

A photograph of a tall, modern building with a light-colored, textured facade and large glass windows. The building is set against a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The sun is visible in the upper right, creating a lens flare effect. The building has a prominent vertical section on the right side. The text is overlaid in red on the building's facade.

Southern College of Optometry

**Externship Program Handbook
For Students & Adjunct Faculty**

Southern College of Optometry

Mission Statement

The mission of Southern College of Optometry is to educate men and women in the Art and Science of Optometry.

In support of this mission, Southern College of Optometry is committed to:

Our Students

- to foster an environment which encourages intellectual curiosity, critical analysis of information, clarity of expression and self-directed life-long learning
- to provide a comprehensive educational program of study designed to prepare the graduate for the dynamic practice of Optometry
- to promote by example the development of professional and ethical behavior

Our Faculty and Staff

- to provide opportunities for research and professional development
- to provide a secure employment environment that rewards outstanding performance and personal commitment to the mission of the College

The Public

- to serve as a national resource for information regarding eye and vision care
- to serve the general welfare of the public through educational and research programs and to provide quality, cost effective, accessible health care

The Profession of Optometry

- to promote personal responsibility for and commitment to the Profession of Optometry
- to provide opportunities for continued professional development

Mission Statement

Clinical Programs

To provide professional education and professional clinical experience in order to prepare students of optometry for effective and ethical practice in the twenty-first century, while serving as a significant community resource for health care through the practice of the full scope of the profession of optometry.

- (1) To develop in students the necessary clinical skills, both cognitive and physical, which enable the optometrist to provide quality services to patients.
- (2) To develop in students the necessary values and attitudes which enable the optometrist to provide quality services that are of maximum value and benefit to patients.
- (3) To develop in students the necessary values and attitudes which enable the optometrist to provide quality services that are community focused and community based in a variety of practice settings.
- (4) To develop in students the necessary levels of intellectual curiosity which provide the optometrist with the motivation to pursue lifelong learning.
- (5) To create and maintain an environment for professional and support staff which fosters continuous development, and which facilitates the accomplishment of their professional goals.
- (6) To serve the public by providing high quality, cost-effective optometric service which meets the needs and goals of each individual patient.
- (7) To serve the public by participating effectively with other professionals in meeting the total health care needs of individual patients.
- (8) To serve the community by supporting community-based initiatives directed at improving the health of its citizens.
- (9) To support the mission of Southern College of Optometry by practicing effective stewardship of all resources, thereby containing the cost of education for students and maximizing the ability and effectiveness of the College.
- (10) To serve the profession and mankind by conducting research and by sharing the results.

Mission Statement Externship Program

The mission of the Externship portion of the Clinical Programs of Southern College of Optometry is:

To expand the educational and clinical experience of students of optometry in order to provide larger numbers of patient encounters and exposure to additional off-campus health care settings in support of the Mission of Clinical Programs and of Southern College of Optometry

GOALS:

- To provide quality educational and clinical experiences to students which are designed to improve clinical skills AND patient management skills.
- To provide clinical experiences which expose students to adequate numbers of patient presentations to allow the further development of diagnostic and management skills.
- To provide clinical experiences which enable students to participate in the provision of continuous services to individual patients.
- To provide clinical experiences which expose students to practice management issues related to reimbursement, quality assessment and improvement, office management and practice development.
- To place students in professional environments which foster development of values and attitudes which enable the optometrist to provide quality services that are of maximum value and benefit to patients.
- To place students in professional environments which foster values and attitudes which challenge optometrists to make positive contributions to their communities through activities not directly related to the practice of the profession.
- To provide guidance and support to volunteer preceptors which will enable them to maximize the value of the externship experience for students.
- To offer a variety of sites to each student in order to maximize benefit and minimize unnecessary expense and personal hardship.
- To evaluate and monitor sites to insure beneficial experiences for each student.
- To assess student performance and activity at each extern site through evaluation of mandatory reports assigned by the Director of Externs.
- To maintain adequate documentation of externship program to insure that its quality and effectiveness can be demonstrated to interested third parties.

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SCO

Externship Program Handbook

Forward

The SCO Externship Program's mission is to expand the students' educational and clinical experience by providing large numbers of patient encounters and exposure to off campus health care settings. As an integral part of the curriculum, the Externship Program strives to transform the optometric student into a complete health care professional capable of effectively applying scientific knowledge and clinical insight on behalf of every patient. This transformation is accomplished by the student's exposure to and active participation in traditional practices and co-management/multidisciplinary clinical settings under the direct mentoring and supervision of Adjunct Faculty.

Each student is required to complete two academic sessions of externship with competent and successful optometrists selected from a list of College approved locations. The intent of the Program is to provide the student the opportunity to observe, participate with and to be trained by outstanding practitioners in primary and secondary care optometry. Students are expected to interact with patients, under the direction and supervision of attending faculty, according to the highest standards of clinical, moral and ethical conduct promulgated by the American Optometric Association.

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

1.1. Synopsis: The Externship Program consists of Fourth-Year students leaving the College to spend two rotations, each of one academic session (quarter or semester), at various clinical sites for patient care and practice management experience under the tutelage and supervision of Adjunct Faculty. The intent of the program is to provide the student the opportunity to be mentored and taught by outstanding practitioners in primary and/or secondary care optometry. The Externship Program is an essential and integral part of the curriculum, designed to contribute to the transformation of students into complete health care professionals who can apply scientific knowledge and clinical abilities for the benefit of patients. The student is expected to participate in patient care under the instruction and guidance of Adjunct Faculty, according to the highest standards of clinical, moral and ethical conduct.

