



TRANSLATING OSTEOPATHIC UNDERSTANDING  
INTO COMMUNITY HEALTH

## The Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents TOUCH Program Rules & Regulations

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### I. TOUCH HOURS

- A. TOUCH Hours are any activity that works to improve the health and wellness of a community which incorporates osteopathic tenets, awareness, principles, and practice. (*See Section VII, TOUCH Hours Standards*)
  - 1. A "community" includes working to improve the overall health of humans, animals, and the environment.
- B. Volunteer Hours are any activity that provides service to a community but does not meet TOUCH Hours standards. (*See Section VII, TOUCH Hours Standards*)
- C. Service Hours are defined as any event that involves *active* participation or directly benefits the betterment of the community either local or global.
  - 1. TOUCH Hours and Volunteer Hours are both designated as Service Hours.
  - 2. Activities can be associated with either COM student organizations or external organizations.
- D. The "community" shall be designated as those outside of each institution. Community includes local, state, national, and international activities.
- E. COSGP Student Services Committee will have the discretion to grant or deny records towards TOUCH Hours based on the parameter set forth within this document.

### II. ROLES

- A. AACOM will maintain and coordinate administration of the TOUCH program, as well as maintaining and supporting an online database
- B. COSGP will maintain ownership and administration of the TOUCH program.
  - 1. A National Coordinator appointed by the COSGP executive board for a term of one (1) year will:
    - i. Oversee the national program
    - ii. Delineate policy and protocol
    - iii. Resolve disputes (see Section III)
    - iv. Serve as Chairperson of COSGP Student Services Committee
  - 2. A COSGP Student Services Committee appointed by the National Coordinator and comprised of general COSGP council members for a term of one (1) year, will:
    - i. Review and clarify policy and protocol
    - ii. Have the discretion to grant or deny records based on the parameter set forth within this document

- C. Each College Student Government Association (SGA) will appoint:
  - 1. A student COM Coordinator to serve as primary TOUCH program contact at each college for a term of one (1) year. The Coordinator will verify and approve completed hours, and certify each student's completion of the program
  - 2. A staff or faculty Student Service Coordinator to act as the secondary TOUCH program contact at each college for a term to be decided by the college. The Student Services Coordinator will confirm the work of the Coordinator and delineate each award:

### III.RECORDS

- A. Records will be maintained by a system chosen and maintained by AACOM.
- B. Student records consist of:
  - 1. Student name
  - 2. Student college
  - 3. Event name
  - 4. Event date
  - 5. Event city and state
  - 6. Event coordinator, including contact information (email address or phone number)
  - 7. Hours
    - i. TOUCH Hours include 100% of qualified (see TOUCH Hours I.A.) event hours plus 50% of planning hours for a qualified event
      - a. Event hours
        - i. Hours spent participating at actual event
      - b. Planning hours
        - i. Hours spent in administrative tasks related to planning the event for which hours are claimed in (III, B, 7, a).
        - ii. 50% counted towards TOUCH Hours
    - ii. Volunteer Hours
      - i. Hours not eligible for TOUCH Hours as defined in TOUCH Hours Standards, A.
      - ii. Planning time for non-TOUCH events is counted as 50% of actual hours spent planning the volunteer event for which hours are claimed in 1.
    - iii. Service Hours
      - a. Total of all event hours, (TOUCH and Volunteer Hours) and
      - b. Total of all planning hours (50%)
      - c. Denied TOUCH Hours are included in Volunteer Hours.
  - 8. Event Description
    - i. Description should demonstrate how service meets TOUCH Protocols.
    - ii. Descriptions should include student's role in event.
    - iii. Description should serve as a reflection component of the event for the student
- C. Student TOUCH Hours should be submitted to the online database within one (1) month of the activity or date of service.
- D. Student TOUCH Hours record will be approved as follows:
  - 1. Any record, event, or day with greater than 10 TOUCH Hours in one day must include the supervisor's name and contact information on the submitted entry.
  - 2. Any record or event greater than 50 TOUCH Hours requires additional verification by TOUCH National Coordinator

- E. Each college's Student Government Association (SGA) is required to maintain records of all matters involving the TOUCH program:
  - 1. Including meeting minutes, photocopies of both complete and incomplete submitted forms, and records of students who have completed the program.
- F. College student organizations that sponsor and organize community service activities will be encouraged to submit the necessary forms acknowledging the students' involvement.
- G. Any participant, faculty member, or program administrator will be entitled to review all records pertaining to the TOUCH program.
- H. TOUCH records and TOUCH database may be used for research with appropriate request, supporting documentation, and institutional review board approval.

