

IOWA COLLEGE STUDENT AID COMMISSION

Ultimate Medical Academy Application for Postsecondary Registration Renewal June 16, 2016

STAFF ACTION:

Approve Ultimate Medical Academy's Iowa registration renewal request for a period of two years, beginning retroactively on July 20, 2015 and ending on July 20, 2017.

Registration Purpose

Revised Iowa Code Section 261B.3 (effective July 1, 2012) requires a school to register with the Commission if a person compensated by the school conducts any portion of a course of instruction, including by in-person, distance education, or correspondence method in this state or if the school otherwise has a presence in this state. Presence means a location in Iowa at which a student participates in any structured activity related to a school's distance education course of instruction. Presence also means an address, location, telephone number, or internet protocol address in Iowa from which a school conducts any aspect of its operations. Ultimate Medical Academy (UMA) applied to offer distance education programs, one of which includes a structured practicum that an Iowa resident would participate in at an Iowa location. The Academy does not now employ Iowa-based faculty to teach in its distance education programs, but may wish to do so in the future.

Institutional Information

Ultimate Medical Academy is a nonprofit postsecondary educational institution whose administrative offices are located at 3101 W. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Tampa Florida. (Note: The school transitioned from a for-profit to a nonprofit institution on March 9, 2015.) The school's online programs are coordinated from this location. The school also maintains two campuses at 1255 Cleveland St., Clearwater, Florida, and 9309 N. Florida Ave. #100, Tampa, Florida. The school's chief executive officer is Steven Kemler. The Academy is owned by Clinical and Patient Educators Association (CPEA), a Colorado nonprofit corporation, which has 100% control of UMA. The Academy maintains an active certificate of authorization to conduct business in Iowa, #495589, as a foreign nonprofit company. Its registered agent and Iowa contact point is National Corporate Research, LTD, 604 Locust Street STE #222, Des Moines, IA 50309

Physical Facilities: Not applicable for a distance education program provider.

Accreditation: Ultimate Medical Academy is accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS), which is an entity recognized by the federal Department of Education.

Federal Stafford Loan Cohort Default Rate (FFY 2012): 13.8%

Graduation Rate: 50% and 62% for the Tampa and Clearwater locations, respectively. This is the percentage of first-time, full-time undergraduate students who graduated within 150% of the normal time for program completion as reported to the federal Department of Education.

Average Loan Debt upon Graduation: Ultimate Medical Academy discloses *median* loan debt for all of its programs, as was required by the federal Department of Education during the period when it was classified as a for-profit school:

- Diploma – Medical Administrative Assistance: Title IV \$10,111; Private \$0; Institutional \$25
- Diploma – Medical Assistant: Title IV \$12,696; Private \$0; Institutional \$0
- Diploma – Medical Billing and Coding: Title IV \$10,781; Private \$0; Institutional \$0
- Diploma – Medical/Clinical Laboratory Assistant: Title IV \$10,262; Private \$0; Institutional \$0
- Diploma – Medical Office Billing Specialist: Title IV \$10,445; Private \$0; Institutional \$25
- Diploma – Patient Care Technician: Title IV \$9,412; Private \$0; Institutional \$0
- Diploma – Pharmacy Technician: Title IV \$8,474; Private \$0; Institutional \$0
- Associate of Science – Health Information Technology: Title IV \$17,991, Private \$0, Institutional \$56
- Associate of Science – Healthcare Management: Title IV \$16,034, Private \$0, Institutional \$25
- Associate of Science – Medical Billing and Coding: Title IV \$16,520; Private \$0, Institutional \$0
- Associate of Science - Nursing: Title IV \$25,519; Private \$0; Institutional \$0
- Associate of Science, Health Sciences (Basic X-Ray): Title IV \$13,530; Private \$0; Institutional \$638
- Associate of Science, Health Sciences (Dental Assistant): Title IV \$23,020; Private \$0; Institutional \$0
- Associate of Science, Health Sciences (Medical Assistant): Title IV \$17,987; Private \$0; Institutional \$0
- Associate of Science, Health Sciences (Medical Administrative Assistant): Title IV \$14,680; Private \$0; Institutional \$0
- Associate of Science, Health Sciences (Medical/ Clinical Laboratory Assistant): Title IV \$17,598; Private \$0; Institutional \$0
- Associate of Science, Health Sciences (Medical Office and Billing Specialist): Title IV \$16,312; Private \$0; Institutional \$0
- Associate of Science, Health Sciences (Patient Care Technician): Title IV \$19,195; Private \$0; Institutional \$0
- Associate of Science, Health Sciences (Pharmacy Technician): Title IV \$14,231; Private \$0; Institutional \$0
- Associate of Science, Health & Human Services: Data Not Available
- Associate of Science, Health Sciences (Healthcare Technology & Systems): Data Not Available

