



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

School of Medicine

Operating Policy and Procedure

SOM OP: 40.03, **Student Conduct**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this School of Medicine (SOM) Policy and Procedure is to define expectations of student conduct when enrolled in the School of Medicine.

REVIEW: This SOM Policy and Procedure shall be reviewed within each odd-numbered fiscal year by the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee. Revisions will be forwarded to the Office of the Dean for approval and publication.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

- 1. General.** This policy is intended to provide guidelines to students, faculty, administrators and others relative to expectations about student conduct. This policy is not limited to the time that students are engaged in educational activities but should be considered to be in force at all times from matriculation to graduation.
- 2. Standards of Behavior in the Learning Environment.** The medical learning environment should facilitate students' adoption of the professional and collegial attitudes necessary for effective, caring and compassionate health care. The development and nurturing of these attitudes is enhanced and, indeed, is based on the presence of mutual respect between teacher and learner. Characteristic of this respect is the expectation that all participants in the educational program assume their responsibilities in a manner that enriches the quality of the learning process.

While these goals are primary to a school's educational mission, it must be acknowledged that the social and behavioral diversity of students, faculty, residents, and staff, combined with the intensity of the interactions between them, will, from time to time, lead to alleged, perceived or real incidents of inappropriate behavior or mistreatment of individuals. Examples of mistreatment may include but are not limited to sexual harassment; discrimination or harassment based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability or age; humiliation, psychological or physical punishment and the use of grading and other forms of assessment in a punitive manner.

The occurrence of such incidents, either intentional or unintentional, results in a disruption of the spirit of learning and a breach in the integrity and trust between teacher and learner. Further, TTUHSC has a policy of zero tolerance for any type of discrimination or harassment. A student who feels that he/she has been the object of inappropriate behavior on the part of a faculty member, a resident, a staff person, or other student, shall report such behavior in a timely fashion to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.

The School of Medicine has adopted a Code of Personal/ Professional and Academic Conduct that governs the behavior of medical students. The purpose of this Code is to reaffirm the importance of appropriate professional behavior on the part of students and to establish guidelines for dealing with inappropriate behavior.

When an incident is reported, the Associate Dean and/or the Assistant Dean for Admissions will coordinate with the student as his/her advocate to ensure that the appropriate policies and procedures of the Health Sciences Center and the School of Medicine are invoked in the student's behalf (see Policy on Student- Faculty Disputes). The procedures of the Code of Personal/Professional and Academic Conduct will also be followed as necessary in this process.

3. Medical Student Honor Code and Code of Professional and Academic Conduct.

a. Medical professionals are expected, not only by patients but also by society as a whole, to possess certain attributes, which include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Altruism, whereby they subordinate their own interests to take care of their patients
- 2) High ethical and moral standards
- 3) Honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, caring, compassion and respect in their interactions with patients, colleagues and others.
- 4) Accountability, not only for their own actions, but also for those of their colleagues, which is the basis for the autonomy of the profession.
- 5) Maintaining confidentiality concerning the patient and the patient's records.

The School of Medicine TTUHSC expects medical students to exhibit these attributes.

b. Medical Student Honor Code: In my capacity as a Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Medicine medical student, I will uphold the dignity of the medical profession. I will, to the best of my ability, avoid actions, which might result in harm to my patients. I will protect the dignity of my patients and the deceased, and will protect their confidential information in accordance with the prevailing standards of medical practice. I will not lie, cheat, or steal. I will enter into professional relationships with my colleagues, teachers, and other health care professionals in a manner that is respectful and reflective of the high standards and expectations of my profession. I will not tolerate violations of this code by others and will report such violations to the appropriate authorities.

c. The TTUHSC Code of Professional and Academic conduct can be found in its entirety on the TTUHSC Office of Student Services website at www.ttuhscc.edu/student-services/. All School of Medicine students should read and be familiar with the contents.

4. Compact Between Teachers and Learners of Medicine.

a. Preparation for a career in medicine demands the acquisition of a large fund of knowledge and a host of special skills. It also demands the strengthening of those virtues that undergird the doctor-patient relationship and that sustain the profession

of medicine as a moral enterprise. This Compact serves both as a pledge and as a reminder to teachers and learners that their conduct in fulfilling their mutual obligations is the medium through which the profession inculcates its ethical values. This Compact was developed by the American Medical Student Association and has been endorsed by the Educational Policy Committee, the Faculty Executive Council, and the faculty of TTUHSC School of Medicine.

b. Guiding Principles:

- 1) *Duty.* Medical educators have a duty not only to convey the knowledge and skills required for delivering the profession's contemporary standard of care but also to inculcate the values and attitudes required for preserving the medical profession's social contract across generations.
- 2) *Integrity.* The learning environments conducive to conveying professional values must be suffused with integrity. Students learn enduring lessons of professionalism by observing and emulating role models who epitomize authentic professional values and attitudes.
- 3) *Respect.* Fundamental to the ethic of medicine is respect for every individual. Mutual respect between learners, as novice members of the medical profession, and their teachers, as experienced and esteemed professionals, is essential for nurturing that ethic. Given the inherently hierarchical nature of the teacher-learner relationship, teachers have a special obligation to ensure that students and residents are always treated respectfully.

c. Commitments of Faculty:

We pledge our utmost effort to ensure that all components of the educational program for students and residents are of high quality.

As mentors for our student and resident colleagues, we maintain high professional standards in all of our interactions with patients, colleagues, and staff.

We respect all students and residents as individuals, without regard to gender, race, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation; we will not tolerate anyone who manifests disrespect or who expresses biased attitudes towards any student or resident.

We pledge that students and residents will have sufficient time to fulfill personal and family obligations, to enjoy recreational activities, and to obtain adequate rest; we monitor and, when necessary, reduce the time required to fulfill educational objectives, including time required for "call" on clinical rotations, to ensure students' and residents' well-being.

In nurturing both the intellectual and the personal development of students and residents, we celebrate expressions of professional attitudes and behaviors, as well as achievement of academic excellence.

We do not tolerate any abuse or exploitation of students or residents.

We encourage any student or resident who experiences mistreatment or who

witnesses unprofessional behavior to report the facts immediately to appropriate faculty or staff; we treat all such reports as confidential and do not tolerate reprisals or retaliations of any kind.

d. Commitments of Students and Residents:

We pledge our utmost effort to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors required to fulfill all educational objectives established by the faculty.

We cherish the professional virtues of honesty, compassion, integrity, fidelity, and dependability.

We pledge to respect all faculty members and all students and residents as individuals, without regard to gender, race, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation.

As physicians in training, we embrace the highest standards of the medical profession and pledge to conduct ourselves accordingly in all of our interactions with patients, colleagues, and staff.

In fulfilling our own obligations as professionals, we pledge to assist our fellow students and residents in meeting their professional obligations, as well.