIC & CAREER ADVISING

AWSOM offers a variety of academic and career advising services, ensuring that students receive comprehensive support throughout their education. The advising team includes the Director of advising, specialty advisers, and career mentors.

- Director of Academic Advising – Students will meet with the Director each semester and receive assistance in course selection and information needed to apply for residency. The Director is also responsible for developing and organizing advising programs, such as career workshops and seminars.
- Career Mentors – Practicing or recently retired physicians provide guidance and support for students’ professional development. Following a learning community model, career mentors regularly meet with their assigned students in groups and individually and share first-hand knowledge of the “day in the life of a physician.” They will also encourage peer-to-peer support and reflection and promote professional identity formation.
- Specialty Advisers—Selected from the faculty and local community, specialty advisers provide targeted advice to students interested in specific medical fields and support for residency applications.

Student interest groups are also available to promote career exploration along with opportunities to participate in national student organizations. Online resources are available to AWSOM students to support their career investigation, including the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) *Careers in Medicine* Program website, recordings of AWSOM town hall meetings and other career activities, and a *Residency Rx Modules*. Students are encouraged to contact the Director of Academic Advising for

specific questions or to facilitate access to career advising resources. Email: advising@alwmed.org.

STUDENT LIFE

Student life extends well beyond the classroom. From student groups to social events, students are encouraged to get involved, stay healthy, and get to know the local area. Overseen by the Director of Student Life & Development, the inaugural class will have the opportunity to establish new traditions, create new student groups, and help create a foundation of co-curricular activities and support, including the following:

- **Student Interest Groups and Clubs** — Various student organizations for leadership, networking, and personal growth, including student government, student interest groups, and involvement in national student organizations.
- **Milestone Events** — The School will celebrate important milestones and achievements, including Orientation, the White Coat Ceremony, Match Day, and Graduation.
- **Student Wellness** — Prioritized through mental health support, wellness programming, peer support, and wellness coaching. In addition, a variety of fun activities will be planned to relieve stress and build rapport.
- **Community Engagement** — Students can engage in a variety of meaningful service opportunities with faculty, staff, and their peers while building relationships with local community partners.

STUDENT RESOURCES & WELL-BEING

To support student health and well-being, all students are required to have health insurance. Specific health insurance and coverage information will be provided during the admissions process and at new student orientation. Specifically, the following services have been arranged to support student wellness:

- **Physical Health** – Students may choose to use a provider within their health insurance network.
- **Mental Health** – Students will be provided with information for local counseling services information for diagnostic, preventative, and therapeutic mental health services by licensed mental health professionals who maintain the highest standards of ethical, competent, and confidential care. In addition, students will

have 24/7 access to crisis support and telehealth providers through the school-provided health insurance and the Optum Student Assist Program. This provides every student with access to psychiatrists, therapists, and counselors who care for a wide range of mental health issues.

- **Crisis Support** – Students in immediate need of physical or mental health support are encouraged to use this contact information:
 - Emergency Services: Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room
 - Crisis Student Support: 877-369-2013 or <https://liveandworkwell.com> using the member code “awsom”
 - Sober Sidekick: Substance abuse support (855) 780-5955
 - National Suicide Prevention Hotline: Call 988 or text “HOME” to 741741
 - Substance abuse or mental health services: Call the SAMHSA National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

For additional information relating to health services, students are encouraged to contact the Director of Student Life and Development at studentlife@alwmed.org.

Organizational Ombudsperson

The Organizational Ombuds is a confidential, neutral, informal, and independent resource available to all students. The Ombuds provides a safe space to discuss concerns, explore options, and seek guidance on navigating academic, clinical, and interpersonal challenges within the learning environment.

The Ombuds listens without judgment and supports students in identifying constructive paths forward. This may include clarifying concerns, coaching on communication strategies, exploring informal resolution options, or helping students better understand institutional policies and processes. Use of the Ombuds Office is voluntary.

The Ombuds operates in accordance with the following International Ombuds Association Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics:

- **Confidentiality:** Communications with the Ombuds are private and are not shared except in rare circumstances involving imminent risk of serious harm, as permitted by law. The Ombuds does not maintain formal records for institutional use.

