

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

Preamble:

Physicians are held to high standards of professionalism. The medical learning environment must facilitate the acquisition of professional and collegial attitudes for effective, caring, and compassionate health care. The development of these skills requires mutual respect between educators and students, staff and students, and between fellow students. Students encompass undergraduate, graduate, visiting, and postgraduate trainees. Those in authority are expected to role model 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 kindness, engagement, empowerment and purpose can all be demonstrated through respectful collaboration. Respect can be expressed in many ways, but disrespectful, aggressive and harassing behavior is inappropriate. Prevention of these inappropriate behaviors is an ongoing aim that is the responsibility of the all educators, students, and staff.

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.

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 or harassment based on age, race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, 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, tasks with the intent to humiliate, or a personal service not related to the medical education mission
- 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.

Reporting Procedure:

The reporting procedures for an individual considering making a report of mistreatment

(1) The first step should be, if at all possible, an attempt to resolve the matter directly with the alleged offender. Students may consult with the course/clerkship director and/or 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.

(2) Should this not adequately resolve the situation, a formal report may be filed directly to the course/clerkship director and/or to the Associate/Assistant Dean for Student Services.

(3) Students may also submit reports of mistreatment in our electronic evaluation system, which includes a **Mistreatment of Medical Student Report**. Students may choose to submit the report anonymously. Upon receipt of a report, the Assessment Director will work with the Associate/Assistant Dean for Student Services to alert the appropriate course/clerkship director about the report. If the course/clerkship director is the subject of the report, then the Departmental Chair will be included. The course/clerkship director and/or Department Chair will be charged to

- Confirm receipt of the report
- Develop an action plan in consultation with the Assessment Director and the Associate/Assistant Dean for Student Services to address the issue.
- Submit a report to the Assessment Director detailing the result of the action plan:

Depending on the nature of the mistreatment report, the Assessment Director and/or the Associate/Assistant Dean for Student Services may be obligated to alert the coordinator of the Division of Campus Engagement and Compliance and/or the Title IX Coordinator.

Standards of Behavior Committee

If necessary, the Standards of Behavior Committee may be charged to review the facts and make a recommendation for action to the Dean, or Dean's Designee, of the School of Medicine.

The Standards of Behavior Committee will be appointed annually by the Dean, or Dean's Designee, of the School of Medicine and will consist of at least two basic science faculty members and four clinical science faculty members from at least two of the campuses. The Dean, or Dean's Designee, will appoint an Associate Dean as a nonvoting ex-officio officer. The Associate 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 take additional action regarding the offending student's status within the MD degree program. Such actions and subsequent actions will be handled through the West Virginia University School of Medicine Policy on Academic and Professional Standards Governing the MD Degree Program.

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 cause for action under this policy as a separate incident of mistreatment.

Standard 3: Academic and Learning Environments

A medical school ensures that its medical education program occurs in professional, respectful, and intellectually stimulating academic and clinical environments and promotes students' attainment of competencies required of future physicians.

3.6 Student Mistreatment

A medical school develops effective written policies that define mistreatment, has effective mechanisms in place for a prompt response to any complaints, and supports educational activities aimed at preventing mistreatment. Mechanisms for reporting mistreatment are understood by medical students, and ensure that any violations can be registered and investigated without fear of retaliation.

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