

# ADDICTION MEDICINE AREA OF CONCENTRATION

The Area of Concentration in Addiction Medicine (AOC-AM) will provide students a longitudinal academic experience focused on substance use-related disorders. This is a particularly relevant area of interest to our students given the current public health crisis surrounding addiction. However, substance use disorders and addiction have existed for centuries and will continue to affect all fields of medicine regardless of particular substance. This will enhance the current curriculum by affording students who are interested in addiction medicine an educational experience that will complement medical training in a specialized and meaningful way. Upon completion of the program, students will receive an “Area of Concentration – Addiction Medicine” certificate by the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine (UPSOM).

## GOALS

Students will be encouraged to pursue a scholarly project in the realm of addiction medicine, in adherence with UPSOM’s scholarly project expectations. In addition, with faculty guidance, students will choose from a variety of activities in which to participate that will enhance the breadth and depth of their understanding of social, clinical and research aspects surrounding substance use disorders. The flexibility for each student to personalize their AOC program is intended to foster participation and interest. Students will meet individually with an AOC co-director to discuss a tailored plan for earning the required AOC-AM credits. A continued engagement in activities and maintained interest are necessary to complete the program in good standing and to receive the AOC-AM certificate at graduation.

## CREDITS

Students are expected to achieve 150 credits prior to graduation in order to complete the program. At least some credits must be earned each year that students are enrolled in the AOC-AM. Furthermore, some credits must be earned from each of the three categories listed below.

Category	Activity	Credit
<b>Research</b>	Scholarly Project	Encouraged, 2/hr
<b>Educational</b>	Lunch talk, Workshop, Film Night, or Journal Club	2/hr
	Mini-Electives, Electives, Sub-Internships	25/week
	AA/NA Meetings	3/hr
	Conference (attendance)	2/hr
<b>Practice</b>	Gatherings, meetings with faculty etc.	2/hr
	Community outreach activities ex.: The Poison center, OverdoseFreePA	3/hr

Impact writing piece (essay, letter to the editor, letter to a member of the government...)	3/hr
Shadowing	2/hr
Conference (presenting)	Credit variable (high)
<b>Other</b>	Variable
<b>Total Required</b>	150

Credits that are weighted by hour may be accumulated for multiple hours of participation in the specified activity. Other activities may be considered for credit following discussion with the AOC co-directors and determination of appropriate credit equivalence. Scholars who elect to complete an SRP in addiction medicine will still be required to complete a minimum of 10 credits from the Educational and Practice categories.

### COMPONENTS & ACTIVITIES

This will allow students to have a mixture of the aforementioned experiences. Each student will individually design their AOC experience, with approval from a faculty mentor and the AOC co-directors. The co-directors will connect students to mentors with whom they may discuss research and/or volunteer opportunities. There will also be a few meetings for all AOC-AM students throughout the year, opportunities to attend conferences, and ample occasions to receive guidance from faculty and peers. This program will create community for our students who share an interest in substance use disorders, affording them easy access to fellow students, faculty at UPSOM, as well as from other institutions who are engaged in the field of addiction medicine. Students will be expected to record all their attended activities in a log in order for the credits to be approved. Students should keep this log in a portfolio (containing activity log, any produced materials such as letters to the editor, posters etc.), which they will bring to their required meetings with a co-director.

The activity categories and their objectives are detailed below:

1. **Research Experience:** Students can opt to choose a scholarly research project (SRP) based on their interest in substance use and substance use disorders. The SRP can be based on qualitative research, which can produce a theory or create hypotheses for future research, or quantitative research techniques that tests a specific hypothesis in some way. By completing a mentored SRP of publication quality, students will practice the ability to think creatively and analytically. This experience will also allow students to better understand and critically evaluate the research methodologies used in addiction medicine. Students will be encouraged to present their SRP at a substance use-related meeting such as AMERSA, ASAM and American Society of Addiction Psychiatry, for example.
2. **Educational Experience:** students will be able to participate in a variety of educational experiences aimed at enhancing the breadth and depth of their understanding and skills in addiction medicine.
  - *Lunch Talk, Film Night, or Journal Club* – Conversations will be centered around a specific workshop, film, or academic paper with a topic that is important in addiction medicine. Dialogues will include students, patients, faculty and other professionals who work with people who use drugs.

- *Workshops* – Workshops will allow scholars to explore research methodologies, sociocultural and ethical aspects surrounding addiction, uncover and explore pervasive stigmas, as well as practice applicable skills (ex: Narcan administration, SBIRT). This information will assist Scholars as they pursue their research and/or clinical work. One example is an inter-professional overdose management workshop.
- *Mini-Electives, Electives & Sub-Internships* – Because “Opioid Epidemic and Addiction” is a curricular theme at Pitt Med, there are existing options for electives that will afford AOC-AM students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of topics related to addiction. Examples include:
  - *Transitions: Primary care’s role in addiction medicine mini-elective*
  - *Addiction medicine and dual diagnosis elective*
  - *Outpatient addiction medicine elective*
  - *Pain medicine elective*
  - *Dual Diagnosis Unit sub-internship*
  - *Medical Toxicology elective*
  - *Participation in the forming Addiction Consult Team*
- *Conferences* - Various conferences occur throughout the year which address the topic of addiction. Conference attendance will be reviewed by the student’s advisor and the program co-directors.
- *AA/NA Meetings* – *Observing AA/NA meeting* with structured narrative writing afterward

