

Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine

Copyright Infringement Policy

I. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the expectations of the Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine (MSOM) regarding the use of copyrighted materials. It is designed to define copyright infringement, clarify legal obligations, and establish institutional guidelines that promote respect for intellectual property and compliance with federal law.

In accordance with 34 CFR §668.14(b)(30), MSOM has developed plans to effectively combat the unauthorized distribution of copyrighted materials and, to the extent practicable, provide alternatives to illegal downloading or peer-to-peer distribution of intellectual property. MSOM maintains documentation of these efforts to demonstrate compliance with federal requirements.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals affiliated with MSOM, including faculty, staff, students, contractors, and anyone utilizing the institution's technological or informational resources.

III. POLICY

All members of the MSOM community are expected to comply with United States copyright law and institutional policies regarding the appropriate use of copyrighted content. Unauthorized use, reproduction, or distribution of copyrighted materials is strictly prohibited. Common forms of infringement include sharing or downloading music, films, software, textbooks, or educational resources without permission; participating in peer-to-peer file sharing of copyrighted material; and uploading protected content to public platforms or repositories without proper authorization.

IV. LEGAL CONSEQUENCES

Federal copyright law, specifically the Copyright Act of 1976 (Title 17, United States Code), provides strong protections to creators and copyright holders. Violators of these laws may face both civil and criminal penalties. Civil penalties may include actual damages or statutory damages ranging from \$750 to \$30,000 for each work infringed. In cases of willful infringement, courts may award damages up to \$150,000 per work. Courts also have the discretion to impose additional costs, including attorneys' fees. Criminal penalties for willful copyright infringement may include fines up to \$250,000 and imprisonment for up to five years. Further details are available in Sections 504 and 505 of Title 17 of the United States Code.

V. INSTITUTIONAL CONSEQUENCES

MSOM treats copyright infringement as a serious violation. Individuals found to have engaged in such activity may face disciplinary action, which may include the loss of access to institutional technology resources, academic sanctions, suspension, or expulsion for students, and employment-related consequences for faculty and staff.

VI. USE OF CAMPUS NETWORKS & TECHNOLOGY

Use of MSOM's information technology systems for the unlawful acquisition or distribution of copyrighted materials is strictly prohibited. To combat unauthorized activity, the institution implements technological and administrative controls to monitor and manage network activity in alignment with the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), including the use of URL blocking technology to deter peer-to-peer file sharing of copyrighted content. MSOM actively promotes copyright compliance through annual notifications and mandatory technology use agreements. These efforts are designed to prevent copyright violations before they occur.

VII. LEGAL ALTERNATIVES TO ILLEGAL DOWNLOADING

In compliance with 34 CFR §668.14(b)(30), MSOM encourages the use of legal resources for accessing copyrighted material. The institution refers all users to a list of legally authorized downloading sources maintained by Educause, available at <https://www.educause.edu/focus-areas-and-initiatives/policy-and-security/educause-policy/legal-sources-online>. MSOM does not guarantee the accessibility or continued availability of these third-party websites through institutional networks. In addition to the resources listed by EDUCAUSE, MSOM encourages the use of the institution's library resources, licensed media platforms, and open educational resources (OER) as legal alternatives to unauthorized downloading.

VIII. QUESTIONS OR REPORTS OF VIOLATIONS

Questions regarding the proper use of copyrighted materials or reports of suspected copyright violations should be directed to the Office of Academic Affairs or the MSOM IT Department. Reports will be handled confidentially and investigated according to institutional procedures.