



# **Code of Professional Conduct**

**July 2017**

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## INTRODUCTION

This Code of Professional Conduct (medical school policy GEN01) outlines professional standards and behaviors that are aligned with the essential values of Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine (WMed) and the medical community. This code applies to all individuals who participate in activities at, under the auspices of, or using the services or resources of the medical school, and specifically includes all WMed faculty (including regular, clinical, community, adjunct, and emeriti faculty), residents, fellows, students, student applicants from the time of acceptance of an offer of admission, and staff.

These individuals are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the high ethical standards expected of physicians, educators, and healthcare professionals. Physicians, and medical students after graduation, are licensed to practice medicine and assume responsibilities for the life and welfare of others. Each individual participating in clinical care, education, research, and service must demonstrate competence and behaviors consistent with their responsibilities.

The medical school graduates only those students who are deserving of the public's trust. The medical school has the right to sever at any time the relationship it has with any faculty, student, employee, or associate determined, after appropriate due process, to be unfit for a career in medicine or medical education.

The Code of Professional Conduct applies to all conduct on the premises of the medical school and when participating in professional, educational, or social activities sponsored by or associated with the medical school, public behavior including posts on websites and social media, as well as any activity that may adversely reflect on the medical school or show an individual to be unfit for participation with the medical school.

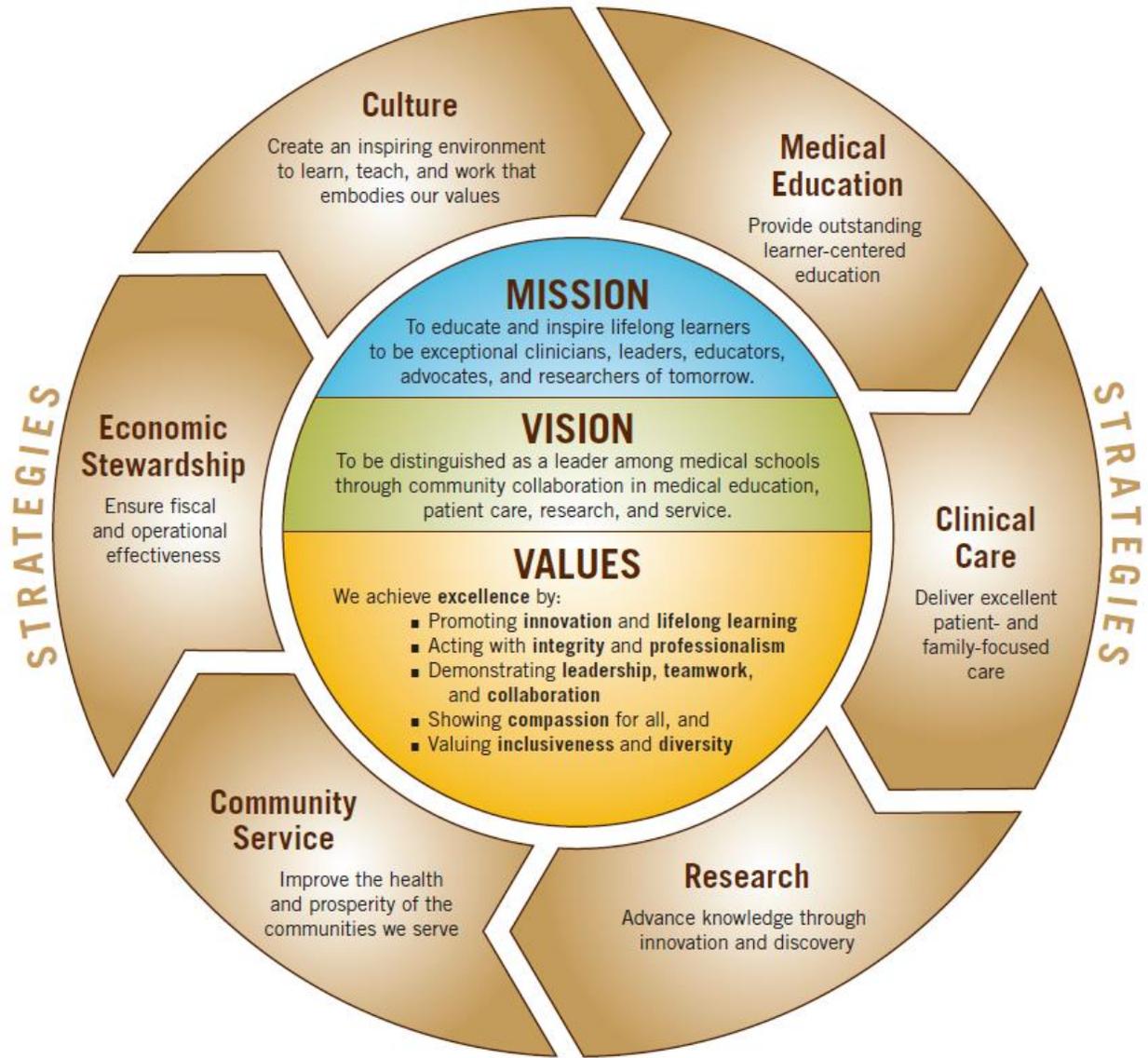
The medical school may take disciplinary or academic actions for any conduct whether on-campus or off-campus.