1.2. Educational Objectives: It is expected that students' cognitive, technical and analytical skills will continuously improve throughout their four-year formal educational experience. It is expected that their knowledge base will be broadened and deepened, and that interpersonal skills, attitudes and values will improve throughout the process. Southern College of Optometry graduates are expected to have achieved entry-level competence that allows them to independently manage most cases accurately and efficiently. Graduates are expected to manage conditions that may be outside entry-level competence through effective utilization of appropriate referral or consultation. In addition, the externship experience is intended to provide opportunities for students to interact within a practice or other health care institution in a manner that furthers their ability to establish themselves in a setting that is conducive to the provision of excellent services to patients and results in a satisfying and successful professional career.

2. TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

2.1. Externship Director: The College appoints a fulltime member of the Faculty to the position Director of Externships. The Director reports directly to the Vice President of Clinical Programs. The Director is responsible for the full implementation and management of the Externship Program. This responsibility requires recruiting, developing, evaluating and monitoring an adequate number of high quality externship sites to ensure that every student is assigned to appropriate rotations. The Director is the College contact for preceptors and externs. The Director, as instructor of record for the Externship Courses, is responsible for computing and reporting grades that accurately reflect student performance. The Director determines the range of academic activities that students must submit to the College in order to adequately document effective learning activities at the externship site. Externship procedures and policies are developed by the Director and approved by the Vice President of Clinical Programs.

2.2. Externship Site: An externship site is a private practice or institutional setting that has been evaluated and approved by the College to host one or more student externs. Sites are selected based on many attributes, including location, clinical capacity and patient census, preceptor experience and credentials, commitment to teaching, professional standing and others.

2.2.1. Private Practice Site: A private practice is a doctor-owned and operated optometric practice that provides a broad range of optometric primary care services. Typically sites are selected that include opportunities to participate in services in most, if not all, recognized areas of optometric service. Private practice sites often are the most effective locations for students to develop skills necessary to maintain long-term doctor/patient relationships, community involvement, optometric organization involvement and business management. Private practices may be single or multiple doctor practices. Private practices may include only optometrists, or they may include optometrists and other health care professionals.

2.2.2. Institutional Site: An institutional site is most often a government facility such as a Veterans Administration Health Center, and Indian Health Service Hospital, a U.S. Military Base Hospital or a co-management/referral center. Institutional sites often are able to provide students with more clinical independence, higher volume of patients who present with significant ocular disease, more multi-disciplinary exposure and more intensive academic rigor.

2.3. Preceptor: A preceptor is a licensed health care provider who works directly with students in the provision of health care services to patients. The preceptor is a teacher, mentor, supervisor, role model, evaluator and counselor. It is the preceptor's responsibility to help students prepare themselves for effective and successful provision of optometric services.

2.3.1. Primary Preceptor: The Primary Preceptor is a doctor of optometry at an approved site who takes the responsibility for the student experience for the duration of the assigned rotation. The Primary Preceptor is the

Director's contact with the Externship Site. The Primary Preceptor's responsibilities include assuring that student activities are conducive to accomplishing the mission of the Externship Program. The Primary Preceptor provides feedback to the Director regarding student clinical performance, conduct or any other relevant issues. The Primary Preceptor provides grades, takes responsibility for providing timely feedback to students and certifies to the Director that all assignments and data that students are required to provide to the Director are accurate and valid.

- 2.3.2. Associate Preceptor:** An associate preceptor is a licensed health care provider at a site who is designated by the Primary Preceptor to work with externs in meeting the goals of the Program. Associate preceptors have the same professional responsibilities as Primary Preceptors with the exception of those responsibilities that are specifically designated for the Primary Preceptor.
- 2.4. Extern:** An extern is a student enrolled at Southern College of Optometry who has been assigned by the Director of Externships to complete a clinical rotation at an approved Extern Site. As an extern *from* the College, the student often is referred to as an intern *at* the site. An extern is held to the same standards of performance and conduct as any other student enrolled at Southern College of Optometry.
- 2.5. Externship Session:** A session is the period of time for which a student is assigned to an externship site. Sessions coincide with the College academic calendar and curriculum. Each externship session fulfills the requirements of a clinical course within the curriculum. Presently externship sessions coincide with an academic system of Trimesters, organized into sessions for Summer, Fall and Spring.
- 2.6. Professional Supervision:** Professional supervision, as it relates to externs, means (at a minimum) that in no case shall a patient receive services or be treated based on an extern's evaluation where a preceptor has not agreed to the findings, the conclusions and the plan. The College does not intend that Professional Supervision require direct physical observation of all extern clinical activity, however, externs cannot be required or allowed to provide professional services at any time when a preceptor is not on the premises and aware of the student activity.
- 2.7. Professional Mentoring:** Professional mentoring includes many types of teaching activities including coaching on technique, case analysis, patient communication, strategies for differential diagnosis, professional demeanor, recommendations for study or practice, evaluation feed back, career counseling and other activities.
- 2.8. Site Orientation:** A site orientation is a process by which externs are informed regarding site requirements, policies, procedures and expectations. Site orientations should include both clinical and non-clinical guidance. Site orientations should specifically include information regarding policies related to privacy, treatment of minors, hygiene, medical emergencies, incident reporting, equipment maintenance and safety.