#### **IV. CYCLE**

- A. The TOUCH year will extend from May 1 to April 30 of the next year.
  - 1. This cycle may be adjusted as needed by National Program Coordinator and AACOM staff with advance notice.
- B. The required hours must be completed within the TOUCH year.
- C. Hours completed must be completed following matriculation into medical school.
  - 1. Hours completed by first year medical students during the summer before matriculation are not eligible.
- D. Completed hours may not be carried over from one academic year to the next.

#### **V. DISPUTE**

- A. Students may dispute whether or not their activities should be counted as TOUCH hours. The contesting student has the right to dispute approved or denied hours.
  - 1. The first level of dispute resolution is with the COM Coordinator and the Student Service Coordinator, who will serve as impartial decision-makers as needed.
  - 2. Final decision will be made by the National TOUCH Coordinator.
- B. All records submitted are subject to formal review by COSGP Student Services Committee.
- C. Failure to supply record will result in zero credit for the TOUCH Hours gained in dispute.

#### **VI. FALSIFYING RECORDS**

- A. Students who are found to have falsified a TOUCH record, in a first offense will receive a warning from the national TOUCH coordinator. Students who are found to have falsified a TOUCH record, in a second or subsequent offense, will receive no credit for previous hours; be deemed ineligible for TOUCH recognition the remainder of the TOUCH year; and the student's falsification will be reported to the Student's college by the national TOUCH coordinator

#### **VII. TOUCH HOURS STANDARDS**

- A. TOUCH Hours are awarded for any activity that works to improve the health and wellness of a community.
  - 1. The event must provide a service to the community in order to be TOUCH eligible.
- B. Denied TOUCH Hours count toward Service Hours.
- C. The following events do not count as TOUCH hours, but do count as Volunteer hours if the student was not otherwise compensated for the activity (note: Service activities performed in conjunction with conference are TOUCH eligible):

1. Tutoring of classmates/peers
    - i. Example: mock practical/tutoring sessions for students in lower classes
  2. Staying after shift to continue care outside of academic requirements
  3. Time spent on call where no service was provided outside of academic requirements
  4. SIM labs, small group leadership
- D. Ineligible activities:** The following activities are not eligible for TOUCH hours or for Volunteer hours:
1. Physician shadowing or clinical rotations
  2. Conference attendance
  3. Administrative tasks that do not involve planning hours and that do not take place at the event.
  4. Travel time, sleep or other time spent not in service for overnight service events
  5. Funds raised for philanthropic causes including:
    - i. Pledging or collecting pledges (eg Charity Miles)
    - ii. Participation in athletic events (eg Fun Runs)
  6. COSGP Silent Auction activities, including acquiring auction items or staffing the auction.
  7. Funds raised directly to benefit school associated clubs or organizations
  8. Leadership responsibilities in a College Student Organization
  9. SIM labs, staying after rotation/clerkships, small group leadership, normal student organization activities (e.g. meetings, bringing in speakers, etc.)
  10. Research activities
- E. Awards**
1. Final hours are tallied by AACOM staff and National TOUCH Coordinator.
  2. Electronic certificates will be presented by AACOM Staff and National TOUCH Coordinator to COM Coordinator and Student Services Coordinator for distribution.
  3. Awards:
    - i. Participation recognition
      - a. Students who complete less than 50 approved TOUCH Hours
    - ii. Silver-level recognition
      - a. Students who complete 50 but less than 100 approved TOUCH Hours
    - iii. Gold-level recognition
      - a. Students who complete 100 or more approved TOUCH Hours
    - iv. Platinum-level recognition
      - a. Awarded to the student at each COM with the highest number of approved TOUCH Hours
  4. Recognition may include, but is not limited to: certificates, plaques, trophies, or other materials as deemed appropriate by the COSGP Student Services Committee.
  5. Letter of Commendation
    - i. A Letter of Commendation will be sent to the COM Dean from AACOM suggesting it be included in the student's commitment to service in his/her Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE)
    - ii. Letters of Commendation are sent yearly and are based on students' TOUCH Hours accumulated during one cycle year.