

Palo Alto University

Student Handbook *2026-2027*



Student Handbook Disclosure

Updated 08/28/26

This Student Handbook was prepared to provide information and does not constitute a contract. Palo Alto University (PAU) reserves the right to change, delete, supplement or otherwise amend at any time and without prior notice the information, requirements, and policies contained in this Student Handbook. PAU recognizes its obligation to provide program accessibility for persons with disabilities. Contact the Office of Accessible Education at (650) 433-3818 (Voice) to obtain information about the existence and location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities. This Student Handbook is available in alternate format upon request by persons with disabilities. Palo Alto University is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ASC WASC), 533 Airport Boulevard, Suite 200, Burlingame, CA 94010-2009, tel: (650) 696-1060, email: mail@ascwasc.org, web: <https://www.acswasc.org/>. For additional ACS WASC accreditation information, please visit <https://www.wscuc.org/institutions/palo-alto-university/>.

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INTRODUCTION

This Student Handbook along with the Catalog, Program Handbooks, and Student Disabilities Services Handbook are designed to inform and guide you through a successful curricular and co-curricular experience. We suggest that you familiarize yourself with these documents as reference points throughout your academic experience, and if ever in doubt, please ask any staff or faculty member for assistance. We are here to help you successfully navigate your student experience.

All of these documents detail academic and behavioral expectations throughout your educational journey. As you prepare to become working professionals in your respective fields, the information put forth here is intended to help prepare you for the professional expectations you will need to meet. We encourage you to take the opportunity to review the material as active participants in our PAU community.

PAU provides student opportunity involvement as either a member of your cohort, via student clubs and organizations, student employment in the various offices at PAU, and/or attending any sponsored speaker series or events. We look forward to getting to know you and supporting you as you begin, continue, and prepare to close your academic and non-academic journey at PAU.

UNIVERSITY VISION AND MISSION

Vision

A future shaped by human understanding

Grounded in human dignity, we aspire to shape a future where people live with greater connection and purpose; where communities are healthier and more resilient; where systems are more equitable and humane; where the tools we create serve humanity rather than diminish it; and where the defining challenges of our time are met with the depth of insight only human understanding can provide.

Mission

Palo Alto University advances human understanding through innovative education, groundbreaking research, and impactful practice in behavioral science.

Dimensions of Human Understanding

Human understanding is the purposeful application of insight into how people think, feel, behave, relate, heal, and make meaning to improve lives, strengthen communities, and build more humane systems.



Cognition

How people think, perceive, learn, and decide.



Emotion

How people feel and regulate experience.



Behavior

How people act individually and in families, communities, and institutions.



Relationships

How people connect, belong, and influence one another.



Healing

How people recover, grow, and restore wellness.



Meaning

How people interpret experience, construct purpose, and make sense of themselves and the world.

STUDENT SUCCESS

Student Success is comprised of the Office of Accessible Education, the Writing Studio, the Office of Financial Aid, Veteran and Military Student Services/International Student Services, Student Support, and student organizations. Our goal is to serve the non-academic needs of PAU's students from the time of enrollment through graduation and we encourage any student needing academic, mental health support or seeking leadership opportunities to reach out to studentsuccess@paloalto.edu.

OFFICE OF ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

The [Office of Accessible Education \(OAE\)](#) is a resource in the PAU Community for students, faculty and staff. The OAE works directly with students who have disabilities to secure reasonable accommodation.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A student with a disability is a person who: has a physical or mental impairment which limits one or more major life activity (such as walking, seeing, speaking, learning, or working); has a record with the school of such impairment, is regarded by the school as having such an impairment, or who is otherwise defined by law as a qualified disabled student. Individuals who have disabilities can choose whether or not they wish to disclose their disability and seek disability-related accommodation with the Office of Accessible Education. Services for students with disabilities at PAU are available to those individuals who complete the request process for reasonable accommodation.

REQUESTING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Information about the process for requesting disability-related accommodation is available in the [Student Disability Services Handbook](#).

Students with qualified disabilities can request reasonable accommodations through the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). The Office of Accessible Education is located on the Calvin Campus in the Mehta Student Center in Building 3, Room 308. The phone number is 650-433-3818. The Office of Accessible Education can meet students at all PAU campuses or via Zoom.

Students with disabilities must meet the qualifications and requirements expected of PAU students and must be able to perform the essential requirements of the curriculum, either with or without reasonable accommodations.

USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a service animal is any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. Please consult the [Student Disability Services Handbook](#) for more information regarding service animals and emotional support animals.

THE WRITING STUDIO

The [Writing Studio](#) at Palo Alto University (PAU) is a welcoming and supportive community of writers providing exceptional resources and guidance to students, faculty, and staff. We offer comprehensive and innovative services

that support the unique academic and professional needs of writers in counseling, psychology, human services, and social work. The goal is to make the study and practice of writing a signature experience of a PAU education.

Our collaborative and compassionate approach fosters a sense of belonging and connection within our community while promoting professional development and academic success. Our vision is to promote a culture of reflective writing and self-discovery, where every writer feels empowered to explore their thoughts and emotions through the written word.

Services offered include:

- Individualized consultations with peer writing coaches that address the specific writing needs of each student.
- Workshops that focus on specific writing skills, such as thesis development, sentence structure, or research methods.
- Online resources like writing guides and video tutorials that students can access anytime to reinforce their learning and improve their writing skills.

For more information, contact writingstudio@palloatou.edu.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Student Success offers tutoring support, one-on-one and group sessions on such topics as time management, effective test taking, etc. Students can contact studentsuccess@palloatou.edu. Student Success is located on the Calvin Campus in the Mehta Student Success Center in Building 3, Room 313. The phone number is 650-433-3836.

STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

PAU has a wide range of student clubs and organizations that are open to all PAU students. There are interest-based organizations, affinity groups, organizations aligned with various academic interests, and honor societies. Student Success hosts a Student Involvement Fair at the beginning of Fall and Spring terms for all students to learn more about each organization before joining. A complete list of clubs and organizations can be found on the [Student Organization Directory](#) on the PAU website. If you are interested in starting a group of your own, please contact Student Success at studentsuccess@palloatou.edu.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

While Palo Alto University does not have a counseling center on campus for students, we do have several mental health support options. If you need mental health support, please reach out to Student Success at studentsuccess@palloatou.edu.

Some services available include (subject to change):

Through [TimelyCare](#), a leading telehealth company specializing in higher education, all students have access to:

- 24/7 virtual access to medical and mental health care from anywhere in the United States - **at no cost**. Any PAU student has access to a licensed provider via a smartphone or any web-enabled device. Licensed providers are available to offer medical and mental health support via phone or secure video visits.
 - **Medical** - On-demand virtual access to a medical provider that can treat a wide range of common illnesses like cold and flu, sinus infection, allergies, and more
 - **Scheduled Medical** - Appointment-based options to speak with a medical provider

- **TalkNow** - 24/7, on-demand access to a mental health professional to talk about anything at anytime
- **Scheduled Counseling** - Speak to a licensed counselor (up to **12** visits per year, every August to August)
- **Group Sessions** - Weekly Guided Meditation and Yoga Group Sessions, plus specialized discussions throughout the year.
- **Session Sync**: Session Sync is a telehealth platform that provides clinicians across 43 states. It is free to search and care is provided exclusively by licensed psychologists with secure messaging, online booking, and is HIPAA compliant. For insurance reimbursement, contact your insurance provider to see if they offer out of network coverage for mental health and discuss superbills with your selected clinician.
- **E-Clinic**: The PAU eClinic is a fully online clinic offering mental health services. Due to potential conflicts of interest, **this service is only available to undergraduate students at PAU.**
- **American Psychological Association (APA) Psychologist Locator**: This website provides you the opportunity to find practicing psychologists in your area.
- PAU encourages all students to become familiar with personal insurance plan coverage to access additional mental health and healthcare as needed.

STUDENT NEWS DIGEST

The [Student News Digest](#) (SND) is a newsletter that serves as a means of communication to students from the University. The SND is sent to students through their PAU email address, and includes information on important events, seminars, and announcements for students. Be sure to check your PAU email to get important announcements and event notifications from PAU.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

A student's work experience at Palo Alto University (PAU) can be fun and rewarding. It also provides students an opportunity to explore career choices and gain critical skills to improve marketability for professional employment. Students are responsible to seek out and apply for positions. A resumé, application and/or interview may be required prior to hiring. There are a variety of student employment positions including student assistant, research assistant, and teaching assistant.

All available PAU student employment opportunities are posted on PAU's [Student Job Board](#).

Before starting a position, student employees are required to complete all new-hire documentation through [People Operations](#) (PO). Students may not begin work until they and their supervisor have been notified that they have been authorized to do so by PO. For further questions about student employment, please contact [PO](#).

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & CONSTITUTION DAY

Annually, PAU celebrates Constitution & Citizenship Day by sharing educational information about the U.S. Constitution, as well as information about how to register to vote. Constitution & Citizenship Day is September 17th. The United States federal government requires any institution of higher education to share resources and information about the Constitution and Citizenship Day, but of more importance than just complying with a regulation, PAU thinks it is critical that our community is civically engaged.

We encourage voter registration for all members of our community who qualify to vote. California residents can register to vote online through [the California Secretary of State's office](#). To be eligible to vote in California, you must be a U.S. citizen, a resident of California, and 18 years old on the day of the election. Other restrictions apply. You must be registered to vote at least 15 days before an election in order to cast your ballot. If you are outside of California, the [U.S. Election Assistance Commission](#) can direct you to where you can register online.

PAU EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM - OMNILERT

All current staff, faculty and students are automatically enrolled in the system with their PAU email address and/or mobile phone number that is on file. To confirm or update your information visit the PAU [Emergency Notification System -OMNILERT](#) page. This system is managed by PAU's Information Technology team.

STUDENT SURVEY

Palo Alto University (PAU)'s Assessment Committee (PAC) conducts student surveys for all PAU students. PAU uses the data generated from these surveys to improve and/or refine our students' experience. Surveys are administered as deemed most appropriate by PAU and all students are strongly encouraged to complete University surveys.

Additionally, for some academic programs, there are program specific surveys. Academic departments will contact students directly with information about how to complete program specific surveys.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

For details, please refer to the University Catalog.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT/TITLE IX

Please refer to the University Catalog for details on PAU's [sexual misconduct policy](#). To speak to a university representative, contact the Title IX Coordinator at titleix@paltoalto.edu and to submit a report, please see the How to Report Concerns to the University section below.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH POLICY AND PROTOCOL

PAU is an institution dedicated to research, teaching, and practice in the fields of Psychology, Counseling, and Social Work, and is wholly committed to the mental health and wellbeing of its student population. As such, PAU had developed an emergency protocol to assist in assessing risk, intervention, and response to suicidal and homicidal behaviors. Please refer to PAU's, Department of Student Success, [Student Mental Health Policy and Protocol](#).

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Students who fail to meet program specific requirements may be placed on academic warning, probation or dismissed from the University. Students placed on probation must meet with their academic advisor to develop a student assistance plan (SAP) to address the academic deficiencies and must be followed. Failure to follow a

student assistance plan (SAP) may result in dismissal from the University. For program specific requirements, please refer to your corresponding Program Handbook.

If the program Student Evaluation Committee (SEC) recommends dismissal, that recommendation is forwarded to the Department Chair of the corresponding program. If dismissal is warranted, the student receives a formal letter advising of the dismissal, the reason for the dismissal, and includes steps for the appeal process.

STUDENT'S RIGHT TO PROTEST

PAU supports your First Amendment United States Constitutional right to freedom of speech and assembly. However, you need to be aware that applicable laws and restrictions are allowed by police and government officials when you exercise your views through protest. As a resource, please prepare and know your rights by referring to the [ACLU Know your Rights – Protestor's Rights page](#).

