



I. 14.2.3 Student Volunteers in Clinical Settings

Chapter 14 - Student Policies and Procedures	Original Effective Date: March 2021
Section: 14.2 Other Student Policies	Date Last Reviewed: December 2024
Responsible Entity: Vice President for Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs	Date Last Revised: December 2024

II. Purpose

To effectively manage volunteer clinical activities undertaken by University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (University) students and provide a safe environment for students while minimizing liability and risk to the University.

III. Scope

This policy applies to all students in all five UT Health San Antonio schools: the School of Dentistry, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Long School of Medicine, School of Health Professions, UT School of Public Health San Antonio and School of Nursing, participating in volunteer clinical activities related to their academic program as a UT Health San Antonio student or as a member of an authorized University group, activity or event. This policy applies only to student volunteer activities in a Clinical Setting.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to students who volunteer for Co-Curricular Activities in a Non-Clinical Setting with an authorized University group, activity, or event. This policy does not apply when a student volunteers as an individual with a group, activity or event sponsored by an outside entity. Examples include but are not limited to, acting as a docent at a local museum; school or community activities such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, tutoring programs, Head Start, etc.; or staffing a public service event such as a fundraiser or gala.

IV. Policy

UT Health San Antonio students are encouraged to volunteer and give back to the community. Students who volunteer individually on their own with a group, activity or event sponsored by an outside entity do not represent the University or their school. As such, students volunteering individually should not wear UT Health San Antonio logo attire at such events or purport to represent the University in any other fashion.

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Students seeking to gain volunteer clinical hours for academic or school recognition and/or a transcript designation with an authorized University group, activity or event are responsible for completing the following requirements:

- A. Obtain school and/or program approval prior to participation. Each UT Health San Antonio school may define volunteer clinical activities differently based on scope or practice. The student affairs dean in each school should be consulted.
 1. Examples of volunteer clinical activities that should be vetted and approved, include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Shadowing a health provider.
 - b. Volunteering in patient interactions that may contribute to a transcript designation (i.e., clinical excellence or medical humanities degree distinctions).
 - c. Working or engaging in patient interaction with potential exposure to infectious or environmental hazards or occupational injury (i.e., needle sticks, etc.).
 - d. Serving as a research volunteer with access to patient files.
 - e. Providing direct patient care under supervision of a UT Health San Antonio faculty member (e.g., student-faculty collaborative practices or first-aid station at a walk/run event); or
 - f. Serving in student organizations that provide health outreach and health education to the community (e.g., health fairs, flu vaccinations, high school physicals, etc.).
- B. Identify a UT Health San Antonio Faculty/Staff Advisor to serve as the primary institutional representative for each volunteer clinical activity.
 1. It is the responsibility of the UT Health San Antonio Faculty/Staff Advisor to consider the potential risks associated with the activity and to determine the degree of oversight required to mitigate risks to patients, students, and the University.
 2. The UT Health San Antonio Faculty/Staff Advisor is also responsible for ascertaining pertinent information regarding the activity and informing the relevant school administrators (e.g., Associate Deans, Student Deans, Department Heads, etc.).
- C. Adhere to all relevant University and school policies and procedures including, but not limited to:
 1. The UT Health San Antonio Official Catalog
 - a. [Student Travel Policy](#), governing volunteer activities or events located more than 25 miles from Health Science Center campuses; and
 - b. School-specific program policies and procedures listed below in section V. Related References.
 2. Office of Student Life
 - a. [Student Organization Handbook](#), governing requirements, and activities of registered student organizations on campus.

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D. Track volunteer clinical activities/hours through [ENGAGED](#), the University's online platform for recording volunteer activities.

V. Definitions

When used in this document, the following words have the meaning set forth below unless a different meaning is required by context.

Clinical Setting – a setting that accommodates patient care; any location that provides for student-patient interaction, including direct patient care, phoning patients, providing tele-health consultation, laboratory experiences, clinical research opportunities, or review of health records.

Co-Curricular Activities – activities meant to augment the learning/professional development of a student that takes place outside the formal curricula and does not lead to an official transcript designation.

Faculty/Staff Advisor – a University faculty or staff member who oversees a University-registered student group or a group of students organized for a specific event or activity.

Formal Curricula – any planned educational activities in an academic program that contributes to an official transcript designation.

Non-Clinical Setting – a setting in which direct patient care is not provided nor expected; any location that does not involve student-patient interactions.

Student Volunteer – a student that freely offers to take part in an activity or event that their position or expertise as a student allows them to perform as part of academic-based initiatives, or any currently enrolled student who takes part in a non-transcript designated activity or event. Students may volunteer as an individual person with an outside entity or in an authorized University group, event, or activity. Students who volunteer as individuals with an outside entity do not represent the University or school.

VI. Related References

Policies and Procedures

[University Catalog](#)

[Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences](#)

[School of Health Professions](#)

[Long School of Medicine](#)

[School of Nursing](#)

VII. Review and Approval History

The approving authority of this policy is the University Executive Committee.

Effective Date	Action Taken	Approved By	Approved Date
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03/2021	New Policy Approved	Executive Committee	03/2021
12/2024	Policy Revision/Discretionary Edit		12/2024