

POLICY – Policy on Student Professionalism in Undergraduate Medical Education

Classification: ACADEMIC

By: Curriculum Committee

Approved: September 2018

Related Policies: Code of Conduct

Effective: October 2018

I. INTRODUCTION

Professionalism in medicine demands adhering to the principles of “honesty and integrity, caring and compassion, altruism and empathy, respect for others, and trustworthiness”.¹ The Doctor of Medicine Program at Western University supports student progression to achieve the competency of professionalism, a required academic objective of the program.

This policy set standards for professionalism for students registered in the Doctor of Medicine Program at Western University and identifies the process for addressing contraventions of these standards.

This policy applies to all students registered in the Doctor of Medicine Program.

II. DEFINITION

Associate Dean Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) is the senior faculty officer responsible for the oversight of undergraduate medical education within the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

Dean refers to the Dean of the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

Program is the Doctor of Medicine Program at Western University.

Student or Students refers to a student or students registered in the Program.

¹ Swick, H.M. Toward a normative definition of medical professionalism. *Academic Medicine*, 2000; 75: 612-616.

III. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:

Behavior unacceptable to the professional practice of medicine includes but is not limited to:

- Breach of any of the principles, objectives, and/or competencies set out in policies and statements listed above
- Referring to oneself as, or holding oneself to be, more qualified than one is
- Behavior or inappropriate judgement which adversely affects the medical education of others
- Commission of a criminal act
- Failure to be available while on call
- Failure to adhere to Program or Course timelines for learning or assessments
- Failure to respond to communication from Program staff, leadership or faculty
- Unapproved absences from Program required learning modules or experiences
- Failure to respect patients', colleagues', other health professionals' or any individual's rights
- Breach of confidentiality in patient care
- Failure to provide transfer of responsibility for patient care
- Failure to keep proper medical records in clinical care learning
- Falsification of medical or other records in clinical care learning
- Falsification of academic records, cheating, or other academic misconduct
- Sexual impropriety with a patient
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while participating in any curricular learning experience, patient care or on call
- Sexual or other harassment of colleagues, other members of the health care team, patients and members of the public
- Conduct prohibited by professional governing bodies including the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- Disrupting the effective functioning of organizations or individuals within the university or health care system
- Inappropriate use of verbal and non-verbal communication including face to face, written, electronic or social media
- Dress or personal appearance that is not consistent with Program or profession guidelines
- Any conduct unbecoming of a practicing physician as outlined in the referred "documents on Professionalism for Canadian physicians" referenced above in this section of the document

Students are required to comply with the professional standards mandated by the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry (e.g. Charter on Medical/Dental Professionalism; Four Pillars of Professionalism; Policy and Guidelines for Interactions between Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and Industry), as well as those issued by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, and the Canadian Medical Association.

The Program supports Students as learners and evolving health professionals in an educational process. As such, for instances of unprofessional conduct, the Program will take actions, if possible, which develop learner competency through education and remediation. For unprofessional conduct that is recurrent or serious, failure of a course, clinical rotation or clinical science elective, or suspension or dismissal from the Program may be warranted.

A Student's professional conduct is assessed during their participation in a course by the course chair and in a clinical rotation or clinical science elective by the rotation director.

Unprofessional conduct in a course, clinical rotation or clinical science rotation may result in a failure of the course, clinical rotation or clinical science elective as determined by the course chair or rotation director, as applicable, in consultation with the Associate Dean UME.

Unprofessional conduct during Program sponsored activities (i.e. Discovery Week) and any serious breaches of professional conduct will be reported immediately to the Associate Dean UME. Unprofessional conduct during Program sponsored activities or serious breaches of professional conduct as determined by the Associate Dean UGME may result in remediation, probation, suspension or dismissal from the Program.

Faculty, staff, students and other individuals may file a report concerning a Student's program related conduct directly to the chair of the course in course related matters or to the rotation director in matters related to a clinical rotation or clinical science elective.

Faculty, staff, students and other individuals may also choose to report program related conduct directly to the Associate Dean UME or to the Associate Dean or Assistant Dean (Undergraduate) LEW, including reports in matters related to Program sponsored activities, Program learning experiences, courses or rotations. For matters reported to the LEW Office, there will be a meeting to discuss this event with the Associate Dean UME.