If you are planning a peaceful demonstration, said demonstration must not interfere with the rights of others to participate in their educational programs or inhibit their right to receive University services. Peaceful protests may not interfere with classes, University events or activities, and cannot represent any position representative of the University.

Notifications of a peaceful protest must be received by the Department of Student Success no later than two weeks (14 calendar days) prior to the scheduled event and must confirm a scheduled time within normal business hours on a PAU campus and not must not take place at any external location, including Residencies or Commencement due to their external locations. Peaceful protests must take place outdoors and the location must be previously determined and reserved via the Department of Student Success. Peaceful protests cannot block or impede vehicular or pedestrian traffic, block or obstruct any entry or exit points to any PAU building, especially where there may be an impact to student or staff ADA access.

Peaceful protests may not endanger any PAU community member or violate PAU's academic or community policies below listed under the [Behavioral Expectations Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) section. Should there be any violation of PAU's policies, please submit a report listed under the [How to Report Concerns to the University](#) section below.

Prioritize your physical and mental health safety. Call 911 if you are in imminent danger and access PAU's mental health support via Timely Care and/or additional resources found under the [Mental Health Support](#) section above.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Palo Alto University (PAU) is an academic community that endeavors to maintain the highest ethical and behavioral standards in all that we do. PAU administration, faculty, and staff have a responsibility to help students to understand, to be measured by, and to uphold the ethical and behavioral standards of our PAU community. Students have a responsibility to learn our community's ethical and professional standards and to maintain those standards in all of their work and professional relationships while at PAU. This includes their work and professional relationships as students, researchers, clinicians (including at practicum and internship sites), and as professional and academic colleagues.

The following policies and procedures outline student behavioral expectations as well as their rights should they be alleged to be in violation of any of these policies. Students are expected to abide by these policies.

Finally, the procedures outlined in this document detail administrative action the University will take should a student be alleged to have violated University policy. Consistent with the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) principles of academic freedom and tenure, the faculty instructor is responsible for determining any grades related to the courses they teach, including individual assignments and final grades. When alleged policy violations occur, faculty may consult with administration in determining an assignment or final course grade related to an alleged policy violation, but the ultimate responsibility for assigning course grades is the instructor's. Administrative action taken by the University cannot include dictating to faculty an assignment or final course grades.

The following behaviors violate PAU policy and may result in disciplinary action by the University.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

- a. **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the inclusion, in any paper, draft, assignment, presentation, or other work, of someone else's product, words, ideas, or data and representing it as one's own work. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: the taking of any portion of a document, article, or book and representing it as one's own work, the lifting of a well-phrased sentence and including such sentence without crediting the author, or including another person's ideas as an example of one's own thought or work. Plagiarism includes using unpublished work as well as published sources, using another's term paper, or handing in a product that includes substantial work by another individual or agency, including internet services.
- b. **Self-Plagiarism:** Self-Plagiarism is using one's own work from a previous assignment without the permission of the current instructor and/or without properly citing this information.
- c. **Cheating:** Cheating includes, but is not limited to, using unauthorized materials in an examination; looking at another student's test paper to copy answers; using or supplying questions or answers from an examination to be given or in progress that have not been authorized for distribution; having a person other than the one registered and taking the course, stand in at an examination or at any other graded activity; collaborating with others on projects where such collaboration is expressly forbidden; using resources, including electronic resources, forbidden by a faculty member. Cheating also includes facilitating any of these actions.
- d. **Fabrication:** Fabrication includes, but is not limited to, submitting a paper, a lab report, computer data, or other academic exercises with falsified, invented, or fictitious information.
- e. **Academic sabotage or obstruction:** Academic sabotage is an intentional interference with the work or progress of other students or researchers, and may include, but is not limited to, intentionally destroying or interfering with the work of others, stealing or defacing library materials or materials owned by others, and altering or copying computer files or documents owned by others without authorization.
- f. **Unauthorized use or misuse of materials:** Unauthorized use or misuse of materials include, but are not limited to, reading, duplicating, copying, removing, or any other unauthorized use or misuse of a document, record, book, ledger, file, printout, tape, cartridge, disc, key, or any property maintained by any individual(s) or department(s) of PAU.
- g. **Forgery:** Forgery is the unauthorized creation of an imitation of, forging, or any other unauthorized alteration of, a document, electronic file, form, record, identification, or any property maintained by any individual(s) or department(s) of PAU.
- h. **Grade tampering, exam fraud, or other acts of dishonesty:** Academic misconduct includes other acts of dishonesty or impropriety occurring in the course of academic activities, such as grade tampering, or obtaining

or distributing any part of any exam materials or any information about an exam, or knowingly providing false information.

- i. **Professional Ethics & Dispositional Issues:** Violations of professional ethics in the context of earning academic credit including, but not limited to, violation of the ethical code or professional code of the profession that a student is preparing to enter (for example the [APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct](#) and the [ACA Code of Ethics](#)), using unethical research practices, and violation of professional ethics are also policy violation at PAU. Uncorrected dispositional issues incompatible for the professional fields (Counseling & Psychology) are also policy violations.
- j. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** PAU has adopted guidelines for the use of AI, which aim to ensure that AI is used in ways that support PAU's mission and values, including academic excellence, student success, and community respect. It is every student's responsibility to become familiar with the requirements for each course via the course syllabus to understand the use or non-use of AI for each course. Any AI use should adhere to university policies (see [Student Professional Behavior and Use of Technology](#), and [Research Integrity Policy](#) in the [PAU University Catalog](#) and the Academic Integrity policy in the [PAU Student Handbook](#)) legal standards, and PAU's commitment to inclusive, ethical practices.