The medical school reserves the right to take whatever actions are appropriate and necessary for the safe and orderly maintenance of its programs and relationships with others. This may, in egregious circumstances, mean forgoing the routine procedures outlined in the Faculty Handbook, Resident Handbook, Medical Student Handbook, Graduate Student Handbook, and other medical school policies and procedures.

Retaliation or reprisals against individuals who, in good faith, report or provide information is prohibited and may result in separate academic or corrective action.

The Code of Professional Conduct may be enforced even if the individual resigns or withdraws from their role at the medical school while a Code of Professional Conduct matter is pending review or action, and may be enforced for conduct prior to resignation, termination, withdrawal, or dismissal.

# Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategies



## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

To promote the highest ideals of personal and professional conduct, all members of the medical school community are expected to cultivate a positive, respectful, and safe learning and working environment that honors the inherent dignity and worth of all members of the medical school community. All members of the medical school community have an obligation to model appropriate personal and professional conduct, to actively encourage others to do likewise, and to refrain from actions and conduct that is unprofessional, uncivil, disorderly, disrespectful, or interferes with the working and learning environment.

Freedom of thought and expression is vital to our shared goal of the pursuit of knowledge as we explore new ideas, generate new knowledge, learn from one another, and deepen our own understanding of humanity. The medical school fosters exchange of ideas and beliefs, including the expression of provocative or unpopular ideas, with productive, vigorous, and meaningful dialogue and debate in an environment of civil discourse that respects different points of view. Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarship in an open, honest, and responsible manner under the principles of medical school policy GENo2, *Academic Freedom and Integrity*.

The Code of Professional Conduct (medical school policy GENo1) outlines professional standards and behaviors that are aligned with the values of the medical school and medical community, and support a learning and working environment that respects the dignity of each individual. Assisting any person in violating the Code of Professional Conduct is treated no differently than a direct Code of Professional Conduct violation. Every person covered by the Code of Professional Conduct is expected to ensure that all others abide by these professional standards and maintain the standards of the Code of Professional Conduct.

The medical school Code of Professional Conduct is posted with all medical school policies and is accessible to students, faculty, and staff. It is also posted on the public website for all medical student applicants, graduate student applicants, employee applicants, and faculty candidates.

Compliance concerns are reported to the associate dean for Administration and Finance (269.337.6505; [compliance@med.wmich.edu](mailto:compliance@med.wmich.edu)).

## **Standards and Behaviors**

Freedom of expression must be respectful of others and exercised in good taste and decency, even though divergent ideological perspectives may be unwelcome or disagreeable and create intellectual conflict. Each member of the medical school community must be thoughtful and sensitive in their choice of words and behaviors. Each member has a responsibility to behave in a manner that does not harm others or create a hostile environment, and to challenge those who communicate inappropriate words and behaviors.

