
Section 8: Professionalism Standards

The public expects that those in the medical profession will adhere to a set of values that reflect their commitment to excellence, responsibility, respect for all, integrity, prudence, and trustworthiness. The College of Medicine considers any student enrolled in the College for the purpose of seeking the MD degree to be an active member of the profession at all times. Commitment to integrity in espousing the values of the profession means that members of the profession (including medical students) behave in ways that will reflect positively on the profession even when they are not in class or on the grounds of the university or medical center. Students who behave in a manner counter to the values of the medical profession may be subject to adverse actions from the College of Medicine, up to and including dismissal.

Unprofessional behavior includes but is not limited to:

1. Breaches in patient confidentiality.
2. Public intoxication or substance abuse, including use of alcohol or drugs especially while wearing COM attire (scrubs or white coats).
3. Distribution of material that includes disparaging comments about populations of people.
4. Lack of self-control in encounters with patients, faculty, staff, and other health professionals.
5. Criminal activity.
6. Interpersonal violence.
7. Distribution of defamatory or vulgar comments about faculty of The Ohio State University, employees of the Wexner Medical Center at The Ohio State University Medical Center or any of the following entities: The Ohio State University, the Wexner Medical Center at The Ohio State University or The Ohio State University College of Medicine.
8. Invasion of another's privacy by any means.
9. Misrepresentation of credentials, abilities, or position.

STUDENT PROFESSIONAL HONOR CODE

(Developed by OSU COM Student Council, 2006)

Medical students will behave in a manner consistent with the following principles of professionalism in order to foster and maintain a culture that facilitates professionalism:

Altruism

- Assist other medical students in need.
- Contribute to a positive image of the medical profession.
- Serve the interests and welfare of the patient and the community above our own self-interest.

Honesty and Integrity

- Respect the rights of patients, staff, colleagues, and other health professionals.
- Safeguard patient confidences and privacy within the constraints of the law.
- Deal with confidential information appropriately and discreetly.
- Understand the general principles of ethical behavior and their application to performance expectations of any course of study, examination, or other evaluations.

Caring and Compassion

- Treat each patient as an individual with respect, empathy, and dignity both in the family's presence and in discussions with other members of the healthcare team.
- Handle issues of sickness, dying, and death in a professional manner with patients and their families.
- Refrain from abusing authority.

Service

- Participate in and contribute to the betterment of the public health community in a productive manner.
- Participate in and contribute to peer groups, local, and/or national organizations.

Excellence and Scholarship

- Recognize one's own deficiencies and endeavor to correct them, requesting help when needed.
- Strive to improve one's self in the integration and transmission of knowledge.
- Collaborate with and assist peers, colleagues, and other health professionals appropriately for the advancement of scientific knowledge and skills.
- Commit to self-directed and lifelong learning.

Respect Teachers, Staff, Colleagues, Patients, and Families

- Treat those with whom they work with respect, trust, and dignity.
- Refrain from engaging in unwanted and inappropriate romantic and sexual behaviors or any other unprofessional behaviors.
- Respect rights such as privacy, confidentiality, informed consent, and others.

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- Communicate in a sensitive manner and do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, intelligence, medical condition, nationality or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

Responsibility and Accountability

- Maintain patient care and service as our highest priority.
- Be accountable for deadlines and complete assignments/responsibilities in a timely fashion.
- Recognize and report peers' errors, fraud, poor behavior, deficiency in character, and incompetence.
- Identify one's own limitations and developmental needs, and seek approaches for improvement.
- Present oneself in a professional manner with respect to dress, hygiene, body language, composure, and gestures.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

Students must demonstrate academic honesty and refrain from dishonorable actions that include but are not limited to:

- **Cheating:** Allowing another party to do one's work/exam; serving as a substitute for a student in the taking of an exam; possession and/or use of unauthorized study aids/notes during an exam; practicing fraud or deceit; knowingly providing or receiving information during examinations with or without the source's knowledge; and/or sharing information about the content of an exam with a student who has not yet taken the exam.
- **Plagiarism:** Representing another's work as one's own including the unacknowledged word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas.
- **Fabrication:** Altering a graded work; falsification of information and resources including laboratory and research results.
- **Aid of academic dishonesty:** Intentional facilitation of the above dishonorable actions or any other action deemed in violation of this code.

Students who fail to adhere to these academic standards will be referred to a Level II committee for determination of adverse actions up to and including dismissal from the College of Medicine.

ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORD ACCESS

Guidelines for Student Access and Use of Electronic Medical Records

The Ohio State University College of Medicine is committed to developing physicians who excel in the patient-centered use of electronic medical records (EMRs). Accordingly, students must learn effective and appropriate use of EMRs in order to assume roles of increasing responsibility.