Record Preservation: All student records are maintained on an electronic database, and access to data is controlled based upon need and is password protected. Records are backed up daily to redundant systems that are both on site and remote, that UMA owns and controls.

Hard copies of student records are also maintained. These files are stored in a secured area at the online campus for all current students and for the most recent cohort. Because of the volume of files, older files are stored off-site under a contract with Iron Mountain, a secure data storage facility in Tampa, Florida. Off-site records can be retrieved within hours of notification.

Transcript Requests: Any current or former student may request a transcript by contacting:

Registrar's Office
3101 W. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33607
(888) 205-2456

UMA students and alumni wishing to obtain copies of their unofficial or official transcripts may do so either in person, or in writing via mail or email. Transcripts of either type will only be released to a UMA student or graduate, unless a surrogate (another designated person) is identified on the student's FERPA form. A request for official transcripts to be sent to a third party must include the address of the intended recipient. A student should allow ten calendar days for a transcript after a request has been made. Students and/or graduates must be current on their financial obligations to UMA to receive official transcripts.

Instructional Methodology: Instructional methodology varies by program, and even by course, depending upon the nature of the material and the available resources. The pedagogical approaches used within all UMA distance education courses match current best practices in postsecondary online instruction. Instructors use both "one to many" and "one to one" instructional techniques. Each of the learning resources have their individual strengths, so the instructors are required to use a multiple array of these resources in each class to best accommodate different learning styles and individual student needs.

UMA Online Learning Site delivers distance education. Students access course and program content via an online learning management system, Blackboard. The online delivery system provides students with an effective learning environment that is accessible to students year-round, 24 hours a day. The system is designed to provide accessibility 99% of the time. Each program offered online is primarily taught through distance education. However, some programs contain an externship that is conducted at an approved off-site location. Instructors deliver curriculum aligned with key industry competencies, communicate one-on-one with the student and provide live instructional supplemental lessons. Students receive a multitude of on-demand tools and resources to facilitate and support their learning and development including supplemental reading materials, study tools and tips, instructional webinars, and tutorials.

Student Learning Resources: Within the online classrooms, the following instructional and assessment resources are provided to facilitate substantive interactive engagement that meets the educational goals and objectives of each course:

- PowerPoint presentations
- Interactive software simulations
- Discussion forums
- Graded and ungraded practice activities
- Video files

- Audio/Video demonstrations
- Synchronous chat room sessions
- Library resources

Additionally, scheduled, open-form webinars for specific technical topics are provided on a per program basis by specialists to assist the general student population with commonly experienced difficult areas. Resources are evaluated and additions, changes, deletions, modifications, etc., are discussed and implemented throughout the year based on student performance monitoring, instructor feedback, and subject matter experts' recommendations. There is continual review of all resources by the instructors and program chairs in each department. Much like the residential programs, the administration assesses resource usage, student satisfaction, faculty feedback, advisory board feedback, and impact on student outcomes. Data collected related to instructional resources are used to guide strategic planning.

The UMA Virtual Library <https://www.ultimatemedical.edu/library/> provides access to full-text articles and transcripts from more than 2383 magazines, newspapers, books, and radio/TV programs, along with access to more than 250,000+ photographs and maps, and over 20,000 unique educational audio/video resources. The Library is a 100% full text, general research database.