The standards and behaviors for all members of the medical school include the following.

### ***Honesty and Integrity***

- Being truthful in communication with others in personal communication, representation and documentation of patient's findings, presentations, research, and all other aspects of interactions.
- Being fair.
- Keeping one's word and honoring one's commitments.
- Consistently demonstrating the highest standards of behavior and refusing to compromise these professional standards and one's personal integrity.

### ***Trustworthiness***

- Maintaining the confidentiality of information that is entrusted.
- Admitting errors.
- Accepting responsibility.
- Not intentionally misleading others or promoting oneself at another's expense.

### ***Respect for Others***

- Showing respect and concern for the rights of others as demonstrated by thoughtful and sensitive choice of words and behaviors, treating all individuals with respect and civility, and dealing with others in a fair and considerate manner and with a spirit of collegiality, collaboration, and cooperation in all areas of contact with patients, families, learners, and colleagues, and others.
- Being fair and nondiscriminatory, promoting equality and acceptance of people from diverse backgrounds without bias.
- Respecting the individual privacy of all persons.
- Promoting collaboration through sharing of ideas and participation.
- Being aware of emotional, personal, family, and cultural influences of patient well-being and patients' choices in medical care.

## ***Personal Accountability and Responsibility***

- Being fit for duty, participating responsibly in all activities to the best of one's ability, meeting professional standards, and fulfilling professional responsibilities.
- Teaching, conducting research, and providing health care with competence, honesty, and meeting high ethical standards.
- Maintaining licenses and certifications that are required for one's roles and responsibilities, and continuing lifelong learning to maintain professional competence.
- Eagerly undertaking duties for which one is qualified and persevering with thoroughness and completeness.
- Working under appropriate supervision and seeking appropriate supervision and advice before acting.
- Treating patients, families, learners, and colleagues with respect and dignity in their presence and in discussions with others.
- Responding to reasonable and professional requests by colleagues.
- Punctual attendance and active participation in class, rounds, conferences, and other duties.
- Understanding and following medical school policies and procedures, facilitating colleagues also to understand and follow medical school policies and procedures, promptly addressing deviations from policies and procedures, and cooperating with inquiries, investigations, and audits as requested.
- Using medical school facilities, equipment, and resources, including communications and information technology resources, responsibly and for legitimate medical school business.

## ***Interpersonal Relationships***

- Being thoughtful and professional when interacting with patients and their families.
- Communicating with patients, families, learners, colleagues, and the public with professional demeanor and clear, open, and honest communication.
- Actively listening to the perspectives of others.
- Providing patients, families, learners, and colleagues with clear direction, timely and constructive feedback in a respectful manner, and suggestions and opportunities for improvement or remediation when needed.
- Striving to maintain composure even under pressures of fatigue and stress.
- Endeavoring to address and resolve personal conflicts with peers in a respectful, constructive, and collegial manner before escalating to involve others.
- Maintaining a neat and clean appearance that is accepted as professional to patients, learners, and colleagues.
- Representing oneself and the medical school professionally while in the classroom, on campus, in a clinic or hospital, and in public settings including posts on websites and social media.

## ***Commitment to Excellence***

- Making a conscientious effort to exceed ordinary expectations and provide the highest quality of service and health care through lifelong learning, education, and improvement.
- Learning from experience, seeking feedback, and improving from self-evaluation and critiques from others.
- Understanding one's strengths and weaknesses, and seeking assistance when needed.

## **PROSCRIBED CONDUCT**

The Code of Professional Conduct prohibits conduct by an individual or group that:

- Demonstrates disregard for any person or persons.
- Threatens the health, safety, well-being, or property of any individual or group.
- Adversely affects the pursuit of medical school objectives.
- Adversely reflects on the medical school community.

Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to the following.

### **Inappropriate Behavior**

Any physical conduct or written or oral communication, including posts on websites and social media, that attacks, bullies, demeans, humiliates, intimidates, conveys bigotry or hatred, harasses, frightens, degrades, coerces, endangers, or threatens the health, safety, or well-being of a person.