- **Neutrality:** The Ombuds does not advocate for individuals or the institution, but instead supports fair and equitable processes.
- **Independence:** The Ombuds functions independently from academic, administrative, and evaluative structures and does not participate in formal investigations, disciplinary actions, or decision-making.
- **Informality:** The Ombuds does not serve as a formal reporting channel and does not trigger institutional notice. Students retain full control over whether to pursue formal processes.

Students may contact the Ombuds Office at any time, including to:

- Discuss concerns related to the learning environment, mistreatment, or professionalism
- Seek guidance on navigating challenging interactions with peers, faculty, or staff
- Explore options before pursuing formal channels
- Receive coaching on conflict management and communication strategies

Engaging with the Ombuds Office does not replace or delay access to formal institutional processes. Students seeking to initiate formal complaints or reports should refer to the appropriate policies outlined elsewhere in this handbook.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

AWSOM has an institutional commitment to providing equal educational opportunities for qualified students with disabilities in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Equal access for students with disabilities includes providing reasonable accommodations such as auxiliary aids and services. Each student is entitled to an individualized, interactive process with the School of Medicine's Disability Resources Representative. Accommodations aim to address specific, documented functional limitations, remove or mitigate barriers to access, and ensure that disabled students are not excluded from learning opportunities available to their peers. Medical students who need academic accommodation based on the impact of their disability must initiate a request by completing an online form and including appropriate medical documentation. Admitted and current students are encouraged to apply when they become aware of their disability. For additional information, please contact Student Affairs by email at studentcompliance@alwmed.org.

ADMISSIONS

The Office of Admissions plays a vital role in supporting prospective students throughout the admissions process. Services include personalized guidance on application requirements, timelines, and prerequisites, ensuring applicants are well-prepared to present their best selves. The admissions team is committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, providing resources for interviews, financial aid, and understanding the School's whole health mission.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- MCAT score of 500
- Overall GPA of 3.4
- United States Citizen or Permanent Resident

Highly recommended requirements*:

- Preview Score

Applicants should complete a minimum of 24 credit hours in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math (BCPM), with the following GPA requirements:

- Cumulative undergraduate BCPM GPA of 3.4 with at least 24 credit hours OR
- Cumulative post-baccalaureate BCPM GPA of 3.5 with at least 24 credit hours in math and sciences OR
- Cumulative graduate BCPM GPA of 3.5 with at least 24 credit hours in math and sciences

Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) coursework will not count toward the required credit hour total.

For additional information regarding the admissions requirements, please refer to the [admissions webpage](#), call (479) 441-0064, or email admissions@alwmed.org.

FINANCIAL AID

The Office of Financial Aid, located at AWSOM 3130, provides support to help students achieve their educational aspirations while successfully managing their finances. Services include personalized financial counseling, assistance with scholarship applications, and guidance on federal, state, and private funding opportunities. Workshops and information

sessions are also offered to educate students about budgeting, loan management, and repayment options, empowering them to make informed financial decisions. For additional financial aid information, please refer to the [financial aid webpage](#) or contact the financial aid office at (479) 397-1504 or email Finaid@alwmed.org.

LIBRARY

The AWSOM Library, located in the center of the medical school building, is a robust 4,000 square feet of resources and assistance. The Library search layer, [Ovid Discovery](#), houses an extensive collection of online resources curated to support medical education and research, including electronic and print books and journals, online databases, and clinical information sources. Individualized study space and full-time library staff are also available to provide comprehensive services.

Library resources are accessible online to medical students and faculty on and off campus. Students will have 24/7 access from anywhere through a secure online proxy server, OpenAthens. Virtual consultations with a reference librarian are also available. Students may email Library staff any time at awsom.library@alwmed.org with questions about access, resources, consultations, or any other questions/concerns.