In all cases, it is expected that students will at all times preserve patient privacy and abide by university and hospital policies. Access to patient records for purposes beyond the scope of academic, clinical, or research roles is a serious violation subject to discipline under The Ohio State University HIPAA policies and disciplinary procedures.

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1. Students should access and use the EMR for the following purposes:
 - a. Accessing the records of patients in whose care they are directly participating or for educational assignments (e.g., case write-ups).
 - b. For research purposes in accordance with an IRB-approved protocol.
 2. Students should recuse themselves from accessing the EMR or participating in the care of the following patient groups:
 - a. Faculty members, residents, or fellows who are known to the student or who have had or may potentially have a professional or supervisory relationship to the student in the future.
 - b. Fellow health professional students or their family members.
 - c. Friends or family members of the student.
 3. Access to the EMR will be granted to all actively enrolled medical students.
 - a. Students must successfully complete the “HIPPA Privacy and Security” course each year.
 - b. Student's access to the EMR will be monitored according to medical center and university policies and may be audited at any time on a random basis or for cause.
 4. To optimize student access to the EMR, remote access will be provided on mobile devices through the approved apps supported by the medical center. This may be the app, Canto, for tablets, or the app, Haiku, for phones.
 5. Access to the EMR, including remote access, can be terminated according to medical center and university policies at any time.
 6. Access to the EMR, including remote access, can be restricted and/or terminated at the discretion of the Associate Dean of Medical Education, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, or his/her designee. Reasons for restriction and/or termination may include but are not limited to:
 - a. Demonstration of lapses in professionalism
 - b. Inappropriate use of social media
 - c. Impairment or inability to perform essential functions of position due to medical, physical, or mental condition
 7. Remote access is provided for the convenience of the student and is not considered necessary for their education. It is important to remember with this access comes risk and the need for heightened concerns about access to personal health information (PHI). Using a device in an unrestricted area to view PHI is not advised and should only occur in an emergency and with awareness of your surroundings. **All concerns about any possible HIPAA violation by yourself, a classmate, and faculty member or staff person should be reported to the HIPPA Privacy Officer at PrivacyOffice@osumc.edu.**

EXAMINATIONS AND CONSENT

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecology Committee on Ethics states in Opinion Number 500, August 2011 that: “Physicians must learn new skills and techniques in a manner consistent with the ethical obligations to benefit the patient, to do no harm, and to respect a patient's right to make informed decisions about health matters. These obligations must never be subordinated to the need and desire to learn new skills.” Procedures under anesthesia, such as pelvic, rectal, breast and other examinations for teaching purposes, require specific consent and medical students should not perform such an examination unless that consent has been obtained. Such examinations should be related to the planned procedure, performed by a student who is recognized by the patient as part of their care team and should be done under direct supervision by the educator.

PROFESSIONALISM AND SOCIAL NETWORKING

Policy on Social Networking: The Ohio State University College of Medicine

Social networking is a common activity that has the potential to increase our ability to interact with each other in positive ways. However, the ability of the internet to instantly reach millions of people, both within and outside of the medical profession makes it imperative that we take safeguards to insure that social networking does not erode the values of the medical profession or damage the reputation of the profession or the medical center.

Definitions

Social Networking: The use of various internet sites to connect people via web-based technology. This includes but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snap Chat, Flickr, web blogs, and chat rooms.

Publically Disseminate: to distribute to a wide audience, either through posting to a non-secure website, sending content in an email, and/or posting flyers.

Values of the Medical Profession: altruism, respect, confidentiality, prudence, tolerance, integrity, and a commitment to personal excellence.

The policy of the OSUCOM regarding student and faculty use of social media sites is delineated below.

Students and faculty of the College of Medicine:

- Should take steps to insure that their social networking sites have the appropriate privacy settings to avoid inadvertent dissemination of material to audiences beyond their control.
- Should include a disclaimer with postings that clearly state that the expressed opinions belong to the writer alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the College of Medicine.
- May not write about patients in a manner that could in any way convey the patient’s identity, even accidentally. They are cautioned that patients with rare diagnoses, physical appearances, and specific locations within the medical center may be easily identifiable even in the absence of names and medical record numbers.

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- May not write defamatory comments about faculty, staff, students, and health professionals within the medical center.
 - May not post someone else's work (including from internet sites) without attribution.
 - May not post pictures or descriptions that demonstrate participation of students, faculty, or staff engaging in unprofessional behavior
 - In general, should not interact with patients (either current or past) with their personal social media accounts. (For example, "friending" a current/former patient on Facebook, interacting via chat/dating apps, etc.)

Faculty within the College of Medicine are strongly discouraged from inviting people who are actively enrolled in the College of Medicine or in the Wexner Medical Center residency programs to participate in any social networking community that involves their personal lives. Social networking communities limited to professional work are acceptable.