Tutoring: Academic coaching with one-on-one tutoring is available for each course. Students may share questions by phone or email. UMA staff strives to respond to students as soon as possible, often within 24 hours.

In addition, UMA provides live, interactive learning labs. Learning labs help students get a better understanding of course concepts through live lectures. This involves listening to a live instructor while viewing a slide presentation. Students have the opportunity to ask questions during the presentation. UMA offers more than 200 live learning labs per week. Labs are conducted via Blackboard Collaborate and include audio and slides. Students may call in or listen through the student's computer speakers. Help is available in general subject areas that include but are not limited to biology, English, accounting, math, Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, Word, dressing for success, and in program areas that include Healthcare Management, Medical Administrative Assistant, Medical Billing and Coding, Medical Office Billing Specialist, and Pharmacy Technician.

UMA also offers the Student Guidance Center, a no-cost personal assistance program for UMA students and their dependents. Students have 24/7 assistance with everyday challenges through the Student Guidance Center. The Center offers confidential assessment and referral, work-life solutions, financial information and resources, guidance resources online, and legal support and resources at no cost to students. All Student Guidance Center services are completely confidential. Students register for services through a link on the UMA website.

Additional information about student services is located on the UMA website at <https://www.ultimatemedical.edu/student-services/>.

Curriculum Evaluation and Development: UMA provides several program supervisors to share the tasks of organization, administration, quality improvement, planning, and development of each academic program. Organization, planning and initial development of each program is

supervised by qualified individuals within the Program Development group. Subject matter experts and instructional design experts are responsible for these supervisor components. Additionally, the program development group works collaboratively with Program Chairs and faculty for quality improvement on an ongoing continuous basis.

Program Chairs are subject matter experts and maintain ongoing program supervisor responsibility. They assume the full administrative responsibility for the management of faculty and classroom implementation of instructional requirements for each program. Program Chairs continuously monitor faculty instruction and feedback to identify quality improvement opportunities.

Programs are assessed and evaluated by studying:

- Grade distribution throughout the program to determine the effectiveness of each course and the results of the comprehensive exams in each course.
- Retention of students and if not retained, the exit points and reasons.
- Successful completion/graduation.
- Placement data.
- Student survey data to determine program effectiveness.

Staff review of Associate Program Chair and Program Chair educational credentials produce graduate level background in education, medical science, health science, business administration, human resource management, and health services administration.

Student Complaints Process: UMA's student complaints process and policies can be found in a number of locations that are readily available to the public and students including in its catalog at <https://portal.ultimatemedical.edu/public/uma/images/PDF/Catalog/UMA%20Catalog.pdf>. UMA contacts for student complaints are as follows: communicate with the appropriate instructor or staff member; communicate with the Learner Services Advisor, or administrative manager; communicate with the Director of Education; unresolved concerns may be elevated to a Review Committee. A UMA Cares Resolution Specialist is available for students to voice their problems, concerns, frustrations, or complaints via phone at 800.509.5474 or e-mail at umacares@ultimatemedical.edu.

Distance Education Programs Offered In Iowa

The total, estimated cost of tuition, fees, books and supplies for each program is listed below. Tuition costs vary when courses are failed and must be repeated. Students are charged full tuition for repeated coursework.

It should be noted that the Academy charges lesser tuition to veterans and active military personnel.

Diploma Programs

- Healthcare Technology & Systems: \$15,910
- Medical Office and Billing Specialist: \$16,340
- Medical Administrative Assistant: \$16,340
- Medical Billing and Coding: \$16,770

- Pharmacy Technician: \$16,125

Associate of Science Degree Programs

- Health and Human Services: \$27,520
- Health Information Technology: \$27,305
- Healthcare Accounting: \$27,950
- Healthcare Management: \$28,380
- Medical Billing and Coding: \$27,090
- Health Sciences –Health Technology & Systems: \$26,230
- Health Sciences – Medical Office and Billing Specialist: \$26,660
- Health Sciences – Pharmacy Technician \$26,445
- Health Sciences – Medical Administrative Assistant: \$26,660