COMMUNITY POLICY

1. **Alcohol:** No one under the age of 21 is permitted to possess, purchase, use, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time at PAU or PAU sponsored events. Students are expected to abide by all local, state, and federal laws: failure to do so is a violation of University policy. Impaired students are not permitted to be in class, interact with clients, or conduct research under any circumstances.
2. **Abuse of Technology:** PAU is the licensee of many computer software packages that are protected by copyright laws. Misuse of computing facilities, software, hardware, unauthorized use of another individual's computer account, misuse of one's own computer account, or any violation of the policies for using computing and networking resources at Palo Alto University is prohibited.
3. **Hazing:** Palo Alto University prohibits any form of hazing. Hazing is defined as any action or situation created by individuals, groups, teams, or student organizations, on- or off-campus, that could cause or has the potential to result in harassment, emotional or physical abuse, harm, embarrassment, anxiety, ridicule, or the violation of a policy, no matter how positive the end result or intent. Hazing is prohibited regardless of consent, membership, or length of affiliation with an organization.
4. **Failure to Comply:** Failure to comply with the reasonable direction of a University official acting within their job responsibilities is prohibited. Failure to comply with any assigned sanctions resulting from PAU's student conduct system is also a violation of this policy.
5. **Disorderly Conduct:** Disruption of the educational or administrative process at PAU is prohibited.
6. **Vandalism:** The physical abuse or destruction of PAU property and/or property at one of our partner locations is prohibited.
7. **Harassing, Abusive, Threatening, and/or Bullying Behaviors:** Harassing, abusive, threatening, and/or bullying behavior of PAU community members, including but not limited to other students and employees of the University (and their family members) is prohibited. Any conduct that threatens or endangers the physical,

mental, and/or emotional health and safety of a member of the University community, on or off University property, or at a University-sponsored or supervised activity is considered abusive or threatening behavior.

- **Verbal:** includes, but is not limited to, threats, discrimination, harassment, bullying, and cyberbullying made in person, over the phone, left on voicemail, and/or by other electronic means
 - **Physical:** includes, but is not limited to, assault, battery, fighting, false imprisonment, coercion, hazing, stalking, prohibiting a person from freely entering or departing a room or event through physical force or the presence or otherwise confining a person, any unwanted physical contact between individuals, and/or attempts of physical threat
 - **Written:** includes, but is not limited to, online messaging, internet usage, email, cell phone/texting, social media, letters, signs, banners, clothing, and/or graffiti
 - **Retaliation:** includes, but is not limited to, blackmail and/or action taken against another member of the community who has been identified as a complainant, victim, witness, or University representative alleging misconduct
 - **Implied threats:** includes, but is not limited to, gestures, taunting comments, and/or any behaviors that create a threatening environment, including threats against the University and/or its property
8. **Criminal Violations and Arrest Notification:** Violation of any local, state, or federal criminal code on- or off-campus is prohibited. Behaviors and violations off-campus are referred to PAU's student conduct system at the discretion of the University administration. Students accused, arrested for, or convicted of any misdemeanor, felony, or sexual offense must notify the Department of Student Success of their status within 48 hours after their release from jail and/or a judgment, or at the time of enrollment into the University, whichever comes first. Failure to do so is a violation of Palo Alto University policy.
9. **Emergency/Fire Equipment & Procedures:** Students are prohibited from the misuse of, vandalism to, and/or tampering with fire and emergency equipment, including but not limited to, fire extinguishers, alarms, hoses, sprinkler heads, smoke detectors, AED devices, safety/emergency vehicles and property, and/or video surveillance equipment. Falsely reporting a fire, bomb threat, or other emergency is also a violation of this policy. In the event of an emergency or drill, students must follow the directives of University officials and/or emergency personnel. Knowingly setting fire (arson), unintentionally setting fire, and intentionally setting off the fire alarm when there is no emergency is also strictly prohibited.
10. **Theft:** Theft or attempted theft, unauthorized possession, misuse, or wrongful appropriation of property, or sale of property not belonging to oneself is strictly prohibited.
11. **Drugs and Illegal Substances:** The possession or sale of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited at PAU. In addition, students are not permitted to be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time on PAU property and/or during PAU activities. Impaired students, whether legally prescribed medication that alters mental status or illegal drugs, are not permitted to attend class, interact with clients, or conduct research under any circumstances.
12. **Recordings:** It is prohibited to videotape, audio record, or take pictures of persons using any current or future technologies without their knowledge and/or consent when there is a reasonable expectation of privacy and/or confidentiality.
13. **Sexual Misconduct:** Palo Alto University is committed to maintaining its campuses and programs free from all forms of sexual misconduct. All forms of sexual misconduct are prohibited, including sexual and

gender-related: violence, assault, harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Palo Alto University's Sexual Misconduct Policy, in its entirety, can be found [here](#).

- 14. Weapons:** Possession of weapons and weapon replicas, including but not limited to, firearms, BB guns, air guns, knives, swords, machetes, blow darts, spears, compound bows/arrows, Tasers, brass knuckles, slingshots, martial arts devices, dangerous chemicals, incendiary devices, ammunition or other explosive substances including fireworks is prohibited and banned from University property and University-sponsored events.
- 15. Lewd Behavior:** Lewd, indecent, or obscene behavior is not permitted.
- 16. Solicitation:** Solicitation of and by students, student organizations, faculty, and staff for money, goods, or services without written authorization from the Department of Student Success is prohibited.
- 17. Animals:** Animals/pets are not permitted on any PAU campus, with the exception of service animals registered with the Office of Accessible Education and emotional support animals that have been approved by Human Resources as it relates to PAU employment. Emotional support animals are only permitted for employment-related activities and are generally not permitted with other activities related to the University.
- 18. Smoking/Tobacco-Free Environment:** Tobacco and smoking/vaping products include, but are not limited to cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, all forms of smokeless tobacco, pipes, and cigars are prohibited on all PAU campuses. Breach to this detailed policy outlined in the University Catalog will constitute a policy violation and will be handled via the University-level conduct process.
- 19. University Logo Use:** The Palo Alto University logo is the property of the University and is only to be used for official University functions or with the permission of the Division of Business Innovation and Strategic Advancement ([BISA](#)). Logo files and brand guidelines can be downloaded from the [Brand Center](#) page of the website. They may not be altered, revised, or combined with any other symbols, words, or designs without prior written consent. Use of the logo must comply with the University's brand guidelines regarding colors, sizing, spacing, and placement. Unauthorized or improper use of the University's logos or word marks is prohibited.
- 20. Campus Policies and Information:** Breach to these detailed policies outlined in the University Catalog, including its sub-sections: Email Communication, Social Media Policy, Student Professional Behavior and Use of Technology, and Research Integrity Policy will constitute a policy violation and will be handled via the University- level conduct process.
- 21. Confidentiality/Honor Code:** In line with the ethical standards in the fields of counseling, psychology, human services, and social work, PAU may require a signed confidentiality agreement to carry out certain student employment roles, a signed exam proctoring agreement or any other document requiring confidentiality or maintaining ethical standards, including, but not limited to an honor code, and if breached, may be cause for disciplinary action.

