



Policy on Standards for Professional Code of Conduct

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Revised Summer 2017

The Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont is committed to maintaining an environment in which faculty, fellows, residents, students, visiting students, nurses, patients, standardized patients, other health care professionals, and staff (collectively, referred to here as “Community”) can work together freely to further education and research and to provide the highest level of patient and family centered care, whether in the classroom, the laboratory, or the clinical setting. Our goal is to train physicians to meet high standards of professionalism and to practice in environments where effective, humane, and compassionate patient care is paramount. We affirm our commitment to creating and maintaining a community that supports and encourages respect for every individual.

The Larner College of Medicine equally recognizes that each member of the Community should be accepted as an autonomous individual and treated civilly, without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, veteran status, or any other factor irrelevant to participation in the activities of the College. Because diversity in background, outlook, and interests among members of the Community is inherent in the practice of medicine; appreciation and understanding of such diversity is an essential aspect of medical training. We expect all members of the Community to act professionally in the school, clinical setting, social media, and wider community; with patients, those close to them, families, and colleagues.

Accordingly, the Larner College of Medicine is committed to providing an educational environment that supports rational discourse, diversity of views, and free inquiry and expression among members of its Community.

Abusive treatment of students and/or any other member of the Community is damaging to the learning environment and is not acceptable. Abusive behavior may include, but is not limited to: public berating and humiliation; intellectual bullying, deliberate and repeated exclusion from learning opportunities, and the expectation to carry out personal tasks in order to receive favorable treatment or avoid explicit or implicit criticism. Abusive behaviors may also include inappropriate sexual comments, advances, as well as intimidation or discrimination. Frank formative feedback and constructive

criticism are essential for learning and should not be confused with mistreatment.

Conflicts between freedom of expression and the right to be free from abuse will be given careful consideration to appropriately protect the rights of all parties involved.

To ensure the implementation of the principles described above, the following Code of Professional Conduct sets forth the standards that all members must adhere to.

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

1. Honesty and integrity must be practiced by all members of the Community during all aspects of the educational process. Teachers must foster an environment that supports open and honest communication as well as constructive criticism.
2. Teachers must fulfill the commitments made at the beginning of a course, rotation, or any other learning activity. Syllabi, assignments, grading principles, and class and office hour schedules are promises made to students that must be adhered to under normal circumstances.

Teachers should ensure that their grading practices are as objective as possible by creating and adhering to clear and specific criteria. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that the assessment of a student's performance is valid, open, fair, and congruent with the course or rotation objectives.

3. Students are responsible for regular attendance and participation, completion of assignments, and thorough preparation for examinations.
4. All members of the Community are expected to show common courtesy during interpersonal interactions and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect. In particular, respect for differences in race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, sex, gender identity, age, marital status, cultural background, socioeconomic status, and political convictions should be supported and encouraged in all aspects of the educational process.
5. Faculty and staff are expected to respond promptly to students' need for guidance and feedback. All members of the Community must recognize that demeaning comments and learner humiliation are unacceptable and not conducive to a productive and respectful learning environment. An environment free from harassment and discrimination, verbal abuse, physical violence, and intimidation in any form must be provided for all learning activities.
6. Teachers must maintain a high level of subject matter knowledge and assure that the content of the educational experience is current, accurate, representative, and appropriately aligned with the level of knowledge, skills and ability in the students' program of study. The teacher must approach each student with a commitment to

meeting their educational needs.

7. A pedagogically competent teacher communicates the objectives of the educational experience to students, is aware of alternative instructional methods or strategies, and selects methods of instruction that are effective in helping students to achieve course or rotation objectives.
8. Student grades, letters of evaluation, attendance records, and private communications are treated as confidential materials by all members of the Community in accordance with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html?src=rn>)
9. Teachers respect the dignity of their colleagues, including those in other medical specialties, professions and other disciplines, and work cooperatively with all members of the Community in the interest of fostering student learning and development.
10. Teachers must recognize the unique and changing role of medical and graduate students and residents as they progress through the various stages of the curriculum.
11. All members of the Community must be familiar with and compliant with the University of Vermont Policy on Sexual Harassment & Misconduct (http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general_html/sexharass.pdf) and the University of Vermont Policy on Student Harassment (<https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/studentharas.pdf>) which are available on the UVM website and in the faculty and student handbooks.
12. All members must be familiar with and compliant with the University of Vermont Policy Statement on Equal Opportunity in Educational Programs and Non-Harassment (<https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/equaledu.pdf>) which is available on the UVM website and in the faculty and student handbooks.
13. All members must be familiar with and compliant with the University of Vermont Policy on Amorous Relationships with Students (https://www.uvm.edu/policies/general_html/student_relation.pdf) which is available on the UVM website and in the faculty and student handbooks.
14. Sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination, as defined in University Policies, is prohibited. Activities which may give rise to charges of sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, and which in any event are considered inappropriate, include the following:
 - a. Denying the opportunity for training or rewards because of gender
 - b. Requesting sexual favors in exchange for grades or other awards
 - c. Making unwanted sexual advances
 - d. Displaying sexually suggestive or pornographic materials
 - e. Grading or evaluating based on gender rather than performance or merit.

