

Institutional Responsibility/Registrar's Office

The primary role of the school of medicine (SOM) registrar is to maintain the permanent records and documents that pertain to each matriculated student's progress through medical school. While each medical school's administrative organization is unique, the key functions of the SOM registrar remain the same. While this document assumes that the SOM registrar is based at a medical school, some institutions have other administrative structures.

Examples of the roles and duties of the SOM registrar are enumerated below. This list is neither exhaustive nor intended as a minimum standard. Variations will occur among schools, based on institutional needs and history. In the final analysis, it is the registrar's job description at each school that delineates the registrar's particular list of responsibilities.

1. Documents and Records:

The SOM registrar is responsible for maintaining documents that preserve the institutional memory of a school.

Examples:

- Maintain, interpret, and implement university, state, and federal guidelines and policies regarding student records.
- Coordinate and maintain permanent records for historical degree requirements, assuring that institutional criteria for graduation are met and that established institutional policies for each graduating class are in compliance.
- Prepare and maintain permanent records for course and elective catalogs and student policies.
- Develop procedures for publications, including school bulletins, student handbooks, Web site pages, and the student directory.
- Maintain school archives for USMLE scores.

The SOM registrar is responsible for maintaining the permanent student records.

Examples:

- Maintain and permanently secure each matriculated student's official academic record.
- Coordinate diplomas for graduation and certify that all students have met institutional graduation requirements.
- Receive, record, and secure documentation for final course grades and student performance evaluations.
- Maintain and distribute the official transcript. (Note: At some schools, the university registrar is responsible for distributing the official transcript.)
- Coordinate, with other departments, the withholding of diplomas and transcripts from individuals with outstanding obligations to the institution. (Note: Only the document (diploma or transcript) can be held; conferring of the degree cannot be withheld.)

- Establish policies for access to student academic records in accordance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Maintain official documents pertaining to student promotion, disciplinary actions, leave of absence, extended academic programs, withdrawals, and other changes in student status.
- Submit annual AAMC SRS and/or NBME reports.

2. Enrollment:

The SOM registrar is responsible for coordinating registration and enrollment.

Examples:

- Coordinate course registration and distribute grade rosters.
- Coordinate enrollment status of combined (dual)-degree students.
- Post individual tuition and fee assessments (often performed by university bursar or cashier).
- Collect and process required health and other insurance fees.
- Maintain and prepare student directory information.
- Coordinate add/drop registration policies and procedures.
- Report and update AAMC enrollment records in the SRS.
- Manage leaves of absence and withdrawals.

3. Clinical Scheduling:

The SOM registrar is responsible for coordinating, with students and departments, all clinical clerkship experiences.

Examples:

- Prepare schedules and site assignments for third- and fourth-year students.
- Provide scheduling advice to students regarding requirements for, and planning of, third- and fourth-year clinical assignments.
- Coordinate, with the appropriate departments, student clinical assignments, site assignments, and course changes.
- Coordinate scheduling for visiting students, including verifying academic standing at home school, acquiring appropriate documentation of medical and malpractice insurance coverage, coordinating schedules with departments, collecting fees, and, in some cases, identifying housing options.

(Note: At some schools, this function is handled by the student affairs office.)

4. Data Reporting: The SOM registrar is responsible for ensuring an appropriate database system for student records.

Examples:

- Participate in developing an appropriate database system for the school.

- Maintain statistical data on student demographics.
- Prepare enrollment status reports (Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), AAMC, federal, state, university, etc).
- Prepare grade reports and class rankings.
- Prepare statistical reports on enrollment. (These functions may be performed by an institutional research department.)

5. Interaction with Other Offices: Depending on the individual school, the SOM registrar may be involved in various activities and programs with other offices in the medical school.

a. *Student Affairs Office*

- Implement and/or participate in determining disciplinary and promotion actions from faculty committees (e.g., leave of absence, dismissal, remediation, extension, withdrawal). (Note: At some schools, the SOM registrar may coordinate the work of these committees.)
- Assist with preparation of the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE), Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) documents, and National Residency Match Program (NRMP).
- Participate in preparations for hooding and graduation ceremonies.
- Participate in planning the White Coat Ceremony, Honors and Awards Day, Orientation, Student Clinician Ceremony, and Match Day functions.

b. *Financial Aid Office (FAO)*

Depending on the level of student information system integration:

- Notify the FAO if a student drops below half-time student status.
- Notify the FAO of enrollment status changes, including, but not limited to, probation, leave of absence, withdrawal, and extended academic program, which then verifies satisfactory academic progress (SAP) and continued eligibility for financial aid.
- Provide FAO with necessary statistical data about students.
- Coordinate extended academic programs and student leaves of absence with the FAO, to ensure that appropriate financial assistance to the students can be maintained or restored upon return from the leave of absence
- Develop templates with FAO regarding sharing of student data as required for compliance with federal regulations.
- Coordinate student tracking systems.

c. Admissions Office

- Receive names and pertinent demographic information about entering students.
- Determine which documents should be included in the official student record when materials are transferred from the admissions office. (See Academic Records Retention Policy. It is assumed that the admissions office is responsible for verifying that the coursework needed for matriculation has been completed and final transcripts have been obtained.)

d. Curriculum Office

- Assist in developing academic year schedules, calendars, and examination schedules.
- Coordinate class, small-group, and conference room scheduling.
- Coordinate distribution and receipt of student course evaluations.
- Participate in the work of the Curriculum Committee.
- Be a resource in curriculum development, to include creation of new courses and new academic programs.

e. Cashier/Business/Bursar/Student Accounts Office

- Serve as contact for student delinquency on tuition and fee payments.
- Serve as contact for information on student loan defaults.
- Provide enrollment status information as a basis for establishing appropriate tuition and fee assessments for each student.
- Honor holds on release of student records, i.e., transcripts, licensure paperwork, etc.

f. National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME)

- Coordinate registration procedures for United States Medical Licensure Examination (USMLE, Step 1 and Step 2).
- Verify accuracy of enrollment rosters and medical school graduate reports.
- Access and download examination scores.

g. Student Health Services/Insurance

- Serve as a communication liaison to the student.
- Verify immunization compliance for clinical rotations.
- At some schools, the registrar's office is also involved with the bidding or selection process for the student health insurance program, including student enrollment and managing the administrative part of the student

health plan.

B. RECORDS

Records and FERPA

Responsibility for educational records is a primary responsibility of the registrar/records officer. The Buckley Amendment, otherwise known as The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) (www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html), defines educational records and governs students' rights of privacy and access to their educational records. The act applies to all institutions that receive federal funding; noncompliance can result in withdrawal of federal funds.

Definition of Educational Records

Educational records directly related to the student are either maintained by the school or by a party or organization acting on behalf of the school. Such records may include:

- Written documents;
- Computer media;
- Microfilm and microfiche;
- Video or audio tapes or CDs;
- Film;
- Photographs.

Any record that contains personally identifiable information directly related to the student is an educational record under FERPA. This information can also include records kept by the school in the form of student files, student system databases kept in storage devices such as servers, or recordings or broadcasts that may include student projects.

The following items are not considered educational records under FERPA:

- Private notes of individual staff or faculty that are in their sole possession;
- Campus police records;
- Medical records;
- Statistical data compilations that contain no mention of personally identifiable information about any specific student.

Faculty notes, data compilation, and administrative records kept **exclusively** by the maker of the records **not accessible or revealed to anyone else** are not considered educational records and, therefore, fall outside of the FERPA disclosure guidelines. However, these records may be protected under other state or federal laws such as the doctor/patient privilege.