The following programs require an externship/field experience:

- Pharmacy Technician Diploma and Associate of Science Degree
- Health Information Technology Associate of Science Degree

Once a student successfully completes online classroom training in these programs, the student is placed in an onsite externship/practicum practicing the responsibilities and duties consistent with the core concentration of his/her program. An onsite externship/practicum must begin within 14 days of completing classroom training. A student must successfully complete the onsite externship/practicum in order to graduate and receive an applicable credential. UMA assigns externship/practicum sites based on availability. Universal Medical Academy does not guarantee a particular office or geographical location. However, a student's request is taken into consideration when making assignments. All UMA externships are unpaid. UMA has a relationship with companies across the country for health information technology field experiences.

Students enrolled in a pharmacy technician program receive 180 hours of hands-on experience under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist at a pharmacy. This includes learning a variety of day-to-day tasks that may be common for this career field. The practicum for this program includes 135 hours of simulation and 45 hours of hands-on training on site.

Students enrolled in the Health Information Technology program receive 45 hours of hands-on experience under the supervision of a professional. This includes learning a variety of day-to-day tasks that may be common for this career field.

Registration Compliance

As required by Iowa Code Section 261B.4, UMA disclosed its institutional policy on refunding tuition charges for withdrawn students. The Academy's tuition refund policy is not governed by Iowa law since the school is a private nonprofit institution. However, staff notes that UMA's tuition refund policy for Iowa resident students who withdraw is more beneficial to the student than required of a for-profit school under Iowa law.

Administrative rules specifically require the school to comply with the requirements of Chapter 261.9(1) “e” through “h”.

- Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(e) requires a school to maintain and disseminate a drug and alcohol abuse policy that includes sanctions for violation of the school’s policy and information about the availability of drug or alcohol counseling or rehabilitation. Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(f) requires a school to maintain and disseminate a sexual abuse policy that includes information about counseling opportunities and reporting instances of sexual abuse to school officials and law enforcement. These requirements duplicate policies and disclosures required by the federal Department of Education for a school that participates in the federal student aid programs. The Academy complies with the requirements of Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(e) and (f), and discloses these policies to students in its Student Consumer Information at:
 - ✓ <https://www.ultimatemedical.edu/pdfs/Drug-and-Alcohol-Abuse-Prevention.pdf>
 - ✓ <https://www.ultimatemedical.edu/pdfs/tampacampuscrimestatistics.pdf>
 - ✓ <https://www.ultimatemedical.edu/pdfs/clearwatercampuscrimestatistics.pdf>
- Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(g) requires a school to maintain a special policy concerning institutional charges for members of the Iowa National Guard or reserve members of the U.S. Armed Forces, or the spouse of such a member if the member has a dependent child, when the service member or spouse must withdraw from the school because the service member has been called to active (Iowa) state or federal military duty or service. The Academy complies with the requirement of Iowa Code Section 261.9(1)(g), and discloses these policies to students in its school catalog addendum at <https://portal.ultimatemedical.edu/public/uma/images/PDF/Catalog/UMA%20Catalog%20Addendum.pdf>. The Catalog will be updated with this policy upon the next, regularly scheduled Catalog publication date.
- This law requires a school to develop and implement a policy for employees who, in the course of their employment, attend, examine, counsel, or treat a child and who suspect the physical or sexual abuse of that child. By cross-reference from existing administrative rules for registration [283-21.2(261B), subsection 7], this new policy now applies to certain registered schools. However, implementation of this policy is not required for a distance education program provider who has no compensated party conducting operational activity at an Iowa location. Ultimate Medical Academy has not applied for registration renewal to conduct any type of operational activity in Iowa.