- 2.9. Preceptor Forum:** From time to time the Director organizes opportunities for preceptors to meet together with College officials to review the program, to open opportunities to share ideas, to solicit feedback and for other purposes. The intent is to increase the effectiveness of individual sites and to develop ways to further improve the overall program.
- 2.10. Memorandum of Agreement:** The memorandum of agreement is a document produced by the College and signed by the Primary Preceptor whereby the willingness and ability of the Site to accept students for extern rotations is documented. The memorandum acknowledges the acceptance of the responsibilities inherent in the Externship Program.
- 2.11. Preceptor Credentials:** All preceptors must provide the College with documentation indicating qualifications required to serve in the capacity of professional teacher and mentor. Examples of required credentials are curriculum vitae, professional license and proof of insurance. Other credentials may be required from time to time.
- 2.12. Preceptor Clinical Privileges:** The College does not presume to establish clinical privileges for practitioners who do not practice in a facility operated by the College, however; the College does require that preceptors refrain from interacting with externs on procedures for which they (the preceptors) do not have the privilege of providing in their own facility.

3. SITE SELECTION PROCESS

3.1. Eligibility

3.1.1. Primary Preceptor

3.1.1.1. Doctor of Optometry with legal authority to practice in the location of the Externship Site.

3.1.1.2. Minimum of five years practice experience or completion of an accredited optometric residency and three years of practice experience.

3.1.2. Associate Preceptor

3.1.2.1. Licensed Professional who serves in the preceptor role under the authority of the Primary Preceptor.

3.2. Application for Participation

3.2.1. **Notice of interest**---Doctors of optometry with the desire, ability and willingness to serve as Primary Preceptors may notify the College of their interest by contacting the Director of Externships.

3.2.2. **Application/Practice Survey Form**---Applicants will receive a form that must be completed to provide the College with detailed information about the nature of the practice and which commits the potential preceptor to the educational mission of the College.

3.2.3. Curriculum Vitae

3.2.4. **Proof of professional liability insurance.**

3.2.5. **Copy of current license to practice.**

3.3. Selection Criteria

3.3.1. **Quality** of professional staff responsible for the provision of optometric services.

3.3.2. **The types, variety and number** of patients that exist in the practice.

3.3.3. **Willingness of the Primary Preceptor** (and Associate Preceptors if applicable) to serve as Adjunct Faculty for Southern College of Optometry and willingness to conform to administrative and faculty policies relative to externships.

3.3.4. **The overall educational experience** that students would gain in the environment deemed to enrich and augment the experiences gained on campus.

3.3.5. **There must be a need** for a site in the geographic location of the practice.

3.3.6. Adjunct Faculty members are strongly encouraged to attend an Adjunct Faculty Forum prior to receiving students. All preceptors are strongly encouraged to attend an adjunct faculty forum periodically.

3.3.7. The Director or his representative will personally visit all approved sites as often as possible.

4. GENERAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

- 4.1. **Hours:** The externship program goal is for each student to average 30 hours of patient contact per 35-hour workweek. Early weeks of the session may have less patient contact as the student's abilities are assessed. As the student becomes adapted and as the preceptor becomes more comfortable with the student's competence, patient contact may increase above 30 hours per week. Students are not limited to a 35-hour workweek. In fact, they are encouraged to be present at all times the practice is open.
- 4.2. **Scope of Clinical Experiences:** Students want and need to be exposed to as many full scope, primary care clinical experiences as possible. Targets of specific percentage goals of contact lenses, pediatrics, low vision, ocular disease, geriatrics, vision therapy, etc., seem arbitrary and artificial. If specific categories of patients are not available in the host practice, the student may be detailed or assigned for limited periods of times to situations which augment the primary site. These experiences need to be documented by the extern using the form provided, but responsibility for the student remains with the Primary Preceptor.
- 4.3. **Practice Management:** Graduates tell us that as students, they needed more exposure to practice management, but as students, they often didn't realize the need for or appreciate the opportunity for such exposure. Your interest and their direct involvement will increase the students desire to experience basic practice management principles and philosophies. The student should gain exposure to all aspects of daily operations. Please include them in discussions and office meetings with your accountant, business manager, insurance specialist, procurement person, personnel manager, inventory clerk, and other individuals with knowledge and information. Many of these exposures can occur when you are out of the office. Encourage your students to take advantage of this time and these opportunities.
- 4.4. **Insurance:** The College provides professional liability insurance for our students located off campus for externships. The carrier may change from year to year, but the coverage remains stable. Certificates of insurance can be provided upon request. Our coverage does not substitute for insurance carried by practitioners. Proof of liability insurance is part of the documentation required from each externship site. The coverage for students follows them to any location to which they are assigned, so long as they are functioning within program guidelines as students of Southern College of Optometry.

5. **COLLEGE POLICIES:** For students, extern sites are considered an extension of the College campus. Therefore, policies of the College will be enforced, when applicable, at externship locations. Preceptors should be familiar with these policies and assist in their enforcement.

5.1. Attendance: The schedule of externship activities is determined and controlled by the preceptor. While daily attendance is mandatory, hours on location are dictated by the preceptor. The extern is encouraged to be present during all hours the practice is open whether or not the preceptor is present. However, if the preceptor (or similarly licensed and responsible individual) is not present, extern activities must be restricted to clerical or support functions rather than direct patient care. If the preceptor must be away from the practice for a significant amount of time, there are several options: (1) The preceptor may designate a colleague to temporarily supervise the extern for continued patient care; (2) the extern may be detailed to another practice for observation and enrichment; (3) the extern may be restricted to experiences not involving patient care; or, (4) the extern may be returned to the College until the preceptor is again present in the practice. Because of the expense to the student, Option 4 should be considered only if all other possibilities have been rejected. For options 1-3, the responsibility for the student remains with the Primary Preceptor.

5.2. Planned Absences: Planned absences must have prior approval of the preceptor. Of course, illness, trauma, and unforeseen emergencies may be excused at the discretion of the preceptor after the fact. Absences may be made up by extra assignment by remaining after the end of the session at the extern location. On rare occasions, absences may be resolved after graduation by assignment to the College's Eye Center. All absences, arrivals and departures must be verified by the student and the preceptor on the attendance form.