By accepting admission to PAU, every student endeavors to uphold and maintain the highest ethical and behavioral standards of our PAU community and has the responsibility to learn our community's ethical and professional standards and to maintain those standards in all of their work and professional relationships while at PAU. This includes their work and professional relationships as students, researchers, clinicians (including at practicum and internship sites), and as professional and academic colleagues.

REPORTING CONCERNS TO THE UNIVERSITY

All three reporting forms can be found on the student tab of MyPAU Portal. If there is any confusion about which form to use, please submit the General Incident Report.

PAU's University-level conduct process follows an evidentiary line of inquiry. It begins with a thorough review of the submitted report and any supplemental documentation (evidence). If it is determined that there is not enough evidence to proceed with charges through the University-level conduct system, no communication will ensue and no further action will be taken.

Any member of the PAU community can submit an incident report, but faculty and staff are required to do so when they know or reasonably suspect that a University-level policy violation has occurred. It is important that all alleged policy violations are reported to the Department of Student Success in order to have a complete and effective University-level conduct system that appropriately addresses student behavior, remediates behavioral concerns, and keeps the University and those affiliated with it safe.

A report of misconduct or allegation of policy violation should include: the name of the student(s) alleged to have violated University policy; a clear factual statement describing the nature of the conduct (date, time, place, witnesses); and the name(s), address(es) and telephone number(s) of those filing the report to support PAU's evidentiary process. Students may wish to make anonymous reports, but doing so will likely inhibit the ability of the University to respond.

Once a report is received, a representative from Student Success will review the report and determine if there is sufficient evidence to support the allegation of a policy violation. This may or may not include reaching out to the person who submitted the report for clarification if/as needed, working with PAU's Student Evaluation Committee (SEC), and/or program department heads for resolution prior to a formal University-level conduct proceeding.

GENERAL INCIDENT REPORT

Use this [form](#) to create a report about any alleged policy violations at PAU, including both academic and community-based policy violations. With the exception of reports of sexual misconduct and gender-based discrimination (Title IX), and Identity-Based bias incidents, all reports of an alleged violation of University policy should be reported to the Department of Student Success through the General Incident Report.

IDENTITY-BASED INCIDENT REPORT

Use this [form](#) for reporting an incident or harm based on identity. Examples can include, but are not limited to, microaggressions, slurs, degrading language, epithets, and intimidation. These experiences may occur on campus or at external training sites. Reports of identity-based incidents should be reported to the Department of Student Success through the Identity-Based Incident Report Form.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT/TITLE IX REPORT

Use this [form](#) to report an incident or policy violation related to the University's [Sexual Misconduct Policy \(Title IX\)](#). This report will go to PAU's Title IX Coordinator who is the person designated by the University to oversee the University's Sexual Misconduct Policy and to whom anyone with questions about this policy may be referred. To speak to a University representative, contact the Title IX Coordinator at titleix@paloin.edu. Reports of alleged violation(s) of the Palo Alto University Sexual Misconduct Policy (Title IX) should be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator through the Title IX Report.

ADJUDICATION OF UNIVERSITY-LEVEL STUDENT CONDUCT REPORTS

It is important that a complete report be submitted with evidence to support the allegations made. If there is insufficient evidence to proceed, no communication will be forwarded to the reporting party and no further action will be taken. The student who was reported to have allegedly violated University policy will not be notified, and will not face any disciplinary action. Nothing will be included in the alleged student's file.

Providing false information or withholding information from a University official during the conduct process is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to: initiating a student conduct proceeding in bad faith, falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information before any University official or hearing board, disruption or interference with the orderly conduct of the student conduct process, and/or tampering with witnesses in preparing for or during a hearing process. If throughout the conduct inquiry process it is found that the alleged student provided false information or withheld information from a University official, this will result in an additional charge of Disorderly Conduct.

The University-level student conduct process is a serious means of processing any student misconduct case and as such follows an evidentiary process. Just as important as providing false information or withholding information from a University official is bringing forth a potentially frivolous allegation. All allegations must be substantiated with evidence to demonstrate proof of the allegation being made toward any member of the PAU community. PAU is dedicated to maintaining a safe environment for all of its members. If/When in doubt, please ask. We want to encourage all students to bring forth any concerns to help them better understand how to best manage any matter needing attention.

If, however, it is determined that there is sufficient evidence to support the allegations, a representative from the Department of Student Success will request to meet with the reporting party and/or request an official written statement to clarify any information submitted in the report. A Charge Letter will be forwarded to the accused student (respondent) detailing the alleged violation via their PAU email account. The letter to the accused student (respondent) will include:

- the alleged policy violation(s) and when it/they occurred,
- a link to PAU's Student Handbook (this document), and
- a request to meet with a representative from the Department of Student Success by a specific date and/or request that the alleged student provide an official written statement in response to the allegation.