Consequences

Students who fail to adhere to the standards of professionalism regarding social networking will be referred to a Level II committee: either the Academic Behavioral Review Committee or the Honor and Professionalism Council. The same sanctions for social networking transgressions exist as for other professionalism breaches up to and including dismissal from the College of Medicine.

APPEARANCE REQUIREMENT GUIDELINES

General Expectations of Appearance (Developed in conjunction with Student Council, May 2006)

The following policy was developed to delineate guidelines regarding professional attire for any preclinical or clinical patient encounter, whether with actual patients or simulated patients. Additional guidelines of affiliated hospitals or preceptors shall be observed. Students are expected to inquire prior to wearing any questionable items. These guidelines for professional attire should also be followed anytime a student represents the College of Medicine outside of the campus while giving presentations, performing service work, etc.

Please note – beyond the expectations listed below, host institutions (e.g. OhioHealth, Nationwide Children's Hospital) may have additional policies that apply to appearance. Students must comply with these additional policies at all times.

Identification

- White coats should be clean, wrinkle-free, and in good repair.
- Always display IDs in a visible location above the waist.

Clothing

Shirts:

- Shirts should be wrinkle-free, clean, and in good repair.
- Tight-fitting or revealing shirts are not permitted.
- Tank tops, halter tops, tops exposing midriff, and spaghetti-strap or shoulder-less dresses or tops are inappropriate.
- Proper undergarments should be worn at all times.

Skirts:

- Tight-fitting and revealing skirts are not permitted.
- Skirt length shall be no shorter than three inches above the top of the knee.
- Split skirts and dress shorts are permitted, provided that they fall within skirt guidelines.

Pants:

- Tight-fitting or excessively baggy pants are not permitted.
- Pants should be wrinkle-free, clean, and in good repair.
- Denim pants of any color, spandex, leggings, athletic wear, and sweat suits shall not be worn.

Socks and Hosiery:

- Socks and hosiery should be worn at all times in the hospital or clinic.

Scrubs:

- Students will don clean, surgical scrubs daily in the appropriate designated dressing area before entry/re-entry into the semi-restricted and restricted areas.
- Scrubs will not be donned or worn in from home
- Clean short sleeve v-neck or crew t-shirt may be worn under scrub shirt only if completely covered within the scrub shirt.
- No turtle neck or long sleeve shirts are permitted under scrubs
- Surgical scrubs must be changed whenever soiled, wet or if worn outside of the facility for any reason.
- When leaving the semi-restricted and restricted areas, a clean, full-length lab coat that is closed, should be worn over scrub clothes. Disposable full-length lab coats are provided on each surgical unit.
- Scrubs are not to be worn as general attire on clinical assignments, whether inpatient or outpatient. Scrubs are not appropriate for daily wear on the wards or in the clinics at the University Hospital, the Ross Heart Hospital, the James, or in any OSUMC outpatient practice. In those areas, you should wear a clean white coat and professional attire. Scrubs are allowed ONLY in the following areas or under the following conditions:
 - Operating Rooms
 - Labor and Delivery
 - Emergency Department
 - ICUs
 - Procedural areas (cath lab, endoscopy suite)
 - On call after 6 p.m.

Students need to be aware of each hospital's or assigned area's policies.

Shoes:

- Shoes should be clean and in good condition.
- Casual sandals, canvas sneakers, and open-toed shoes shall not be worn.
- Heels should not be taller than three inches.

Accessories:

- Rings, bracelets, and necklaces are permissible if they are not hazardous to equipment operation or patient contact.
- No more than two earrings per ear are recommended.
- Body piercing is permitted in ears only; no other visible body piercing is permitted.
- Hats are not to be worn inside unless they are required parts of a uniform.

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- While representing the College of Medicine, students should not display accessories such as pins, buttons, bracelets, etc. that could potentially make patients feel ill at ease such as those advocating a political party or commenting on a sensitive controversial issue.

Tattoos:

- Visible tattoos are not permitted. Tattoos should be hidden by clothing or obscuring makeup.

Nails:

- Nails should be clean and manicured and kept less than ¼ inch long past the tip of the finger.
- **Artificial nails and gel nail polish are not permitted in any form.**
- Non-gel nail polish should be of a single color and not chipped, cracked, or peeling.
- Nail polish of any form is not permitted in situations requiring **aseptic** care (e.g. surgery, obstetrics and gynecology).
- No nail jewelry or nail art of any form is allowed.

Hygiene

- Daily healthy hygiene includes
 - clean skin, hair, and teeth
 - regular use of deodorant and/or antiperspirant
 - regular dental hygiene
- Makeup should not be distracting.
- Cologne/ perfume should not be worn in the clinical environment due to potential respiratory sensitivities of patients and other providers.

Enforcement

Department managers, attending physicians, and house staff may prohibit any student from working if he or she is wearing clothing that is offensive, unsafe, or not in compliance with the hospital/clinic and department standards.

