I. PURPOSE

Professionalism in medical education is a key component in the training of physicians. This principle – in training and practice - requires adherence to the pillars of “honesty and integrity, caring and compassion, altruism and empathy, respect for others, and trustworthiness.”¹ The Doctor of Medicine Program (the Program) at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry at Western University is responsible for supporting the spectrum of student medical education.

The study and practice of medicine demands adherence to these high standards of professionalism at all times through individual and group actions. As professionals, physicians agree to be accountable to peers and society for their actions.

Program students are at an early stage of their careers. Most Professionalism lapses are opportunities for formative student education and remediation. In supporting student learning, the Program acknowledges the need to provide (wherever possible) formative support to students for actions that may be interpreted as or be in breach of professionalism. This will be balanced with an active awareness of assessing for and addressing risk in all decisions. However at all times any actions that are seen as serious breaches after all decisions have been rendered may require more finite and immediate action.

II. DEFINITION

Professionalism: Medical professionalism includes both the relationship between a physician and a patient and a social contract between physicians and society. Society grants the profession privileges, including exclusive or primary responsibility for the provision of certain services and a high degree of self-regulation. In return, the profession agrees to use these privileges primarily for the benefit of others and only secondarily for its own benefit.

- Canadian Medical Association Charter

POLICY

Medicine is a professional academic program. A breach of personal professional behaviour or patient safety in any course, rotation or elective may result in remediation of and/or a grade of “fail.”

a. Requirement to Withdraw

i. As per Senate approved Program Requirements, even when a student has met the requirements under "Satisfactory Progression" but has demonstrated unprofessional or unethical behaviour as defined by the Policies of the of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and the Canadian Medical Association Code of Ethics, a student may be required to withdraw.
b. Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry Code of Conduct
   i. The Undergraduate Medical Education program will adhere to the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry Code of Conduct in understanding issues of responsibility, reporting, confidentiality and safety.
   ii. The Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry Code of Conduct is found online at: https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/learner-equity-wellness/equity_professionalism/Code%20of%20Conduct%20Schulich%20School%20Of%20Medicine%2007-11-14%20Final.pdf

c. Student Conduct and Professional Behavior at Western University
   i. For issues which relate to learner professional behaviour outside of the clinical setting, the Undergraduate Medical Education Program will adhere to the terms, definitions, jurisdiction and procedures as outlined in the “University of Western Ontario Student Code of Conduct” (November 25, 2010).
   ii. The purpose of the University of Western Ontario Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at Western University, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions or actions that may be imposed, and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow.

d. Student Conduct and Professional Behavior in Clinical Clerkship and Clinical Science Electives
   i. Professional behaviour and ethical performance are mandatory course objectives assessed in all clinical rotations and electives.
   ii. A breach of professional standards in the clinical learning environment in a Schulich Medicine or other clinical learning site in Canada or internationally, represents a potential failure to meet the academic requirements of a rotation:
      • Poor performance in the area of professional or ethical behaviour will result in a performance assessment which may include a documented formal written reprimand, remedial work or failure of the rotation or Clerkship as per the Progression Policy.
      • Suspension will be recorded in the student’s academic record and on their official transcript.
   iii. In cases where the allegations of actions are serious, and if proven, could constitute a significant disruption to the Undergraduate Medical Education Program, the training site, or a health and safety risk to other students, members of the University community, or patients, the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education is authorized to impose immediate conditions upon the student, including removal from the learning site.

e. Remediation & Appeals
   i. Remediation is a privilege and is not guaranteed.
   ii. Failure as a result of professional behaviour is subject to review under the Appeals Policy.