REGISTRAR'S OFFICE

The Registrar's Office is responsible for maintaining accurate student records, managing course registration, and ensuring compliance with academic policies. Key services include enrollment verification, transcript requests, scheduling, and degree audits. The office works closely with students, faculty, and staff to support academic progress and uphold institutional standards. Students may email the Registrar's Office for assistance with registration, academic calendars, grading policies, and graduation requirements at registrar@alwmed.org.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology Services (ITS) department provides comprehensive technical support and resources to enhance the student learning experience. ITS manages the School's digital platforms, including the learning management system and student information system, as well as various academic, collaborative, productivity, and research software systems. Key services include troubleshooting technical issues, ensuring secure

access to online resources, and maintaining campus Wi-Fi. Students will be provided with a computing device and can contact ITS for assistance with software installations, password resets, and device connectivity. Contact at tech@aweoffice.org.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

The Student Government Association (SGA) is committed to fostering a collaborative and supportive community by addressing student concerns, organizing events, and promoting student engagement in school governance. The SGA works closely with administration, faculty, and staff through its elected representatives to enhance the overall student experience. The SGA also oversees student organizations, assist with funding allocation for activities, and advocate for initiatives that support student well-being and academic success. The inaugural class will help create the SGA bylaws and establish new student organizations. The Director of Student Life and Development serves as the advisor for the SGA.

TUITION & FEES

Alice L. Walton School of Medicine will waive tuition for the first five cohorts of students. Specific student fees will still be required. For more information, including the estimated cost of attendance, please visit the [Financial Aid webpage](#).

SECTION 6 – STUDENT POLICIES

The policies in this section represent a foundational framework for student conduct, academic expectations, and institutional guidelines at AWSOM. This list is not exhaustive, and additional policies will continue to be added or modified throughout. Each year, students are required to review the AWSOM policies and guidelines online and sign an attestation form. The AWSOM Student Attestation Form must be completed and signed within the first week of each semester. Students are responsible for staying informed on policy throughout the year.

ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR STUDENTS

This policy outlines the proper use of the technology resources provided by AWSOM to support its educational, clinical, and administrative missions. Technology resources are essential tools that enable students to access information, collaborate with peers and

faculty, and participate in clinical and research activities. Proper use ensures that these tools are available and functioning effectively for all students and that sensitive information remains secure. This policy promotes responsible, ethical, and legal use of these resources in alignment with institutional values and professional standards.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE POLICY

This policy establishes the process for addressing unsatisfactory academic performance by medical students enrolled in the MD program of the Alice L. Walton School of Medicine (AWSOM). [Link to Full Policy](#)

ALERT MEDIA

Safety & Security Division partners with [AlertMedia](#) to streamline mass communications and deliver important notifications for weather-related impacts and real-time emergencies via text, voice, app, push email, and more.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

AWSOM's Anti-Discrimination Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on protected characteristics, ensuring equal opportunities for all. It complies with Title IX, with a designated coordinator to oversee adherence. Complaints are thoroughly investigated, and violations may lead to disciplinary action.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

BLOODBORNE PATHOGEN & ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURE POLICY

To educate about, prevent, and address steps to be taken if a student is exposed to bloodborne pathogens, body fluids, or environmental hazards. This policy is to assure compliance with Element 12.8 of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) accreditation standards: "A medical school has policies in place that effectively address medical student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

BREACHES IN STUDENT PROFESSIONALISM

The purpose of this policy is to describe the procedures governing breaches in medical student professionalism standards outlined in the Student Code of Professional Conduct and course and clerkship syllabi, if applicable.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

CLERY ACT COMPLIANCE POLICY

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1998, a part of the Higher Education Act of 1965, was extended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013(collectively known as the "Clery Act") and requires colleges and universities receiving federal financial assistance to gather and make public information about certain crimes on or near their campuses and publish policy statements concerning campus safety and security.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

CLINICAL DUTY HOURS POLICY

To provide students and faculty with guidelines related to clinical duty hours of the medical education curriculum and ensure safe and professional learning and clinical environments for all medical students, healthcare providers, and patients.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

CLINICAL ROTATION SCHEDULING POLICY

To ensure equitable scheduling so that all students meet their clinical educational goals Phase 3 required clerkships. To ensure that all students are prepared and aware of the planning necessary to participate in the Phase 3 required clerkships of the AWSOM curriculum.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

