

I. POLICY

Professionalism and Expectations for Students' Professional Behaviors

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the aspirations for professionalism over the course of the Doctor of Medicine (MD) program, the expectations for medical students' professional behaviors, and the procedures for encouraging professional behaviors.

III. RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE

Student Affairs in conjunction with Medical Education will review this document annually. The Medical Education Committee will review and approve any changes to this policy as recommended by Student Affairs and Curriculum Policy Subcommittee.

IV. ACCREDITATION REFERENCES

LCME 3.5 Learning Environment/Professionalism
SACSCOC 12.3 Student Rights
SACSCOC 12.4 Student Complaints

V. DESCRIPTION

In accordance with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education standards, EVMS is committed to promoting the development of medical student professionalism and professional behaviors for success as a practicing physician. EVMS defines our aspirations for professionalism in the following way: Professionalism is a decision and commitment by educators and students to strive for excellence and continuous improvement in knowledge and skills, education of others, altruism, communication, and duty and service, to reflect a social contract with communities served.

In addition to these aspirations, EVMS believes it is important to define expectations for individual behaviors that contribute to a collegial and positive professional environment. Such professional behaviors are a component of our multi-faceted professional identities and therefore warrant reflection and review. The expectations for student behaviors are defined below.

Finally, it is the goal of EVMS to highlight individual student contributions to our professional environment. As such, students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to acknowledge exemplary student professionalism by informing Medical Education and Student Affairs via the [School of Medicine Student Recognition Form](#). Exemplary student professionalism can be documented in the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE) during the residency application process.

Expectations for Students' Professional Behaviors

The following are examples of expected professional behaviors:

- Consistent and visible wearing of the EVMS identification badge
- Arriving to all academic sessions and meetings by the start of the session
- Responding to peer, staff, faculty, or administration communications within 48 hours or after two attempts
- Attending all required academic sessions or notifying appropriate individuals of approved absences in accordance with the Attendance of Academic Responsibilities Policy
- Submitting all required assignments and/or completing all responsibilities (e.g., Clinical Evaluation assignment, MD Phase requirements, MD Phase expectations, clinical duty hour logs, evaluations, etc.) in stated time frames
- Adhering to all procedures and expectations for behavior in the testing center
- Engaging in supportive and appropriate behavior with faculty, staff, or other students during in-person, virtual, or email discussions involving the learning environment
- Maintaining professional dress as outlined in the MD Student Handbook

EVMS recognizes that while we strive to be consistently professional, we occasionally exhibit behaviors that do not reflect our intentions or professional identities. When lapses of professional behavior occur, students are encouraged to self-reflect, self-calibrate, and engage EVMS resources, as needed. Peer and near-peer education and encouragement of professional behaviors, as appropriate, is also helpful. Unexcused absences or attending an academic session at a date or time other than what was assigned will also be addressed per the Attendance of Academic Responsibilities Policy. Late or missing academic assignments may result in a lower grade for that assignment or failure per the relevant Phase assessment and grading policy. Students have the right to an academic appeal in such circumstances. Finally, incident reports filed during an exam may also be addressed by the Honor Code.

Lapses of professionalism and discussions towards efforts for improvement (if applicable) will be shared with MD program administration using the [Professionalism Reporting Form](#) or other means.

Feedback on Professional Behaviors in the Pre-clerkship Phase

In the Pre-clerkship Phase, lapses of professional behavior will be noted for students' review in Blackboard and are addressed developmentally. Students are encouraged to self-monitor this feedback for self-reflection and self-calibration. They are also encouraged to make use of program curricula and/or resources (e.g., Academic Development, Student Affairs, Clinical Development, Student Mental Health, etc.) to address any potential patterns of behavior that might impede their success as a physician in training or as a future resident or physician.

Feedback on Professional Behaviors in the Clerkship and Elective Phases

In the Clerkship and Elective Phases, students are expected to demonstrate the professional behaviors listed above, as well as any context-specific expectations outlined by the clerkship, course or elective directors. While not an exhaustive list, below are examples of behaviors that are considered hindrances to the professional environment.

- Recurrent tardiness, to rounds, sign-out, a small group, didactic lecture, required activity, etc.
- Unexcused absence for a clinical assignment, academic session, or mid-clerkship meeting. NOTE: Tardiness of greater than 30 minutes will be considered an unexcused absence.
- Lack of timely response and/or completion of patient responsibilities
- Late or missing assignments, requirements, or duty hour logs
- Lack of timely completion of one or more required evaluations
- Lack of timely responsiveness to faculty, staff, or administration communications. Unless otherwise stated, timely responsiveness is considered a response within 48 hours or after two attempts.
- Lack of context-specific expectations outlined by the clerkship, course or elective directors.

Each occurrence of behaviors that hinder the professional environment will result in a one-point deduction from the Professionalism domain of the assessment. Missing assignments not submitted by the new communicated deadline provided by the clerkship may result in an automatic failure for the Professionalism domain.