[Non-Program Related Conduct](#)

Reports of unprofessional behavior outside of Program learning or Program sponsored activities will be addressed under the [Western University Code of Student Conduct](#) overseen by [Western Student Experience \("WSE"\)](#). The Dean will be notified of formal Code proceedings by WSE and kept informed throughout the process. If the Student is found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct, the Dean will be notified by WSE as required under the Code. Faculty, staff, students and other individuals may file a report concerning non-program related conduct directly with WSE, or with the Associate Dean UGME or Associate Dean / Assistant Dean (Undergraduate) LEW or member LEW Office with a referral provided to WSE.

Students are encouraged to approach the LEW Office directly with concerns for their safety (physical and mental) or the Associate Dean UME with requests for immediate learning module modification. Students who report are highly encouraged to access assistance through the LEW office if reporting a peer(s) to WSE.

Students named in a report are encouraged to approach the LEW Office for support navigating the process and counseling. Relevant Program learning groups may be changed by the Associate Dean UME if requested by a student in a reported incident.

IV. APPEALS

A Student may appeal a failure in a course, clinical rotation or clinical science elective for professionalism issues in accordance with the [Statement 1.3.7: Academic Challenges, Remediation & Appeals](#).

A Student may appeal a decision made by the Associate Dean UGME to suspend or dismiss the Student to the Appeals Committee (“the Committee”) on the following grounds:

- a) that the Associate Dean UME did not take into consideration relevant information when making the decision
- b) that the decision made by Associate Dean UME cannot be supported on the information that was before the Associate Dean UME at the time the decision was made, or
- c) that the sanction was unreasonable or unsupportable on the evidence before the Associate Dean UGME.

An appeal must be submitted to the UME Office within two weeks of the issuance of the decision and include the following:

- a) a copy of relevant assessments (if applicable)
- b) a copy of the Associate Dean UGME’s decision
- c) the grounds of appeal and remedy sought, and
- d) a full statement supporting the grounds of appeal and any relevant documentation.

The UME Office shall forward copies of the Student’s appeal documentation to the Associate Dean UME who shall file a concise written reply with relevant documentation within two weeks of the filing of the appeal. A copy of the reply shall be provided to the Student.

Where circumstances warrant, the deadlines for filing an appeal or response may be extended at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee.

The UME Office shall forward the documentation provided by the Student and respondent to the Committee.

The Committee shall determine its own procedures for hearing an appeal and the Chair of the Committee may make such rules and orders as he or she deems necessary and proper to ensure a fair and expeditious proceeding. The Student shall be informed of the procedures that will be followed. The Committee shall proceed fairly in its disposition of the appeal, ensuring that both the Student and the respondent are aware of the evidence to be considered.

The Committee shall provide the parties to the appeal with an opportunity to meet with the Committee and bring witnesses. Both parties and their witnesses may be cross-examined by the other party and both parties may be represented by legal counsel.

If the Committee determines:

- a) that the Associate Dean UME did not take into consideration relevant information when making his or her decision,
- b) that the Associate Dean UME's decision cannot be supported on the information that was before the Associate Dean UME, or
- c) that the sanction was unreasonable or unsupportable on the evidence before the Associate Dean UME, the Committee shall provide written reasons for its determination and shall either refer the matter back to the Associate Dean UME for reconsideration or reinstate the Student in the Program. Such reinstatement may include a recommendation for remediation or probation, the terms of which shall be determined by the Associate Dean UME.

If the Committee determines that the decision of the Associate Dean UME should be upheld, it shall provide written reasons for its determination.

A decision to deny the appeal may be appealed to the Dean, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry. The Dean may delegate his or her authority to consider the appeal to another individual or individuals or to a committee. References to "Dean" in this Part mean "Dean or delegate".

An appeal must be submitted to the Dean's Office within two weeks of the issuance of the decision and include the following:

- a) a copy of relevant assessments (if applicable)
- b) a copy of the Associate Dean UME's decision
- c) a copy of the Appeal Committee's decision
- d) the grounds of appeal and remedy sought, and
- e) a full statement supporting the grounds of appeal and any relevant documentation.

The Dean, in consideration of the appeal, must meet with the Appellant, the Chair of the Committee and the Associate Dean UME.

A decision of the Dean will be made and communicated to the student in writing within two weeks of the review. This decision will involve one of the following:

1. The Dean may grant the appeal
2. The Dean may uphold the suspension or dismissal from the Program.
3. The Dean may substitute a lesser sanction.

If the appeal is denied by the Dean or if the Dean substitutes the sanction from a lesser sanction, the student may appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA) in accordance with its policies and procedures.