

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR THE TEACHER- LEARNER RELATIONSHIP

The EVMS School of Medicine and School of Health Professions are committed to maintaining a positive environment for study and training, in which individuals are judged solely on relevant factors such as ability and performance, and can pursue their educational and professional activities in an atmosphere that is humane, respectful and safe. As such, student and resident/fellow mistreatment is destructive of these fundamental principles and will not be tolerated within the EVMS community and its affiliated learning sites.

EVMS defines mistreatment as behavior that shows disrespect for learners and interferes with their respective learning process. Such behavior may be verbal, emotional, or physical. When assessing behavior that is perceived as mistreatment, students are expected to consider the conditions, circumstances, and environment surrounding such behavior. Provision of healthcare is inherently stressful. Medical and health professions student training is a rigorous process where the welfare of the patient is the primary focus and that, in turn, may impact behavior in the training setting.

Reflective of this philosophy, all EVMS faculty, including community faculty, will abide by the Association of American Medical Colleges Compact between Teacher and Learners of Medicine, modified to be inclusive of the School of Health Professions faculty and students, and referred to as The Compact.

COMPACT BETWEEN TEACHERS AND LEARNERS OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Preparation for a career in medicine or health professions demands the acquisition of a large fund of knowledge and a host of special skills. It also demands the strengthening of those virtues that undergird the relationship between professionals and patients that sustain the health care profession as a moral enterprise. Likewise, professional training entails both formal education in a specific discipline and an apprenticeship in which the graduate student trains under the supervision of investigators who are qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor. This Compact serves both as a pledge and as a reminder to teachers and learners that their conduct in fulfilling their mutual obligations is the medium through which the medical and health professions inculcate their ethical values.

Guiding Principles

- ***Duty.*** Medical and health professions educators have a duty not only to convey the knowledge and skills required for delivering their profession's contemporary standard of care or research, but also to inculcate the values and attitudes required for preserving their profession's social contract across generations.

Teaching. Discovering. Caring.

- **Integrity.** The learning environments conducive to conveying professional values must be suffused with integrity. Students learn enduring lessons of professionalism by observing and emulating role models who epitomize authentic professional values and attitudes.
- **Respect.** Fundamental to the ethic of medicine and health professions is respect for every individual. Mutual respect between learners, as novice members of a profession, and their teachers, as experienced and esteemed professionals, is essential for nurturing that ethic. Given the inherently hierarchical nature of the teacher–learner relationship, teachers have a special obligation to ensure that students and residents/fellows are always treated respectfully.

Commitments of Faculty

- We pledge our utmost effort to ensure that all components of the educational program for students and residents/fellows are of high quality.
- As mentors for our student and resident/fellow colleagues, we maintain high professional standards in all of our interactions with patients, colleagues, and staff.
- We respect all students and residents/fellows as individuals, without regard to gender, race, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation; we will not tolerate anyone who manifests disrespect or who expresses biased attitudes towards any student or resident/fellow.
- We pledge to uphold the duty hour requirements for students and residents/fellows as stipulated in the applicable accreditation standards.
- In nurturing both the intellectual and the personal development of students and residents/fellows, we celebrate expressions of professional attitudes and behaviors, as well as achievement of academic excellence.
- We do not tolerate any abuse or exploitation of students or residents/fellows.
- We encourage any student or resident/fellow who experiences mistreatment or who witnesses unprofessional behavior to report the facts immediately to appropriate faculty or staff; we treat all such reports as confidential and do not tolerate reprisals or retaliations of any kind.

Commitments of Students and Residents/Fellows

- We pledge our utmost effort to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and behaviors required to fulfill all educational objectives established by the faculty.
- We cherish the professional virtues of honesty, compassion, integrity, fidelity, and dependability.
- We pledge to respect all faculty members, and all students and residents/fellows as individuals, without regard to gender, race, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation.
- As physicians or health professionals in training, we embrace the highest standards of our profession and pledge to conduct ourselves accordingly in all of our interactions with patients and/or colleagues and staff.
- In fulfilling our own obligations as professionals, we pledge to assist our fellow students and residents/fellows in meeting their professional obligations as well.

Teaching. Discovering. Caring.

*Adapted from: J. Cohen, Academic Medicine, Vol. 77, No. 6 / June 2002 and
<https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/gradcompact/>*

Reporting of Student Mistreatment

Students are encouraged to report incidences of mistreatment via four avenues:

- Notify clerkship or program director, or departmental chair
- Notify a Dean: the Dean of the School of Health Professions, Vice Dean for Academic Affairs Education, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Associate Dean for Health Professions
- Report the incidence on a course/clerkship evaluation
- Report anonymously using the EVMS Ethics and Compliance Hotline found on the EVMS website. This mechanism can be used to report mistreatment by staff members of EVMS or affiliate institutions as well.

If deemed appropriate, reports will be investigated by Human Resources (for faculty, residents/fellows, or staff accused), by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs (for students accused), or by a departmental chair (for community faculty accused).

Reporting of Resident/Fellow Mistreatment

Residents/Fellows are provided three institutional mechanisms for reporting incidents of mistreatment by faculty members, staff, patients, or peers

- Notify chief resident, program director and/or chair
- Notify the Vice Dean for Graduate Medical Education (446-6190)
- Report anonymously using EVMS Ethics and Compliance Hotline found on the EVMS website.

Retaliation and False Claims

Retaliation against a person who reports, complains of, or provides information in a mistreatment investigation or proceeding is prohibited. Alleged retaliation will be subject to investigation and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion.

A person who knowingly makes false allegations of mistreatment, or who knowingly provides false information in a mistreatment investigation or proceeding, will be subject to disciplinary action and, in the case of students, will be considered a violation of the Honor Code.