

Standards Of Behavior For Interactions With Students (Dealing With Student Mistreatment)

Preamble:

Physicians are held to high standards of professionalism. The medical learning environment should facilitate the acquisition of professional and collegial attitudes for effective, caring and compassionate health care. The development of these skills requires mutual respect between teachers and students, staff and students, and between fellow students. Students encompass undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate trainees. Those in authority are expected to role model these ideals of professionalism in their interactions with patients, patient family members, peers, staff and students. Mutual respect between individuals is one of the core values of the School of Medicine, and is the foundation for these interactions. Our values of integrity, trust, faith, hope and love call all be demonstrated through this respect. This respect can be expressed in many ways, but disrespectful, aggressive and harassing behavior is inappropriate. Prevention of these inappropriate behaviors will be an ongoing activity of the institution lead by the Assistant Vice President for Faculty Development.

While the perception of mistreatment may differ between individuals, examples of mistreatment of students may include but are not limited to:

- Harassment of a sexual nature
- Discrimination based on age, race, gender, faith, national or ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, and veteran status
- Exclusion from any usual and reasonably expected educational opportunities for any reason other than the student's performance
- Any physical or verbal misconduct inflicting bodily injury or emotional harm
- Requirement to perform a menial task or tasks with the intent to humiliate
- Perceived violations of these Standards of Behavior should be reported by the student according to the following procedure. Violations of the Standards may subject the offender to disciplinary action.

From the AAMC, Graduation Questionnaire the following definition of mistreatment has been provided:

Mistreatment either intentional or unintentional occurs when behavior shows disrespect for the dignity of others and unreasonably interferes with the learning process. Examples of mistreatment include sexual harassment; discrimination or harassment based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation; humiliation, psychological or physical punishment; and the use of grading and other forms of assessment in a punitive manner.

Reporting Procedure:

The individual considering making a report of mistreatment should first, if at all possible, attempt to resolve the matter directly with the alleged offender. Students may consult with an Associate/Assistant Dean for Student Services at any time for assistance. Such informal consultation will be confidential, unless precluded by safety of the student or University policy and procedure. Students have the right to report such incidents without fear of retribution or retaliation.

Should this not adequately resolve the situation a formal report may be filed in writing with an Associate/Assistant Dean for Student Services. Upon receipt of such a report the person receiving it may:

Review the situation and alleged violation with the accused, and the accused Department Chair, and if necessary then, call into session the Standards of Behavior Committee, to review the facts and make a recommendation for action to the Dean of the School of Medicine.

The Standards of Behavior Committee will be appointed annually by the Dean of the School of Medicine and will consist of two basic science faculty members, and four clinical science faculty members with two from the Morgantown and two from the Charleston campus, and if necessary the Assistant Vice President for Social Justice of the Health Sciences Center.

The Associate/Assistant Dean will select one of the panel members to serve as Chair of the panel.

Such a panel will convene in a timely manner and may solicit facts by speaking with both the victim and the alleged perpetrator, as well as any key witnesses.

A report of the findings and recommendations will be submitted to the Associate Dean of Student Services commissioning the panel within 10 working days of the meeting.

The Associate Dean will review the findings, and forward them on the Dean, or the Dean's designee, of the School of Medicine for action. The Associate Dean will report all actions by the Dean related to mistreatment of students between fellow students to the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards for the MD degree program. Upon receipt of this information, the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards may make additional recommendations to the Dean regarding the offending student's status within the MD degree program. Such recommendations and subsequent actions from the Dean will be handled through the Policy on Academic and Professional Standards.

The decision of the Dean regarding penalty related to mistreatment under this policy may be appealed to the Chancellor for Health Sciences, or his designee, within 10 working days of receipt of the written decision of the Dean. The decision of the Chancellor is final. Retaliation against any member of the School community who comes forward in good faith with a complaint will not be tolerated. Such action will be caused for action under this policy as a separate incident of mistreatment.

A student alleging sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination will ordinarily be referred to the Health Sciences Office for Social Justice.

MS-32. A medical education program must define and publicize the standards of conduct for the faculty-student relationship and develop written policies for addressing violations of those standards.

The standards of conduct need not be unique to the medical education program; they may originate from other sources (e.g., the parent institution). Mechanisms for reporting violations of these standards (e.g., incidents of harassment or abuse) should ensure that the violations can be registered and investigated without fear of retaliation.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information.

Signature

Date