- Intimidating, discriminatory, belittling, or berating statements including hazing.
- Name calling.
- Profane, offensive, or disrespectful language or sexually explicit material.
- Aggressive or threatening language or gestures.
- Stalking.
- Unwanted physical contact.
- Throwing objects.

Statements or conduct that are directed at an individual because of but not limited to a person's:

- Race.
- Ethnicity/national origin.
- Creed.
- Color.
- Religion.

- Gender.
- Pregnancy.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender identity.
- Age.
- Disability.
- Veteran status.
- Genetic or family medical information.
- Height.
- Weight.
- Marital status.
- Familial status.
- Any other status protected by applicable law or local ordinance.

The expressed or implied consent of the victim is not a defense.

Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of abusing, bullying, hazing, harassing, or stalking is also a violation.

## **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct encompasses misconduct in research and scholarly activities as described in medical school policy RESO4, *Misconduct in Research and Scholarly Activities*. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to the following.

***Cheating*** – Engaging in any activity that would dishonestly improve an individual’s results, or improve or hurt the results of other learners. This includes but is not limited to the following.

- Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials including unauthorized possession of examinations, information, notes, study aids, or other devices or materials in any academic exercise.
- Not completing individual assignment, quizzes, and examinations by oneself or with any form of unauthorized assistance.
- Unauthorized sharing of assignment, and quiz and examination questions and/or answers in any form including email, photocopying, electronic images, and websites.

***Fabrication*** – Inventing or making up information, data, or results and recording or reporting them.

***Falsification*** – Altering or manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.

**Plagiarism, including self-plagiarism** – Presenting another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words as one’s own and without proper acknowledgement and attribution of the source when the ideas or information are not common knowledge. This incorporates ensuring that contributions to scholarly works are appropriately identified and acknowledged as described in medical school policy GENo6, *Authorship*. This includes but is not limited to the following.

- Failure to attribute to the source any portion of an assignment, report, published work, research, or scholarly activity.
- Taking credit for another person’s work, research, or scholarly activity.
- Appropriation without consent of another’s ideas, methods, formulas, or other information, whether published or not.
- Multiple submission of substantial portions of the same work, including:
  - Oral and written reports for credit more than once without awareness of and authorization from instructors of all classes for which the student submits the work.
  - Research results for presentation or publication without awareness of and authorization from all meeting leaders and journal editors.

**Complicity** – Helping or attempting to help another individual or group to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

**Other** – Other material deviations from accepted academic practices include, without limitation:

- Obstruction of another individual’s academic freedom or activities.
- Violations of confidentiality.
- Willful, frivolous allegation of misconduct or dishonesty.
- Willful deception.

## **Alcohol and Other Drugs**

The use of illegal drugs, abuse of alcohol, and abuse of legal drugs or substances in a manner other than their intended purpose and dosage, is prohibited in the academic and clinical settings of the medical school, and while in the performance of any professional duties on behalf of the medical school.

Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to the following.

- Public intoxication.
- Illegally possessing, using, distributing, manufacturing, or selling alcohol or drugs.
- Being under the influence of alcohol and other drugs while in the performance of professional duties.

## **Computing Resources**

- All software used on medical school information technology equipment, and all information technology services must be legal and comply fully with licensing agreements as described in medical school policy ITO1, *Acceptable Use of Information Technology Systems*.
- Account usernames and passwords may not be shared.
- All individuals must follow all medical school policies for data and network security, and policies governing appropriate use.

## **Copyright**

Inadequate attribution including those materials in the public domain, or illegal use of copyrighted materials whether text or images, and whether printed, posted on a website, or published by any other means.

## **Dishonesty**

Dishonesty includes but is not limited to the following.

- Furnishing false information to any official.
- Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any document, record, account, or computer account.
- Representing or acting as an agent of another individual or entity without authorization.