Failure of any student to adhere to the standards will result in corrective action by his/her supervisor. If the issue cannot be resolved at that level, the student will be referred to the student review committee of the academic program. Repeated infractions may result in referral to the Level II Honor and Professionalism Council or the Academic and Behavioral Review Committee.

Note: Exceptions to these requirements for religious preference require prior approval of the supervising attending physician/Dean's Staff.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Background

The College of Medicine is committed to the health and wellbeing of patients and of its students. As part of this commitment, The COM complies with and upholds all federal, state, and local laws that regulate or prohibit the possession, use, or distribution of alcohol or illicit drugs. Students who are impaired by substance abuse endanger patients, themselves, faculty and staff, and other students.

Substance abuse shall be defined as: 1) The use or possession of any drug in a manner prohibited by law; and 2) The use of alcohol or any legal drug or other substance in such a way that the user's performance as a professional student is impaired. The COM recognizes that early treatment is essential for successful rehabilitation and recovery for students with substance abuse. Students are encouraged to voluntarily request referral for treatment before their substance abuse leads to academic or disciplinary problems.

Policy

The College of Medicine policy appropriately establishes substance abuse guidelines and procedures that are similar to those already in place for all other employees of the hospitals in which medical students work. Students are prohibited from engaging in substance abuse.

Testing for designated substances will occur on a scheduled basis during first-year orientation and before entrance into clinical duties in the third year of medical school. The College administration also reserves the right to drug test a student at any time that he or she is suspected of substance abuse (on "For Cause" basis) as outlined in Section 14 of this handbook. Prior to testing, students are asked to disclose any substance use and prescription medications to the College administration, who will keep this information confidential.

If a student brings forth a substance abuse issue to the administration or is found to have a substance abuse problem through other means such as, but not limited to, drug testing, the student will meet with the Associate Dean for Student Life to discuss the issue further. In the absence of the Associate Dean for Student Life, the Associate Dean for Medical Education or designee will be available. The student will then be referred to an addiction specialist for assessment of the problem, who will suggest what treatment and rehabilitation options are appropriate for the student. The Associate Dean for Student Life will mandate the terms of the rehabilitation. Single episodes of substance use including alcohol while involved in the curriculum or associated with unprofessional behavior or legal violations will be handled in the same fashion.

From the moment a substance abuse problem is deemed to be present, the student will be placed on a leave of absence and will be unable to participate in any clinical activities involving patients or patient care. Additional information regarding procedures and consequences for self-disclosure of substance abuse is delineated in Section 14.

PROFESSIONALISM LAPSES AND THE MEDICAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (MSPE)

The AAMC requires documentation within the MSPE of any adverse action(s) imposed on the student by the medical school or its parent institution as well as information about the student's professional attributes. This includes documentation of professionalism lapses. Any Level II committee can determine when a significant professionalism lapse has occurred. The Associate Dean of Medical Education or designee will determine what is written in the MSPE regarding a professionalism lapse.

GUIDELINES FOR SHOWS, SKITS, ROASTS AND VIDEOS

Talent shows and other events that aim to reduce tension and improve morale have a long history at The Ohio State University College of Medicine. The following guidelines for producing shows, skits, and roasts were adapted from the University of Massachusetts Medical School and have been developed to protect personal, professional and institutional reputations.

- Remember that all Equal Employment Opportunity laws are applicable—spoofing that can be experienced as harassment, discrimination, or culturally insensitive is not permissible. If one is uncertain whether or not a skit or parody could be considered in this category, please consult with the College of Medicine Office for Diversity and Inclusion and/or the Main Campus Office for Belonging and Social Change
- The Ohio State University is a large, diverse community committed to a civil, respectful, and humane workplace. Use good judgment in portrayals of individuals and patients, remembering that the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is always applicable.
- Remember that the civil laws on defamation, slander, and libel still apply to the content of these “shows,” and the persons potentially liable under these causes of action are the “student-players.”
- Remember that intentions do not mitigate a negative impact. Even if the intent is to be humorous and the impact is not received favorably, the action or words would be deemed offensive. Implicit consent is inferred in cases where a faculty, resident, or student agrees to participate in a skit or be videotaped. In cases where a faculty member, resident, or student will be parodied, please obtain their permission to do so before incorporating their likeness into the show.
- Members of the OSU community performing on University property in front of video cameras should remember that footage can be easily distributed. Performances should not negatively impact the brand and reputation of the institution. In addition, those taking part in these “shows” are advised that footage of same may later be reproduced in forums not of one’s choosing, which could someday adversely impact one’s reputation.
- The official Ohio State logos may not be used as part of the production. While the College of Medicine is aware these “shows” are staged, the College, itself, plays no role in same and it neither authorizes nor oversees their content.