CLINICAL SUPERVISION POLICY

To ensure that medical students are appropriately supervised at all times in clinical learning situations involving patient care; to ensure student and patient safety; and that the level of responsibility delegated to the student is appropriate for the student's level of training and ability. To ensure that the activities supervised are within the scope of practice of the supervising licensed health professionals.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

CREDIT HOUR POLICY

AWSOM's Credit Hour policy ensures accurate workload reflection and compliance with guidelines. It defines credit hours, outlines the Curriculum Committee's approval process, and details calculations based on instruction, preparation, and experiential learning, including one credit hour per clinical rotation week.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

This policy establishes a structured approach to emergency preparedness, response, and recovery, ensuring that lives and property are protected.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

FERPA STUDENT RIGHTS AND PRIVACY POLICY

This policy outlines FERPA rights, ensuring students can access, review, and amend records while AWSOM protects their confidentiality. Students may restrict directory information disclosure and file complaints for rights violations. Information is disclosed only as legally authorized.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

GRADE APPEAL POLICY

The Alice L. Walton School of Medicine is committed to fair and accurate assessment of student performance and supports a final grade and grade appeal procedure that accounts for assessment errors or irregularities.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

GRADUATION POLICY

This policy establishes clear and consistent standards for academic advancement and graduation and ensures that students are evaluated according to a single standard for academic promotion, graduation, and awarding of the MD degree.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

HIPAA USE AND BREACH POLICY

To provide governing principles and standards on the use of protected health information (PHI) in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH)

Act at the Alice L. Walton School of Medicine.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

To ensure that all employees of Alice L. Walton School of Medicine experience minimal risk during the event of inclement weather or other emergencies.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

LACTATION SUPPORT POLICY

AWSOM supports student parents by providing lactation spaces, flexible scheduling, and secure milk storage. Training is offered to create a supportive environment. Students must submit a written request to Student Affairs to access accommodations. The policy is regularly reviewed to ensure effectiveness and confidentiality.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT STATEMENT

AWSOM is committed to fostering a positive, respectful, and equitable learning environment. This policy outlines expectations for mentorship, teamwork, and ethical conduct among students, faculty, and staff. Regular reviews will address any issues related to professional standards and ensure a supportive, inclusive environment.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Leave of Absence (LOA) policy provides guidelines for students who must interrupt their enrollment for a specified amount of time. The policy is to support student well-being while ensuring adherence to academic standards and timely progression toward the MD degree. Time on a LOA is included in the six-year time frame for completing all curricular requirements, except for Military Leave of Absence.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

MEDICAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (MSPE) LETTER POLICY

This policy provides a summary of what is included in the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE) letter, ensures that students have the right to review and challenge the content and the opportunity to request an alternative letter writer.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

NARRATIVE AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT POLICY

To ensure students receive various types of feedback through the AWSOM assessment system so students can gauge their progress in achieving the educational program objectives defined by the school.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

PHASE 1 AND 2 WORKLOAD POLICY

Phases 1 and 2 of the curriculum focus on active learning and developing lifelong learning skills. Students engage in in-class activities, pre-work, and post-session study. Faculty and the Curriculum Committee monitor time spent to ensure the weekly workload does not exceed 60 hours, including in-class and out-of-class activities, exams, and study time.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

PREPARATION FOR NON-FACULTY INSTRUCTORS

This policy ensures that non-faculty instructors engaged in teaching and assessing medical students are prepared for those roles.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

REMEDIATING A COURSE POLICY

This policy outlines a process for addressing student deficiencies and achieving a passing grade. It provides a framework for addressing student academic deficiencies and provides a pathway for remediation.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS FOR STUDENT LOAN ELIGIBILITY

To ensure compliance with various financial aid regulations and requirements for student loans.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The Social Media Policy sets expectations for online conduct, promoting responsible use while protecting AWSOM's reputation and professional standards. It emphasizes confidentiality (e.g., FERPA, HIPAA), respect, honesty, and avoiding harassment. Members should share official content or label personal views and refrain from unauthorized use of school resources for personal posts.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