15. Other behaviors which may give rise to charges of discrimination or harassment under University Policies, and which in any event are considered inappropriate, include the following:
 - a. Denying the opportunity for training or rewards because of age, race, religious affiliation or any attribute other than merit or performance
 - b. Any conduct directly intended to insult or stigmatize
 - c. Exclusion from any reasonable educational opportunity for any reason other than performance or merit
 - d. Requiring personal services such as babysitting or shopping
 - e. Showing favoritism based upon any attribute other than performance and/or merit and thereby reducing available educational opportunities
 - f. Grading or evaluating based upon any attribute other than performance and/or merit
 - g. Any inappropriate physical treatment, such as hitting, slapping, kicking, or threatening such treatment
 - h. Requiring performance of menial tasks with the intent to humiliate.

16. Other behavior that is considered inappropriate, includes
 - a. Public belittling
 - b. A consistent pattern of neglect or lack of communication
 - c. Taking credit for another individual's work.

17. In addition to acts that constitute discrimination, retaliation against any member of the Community because an individual has made a good faith complaint of discrimination or harassment, or has participated in an investigation of such a complaint, or who supports an individual making such a complaint is inappropriate and prohibited.

PROCEDURES

1. Mechanisms for the reporting of violations of these standards
 - a. Violations of University Policies under Sections 11, 12 or 13 of this Code of Professional Conduct. All faculty and staff of the Larner College of Medicine are required to report suspected violations, or reports of violation, of University policies prohibiting harassment or discrimination to the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity at 656-3368 in accordance with the requirements of the applicable policy.
 Any violation involving students should also be reported to the Larner College of Medicine Associate Dean for Students. Any Community member who has been a victim of harassment or discrimination under the University policies referenced in sections 11, 12 or 13 above who wishes to discuss such violations without report to the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity may make use of the University of Vermont's Counseling and Psychiatry Services Office or Employee Assistance Program where the discussions will be confidential to the extent permitted by Vermont law. Additionally, violations of the University Policy on

Sexual Harassment and Misconduct may be reported to the Campus Victim's Advocate where the discussions will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by state and federal law.

If an incident occurs at an affiliated clinical institution (each referred to here as an "Affiliate"), the violation must ALSO be reported to the Chief Medical Officer and Vice President of Human Resources at the Affiliate if it involves an employee of such institution. Complaints filed with the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity or with the Department of Human Resources at the Affiliate will be primarily handled according to the standard procedures of those offices.

Outcomes of investigations by the University's Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity will be provided to College of Medicine officials in accordance with the procedures of the AAEO Office. If a student is found responsible for violation of the University Policy on Sexual Harassment and Misconduct, sanctions will be determined by a sanctioning panel in accordance with University policy. The College of Medicine Fitness Committee will review the outcome of the investigation and sanctions imposed to determine whether any further action relative to professional standards is required. Final decisions on sanctions or other actions taken for violation of the University policies in sections 11, 12 or 13 must be shared with the Director of the University's Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity.

b. All Other Violations of This Professional Code of Conduct.

All other violations, except those encompassed by the policies referenced in sections 11, 12 or 13 above, may be reported to the Associate Dean for Students or to a trusted faculty member. Violations can also be reported through the use of an anonymous on line reporting mechanism found in COMET. It is important to recognize that the investigation utility of anonymous reports is limited and such reports will generally be used for tracking purposes only. Except as may be required by law or University policy, or for the protection of the Community, any communication of report details (including the complaining individual's identity) will only be made with the expressed consent of the complaining individual (hereinafter referred to as "reporting party"), and only as necessary to provide assistance and care to the reporting party, or to pursue an investigation or remedial action.

2. Mechanisms for the prompt handling of complaints

a. Complaints Alleging Violations of University Policies under Sections 11, 12, 13.

Complaints filed with the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity will be handled in accordance with the investigation procedures of that office. The procedures may be found at:

http://www.uvm.edu/aaeo/policies_and_procedures

b. Complaints alleging Violations of University Policies under Sections 11, 12, 13 that are filed with the Department of Human Resources at the Affiliate will be handled according to the standard procedures of those offices. It is expected that final decisions of the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity or of the

Affiliate or officials considering appeals from such decisions will be referred back to the Dean of the College of Medicine, the Associate Dean for Students (if a student is involved) and, if appropriate, the relevant department chair. Information about the outcome of such investigations will also be shared with the Director of the University's Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity.

c. Complaints Alleging Other Violations of this Policy

- i. Initial informal complaints may be made orally. Those who wish to make a formal complaint or advance an informal oral complaint into a formal one, shall report the complaint in writing. On receipt of the written complaint, the Dean or the Dean's designee will within 10 business days appoint an appropriate ad hoc committee to investigate the complaint. The committee will conduct a prompt, thorough, and fair review.
- ii. For a complaint against a resident or fellow, the committee will generally include: the Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Education; the relevant residency or fellowship Program Director; the relevant Chief Medical Officer and the Vice President of Human Resources at the University of Vermont Medical Center, or Affiliates or their designees, a faculty member of the student's choosing; a representative from the Learning Environment and Professionalism (LEAP) Committee, and any designated faculty contact assigned to communicate with the reporting party.

For a complaint against a faculty member the committee will generally include: the Senior Associate Dean for Education, the relevant department chairperson, a faculty member of the student's choosing and any designated faculty contact assigned to communicate with the reporting party.

For a complaint against a medical student the committee will generally include: the Associate Dean for Students, a faculty member of the student's choosing and any designated faculty contact assigned to communicate with the reporting party.

For a complaint against a graduate student the committee will generally include: Senior Associate Dean for Research, the relevant department chairperson, a faculty member of the student's choosing, and any designated faculty contact assigned to communicate with the reporting party.

For a complaint against a UVM College of Medicine staff member the committee will generally include: the Senior Associate Dean for Business and Finance or their designee, the appropriate staff supervisor, a representative from the Learning Environment and Professionalism (LEAP) Committee, a faculty member of the student's choosing, and any designated faculty contact assigned to communicate with the reporting party.

For a complaint against a University of Vermont Medical Center staff member, or a staff member of an Affiliate, the committee will generally include: the appropriate staff supervisor, the Chief Medical Officer and Vice President of Human Resources (or their equivalents) at the Affiliate, or their designees, a faculty member of the student's choosing, a representative from the Learning Environment and Professionalism (LEAP) Committee, and any designated faculty contact assigned to communicate with the reporting party.

- iii. In all cases the person against whom the complaint is made will have the opportunity to hear the evidence presented to the ad hoc committee, to address the committee, to present witnesses to the committee, and to present new information to the committee.
- iv. The ad hoc investigative committee will make a recommendation to the Dean for an appropriate action. Such actions may range from dismissal of the grievance as one not supported by evidence or requiring no further action to immediate suspension, or even termination, of employment or enrollment of the offending party, depending on the gravity of the violation of standards. Any disciplinary proceedings must be conducted, and any suspension, termination or other discipline must be imposed, in accordance with the existing personnel policies and procedures of the University of Vermont or the Affiliate, as appropriate. Recommendations from the Dean regarding a resident or fellow, or staff member at the University of Vermont Medical Center, or Affiliate shall be seriously considered by the Affiliate in accordance with their own policies, procedures and precedent and should result in appropriate disciplinary or other action by the Affiliate if the resident or fellow is found responsible for a policy violation.

In the case of students, suspensions, dismissals or other discipline for a finding of policy violation will be imposed in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Faculty of the College of Medicine, with convening of the Committee on Fitness if a student's fitness for a career in medicine is called into question. If a serious violation is found, the student may be dismissed from the College of Medicine in accordance with applicable College and University policies and procedures. Intermediate actions might include a formal verbal or written reprimand and/or requirement of completion of an educational or therapeutic activity addressing the behavior that led to the complaint.

- v. Retaliatory action of any sort during or following the investigation will be specifically prohibited, and written warning to this effect will be promptly provided to the parties under investigation.
- d. Cooperation and Contractual Commitments for Policy Compliance from Affiliates
UVM shall use its best efforts to ensure that the University of Vermont Medical Center and Affiliates at which UVM medical students receive professional training and education shall agree:

- i. to review and seriously consider these standards and maintain their own roughly equivalent standards, i.e. roughly similar policies and procedures (“Similar Affiliate Standards”) applicable to their physicians, residents, fellows and other employees who are involved in medical education and training of UVM students;
- ii. to notify such employees that they are bound by the Similar Affiliate Standards, expected to abide by them, and subject to discipline for violations of them, in accordance with their Similar Affiliate Standards and other relevant and applicable Affiliate policies and procedures;
- iii. to reasonably participate in the complaint, investigation and adjudication procedures set forth in the standards; and to seriously consider the reasonable disciplinary recommendations relating to them which are issued hereunder by the COM Dean or some similar (i.e. roughly equivalent) disciplinary action.

RELATED LINKS

Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy

http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general_html/sexharass.pdf

Harassment – Students Policy

<http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/studentharas.pdf>

University of Vermont Policy on Equal Opportunity in Educational Programs and Activities and Non-Harassment

<http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/equaledu.pdf>

University of Vermont Policy on Amorous Relationships with Students

http://www.uvm.edu/policies/general_html/student_relation.pdf

Positive Learning Environment and Mistreatment Prevention Policy

<http://www.uvm.edu/medicine/mededucation/handbook/?Page=63000.html>

Statement on Medical Professionalism

<http://www.uvm.edu/medicine/mededucation/handbook/?Page=61000.html>

Procedure for Reporting Violations of the Positive Learning Environment and Mistreatment Prevention Policy

<http://www.uvm.edu/medicine/mededucation/handbook/?Page=63010.html>

Tenets of Professionalism

<http://www.uvm.edu/medicine/mededucation/handbook/?Page=61010.html>

The Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity (AA/EO)

<http://www.uvm.edu/~aaeo/>

Campus Advocacy Program

<https://www.uvm.edu/~women/?Page=cap.html&SM=capmenu.html>