CHARGE LETTER

Students accused of misconduct will receive a Charge Letter via email from Student Success within a reasonable amount of time given the initial investigative process, number of students involved, and/or the complexity of the case. This process may or may not include collaborative efforts with the SEC, and/or program department heads. The Charge Letter will also include a request to meet for an initial line of inquiry meeting and/or the alleged student may be asked to provide an official written statement in response to the allegation(s). The meeting with a representative from Student Success must occur within 20 business days of the date of the Charge Letter. If a written statement is requested, it must be received by Student Success within 15 business days.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN CONDUCT PROCEEDING

Students alleged to have violated PAU policies are expected to be active participants in the student conduct process. Failure to respond to the Charge Letter and/or failure to meet with a representative from Student Success or provide an official written statement when requested will result in an additional charge of Failure to Comply.

CONDUCT MEETING/WRITTEN RESPONSE

During the initial student conduct meeting, the student who is alleged to have violated PAU's policies will meet with a representative from Student Success who will:

- review the procedures to adjudicate alleged policy violations outlined in this Student Handbook
- review the Charge Letter and discuss the allegations against the student
- provide a fair sanction if the student wishes to accept responsibility for the violation, but
- if instead the alleged student is requested to provide a written statement, the student may receive a written response from the Department of Student Success versus a requested meeting

THE ACCUSED STUDENT (RESPONDENT) WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO:

- ask any clarifying questions about their rights as they relate to PAU's student conduct system as described herewith in the Student Handbook
- discuss the allegations against them
- request to review any reports or documentation that were submitted to Student Success related to their alleged violation of University policies
- accept responsibility for the alleged policy violation(s) and the sanction determined by a representative from Student Success
- request a hearing with the PAU Student Conduct Board. Students may accept responsibility for their behavior and waive their right to a hearing with the Student Conduct Board, but they are not required to do so and cannot be forced to do so. An accused student (respondent) can request a hearing with the Student Conduct Board at any time during this meeting with no adverse impact on the hearing.

ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR VIOLATING PAU POLICY

If an accused student (respondent) wishes, they may waive their right to a hearing and accept responsibility for violating PAU policy. In these cases, they will be assigned a sanction by a representative from Student Success. Some sanctions have deadlines, and all deadlines must be adhered to. Failure to follow may result in an additional charge of failure to comply. By accepting responsibility for violating PAU policy, the student waives their right to any appeal of their case.

REQUEST A HEARING

Students accused of violating PAU policy have the right to a hearing before the PAU Student Conduct Board. If an accused student (respondent) does not want to accept responsibility for an alleged policy violation and the sanctions determined by a representative from Student Success or if the student wishes to exercise the right to request a hearing, Student Success will schedule a hearing within a reasonable amount of time, considering the number of individuals involved and/or complexity of the case.

ACCESS TO STUDENT CONDUCT MATERIAL

Student conduct documents (including, but not limited to, incident reports and statements given during the process by the complainant, respondent, or witnesses) may be reviewed by the complainant and/or the respondent, but may not be duplicated, photographed or shared under any circumstances. Doing so will result in an additional charge of failure to comply. To protect the identity of others involved, names and other personally identifying information of others will be redacted before the information is released.

RECORDING OF CONDUCT MEETINGS AND HEARINGS/WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION

Recordings, including but not limited to tape recording, video recording, recording on a mobile phone, etc. or forwarding of any written student conduct material are not permitted by anyone in any phase of the University-level conduct process. The only exception to this is during the Student Conduct Board hearing itself. The University will record all hearings and keep them on file in the Department of Student Success.

PAU STUDENT CONDUCT BOARD

HEARING NOTICE

Student Success will send a hearing notice to the accused student (respondent), detailing the date, time, and location of the hearing with the PAU Student Conduct Board, providing sufficient time for the accused student (respondent) to attend. This letter will include the charges the student will face described in the Charge Letter the accused student (respondent) received from Student Success. The hearing notice will identify the Student Conduct Board members selected to participate in the hearing.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE STUDENT CONDUCT BOARD

The Student Conduct Board will include at least two faculty members selected by Student Success in consultation with the Provost's Office and the faculty. One faculty member must be affiliated with the department in which the student is studying and one faculty member must be from outside of the department in which the student is studying. The accused student's (respondent's) academic advisor cannot serve on the Conduct Board. Where the decision of the Student Conduct Board members is not agreed upon, a member of Student Success will make the final determining decision.

CHALLENGING AN APPOINTED HEARING MEMBER

Students may challenge the inclusion of one Student Conduct Board member if they believe the member will not be able to participate in the hearing without bias. The student must make this request within three (3) business days of the date of the hearing notice letter. The request should be directed to Student Success, and should include the specific reason why the accused student (respondent) does not believe the Student Conduct Board member can be involved in hearing the case without bias. Please note, because PAU is a relatively small University, it is not always reasonable to expect a Student Conduct Board member to have no knowledge of the accused student (respondent). For example, simply having had the Student Conduct Board member as faculty in the past would not be sufficient reason to be disqualified from participating in a hearing. A representative from Student Success will make a decision about the challenge. If a new Student Conduct Board member is appointed, that will be communicated to the accused student (respondent). The decision about whether or not to remove a Student Conduct Board member is final and cannot be challenged.

EVIDENTIARY STANDARD

In considering and adjudicating alleged violations, the evidentiary standard is "more likely than not." This means that those adjudicating a case must have a firm belief that the evidence demonstrates that there is a high probability that a violation of policy has occurred.

CLOSED HEARINGS

All Student Conduct Board proceedings are closed, meaning only the complainant, where applicable, the accused student (respondent), appropriate witnesses, Student Conduct Board members, and a representative from Student Success are permitted to attend the hearing. In addition, the accused student (respondent) has the right to an advocate, per the guidelines noted below.

Prior to the Student Conduct Board hearing, and where applicable, a representative from Student Success will provide a list of witnesses and relevant information to either/or the complainant and accused student (respondent). All of the testimony and relevant information from the hearing will be kept in confidence, in accordance with the University policy and to protect the privacy of the student(s) involved under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Failure to maintain the confidentiality of the matters and/or the privacy of the student(s) involved will result in a separate and independent charge for Failure to Comply.