This policy ensures that Alice L. Walton School of Medicine complies with accreditation standards and laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 2008 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and is also intended to assist students seeking accommodations.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

STUDENT ASSESSMENT RECUSAL POLICY

Faculty members who provide health or psychiatric care to medical students must recuse themselves from assessing, grading, or making promotion decisions to prevent conflicts of interest and protect student privacy. Any potential conflicts should be reported to the course director, and exceptional cases will be addressed individually. Faculty must also attest on evaluation forms that they have not provided such care for the student being assessed.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

To specify attendance expectations and procedures for students at Alice L. Walton School of Medicine (AWSOM).

[Link to Full Policy](#)

STUDENT CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Recognizing that professional conduct is fundamental to medical training, students pledge to adhere to all regulations and standards set by the school. Professionalism is regarded as an academic competency, and failure to meet these standards may impact a student's progression and graduation, just like other academic requirements. These expectations align closely with those of the medical profession, preparing students to meet the responsibilities and ethical standards they will face in their future careers.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

STUDENT CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

The Alice L. Walton School of Medicine (AWSOM) is committed to fostering a safe and secure learning environment for its students, staff, faculty, and partners. The policy is in support of LCME Standard 6.2. Required Clinical Experiences.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

STUDENT DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

Full policy will be available in Policy Stat.

STUDENT DRUG SCREENING POLICY

The School of Medicine is committed to protecting the safety, health and well-being of all students, faculty, staff and patients. It is the policy of the School of Medicine to establish and maintain a drug-free working and educational environment for medical students and a safe clinical environment for patients, and to provide for compliance with federal law regarding prevention of illicit use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

STUDENT GRIEVANCE AND APPEALS POLICY

This policy outlines the procedures for medical students to appeal a decision that adversely impacts their academic progress at the Alice L. Walton School of Medicine (AWSOM), except for grade appeal. Refer to the Grade Appeal Policy for guidance on appealing course or clerkship grades.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

STUDENT HAZING POLICY

The Alice L. Walton School of Medicine (AWSOM) is committed to maintaining a professional, respectful, and safe learning environment for all students. This policy establishes clear standards prohibiting hazing in any form and outlines the consequences for violations. AWSOM recognizes that hazing undermines the values of professionalism, dignity, and mutual respect that are fundamental to medical education and the practice of medicine.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

STUDENT IMMUNIZATION AND HEALTH SCREENING POLICY

This policy is to ensure compliance with Element 12.7 of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) accreditation standards: “A medical school follows accepted guidelines in determining immunization requirements for its medical students and monitors students’ compliance with those requirements.”

[Link to Full Policy](#)

STUDENT MISTREATMENT POLICY

This policy fosters a respectful learning environment, prohibiting mistreatment such as harassment, discrimination, or inappropriate behavior. Examples include public humiliation, physical harm, unwanted advances, or discriminatory treatment. Students can address concerns directly, report to faculty, administration, or the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, or file anonymous complaints online without fear of retaliation. Formal

complaints are reviewed confidentially, with investigations completed within 14 days. Retaliation is prohibited, with penalties up to expulsion or termination.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

STUDENT PROFESSIONALISM POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to describe the expectations in medical student professionalism standards outlined Student Code of Professional Conduct and in course and clerkship syllabi as applicable.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

STUDENT PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

This policy serves to ensure that the Student Promotions Committee (SPC) follows a fair and formal process taking any action that may adversely affect a medical student's status within the MD program. The composition and charge of the Student Promotions Committee are defined in the Faculty Bylaws and SPC Charter.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, AND GRADUATION

AWSOM's technical standards that candidates for the MD degree must possess to ensure sufficient intellectual capacity, physical ability, emotional and psychological stability, interpersonal sensitivity, and communication skills necessary to acquire the scientific knowledge, interpersonal and technical competencies, professional attitudes, and clinical abilities required to complete the MD degree and pursue any pathway of graduate medical education, and to enter the independent practice of medicine. To specify the minimum technical standards MD degree candidates must meet to pursue and complete a Medical Doctorate and independently practice medicine.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