When students engage in unprofessional behaviors, faculty are entrusted to privately discuss with students the expectations of professionalism. Students are encouraged to self-monitor the professionalism points as feedback for self-reflection and self-calibration. They are also encouraged to make use of program curricula and/or resources (e.g., Academic Development, Student Affairs, Clinical Development, Student Mental Health, etc.) to address any potential patterns of behavior that might impede their success as a physician in training or as a future resident or physician. Clerkship and elective directors may also encourage use of or connect students to these resources.

Because Professionalism is a domain in the Clerkship Phase Assessment and Grading Policy, students should note that loss of two or more professionalism points in a clerkship will be reported in the clerkship grade summary of the MSPE.

Students who feel they were unjustly deducted professionalism points may appeal as outlined in the Appeal and Complaint Procedures Policy. Students who fail a clerkship, course, or elective due to lapses of professional behaviors will be referred to the Student Progress Committee (SPC).

Procedures for Remediation of Recurrent or Significant Lapses of Professional Behaviors

If a student demonstrates either a pattern of lapses of professional behaviors or a one-time, significant lapse of professional behavior in curricular contexts, the MD program will work with the student on a process of reflection and remediation. Based upon an empirically-supported, graduated approach to intervention, the goal of the reflection and remediation process is to educate students about behaviors that might limit their effectiveness as practicing physicians. Lapses of the expected behaviors listed above are reported to Student Affairs for inquiry and remediation, using the [Professionalism Reporting Form](#).

In general, the following guidelines will be used when determining remediation:

- 1-2 lapses of professional behavior over the course of the MD program: No program-initiated remediation
- 3-4 lapses of professional behavior over the course of the MD program: Remediation might include one or more of the following:
 - Reflective/educational assignment
 - Development of a personalized learning plan
 - Required meeting with a member of Student Affairs, the Director of Clinical Development, or other member(s) of the administration
- 5-6 lapses of professional behavior over the course of the MD program: Appearance before the Student Review and Advisory Committee (SRAC) with the possibility of a required action plan
- More than 6 lapses of professional behavior over the course of the MD program: Appearance before the SPC with the possibility of a required action plan or dismissal from the MD program.

This remediation process is intended to be holistic in scope and does not require failure of a course, clerkship, or elective for unprofessional behaviors for initiation. At the onset of the remediation process, the student will receive an email from Student Affairs via the Maxient system and the student will be required to meet with Student Affairs.

Students' MSPEs will accurately reflect their demonstration of professional behaviors. Recurrent or significant lapses of professional behavior will be documented in the student's formal educational record and/or in the MSPE by description of the behavior(s) and curriculum Phase in which they occurred. Students will be advised in advance of such documentation. Recurrent and/or significant lapses of professional behavior will also be considered in selection for honor societies, awards/scholarships, and other institutional honors.

If at any point, a student engages in behavior(s) that violate other EVMS policies, constitutes a safety risk, or are deemed inappropriate for the graduated approach, Student Affairs will initiate the intervention appropriate for the behavior. Behaviors that are in violation of other

institutional policies (i.e., the Code of Student Conduct, the Honor Code, etc.) will be addressed following the procedures of that code. Policies stated here are not mutually exclusive and can be administered in concert with other EVMS policies for professionalism issues depending on the nature and severity of the offense.

VI. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Appeal and Complaint Procedures Policy
Appropriate Dress in the Academic and Clinical Environments
Attendance of Academic Responsibilities Policy
Clerkship Phase Assessment and Grading Policy
Code of Student Conduct
Elective Phase Assessment and Grading Policy
Honor Code
Pre-clerkship Phase Assessment and Grading Policy
Student Progress Committee Structure and Function Policy

VII. HISTORY OF APPROVALS AND UPDATES

The following list documents policy approvals and updates by oversight authority, date, and summary of changes. This policy is housed on the MD Student Handbook webpage.

- On June 17, 2020, the Medical Education Committee approved the update to separate the policy from the MD Student Handbook and to include pre-clerkship procedures.
- On December 7, 2020, the Medical Education Committee approved an update to include new forms into the procedures and to clarify the process of student self-reflection.
- On May 25, 2021, the Medical Education Committee approved an update to make monitoring of professional behaviors in the Pre-clerkship Phase a developmental process and to specify the potential remediation options for recurrent lapses of professional behaviors over the course of the MD program. The name of the policy was also changed to Professionalism and Expectations for Students' Professional Behaviors Policy.
- On July 14, 2021, the Medical Education Committee approved an update to make missing assignments in the Clerkship and M4 Elective Phases that have not been submitted in by the extension deadline an automatic failure of the Professionalism domain.
- On May 27, 2022, the Medical Education Committee approved an update to align the policy with the updated Assessment and Grading Policies and to clarify the example list of M3/M4 professionalism lapses.
- On May 10, 2023, the Medical Education Committee approved an update to align the policy with the curricular redesign language (replace module with course, remove M4).