RIGHT TO AN ADVOCATE

Students have the right to have an advocate for support during the Student Conduct Board hearing. The advocate must be a member of the PAU community (staff or faculty). The advocate is not permitted to speak on behalf of the accused student (respondent), address the complainant or any witnesses if applicable, or the Student Conduct Board members. The advocate cannot be a lawyer or lawyers' representatives (e.g., paralegals), family member, friend, PAU student or alumni to represent any of the involved parties.

RECORDING OF HEARING

The University will record the hearing proceedings up until the private deliberation by the Student Conduct Board members. The recording will be stored with Student Success. No other hearing participants are permitted to record the hearing in any way. If it is found that a participating student has recorded the hearing proceedings, this will result in an additional charge of Failure to Comply.

PARTICIPATING IN THE HEARING

Students are required to participate in the University-level conduct process when they are called to a hearing as a complainant, accused student (respondent), or witness. Should a student fail to appear when proper notification has been given or should the student fail to provide a statement during the hearing, the hearing will proceed without the benefit of that student's input.

HEARING PROCEDURES

The hearing shall proceed in the following manner:

1. Introduction of everyone in the room or Zoom meeting.
2. One of the Student Conduct Board members will explain the procedures.
3. One of the Student Conduct Board members will read the charges against the student policy and will summarize the incident report that resulted in the charges.
4. One of the Student Conduct Board members will ask the accused student (respondent) how they plead: responsible or not responsible for the alleged violations.

5. The complainant, where applicable, or the representative from Student Success on behalf of the complainant, and the respondent will be allowed to make an opening statement regarding the allegation(s) of the complaint.
6. Any witnesses will be called in one at a time to provide testimony.
7. The Student Conduct Board members may individually ask questions of the complainant, where applicable, respondent, and witnesses.
8. After all questions have been asked, and if they choose, the complainant, where applicable, and the respondent may make a closing statement to the hearing board.
9. The Student Conduct Board members will then meet in private to deliberate on the information provided and determine an appropriate finding of “responsible” or “not responsible” for each of the charges the respondent faced, using the more likely than not evidentiary standard. If a determination is made that the student is responsible for the charges against them, the Student Conduct Board members will also consider and recommend sanctions.
10. A summary of the hearing outcome, including any recommended sanctions, will be sent in writing by one of the Student Conduct Board members to a representative in the Department of Student Success within a reasonable period of time.
11. The recommendations will be reviewed by a representative from Student Success who will either approve them, ask the Student Conduct Board member(s) for clarification, or assign sanctions a representative from Student Success determines appropriate. In most cases, the sanctions assigned by a representative in the Department of Student Success will be consistent with what the Student Conduct Board recommends, but the final determination of responsibility and sanctions lies with a representative in the Department of Student Success.
12. Upon receipt of the summary from the one of the Student Conduct Board members, a representative from Student Success will notify the accused student (respondent) in writing of the outcome of the hearing and any applicable sanctions. The accused student (respondent) will also be notified in this letter of their right to appeal.

APPEAL REQUESTS

The accused student (respondent) who accepts responsibility and the corresponding sanctions in the initial meeting with the Director of Academic Integrity and Resolution or by submitting a written statement accepting responsibility, waive their rights to an appeal.

When a student has a Student Conduct Board hearing, he/she/they has/have the right to appeal the outcome within ten (10) business days of receiving written notification from Student Success. An appeal will only be considered on one or both of the following grounds:

- A process or procedural error was made that was significantly prejudicial to the outcome of the hearing.
- New information that was not available or known to the student appealing at the time of the hearing has arisen which, when considered, may materially alter the outcome. Information that the appealing student chose not to present at the time of the hearing is not considered new information.

Appeal Requests must be submitted to the Provost using the [PAU Student Appeal Form](#), and must identify the grounds on which the appeal is based. Appeal Requests that do not identify and/or meet acceptable grounds for

appeal will be denied. Within a reasonable amount of time upon receipt of the Appeal Request, the Provost will notify the student of one of the following:

- The appeal request has been denied because the student did not identify the grounds for the appeal;
- The appeal request has been accepted and a hearing with the Institutional Appeals Committee will be scheduled within a reasonable amount of time considering the number of individuals involved in the case.

UNIVERSITY SANCTIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE SANCTIONS

PAU uses the following sanctions to address student conduct issues. These sanctions are not mutually exclusive or in sequential order, and more than one sanction may be applied. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Disciplinary Warning (Disciplinary and/or Clinical):** Notifies the student that their behavior does not meet the University's standards, immediate corrective action is needed, and future violations of PAU policies will likely result in probation.
- **Probation (Disciplinary and/or Clinical):** Notifies the student that their behavior does not meet the University's standards, immediate corrective action is needed within a specific time frame, and the student is in jeopardy of being separated from the University. A Student Assistance Plan must be completed with an academic advisor or as part of an outcome from the Program Student Evaluation Committee (SEC) and submitted to the Department of Student Success. All timelines must be adhered to. Disciplinary and/or Clinical probation may have serious negative implications for future academic, research, and training assignments and activities.
- **Dismissal:** Permanently separates the student from the University, with no option to return.
- **Suspension:** Separates the student from the University for a set amount of time, typically two to six quarters. Students who wish to return to PAU after suspension may be required to complete other sanctions before returning to the University community. Any student who wishes to return to the University after serving their suspension should contact the Department of Student Success to initiate the process to return.
- **Health/Counseling Assessment:** Referral to a clinician for an assessment, including but not limited to a psychological evaluation, and completion of any recommendations that result from that assessment.
- **Educational Sanction(s) and Intervention Strategies:** Complete a training, paper, or other educational activities. Educational sanction(s) topic(s) may include, but are not limited to, professional integrity, time management, study skills workshops, reflection, or educational papers, etc.
- **Student Assistance Plan (SAP):** SAP, also known as remediation plans, are specific improvement plans with clear measurable behavioral expectations, to be completed within a specific time period. SAPs are developed in consultation with academic advisors and/or Program Student Evaluation Committees (SECs).
- **Restitution:** Compensation for loss, damage, or injury. This may take the form of appropriate service and/or monetary or material replacement.
- **No Contact:** No contact is a restriction from entering specific campus areas and/or all forms of contact with a certain person(s).