Student Consumer Information: In its registration application, UMA affirms its willingness to comply with the requirements of Iowa Code Chapter 261.9, as stipulated by Iowa Code Section 261B.4(8). Chapter 261.9 requires disclosure to students of information about the school’s programs, charges, tuition refund policies, whether a certificate or diploma awarded by the school is applicable toward a degree program the school offers, and the identity of the school’s accrediting agency. These disclosures are duplicative of the federal Department of Education’s student consumer information disclosure requirements for a school that participates in the federal student aid programs and the Academy discloses them in its catalog and online catalog addendum at <https://www.ultimatemedical.edu/student-information/>.

UMA affirms on the application that it will comply with the provisions of Iowa Code Section 261B.7. Effective July 1, 2012, these provisions of Iowa Code were modified to state that,

provided the school does not claim “approval” or “accreditation,” the school must disclose to students that it is registered by the Commission and provide Commission contact information for students who have questions or complaints about the school. The Academy provides this information to Iowa students on its state agency contact site and in its Catalog:

- <http://www.ultimatemedical.edu/agencycontactinformationonline.pdf>
- <https://portal.ultimatemedical.edu/public/uma/images/PDF/Catalog/UMA%20Catalog.pdf>

Financial Responsibility: Ultimate Medical Academy submitted copies of an independent audit conducted by TJS Deemer Dana, LLP, dated May 2, 2014, and covering the institutional fiscal year ending December 31, 2013. At the time of this audit report, Ultimate Medical Academic remained a for-profit institution. The auditing firm expressed its opinion that UMA’s financial statements are free of material misstatement and the results of the auditing firm’s tests disclose no instances of noncompliance.

- A for-profit institution that participates in the federal student aid programs must maintain a composite score, based on a three factor financial responsibility ratio, of at least 1.5 in order to be determined “financially responsible” without additional oversight. The independent auditors’ report states that UMA’s composite score for the year ending on December 31, 2013 was 1.6.
- A for-profit institution is prohibited from deriving more than 90% of its revenue from Title IV aid. The independent auditing firm tested UMA’s calculation that, for the year ending December 31, 2013, UMA derived 87% of its revenue from Title IV aid.

Full-Time Iowa Resident Faculty Member or Program Coordinator: UMA has no Iowa-based faculty at this time. The school is not required to have Iowa-resident faculty since it has applied for registration renewal solely to offer distance education programs in Iowa.

Instructional/Supervisory Staff Qualifications: The Academy provides a summary of the educational credentials of its faculty, including the subject matter each faculty member or instructor teaches, in its online catalog addendum dated May 24, 2016.

Of a total of 322 full-time and adjunct faculty members, all have at least a bachelor’s degree in a field related to the curriculum in which they provide instruction, or a bachelor’s degree and one or more professional certifications in a related health sciences field. Faculty members with master’s degrees total 215, who have educational expertise in health care management, public health, business administration, organizational management, education or teaching, instructional technology, adult education and distance learning, curriculum and instruction, science education, educational administration, education technology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, information systems, computer science, medical science, nursing, gerontology, English, mathematics, accounting, finance, human resource management, or communications fields. Additional faculty holds terminal degrees in education, law, chiropractic medicine, pharmacy, medicine, health administration, educational leadership, administration and supervision.

Commitment to Iowa Students and Teach-Out: The Academy’s application includes a statement signed by CEO Steve Kemler in which Mr. Kemler affirms the Academy’s commitment to offering distance education programs to Iowa residents. Mr. Kemler also states that, to best serve the students of Iowa, in the unlikely event that Ultimate Medical Academy

should close, arrangements would be made to provide alternatives for students to complete their programs of study at other institutions for those who have not yet completed their education at UMA.

Student Complaints: None.

Compliance with Iowa Code Chapter 714

Section 714.18 – Evidence of Financial Responsibility

Ultimate Medical Academy submitted with its registration application satisfactory evidence of financial responsibility, including a continuous corporate surety bond payable to the State of Iowa in the amount of \$50,000, issued by Liberty Mutual Insurance Company.

Section 714.23 – State Tuition Refund Policy

Compliance with this requirement of Iowa law is no longer applicable since UMA's transitioned from a for-profit to a nonprofit institution in March of 2015.