TIMELY GRADE SUBMISSION POLICY

To ensure that a system is in place for timely summative assessment of medical student achievement in each course and clerkship.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

TITLE IX POLICY

This Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, and misconduct based on sex and gender. As used in this policy, the term "sex" includes birth/biological sex and sexual orientation, and gender includes gender identity and expression. AWSOM strongly encourages the prompt

reporting of, and is committed to timely and fair resolution of, complaints of sex and gender discrimination, harassment, and misconduct.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY

Alice L. Walton School of Medicine does not accept transfer or advanced standing students due to its integrated curriculum. AWSOM has no articulation agreements and does not award transfer credit for coursework or prior learning. Credit transferability to other institutions is at their sole discretion, potentially requiring repetition of coursework. Students should confirm AWSOM aligns with their educational goals, including transfer eligibility.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

TUITION REFUND POLICY

AWSOM offers prorated tuition refunds for students who withdraw from the medical program. The refund amount depends on when the student withdraws, with earlier withdrawals resulting in larger refunds. Students must submit a written notice of withdrawal to the Registrar, and refunds are typically issued within 45 days. For specific details and exceptions, please refer to the full policy.

VETERAN AFFAIRS BENEFICIARY – WITHDRAWAL / TERMINATION

Termination: If the student fails to meet minimum requirements in either academics or attendance, the school's certifying official will submit a VA Form 22-1999b effective on the last day of probation.

Reinstatement: Once a VA student's educational benefits have been suspended, after 30 days—and provided the student is meeting minimum standards of progress—the school's certifying official will submit a VA Form 22-1999 to reinstate benefits.

For more information, please contact the School Certifying Official (SCO) in the Office of Financial Aid.

[Link to Full Policy](#)

USE OF INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure consistency of the use of Incomplete Grade "I".

[Link to Full Policy](#)

DEFINITIONS

- **AAMC** – The Association of American Medical Colleges is a nonprofit association based in Washington, D.C. that represents medical schools, teaching hospitals, and academic and scientific societies.
- **Academic Standing** – A measure of a student's academic performance and progress in meeting the medical School's requirements. Academic standing categories typically include "Good Academic Standing" or "Academic Probation," as determined by the Student Promotion Committee.
- **Academic Year** – The MD degree program is divided into four academic segments, also known as academic periods or simply “periods.”
- **Accreditation** – The process by which a medical school is officially recognized and meets the standards set by a governing body, such as the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME).
- **ACGME** – The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) is a nonprofit organization that establishes and oversees the accreditation of residency and fellowship programs in the United States to ensure high standards of medical education and training.
- **ADA** – Americans with Disabilities Act. A federal law that prohibits discrimination based on disability and ensures equal access to public accommodations, including educational institutions.
- **Adverse Action or Adverse Recommendation** – Any recommendation of the Student Promotion Committee (SPC), unless stated otherwise, arising out of a medical student's failure to meet academic requirements or professionalism standards. An adverse recommendation mandates that a student takes specific actions or refrain from taking specific actions.
- **ADHE** – Arkansas Division of Higher Education responsible for determining whether to authorize a graduate degree program in the state of Arkansas.
- **Allopathic** – An allopathic or "conventional" medical School trains doctors using a science-based curriculum focusing on diagnosing and treating patients. Graduates receive an MD.
- **AMCAS** – The American Medical College Application Service is the main allopathic medical school application service in the United States.
- **AMSA** – American Medical Student Association is an organization that aims to support med students worldwide with independent resources.
- **AOA** – Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) is a national medical honor society that recognizes medical students, residents, and physicians for excellence in scholarship, leadership, professionalism, and service to the medical field and society.