## **Disruptive or Disrespectful Behavior**

Disruptive or disrespectful behavior includes but is not limited to language or behavior, including posts on websites and social media, by any individual that:

- Disrupts or disturbs the academic or professional pursuits or infringes on the rights and responsibilities of others.
- Creates disorder, such as protests and demonstrations, and including disrupting or halting, directly or indirectly, an approved speaker from speaking – even briefly – or seizing control of a public forum for one’s own purposes.
- Leading or inciting others to disrupt medical school activities or operations.
- Displays disrespect to individuals or property.
- Displays conduct that is disorderly, lewd, or indecent.
- Uses electronic or other devices to make an audio or video/digital record of any person without his/her knowledge and authorization, or without his/her effective consent when such recording is likely to cause injury or distress.
- Infringes upon the privacy, rights, or privileges of other persons.

- Otherwise disrupts or interferes with the regular and essential cooperation of the medical school community by impeding, impairing, or obstructing access to facilities, teaching, research, administration, proceedings, processes, or functions including public service functions and other activities on medical school premises or sponsored by the medical school.

### **Failure to Comply**

Failing to comply with medical school policies and procedures, including directives from medical school officials or law enforcement officers acting in performance of their duties.

### **Fire Safety and Safety**

- Tampering with fire or safety equipment.
- Setting fires.
- Creating safety hazards with the potential to injure others or interfere with the normal activities of the medical school.

### **Forgery or Alteration**

Making, counterfeiting, imitating, altering, possessing, or using any falsified medical school or other official documents, materials, or signature.

In patient care settings, this includes but is not limited to fabricating or falsifying patient information.

### **Identity**

The representation or use of another person's identity, password, credentials, medical school or other identification or access card.

Assisting another to misrepresent or misuse any identity, password, or credential.

When engaged in outside activities, individuals must make it clear that: 1) they are acting in their individual capacities and not on behalf of the medical school; and 2) that the medical school does not endorse, sponsor, support, or indemnify the outside activity.

### **Key Possession and Use**

Unauthorized possession, duplication, or use of keys, key cards, or other access or security devices.

## **Lewd, Obscene, Harassing, or Threatening Communication**

Including but not limited to lewd, obscene, profane, harassing, or threatening language and communications orally, in print, or electronically by any medium.

## **Property Entry, Use, or Damage**

- Unauthorized entry or use of medical school property or the property of others.
- Actual or attempted unauthorized removal of, use of, or damage to medical school property or the property of others.
- Leaving or placing unauthorized materials on medical school property or the property of others.

## **Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment**

Sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and intimate partner violence as described in medical school policy GEN10, *Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, and Stalking*. This includes but is not limited to the following.

- Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- Any form of sexual contact, blatant threat if sexual favors are not given, or promised reward for sexual favors between instructors and students, or between supervisors and employees.
- Unwelcome sexual contact that occurs as a result of intimidation, threat of force, use of force, or other coercive behavior including but not limited to employment or evaluation of student performance.
- Repeated or inappropriate sex-related statements, unwelcome touching, sexually explicit comments, or presence of graphics that continues after the recipient has made clear that the conduct is unwelcome.

## **Theft**

Stealing, vandalizing, damaging, destroying, or defacing medical school property or the property of others.

## **Weapons Possession or Use**

Possessing, using, or storing firearms, explosives, or other lethal and non-lethal weapons, and unauthorized dangerous chemicals or compounds on medical school premises as well as at any activities sponsored by or associated with the medical school.

Brandishing or using a weapon, even if possession is properly authorized, in a manner that harms, threatens, or causes fear in others.

Weapons include but is not limited to the following.

- Fire arms.
- Pellet guns.
- BB guns.
- Ammunition.
- Paint ball guns.
- Bow and arrows.
- Knives (other than small pocket knives).
- Firecrackers.
- Pepper spray.
- Conducted electrical weapons (Tasers).

### **Violation of Relevant Law (Including Omission)**

Failure to fully comply with federal, state, and local laws on medical school premises as well as at any activities sponsored by or associated with the medical school.

Compliance is required with all research regulations, including Public Health Service regulations.

Compliance is required with the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Health Information Technology for Economic Clinical Health (HITECH), and Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA).