Code of Professional Conduct of the School of Medicine

Preamble
The Duke University School of Medicine strives to educate health professional students who have a high capacity for ethical professional behavior. Since training in professional behavior is a part of training in the health professions enrolled students commit themselves to comply with all regulations regarding conduct established by Duke University (the Community Standard and the Bulletin of Information and Regulations of Duke University), the School of Medicine and the individual’s own academic program, as well as the Social Media Policy of the Duke University Health System (link). Professionalism is an academic issue and failure to demonstrate prescribed professional standards may jeopardize advancement and graduation in the same way as other academic matters. These standards closely follow those established and expected for the medical profession for which the student is training and are intended to serve as a precursor to future professional expectations.

Statement of the Code of Professional Conduct of Professional Conduct

The Code of Professional Conduct is intended to promote:

- Intellectual integrity and honesty in all endeavors
- Concern for the welfare of others and respect for the rights of others
- Professional demeanor and behavior

Students will be expected to hold themselves to these standards:

The student will not:

- Cheat
- Lie
- Alter or falsify academic, research or patient documents (both paper and electronic)
- Commit plagiarism or submit for course work that of another individual, unless it is expressly as part of an accepted group learning exercise as defined by the Instructor
- Participate in academic activities, including patient care, having used non-prescribed psychotropic substances (including alcohol) or having inappropriately used prescribed substances.
• Engage in romantic, sexual, or other nonprofessional relationships with a patient or a patient’s family member, even upon the apparent request of a patient or patient’s family member
• Engage in disruptive behavior in the classroom, clinic, hospital, or laboratory that might interfere with the learning, work or clinical care of others.
• Gain or provide unauthorized access to academic or administrative files, patient medical records, or research documents, via computer or any other means or method
• Misrepresent him or herself as a licensed or certified health care provider

The student will:
• Offer original work for each assignment or learning task
• Admit errors to his/her supervisor and not knowingly mislead others in the classroom, clinical setting or laboratory
• Respond promptly to official communications from the school, comply with attendance standards for learning activities (including assigned call duties), and meet all School of Medicine mandatory deadlines
• Engage in the responsible and ethical conduct of research
• Treat patients or research subjects, their family members, and his/her colleagues with respect and dignity both in their presence and in discussions with others, and maintain appropriate privacy and confidentiality of patient communications and records.
• Recognize the limitations of his/her knowledge, skills, or physical or emotional state, and seek supervision, advice, or appropriate help before acting.
• Learn to recognize when his/her ability to function effectively is compromised, ask for relief or help, and notify the responsible person if something interferes with the ability to perform clinical or research tasks safely and effectively.
• Deal with colleagues in a considerate manner and with a spirit of cooperation, and avoid offensive language, gestures, or remarks while interacting with all persons encountered in a professional capacity regardless of race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or socioeconomic status
• Take personal action to support equity and inclusivity in the learning environment
• Maintain a neat and clean appearance, and dress in attire that is appropriately professional and safe for the patient population served or the learning activity (and when in doubt, ask his/her instructor for guidance).
• Report promptly any witnessed violations of the Code of Professional conduct to a school official or via the (hotline? website?)
Scope of the Code of Professional Conduct

The Code of Professional Conduct is designed to promote the professional development of students in the School of Medicine. It should be understood that these guidelines represent standards to strive for. It should also be recognized that this code can not anticipate every potential offense and that unprofessional behavior not specifically mentioned in this code can still be subject to academic sanctions. Specific incidents will be considered in the context in which they occur. In addition, the magnitude and chronicity of infractions will be taken into account. Finally, it is important for students to understand and accept that professional behavior in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical setting is considered to be as significant an element of academic performance as subject-related evaluations such as Molecules and Cells examinations or clinical performance in Internal Medicine.

The Code of Professional Conduct is intended to guide the professional behavior of students studying in the health professions programs and applies to all endeavors and conduct pertaining to those studies. It is not intended to guide behavior that is a part of a student’s private life away from his or her studies in a direct way, but students should be aware that society has high standards for the conduct of medical professionals, and such behavior may come to the attention of the school in several ways and become the focus of a Code of Professional Conduct investigation.

The Code of Professional Conduct applies to a student while enrolled, and also after graduation in matters pertaining to certifying credentials, issuing transcripts, and verifying degrees that have been granted by the School of Medicine.

Civil and Criminal Charges/Offenses

Academic sanctions may be imposed on individuals who are:

a. being charged with an offense in the civil justice system. The school will generally not pursue an investigation until the outcome of the civil court proceeding is known, unless the alleged offense is such that allowing the student to continue his or her studies could be detrimental to the safety of patients or other members of the school, as determined by the Vice Dean for Education.

b. being charged with a criminal offense. The student is obligated to report this to the Vice Dean for Education immediately. If a matriculating student has been charged with a criminal offense between the time he/she wrote an application and the time he/she arrives at school, he/she should inform the Vice Dean before arrival. If the school later discovers that a student has withheld disclosure of a criminal charge,
he/she may be subject to immediate dismissal by the Vice Dean. In all situations, the student may not be allowed to continue the course of study until cleared of a criminal charge, as determined by the Vice Dean for Education. This does not reflect a "guilty until proven innocent" standard, but rather, the obligation of the school to ensure the safety of patients and other members of the school.