- **ARCHES** – The unique curriculum at AWSOM, with six core elements interwoven throughout the full program: Art of Healing, Research, Clinical, Health Systems Science, Embracing Whole Health, and Science of Medicine.
- **Attending Physician** – An attending physician is a board-certified doctor who has completed med School and residency and is practicing medicine in a hospital/clinic.
- **AWSOM** – Alice L. Walton School of Medicine.
- **Basic Sciences** – The foundational medical sciences covered during the preclinical years, including anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, and pathology.
- **Board Exams** – Certify a physician in a specific medical specialty.
- **CBSE** – Comprehensive Basic Science Examination (CBSE) is a standardized test that assesses medical students' knowledge of foundational biomedical sciences, often used to evaluate readiness for the USMLE Step 1 exam.
- **CBSSA** – Comprehensive Basic Science Self-Assessment is a practice tool provided by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) that helps medical students evaluate their knowledge and preparedness for the USMLE Step 1 by simulating the content and format of the exam.
- **Chief Resident** – A resident in their final year of residency who is the appointed leader of a group of residents. Chief Residents supervise clinical duties, administrative functions, and more. Program directors or senior physicians appoint their responsibilities.
- **Clerkship** – A period during medical School, typically in the third or fourth year, where students gain hands-on experience in various medical specialties through clinical rotations.
- **Clinical or Shelf Exams** – Exams conducted during a third-year medical student's clinical rotations to assess their knowledge.
- **Clinical Preceptor** – A practicing physician or health care provider who supervises medical students during their clinical rotations and provides feedback on performance.
- **Clinical Reasoning** – The process by which medical professionals analyze data and make decisions related to patient care.
- **Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME)** – An approach to medical education that focuses on the outcomes or competencies students must achieve to progress and graduate.
- **Comprehensive Medical Student Evaluation (CMSE)** – A detailed review of a student's academic and professional progress throughout medical School.
- **Confidentiality Breach** – When private or sensitive information is disclosed to unauthorized individuals or entities without proper consent.

- **Consent Agreement** – An agreement voluntarily entered into by AWSOM and a medical student arising from alleged violations of Professionalism Standards.
- **Curriculum Vitae (CV)** – A document summarizing a student’s academic and professional achievements, often used for applying to residencies, fellowships, or research opportunities.
- **Direct Patient Care (DPC)** – Hands-on interaction with patients, including history-taking, physical examinations, and procedures.
- **Duty Hours** – The maximum number of hours per week a resident or medical student is allowed to work, as regulated by accreditation bodies.
- **EHR** – Electronic Health Record. A digital version of a patient's medical history used for clinical care and documentation.
- **Elective Rotation** – A clinical rotation chosen by the student based on their interests, typically during the fourth year of medical School.
- **ERAS** – The Electronic Residency Application Service (or “the Match”) is the main application service used to apply for medical residency training following graduation from medical School.
- **Fellow** – A medical fellow is a doctor who has completed residency and is sub-specializing through a fellowship program.
- **FERPA** – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records and grants students certain rights regarding access and control of their educational record.
- **Formative Assessment** – Assessments used during training to provide feedback and guide learning rather than determine a final grade.
- **Good Academic Standing** – Students who are registered and have met minimum requirements, as defined by the Student Promotion Committee, to progress in the curriculum.
- **Graduate Medical Education (GME)** – Post-medical school training, including residency and fellowship, required to practice medicine independently.
- **HIPAA** – Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act. Federal law protects the privacy and security of individuals' medical information and sets standards for the confidentiality of health data.
- **Incident Reporting Form** – Online form completed by a member of the AWSOM community to identify a possible breach of professionalism.
- **Integrated Curriculum** – A curriculum design where basic sciences and clinical sciences are taught in a unified, cohesive manner.

- **Interprofessional Education (IPE)** – An educational approach where students from different healthcare professions learn together to foster collaboration and improve patient care.
- **ISA** – Independent Student Analysis, a survey completed by medical students as part of the accreditation/reaccreditation process that is submitted to the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME).
- **Junior Resident** – A resident who has completed less than half of their residency program.
- **LCME** – Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the notable authority for the accreditation of medical education programs leading to the MD degree.
- **Match** – Refers to the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP), where medical students are paired with residency programs based on their preferences and program selections.
- **MEPO** – Medical Education Program Objective. Statements of the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that medical students are expected to exhibit as evidence of their achievement by completion of the program.
- **MS-1-4** – This stands for “medical student” (MS) and the year of the program in which they are currently enrolled (e.g., MS1 would be students in their first year of medical School.)
- **MSPE (Dean's Letter)** – Medical Student Performance Evaluation. Objective assessment of a medical student's academic and clinical performance, submitted with their residency application.
- **Narrative Assessment** – A written evaluation providing detailed feedback on a student's performance and progress.
- **NBME** – The National Board of Medical Examiners offers evaluation products and tools to assess American allopathic medical students, such as the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) and Shelf Exams.
- **OSCE** – In an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (aka “clinical performance exam”), students are asked to demonstrate clinical skills and patient assessments on actors, real patients, or volunteers.
- **OSHA** – Occupational Safety and Health Administration. A federal agency ensuring safe and healthful working conditions, including for students in clinical environments.
- **PBL** – Problem-based learning, a learning method where students work in small groups to solve clinical case studies, fostering critical thinking and self-directed learning.

- **Preclinical Years** – Refers to the first phase of medical education, usually covering the first two years, focusing on classroom-based learning of basic sciences like biochemistry, physiology, and pathology.
- **Probation** – The SPC may place a student on probation, which signals to the student that the SPC is carefully scrutinizing performance due to academic failure or breaches of Professionalism Standards. AWSOM Probation is an adverse action.
- **Professionalism** - Professionalism in medicine encompasses the commitment to ethical practice, accountability, integrity, respect for patients and colleagues, and a dedication to continuous learning and excellence in patient care.
- **Professionalism Standards** – The standards of professionalism as set forth in this AWSOM Medical Student Handbook.
- **Residency** – Postgraduate training in a specialized field of medicine, lasting between 3 to 7 years, practicing under supervision.
- **Resident** – A medical school graduate in a residency program training to become a doctor.
- **Rotation** – A period of clinical training in a specific medical specialty, typically lasting 4–8 weeks, where students gain hands-on experience with patients.
- **Rounds** – To go around a hospital or clinic to check on patients.
- **SAP** – Student Academic Progress. A term used by financial aid to determine successful completion of coursework toward an eligible degree.
- **School Certifying Official (SCO):** A designated representative of an educational institution who serves as the primary liaison between the school and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for students receiving VA education benefits. The SCO is responsible for certifying enrollment, reporting changes in student status, and ensuring compliance with VA requirements.
- **Senior Resident** – A resident who has completed more than half of their residency program.
- **Shelf Exams** – Standardized subject-specific exams created by the NBME (National Board of Medical Examiners) to assess medical students' knowledge and application of clinical sciences.
- **Shadowing** – Following a physician through their daily routine to observe their methods and responsibilities.
- **SOAP** – Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program. A process for unmatched medical students to apply for and obtain residency positions after the initial Match process.

- **Specialist Physician** – A doctor who specializes in a particular medical area. Highly sought-after specialists are doctors who have completed a sub-specialty through a fellowship program.
- **Specialty Advisor** – A faculty member who provides career guidance to medical students regarding specific specialties.
- **Standardized Patient (SP)** – An actor trained to simulate real patient scenarios for teaching and testing purposes in medical education.
- **Student Promotions Committee (SPC)** – Student Promotions Committee, the governing body responsible for evaluating student progress and performance throughout their medical education, making recommendations for promotion to the next level of training, and ensuring that all students meet the academic and professional standards required for successful completion of the program.
- **Sub-I** – Sub-internship, an audition rotation during your last two years of medical School.
- **USMLE** – The United States Medical Licensing Examination. Assesses an examinee's ability to apply knowledge, concepts, and principles, and to demonstrate fundamental patient-centered skills.
- **USMLE Step 1** – The first of three USMLE exams taken after the second year of medical School.
- **USMLE Step 2** – The second USMLE exam taken during the fourth year of medical School.
- **USMLE Step 3** – The final step of the USMLE is typically taken after the first year of residency.
- **Wellness Program** – Institutional initiatives designed to support medical students' physical, mental, and emotional well-being.