5.3. Excused Absences: All planned absences must be pre-approved by the preceptor. Activities for which absences may be excused include educational meetings, medical appointments, religious holidays, National Boards, and urgent personal business. Students are encouraged to use excused absences conservatively. Perception of abuse of the excused absence policy may result in an "Incomplete" grade for the session. All unplanned absences must be documented and verified by the preceptor. Unplanned absences include illness, trauma and other emergencies. Extended absences will result in an "Incomplete" grade. Generally, absences will be made up at the discretion of the preceptor. In the event that absences are not made up to the satisfaction of the preceptor and/or that an "Incomplete" grade is assigned, makeup days will be assigned in the Eye Center. In some cases makeups are required during the Summer semester following the student's scheduled graduation.

5.4. Unexcused Absences: Optometry school should prepare the student clinically and behaviorally for the realities of professional practice. Part of the transformation from student to professional includes the instillation of values necessary to be an optometrist, especially the values of sense of responsibility and obligation to commitments. For clinical duties, whether on or off campus, students make a commitment to patients and to other members of the health

care team. Failure to immediately inform responsible individuals of a pending absence or an unplanned absence, and the reason for the absence, demonstrates insensitivity to this essential professional value. Although situations may arise where timely communication is difficult, casual attitudes regarding this responsibility will not be tolerated. Any unexcused absence is justification for failure of externships. Students must notify their preceptor and the Director of Externships of their situation immediately unless unable to communicate.

5.5. **Holidays:**

5.5.1. **Fall and Spring Breaks:** The Extern Program realizes that the Fall (Thanksgiving) holiday period listed on the academic calendar may not be acceptable to all preceptors. Students are expected to be present if the office is open unless prior arrangements have been approved by the preceptor. On behalf of the students, the College requests that, if possible, adequate time be allowed off over the Fall (Thanksgiving) break. Please take into consideration travel time and expense for students leaving the externship area. The College also suspends instruction for one week during Spring Semester. Students on externships may be required to remain at the Externship site during this period at the discretion of the preceptor.

5.5.2. **Other Holidays:** The only College recognized holidays, other than Fall and Spring breaks, that affect externship periods, are Independence Day and Labor Day. Most practices will be closed for those holidays. If not, students need to be told in advance.

5.5.3. **Local Holidays and Religious Holidays** need to be agreed to and coordinated with the preceptor. Students and preceptors should work together to make appropriate arrangements and to prevent conflicts in schedules.

5.6. **National Boards:**

5.6.1. **SCO students** are required to take National Boards. Time off for National Boards is excused.

5.6.2. **Travel time** to and from National Boards also is excused, but this time must be approved by the primary preceptor (4.3).

5.7. **Reporting to/Departing from Externships:**

5.7.1. **Students are expected** to be at their externship locations on the first day of each academic session. Possible exceptions are: (1) Externs who go on Student Volunteers in Optometric Service to Humanity (SVOSH) trips in late May – Early June; and, (2) When National Boards are given the first week of a session. In both situations, it is the student's responsibility to seek prior approval of the preceptor, and to coordinate revised arrival dates.

5.7.2. **Students are expected** to remain at their externship location until the last clinic day of each academic session.

5.7.3. **The College calendar** allows a full week for travel between campus and externship locations-- or from one externship to another. At the end of the spring session, before graduation, additional travel time may be required. This early departure must be coordinated with, and approved by, the preceptor.

5.7.4. **Primary Preceptors** at each site to which students are assigned will be provided with a copy of the College Calendar and academic schedule.

5.8. Unlawful Discrimination:

5.8.1. No person shall, on the basis of race, religion, sex, age, disability or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity at Southern College of Optometry. The College is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

5.8.2. The College promotes an environment free from sexual harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal comments or physical contact of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to: sexual flirtation, advances or proposition for sexual activity, continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature such as suggestive comments or sexually explicit jokes, sexually degrading language, remarks of a sexual nature, display of sexually demeaning objects and pictures, offensive physical contact; and actions indicating that benefits will be gained or lost based on response to sexual advances or any effort to exert influence by sexual coercion.

5.8.3. The College discourages any amorous relationship between faculty members and students. As with faculty members, Adjunct Faculty members are in a position to exercise power over a student, and an amorous relationship could have unintended adverse effects upon the educational atmosphere.

6. ASSIGNMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 6.1. **Site Categories:** for externship assignment purposes, sites are deemed to be Private Practice or Institutional.
- 6.2. **Assignment Policy:** Each student at Southern College of Optometry must complete one rotation at a Private Practice Site and one rotation at an Institutional Site.
- 6.3. **Timing for Making Assignments:**
 - 6.3.1. Externship Assignments are made during the third-year Summer (a full year before students leave campus for the first assignments).
 - 6.3.2. Student input is solicited, beginning during the Spring Semester of the second year. This input includes making the Director aware of each student's preferences for location and sessions of assignment. This timing is required to allow the Director time to resolve conflicts and to allow preceptors adequate time to anticipate and prepare for the arrival of students. The College cannot assure any student that his or her preferred locations or sessions can be achieved.
 - 6.3.3. Preceptor notification (request for approval and confirmation) takes place early in the Fall Semester of the third year. Preceptors are asked to confirm the assignments promptly so that the assignments can be finalized. Only when confirmed by preceptors are assignments considered to be final.

6.4. Priorities for Making Assignments

6.4.1. Local Sites

- 6.4.1.1. **Definition**--Local Sites are approved externship sites within a 40 mile radius of Southern College of Optometry. Sites designated as Local Sites are not considered to be among the sites located in a given state for assignment purposes. Example: a student from Mississippi would have no priority for selection of a site in Coldwater, MS (considered "Local:") over a student who has been approved for a "Local Site" based on need. Nor would a student from Tennessee who also has been approved for a "Local Site" have priority for a "Local Site" in Memphis over any other student who also is approved for a "Local Site."
- 6.4.1.2. **Priority**---Local Sites are reserved for students who have "legitimate need" to remain in the Memphis area during externship assignments relative to other students.
- 6.4.1.3. **Determination of "Legitimate Need"** ---Each class collectively determines how "Legitimate Needs" shall be prioritized. Valid needs include having children in school, home ownership, spouse employment, pre-school children. Being a native of Memphis is not considered to be a valid reason for occupying one of the Local Sites. Should there be more Local Sites available than the number of students with "Legitimate Needs," those remaining sites will be made available based on GPA, but those receiving Local assignments based on need will be assigned first, and remaining students will be assigned to any remaining available sites.

6.4.1.4. **Affect of Grades on Local Assignments**—Students eligible for Local Sites based on need usually will be assigned to the specific sites that they express a preference for based on grade point average (at the time of assignment), however the Director retains the option of balancing other variables in order to maximize the number of students assigned to Local Sites.

6.4.1.5. **Finality of assignments**---because Local Site assignments are based on need and because there are limited numbers of local sites available, each student who applies for and is approved for a local site assignment must honor that assignment once made. Any changes have the effect of depriving another student of the opportunity to “stay local.”

6.4.2. Non-local Sites

6.4.2.1. **Definition**—Non-local sites are all approved externship sites located greater than 40 miles from the SCO campus. The expectation is that students with assignments to non-local sites will find it necessary to move from their Memphis homes or apartments to locations nearer their assigned site.

6.4.2.2. Priorities

6.4.2.2.1. **Based on Session**---Students who express preference for completing their fourth-year on-campus semester (in The Eye Center) during Fall Semester will receive assignments ahead of other students. The result of this policy is that even though an individual who does not volunteer to complete his or her on-campus rotation during Fall Semester may outrank (based on grade point average) an individual in the “Fall volunteer” group, the person in the “Fall volunteer” group may receive an assignment that the “higher-ranked person otherwise may have received. In the event that an excessive number of students express a desire to remain on-campus for Fall Semester, those with higher grade point averages will be assigned on-campus during the Fall and the remainder will be distributed in a manner that results in balancing the numbers of students on-campus during each semester.

6.4.2.2.2. **Based on Home State**---Students whose home of record, as determined by the Vice President of Student Services, is located in a given state shall have priority for assignments within that state over any student whose home of record is in another state. Within each state, student preferences are prioritized by grade point average at the time assignments are made. Should two or more students express preference for any site outside their state home of record---and if no student from that particular state prefers that site---the student with the highest grade point average (at the time of assignment) shall have priority.

6.4.2.3. **College commitment to assigning students within their home state of record**---**Although the College makes an effort to place students in their home state, there is no assurance that such an assignment will**

be available for every student. The College cannot recruit or approve sites for the sole purpose of providing a home state assignment to every student.

6.4.3. Director's Responsibility

6.4.3.1.Balance numbers of students assigned each session---the Director must assign approximately 80 students per session for externship assignments. This requirement impacts student preferences and may result in apparent exceptions in the application of other priorities.

6.4.3.2.Assign students to sites that commit "slots" to SCO, excluding students from other schools from those committed slots---The Director has an obligation to fill committed slots at certain sites in order to maintain relationships with sites that are critical for continuity of the program from year to year. This requirement impacts student preferences and may result in apparent exceptions in the application of other priorities.

7. HOUSING

- 7.1. **College Role:** The College has no direct role in the students' process of obtaining housing during externships. The College maintains summaries that other students have submitted of previous externship experiences. These summaries usually include advice or information regarding housing. This information often is useful to other students who are assigned to the same sites. The summaries are available in the College Library. The Director's office also makes an effort to provide information regarding housing when we are aware of special assistance that may be provided by the site or preceptor.
- 7.2. **Student Role:** Obtaining housing is the sole responsibility of students. Although preceptors may be of assistance, the responsibility to obtain housing remains solely with each student.
- 7.3. **Preceptor Role:** Preceptors are under no obligation to provide housing for students, although many sites opt to do so. Preceptors who are in a position to assist students with housing arrangements should make certain that the Director's office is aware of that assistance so students may be properly informed.

8. PRECEPTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1. As an optometrist (paraphrased from the Optometric Oath):

- 8.1.1. Practice the art and science of optometry faithfully, conscientiously, and to the fullest scope of competence.
- 8.1.2. Uphold and promote by example and action the highest standards, ethics and ideals of optometry.
- 8.1.3. Provide professional care with concern, with compassion, and with due regard for human rights and dignity.
- 8.1.4. Place the treatment of those who seek care above personal gain and strive to see that none shall lack for proper care.
- 8.1.5. Hold as privileged and inviolable all information entrusted to you in confidence by patients.
- 8.1.6. Advise patients, fully and honestly, of all which may serve to restore, maintain or enhance vision and general health.
- 8.1.7. Strive continuously to broaden knowledge and skills so that patients may benefit from all new and efficacious means to enhance the care of human vision.
- 8.1.8. Share information cordially and unselfishly with fellow optometrists and other professionals for the benefit of patients and the advancement of human knowledge and welfare.
- 8.1.9. Strive to serve community, country and mankind as a citizen as well as an optometrist.

8.2. As SCO Adjunct Faculty:

- 8.2.1. Strive to establish and maintain a personal and professional teacher-student relationship. **(ALL PRECEPTORS)**
- 8.2.2. Know the importance of excellence and efficiency in instruction.
- 8.2.3. Make a continual study of professional and technical publications to keep abreast of the changing patterns of knowledge. **(ALL PRECEPTORS)**
- 8.2.4. Assign grades to students on the basis of their achievements in a manner that is equitable and discriminative, distinguishing superior from average or mediocre performance. **(PRIMARY PRECEPTORS)**
- 8.2.5. Insure sufficient and equal learning opportunities for all students. Take prompt and adequate disciplinary action when circumstances require. **(ALL PRECEPTORS)**
- 8.2.6. Assign readings, when appropriate, to insure student contact with a wide range of subject matter and to provide students with the recognition that continuing study following graduation is essential. **(ALL PRECEPTORS)**
- 8.2.7. Contribute to the advancement and dissemination of knowledge held by optometry. **(ALL PRECEPTORS)**
- 8.2.8. Give attention to and thoughtful consideration of the needs of students of optometry and the functions of the College in seeking to achieve its objectives. Submit to the Director of Externships an evaluation for each student assigned. **(PRIMARY PRECEPTORS)**
- 8.2.9. Submit and keep current your curriculum vitae and a copy of your state license. **(ALL PRECEPTORS)**

8.2.10. Attend the Adjunct Faculty Forum when possible. On campus attendance is preferable. **(ALL PRECEPTORS)**

8.3. As a Clinical Preceptor:

- 8.3.1. Provide educational and clinical opportunities to students which allow them to improve their clinical and patient management skills.
- 8.3.2. Provide clinical opportunities to students for adequate numbers of patients which allow further development of the student's diagnostic and therapeutic management skills.
- 8.3.3. Provide clinical opportunities which allow the student to observe or participate in the development of ongoing long term professional relationships between doctors and patients.
- 8.3.4. Provide opportunities which expose the student to practice management issues particularly reimbursement, quality assessment and improvement, office management, and practice development.
- 8.3.5. Maintain a professional environment which fosters values and attitudes of providing quality services that are of maximum value and benefit to patients.
- 8.3.6. Maintain an environment which fosters the values and attitudes of making positive contributions to the community through activities not necessarily related to optometry.

8.4. Administrative Requirements: Primary Preceptor

- 8.4.1. Letters from the Director requesting assignments for specific students for specific sessions are sent during Summer Semester for the next academic year. Your signature of approval accepting the student(s) is required.
- 8.4.2. Memorandums of Agreement are sent to non-government practices. These agreements are for periods of three years. They are included where needed with the assignment request letters sent each Summer. Your signature agreeing to the Memorandum is required. Affiliation Agreements or Training Affiliation Agreements with government locations are renewed as directed in the agreement.
- 8.4.3. Approximately one month prior to a student's arrival, a reminder letter will be sent. This reminder confirms that the student you agreed to accept (in the request letter sent during the Summer of the previous year) will actually arrive as scheduled. No action is required unless your situation has changed and you can't accept the student. In that instance, you must inform the Director as soon as possible so that alternate plans might be made.
- 8.4.4. Approximately halfway into each session, a mid-term evaluation form will be sent.
- 8.4.5. Approximately three weeks before the end of the session, a final evaluation form will be sent. This form should be completed and returned before the last day of the session.
- 8.4.6. Your signature is required on the following student assignments:
 - 8.4.6.1. Patient log sheets--- Both preceptors and students will be given information regarding deadlines for all documentation and assignments given to students by the Director. You or a designated staff member must sign verifying that the logs are accurate. Check to see that patients are not omitted and that they are not fabricated. The goal is an

accurate representation of the student's experiences. The students continue to keep these logs throughout the session and, although you need not verify them throughout the entire rotation, you may ask to see them at any time.

8.4.6.2. Director's Assignments--- Students are responsible for completing a variety of assignments given to them by the Director. Preceptors and students will be provided details prior to the beginning of each session. The preceptor's signature is required on all assignments indicating that you have discussed the work with the student and agree with the presentation. However, unless you have discussed the assignments with the student, inadequate education and slowed professional growth may be the result. These assignments are the only opportunity for educational experiences in your practice to be formally documented and evaluated by the College. Give the students, and the assignments, appropriate time and the benefit of your expertise. Students want and need your feedback whether it be praise or constructive criticism. This is a great teaching opportunity.

8.4.6.3. Absences-- The student is responsible for documenting arrival and departure dates and all absences. Your signature is required to verify this information. Please read Sections 4.1 through 4.4 regarding absences.

8.4.7. Optional Experiences

8.4.7.1. The Externship Program encourages students to participate in practice building opportunities. These activities may include speaking at a civic group luncheon or participating in a high school or college career day or health fair.

8.4.7.2. Attendance with the preceptor at civic meetings, professional Societies, and local or regional continuing education is desired and encouraged.

8.4.7.3. Papers written, articles read, training given or received, and other preceptor assigned responsibilities should be documented and reported.

8.4.7.4. Suggested preceptor assignments:

8.4.7.4.1. Read or write an article or paper.

8.4.7.4.2. Present or attend lecture or presentation

8.4.7.4.3. Give or attend training or continuing education.

8.4.7.4.4. Personal improvement projects.

9. PRECEPTOR PRIVILEGES

- 9.1. **Adjunct Faculty Status**--On-campus faculty members are College employees holding faculty rank, Adjunct Faculty members are independent doctors, unsalaried and unsupervised by Southern College of Optometry, but coordinated by the Director of Externship Programs. Appointments to **Adjunct Faculty** status are made by the Vice President of Academic Affairs after recommendation by the Director of Externship Programs through the Vice President of Clinical Programs. Appointments are made for specified time periods which are renewable.
- 9.1.1. Eligibility—**Primary Preceptors** will be afforded status as adjunct faculty member for all years in which a valid memorandum of agreement has been executed. They shall be designated as “Adjunct Clinical Faculty” of Southern College of Optometry. **Associate Preceptors** also may be afforded this status if they are recommended and endorsed by the Primary Preceptor at their externship site. In all cases credentials must be tendered to the College for analysis and review before adjunct faculty status is granted. These credentials include, at a minimum, a current curriculum vitae and a copy of a valid license to practice their profession.
- 9.1.2. Upon appointment, Adjunct Faculty members are eligible for a certificate certifying that the doctor has been selected and approved by Southern College of Optometry.
- 9.2. **Free Continuing Education**-- Certified Adjunct Faculty members who serve as **Primary Preceptors** at approved Externship sites are offered free registration at regularly scheduled continuing education courses offered by the College. In the event that the Primary Preceptor at a site is unable to attend, the College is pleased to offer the free registration to another professional at the site (designated by the Primary Preceptor). The effect of the policy is that each site is accorded one free Registration at continuing education courses offered by the College. *Eligible preceptors will be accorded the privilege of registering at regular faculty rates for transcript courses or special workshops offered at the College.*
- 9.3. **Library**--Adjunct Faculty members will be accorded privileges in the use of the campus Library commensurate with full time faculty.
- 9.4. **Commencement**--Adjunct Faculty members are invited to attend and participate in Commencement exercises of the senior class. Advance notice is required to order your cap and gown. Adjunct Faculty members will be maintained on the College mailing list and are invited to College social events.
- 9.5. **Recognition**--At the annual Spring Awards Banquet and/or during Fall Homecoming, an Adjunct Faculty member may be recognized as “Adjunct Faculty of the Year.” Nominations and selection criteria will be established by student committee and the Director of Externs.

10. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1. Course Requirements

10.1.1. Assigned by Director---as instructor of record for the externship assignments the Director of Externships requires that students submit records of activities that indicate the quality of the learning experience and the performance of the student. These assignments may include any or all of the following:

10.1.1.1. Patient Logs

10.1.1.2. Case Reports in various formats

10.1.1.3. Attendance Records

10.1.1.4. Summary of Experience

10.1.1.5. Emergency Contact Information

10.1.1.6. Consistent communications with Director's office.

10.1.2. Assigned by Preceptor---Preceptors are encouraged to assign students any activities that are designed to advance the students' professional development and growth. Students are required to complete these assignments just as they are required to complete assignments made by the Director.

10.2. **Dress and Hygiene**--Students are expected to maintain professional standards of cleanliness and appearance. The College strives to promote the highest professional values in all areas of optometric practice. In this regard, personal attire and grooming represent an outward representation of such values to our patients. However, we recognize local and/or cultural differences exist. Therefore, students are expected to maintain the standards set and exemplified by the preceptor. At a minimum, hair should be neat, clean and trimmed or styled. It should not present a safety hazard nor come into contact with patients. Apparel should be neat, clean and appropriate for professional practice. The preceptor is the controlling authority for what is appropriate at the extern location. The wearing of clinic coats and name tags are at the option of the preceptor. Externs must be identified as students, i.e., "Student Doctor ___", "Extern ___", "Student Extern ___", etc.

10.3. **Equipment**--- Students will supply their personal equipment to the extent such equipment was required at the College's Eye Center. Additional equipment may be provided by or required by the preceptor.

10.4. Professional Conduct---

10.4.1. Southern College of Optometry endeavors to instill the highest professional attitudes and values in students. However, on rare occasions an individual may deviate from what is considered professional conduct.

Unprofessional and/or illegal acts will not be tolerated and are grounds for expulsion. Examples of highly unprofessional conduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

10.4.1.1. Practicing without a license. A preceptor may not require or allow his student to practice optometry without a license. thus endangering both his license and the student's ability to get a license. Students may not examine or treat patients independent of direction and oversight of

appropriately licensed professionals. Nor should they sign patient prescriptions.

10.4.1.2. Falsification of documents. Examples of falsification include inflating patient count and practice experiences, plagiarism of case reports, forging preceptor signatures, and misreporting attendance records.. To guard against falsification, SCO asks its preceptors to know what the student requirements are and give them appropriate oversight.

10.4.1.3. Inappropriate joking with the staff. Externs must understand and appreciate the professional distance between doctors and staff. Congeniality is not an excuse for inappropriate language and comments.

10.4.1.4. Financial irresponsibility and illegalities such as writing bad checks, non-payment of obligations, destruction of property, etc.

10.4.1.5. Using drugs, including alcohol, in a way that compromises professional behavior and reputation. This example is not limited to “on duty” time, but also includes behavior during “free” time. This is consistent with the SCO student Handbook and Student Government Association guidelines.

10.4.1.6. Improper use of facilities including the telephone, office equipment, vehicles or other property of the practice.

10.4.1.7. Attempting personal relationships with patients or staff. Dating patients or staff is prohibited.

10.4.2. Southern College of Optometry students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible health care professionals on and off campus. Any allegation of misbehavior on the part of a student is subject to investigation by the Vice President of Student Services. Disciplinary action will be administered in accordance with the Student Handbook.

10.4.3. In addition to SCO Policies and Procedures regarding student activities, students are also governed by guidelines adopted by the Student Government Association.

10.5. Privacy

10.5.1. Patients---SCO students are required to comply strictly with College and externship site policies regarding the protection and appropriate use of private patient health information. In no case shall a student participate in activities that violate the laws of the United States as they relate to the protection of private health information.

10.5.2. Externship Site---SCO students are prohibited from revealing any proprietary information regarding any practice or institution.

10.6. **Student/Patient Interaction**---Students will abide by all internship site policies regarding interactions with patients. Students will complete procedures as directed by the attending preceptors, documenting all findings as directed. Clinical assessment and implementation of treatment plans are the responsibility of the attending preceptor. All student assessments and recommendations for treatment plans are done for educational purposes. All

student/patient interaction must be under the direction of an appropriately credentialed individual.

11. PRECEPTOR EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

- 11.1. **Office Policies:** Students will abide by all office policies and procedure guidelines.
- 11.2. **Punctuality:** Students will be punctual and faithful in attendance.
- 11.3. **Responsibility for Learning:** Students will demonstrate understanding of their personal responsibility for learning, taking initiative to improve upon weaker areas or performance.
- 11.4. **Patient Privacy:** Students will respect patient privacy.
- 11.5. **Interaction with patients---**
 - 11.5.1. Students will properly identify themselves and their role in patient care.
 - 11.5.2. Students will interact with patients with courtesy, respect and compassion.
- 11.6. **Expected Competence:** Students will demonstrate the appropriate level of clinical competence for their level of training and experience.
- 11.7. **Interaction with preceptor(s).**
 - 11.7.1. Students will respond to preceptors with courtesy and respect.
 - 11.7.2. Students will be attentive and responsive to direction or to recommendations for improvement.
 - 11.7.3. Students will function with absolute honesty.
 - 11.7.4. Students will demonstrate willingness to accept all assignments that are relevant to their optometric development.
 - 11.7.5. Students will maintain an appropriate level with all office personnel.

12. STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF PRECEPTORS

- 12.1. **Orientation:** Preceptors will provide appropriate orientation to students regarding policies and expectations.
- 12.2. **Feedback:** Preceptors will provide students with timely feedback regarding performance.
- 12.3. **Teaching:** Preceptors will provide appropriate guidance to assist the student in making improvements in performance.
- 12.4. **Level of Participation:** Preceptors will ensure that students participate in the provision of optometric services in an appropriate manner that leads to maximum professional development.
- 12.5. **Adequate Encounter Numbers:** Preceptors take responsibility for providing adequate numbers of clinical encounters for the students.
- 12.6. **Continuity of Care:** Preceptors will endeavor to include the student in a manner that demonstrates the importance and value of continuity of care.
- 12.7. **Business and Practice Management:** Preceptors will assist students in learning business or management principles and methods that are necessary for success as an optometrist.
- 12.8. **Attitudes and Values:** Preceptors will demonstrate appropriate attitudes and values that are necessary for success as an optometrist.
- 12.9. **Citizenship:** Preceptors will endeavor to demonstrate the value of community involvement, setting the example of citizenship expected of a doctor of optometry.
- 12.10. **Patient Management and Communications:** Preceptors will demonstrate effective patient communications and leads to patient compliance and the most beneficial outcomes.

13. SITE MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 13.1. Log Sheets**—Students are required to keep real-time logs of all patient encounters, documenting clinical categories patient demographics and activities related to their clinical activities. The log sheets are verified by preceptors and submitted to the Director for monitoring, assessment, historical analysis and documentation purposes.
- 13.2. Practice Surveys**-- Each externship site submits to the Director a detailed survey describing the facilities, patient base, clinical scope of practice, available equipment, physical setting, level of clinical activity and other attributes to assist in evaluating the sites' suitability to support the Mission and Goals of the Externship Program. These surveys are updated periodically to reflect substantive changes that may have occurred since the previous survey.
- 13.3. Preceptor Credentials**—Eligibility for preceptors include education, experience, demonstrated performance and licensure . Documentation is maintained to assure that all credentials are appropriate and current.
- 13.4. Director's Assignments**-- The Director assigns students various academic tasks that must be submitted for grading, evaluation and feedback. These assignments enable the Director to assess the level of learning that is occurring and the relevance of the learning activities that are undertaken.
- 13.5. Preceptors' Assignments**-- Preceptors are encouraged to assign written tasks to students that also are submitted to the Director for evaluation and for purposes of monitoring learning activities.
- 13.6. Site Evaluation Visits**-- The Director or a representative of the Director visits each site periodically to directly observe the environment, to solicit individual preceptors concerns, to provide guidance from the College to the preceptors and to learn more about the attributes of the site for communications to potentially assigned students.
- 13.7. Database Management**—The Office of the Director of Externships maintains a database that allows tracking of all assignments, student performance, preceptor credentials and student clinical activities. This system is maintained and monitored daily to assure that all site credentials are properly documented. This system also enables the Director to consistently assess the site activities to determine that clinical activity and learning activities are appropriate in meeting the goals of the program.
- 13.8. Student Feedback**-- One instrument of student feedback is a freeform summary of the externship experience that students are required to submit to the Director at the end of each rotation. This summary may be anonymous and private at the option of the student. This instrument provides a non-threatening way for students to inform the Director of any concerns about the sites or preceptors. Most often this instrument also provides valuable

information to the Director and other students that is of value in making decisions about future assignments.

- 13.9. Grades--** Preceptors are required to provide the Director with a mid-term assessment of student performance that serves to alert the Director of any impending student performance issues. This mid-term assessment also enforces the requirement that students be given performance feedback by preceptors. Preceptors are required to submit graded evaluations of student performance at the end of each rotation. The final grade given each student is determined by the Director. Weighting of the preceptor grade and the Director grade is determined by the Director and communicated to students prior to each academic period.
- 13.10. Attendance--** Preceptors are required to submit a record of attendance for each student at the end of each rotation. This report also includes documentation of any clinical assignments made by the preceptor outside the assigned site, such as surgical observation under another professional's supervision or participation in Low Vision evaluations that occurred at an outside facility under the supervision of another doctor.

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