- **Loss of Privileges:** Denial of specific privileges for a specific period of time may be imposed. Privileges may vary but can include access to parking, computer labs, student employment, participation in registered student organizations, etc.

EMERGENCY ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

In cases when the University determines that someone is a danger to themselves or others, where serious clinical issues exist that jeopardize client care, there is a significant and ongoing disruption to the University community, or it is determined that such egregious behavior has occurred, the University may take action to administer any of the actions listed under Administrative Sanctions whether or not a matter is pending the outcome of the Student Conduct Board hearing or whether or not a formal report has been submitted for review via the University-level conduct process. This may include, but is not limited to, suspension of the student from classes, no-contact orders, removal from clinical settings, and/or a psychological evaluation, etc. Final determination about emergency administrative action is at the sole discretion of the University and is not subject to appeal. When emergency administrative action is taken, every effort will be made to determine an outcome as quickly as possible with or without a hearing process.

Notwithstanding any other policy, the University reserves the right to take administrative action in response to instances of disruptive or other behavior that interferes with University community well-being in the judgment of Palo Alto University. Where the University believes that the behavior may be caused by, or related to, psychological or other health issues, PAU may require a mandatory independent medical evaluation, temporary or indefinite withdrawal, and/or other administrative action as deemed appropriate by the circumstances of the individual situation. Such action must be approved by the Provost/Chief Academic Officer or their designee, with possible consultation by others. The University may require documentation in order for the student to return to active status.

TIMELINES & DUE PROCESS

Every effort shall be made by the University to follow the timelines described in these procedures. On some occasions, near the end of the quarter, over breaks or holidays, and in the summer, for example, there may be difficulties in adhering to the established timelines due to the availability of faculty and administrative staff. Deviations from prescribed procedures during these times does not necessarily invalidate a decision or proceeding unless it is demonstrated by the student alleging the deviation that there is significant prejudice to the final outcome of the discipline proceeding. When good faith efforts have been made by those involved with the conduct process to adhere to established timelines, unavoidable delays in adhering to the timelines will not necessarily be grounds for an appeal.

STUDENT CONDUCT RECORDS

All student conduct records will be kept in the student's file within Student Success. Conduct records will be kept for at least five years after students leave PAU. All records that involve suspension or dismissal from PAU will be kept indefinitely with Student Success. Consistent with FERPA and PAU policy, students can review their academic records, including student conduct files.

INSTITUTIONAL GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

PROCEDURES FOR INITIATING GRIEVANCES

Except for specific matters for which a designated procedure for issue resolution is otherwise provided in University policy (e.g., harassment complaint procedures), students may submit a written grievance against action or inaction by the University (staff or faculty), which the student believes violates University policy. All such grievances must be presented in writing, including email, and addressed to Student Success within 30 days of their occurrence.

INFORMAL PROCEDURE

The grievant should first discuss the complaint with his or her academic advisor, or other appropriate campus officer, who will attempt to resolve the complaint informally. If the circumstances of the complaint prevent such informal resolution, or it is not resolved informally, the grievant should file a written complaint to Student Success. Upon receipt of the complaint, Student Success will forward a copy of the complaint to the relevant Program Director, in the case of a faculty grievance, to the faculty member. In the case of a staff member, a copy of the complaint will be forwarded to the corresponding Supervisor and the staff member. In both cases, the individual against whom or related to whose action or decision the complaint is made will receive a copy of the complaint and the grievant will be advised that an investigation and discussion will begin within a reasonable amount of time of receipt of the complaint, except where additional time is required for investigative purposes. If additional time is needed, the grievant will be notified within a reasonable amount of time.

FORMAL PROCEDURE

All grievances are reviewed and investigated by a representative from Student Success. Where the grievance affects a PAU faculty member, applicable information is also reviewed by the program head. Depending upon the nature of the grievance, PAU faculty, staff, and/or administrators are consulted and contribute to a final decision. A final decision letter will be emailed to the grievant by Student Success within a reasonable period of time.

APPEALS

If the grievant disagrees with the decision from Student Success, he/she/they has/have the right to appeal the outcome within ten (10) business days of receiving written notification.

Appeal Requests must be submitted to the Provost using the [PAU Student Appeal Form](#), and must identify the grounds on which the appeal is based. Appeal Requests that do not identify and/or meet acceptable grounds for appeal will be denied. Within a reasonable amount of time upon receipt of the Appeal Request, the Provost will notify the student of one of the following:

- The appeal request has been denied because the student did not identify the grounds for the appeal;
- The appeal request has been accepted and a hearing with the Institutional Appeals Committee will be scheduled within a reasonable amount of time considering the number of individuals involved in the case.

ARBITRATION

If the grievant disagrees with the decision of the Provost and wishes to challenge that decision, they must submit the issue to binding arbitration under the Rules of the American Arbitration Association. The costs of the arbitrator's fees or any administrative fee imposed by the American Arbitration Association shall be divided equally by the grievant and the University. The arbitration process under this Institutional Appeal Procedure is the exclusive method of external review and is final and binding on both Palo Alto University and the grievant. The arbitrator's

award shall be final, binding and conclusive upon the parties and may be entered in any state or federal court having jurisdiction.

In the event a student believes they have been unfairly treated by Palo Alto University they should follow the PAU grievance procedures. In the event a student feels it cannot be resolved by the methods outlined in the University's publications and Web site, the student has the right to contact the accrediting organizations and related governmental agencies.

An individual may contact the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education for review of a complaint. The bureau may be contacted at:

Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education

2535 Capitol Oaks Drive STE 400

Sacramento, CA 95833

Phone: 916-431-6924

FAX: 916-263-1897

Website: <http://www.bppe.ca.gov>