3. **Addiction Medicine Practice:** These experiences will be broad-based and are meant, in part, to deepen the scholars’ understanding of the various impacts addiction has on individuals and their communities. They will include:

- *Social Gatherings* - Informal social gatherings will allow Scholars to form relationships with other students, mentors, and other invited guests. It will also highlight the role of inter-professional, as well as inter-departmental collaboration in the field of addiction medicine. Scholars are expected to gain an understanding of aspects that contribute to the lens through which addiction is viewed by professionals in different areas of medicine and the health sciences, law enforcement and politics.
  - o *Visiting Faculty* – Students will be afforded the opportunity to have discussions with visiting faculty in addiction medicine to learn more about the faculty member’s career and research.
- *Impact Writing Piece* – Scholars will be encouraged to gain experience in voicing knowledge they have gained with a view to impact public perception regarding addiction-related issues or policy. One example might be to submit a publishable letter to a journal editor. Letters can raise issues/concerns about a recently published paper in the area of substance abuse, a recently passed bill etc. Students are expected to work with their faculty mentor to discuss topics of interest.
- *Community Outreach* – Scholars will be expected to engage in community outreach. This might include hosting educational sessions at local schools (regarding topics such as harm reduction, disposal of unused drugs etc.) and Narcan training in areas of need, for example. Potential organizations through whom scholars might be able to gain such experiences include Prevention Point, The Poison Center, FBI HOPE, DEA, PA Office of

the Attorney General, PA Department of Health, Allegheny County Health Department, PA Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, Allegheny County Office of the Medical Examiner, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

- *Administration and Policy* - Scholars will also have the opportunity to gain an understanding of the differential impact of drug policy, policy formulation and implementation by local, state, and federal governments through collaboration and mentorship by government affairs staff and physicians active in policy development. Additionally, scholars will be able to assist, through apprenticeship, in the design and delivery of care based upon existing regulations.
- *Conferences* – Students will be given the chance to present their research at regional and national conferences and meet with students and faculty from other institutions. Mentors and/or co-directors may arrange informal meetings between Scholars and prominent individuals at the conferences.

4. **Other Activities:** Students will be expected to meet with an AOC co-director biannually to review progress. Once a student has joined the AOC, meetings with a co-director should occur once in the fall semester and once in the spring, schedules allowing.

#### TIMELINE

Scholars will participate in AOC-AM throughout the four years of their medical training. Students may enroll at any point, although typically students will begin by the end of MS1 or beginning of MS2. Below is an example of a chronological outline highlighting typical milestones of the AOC-AM:

Year	Milestones
MS1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participate in AOC activities on joining (earlier if desired)</li> <li>▪ Meet with an AOC co-director</li> <li>▪ Submit declaration form online for Student Affairs</li> <li>▪ Secure a faculty mentor for a SRP, if desired</li> <li>▪ Summer research in addictions, if desired</li> </ul>
MS2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meet with your mentor once/semester</li> <li>▪ Submit SRP proposal and start research, if applicable</li> <li>▪ Keep record of all activities in your AOC log</li> <li>▪ Keep record of anything produced (ex. Letter to the editor...) in Portfolio along with AOC log</li> <li>▪ Keep attending AOC-AM experiences</li> <li>▪ Meet with an AOC co-director to discuss your progress</li> </ul>
MS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meet with your mentor each semester, if doing AM SRP</li> <li>▪ Keep attending AOC-AM experiences, as time allows</li> <li>▪ Keep record of all activities in your AOC log</li> <li>▪ Keep record of anything produced (ex. Letter to the editor...) in Portfolio along with AOC log</li> <li>▪ Meet with an AOC co-director to review your progress</li> </ul>

<b>MS4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete SRP and final report by February, if applicable</li> <li>▪ Keep attending AOC-AM experiences, as time allows</li> <li>▪ Keep record of all activities in your AOC log</li> <li>▪ Keep record of anything produced (ex. Letter to the editor...) in Portfolio along with AOC log</li> <li>▪ Review your all you AOC-AM experiences with an AOC co-director to ensure that you have satisfied completion requirements</li> <li>▪ Attend AOC-AM graduation and receive certificate</li> </ul>
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### **EVALUATION OF SCHOLARS**

Every year, AOC co-directors will review the progress of the student. Any areas of concern will be discussed among the Steering Committee (the three co-directors and student AOC coordinator).

- The three co-directors will require a biannual update of the student's progress and scholarly project, if applicable.
- The co-directors will award the scholar's certificate conditional upon satisfactory completion of AOC-AM goals.

### **EVALUATION OF FACULTY & THE AOC-AM PROGRAM**

At the end of each year, scholars will complete an AOC evaluation form to be reviewed by the AOC Steering Committee, as well as by the UPSOM Office of Medical Student Education.

### **RECRUITMENT & ACCEPTANCE AOC-AM SCHOLARS**

- A description of the AOC-AM will be given to prospective students and a description will be posted to UPSOM's web site.
- AOC-AM scholars will answer questions and distribute information during second look and during orientation.
- Students will apply to the AOC-AM using a standard application form and a short personal statement. The Steering Committee will review applications and issue acceptances.

### **AOC DIRECTORS**

Antoine Douaihy, MD  
Jane Liebschutz, MD, MPH, FACP  
Michael Lynch, MD  
Savannah Tollefson