

## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR TEACHER/LEARNER RELATIONSHIPS POLICY**

UMKC School of Medicine (SOM) is a community of professionals dedicated to education, patient care, and research. The SOM holds in high regard professional behaviors and attitudes, including altruism, integrity, respect for others and a commitment to excellence. The SOM community is committed to maintaining academic and clinical environments in which faculty, fellows, residents, students and staff can work together to further education and research, while providing the highest quality of ethical and compassionate care for patients at affiliated hospitals and clinics. As effective learning is best fostered in an environment of mutual respect between teachers and learners, mutual respect is expected; each member within the SOM community must be accepted as an individual and treated with respect and fairness. Diversity in background, outlook and interest is inherent, necessary and important in medical education and the practice of medicine. Although both teachers and learners bear responsibility for creating and maintaining these academic and clinical environments, teachers take on particular responsibility with respect to their evaluative roles relative to student work and with respect to demonstrating appropriate professional behaviors.

The term “teacher” is used broadly to include peers, resident physicians, full-time and volunteer faculty members, clinical preceptors, nurses, and ancillary support staff, as well as others from whom students learn. Resident physicians, of special note, are also “students” at the UMKC SOM.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

**Duty:** Medical educators/teachers have a duty to convey the knowledge and skills required for delivering the Medical profession’s standard of care and also to instill the values and attitudes required for preserving the medical profession’s social contract with its patients.

**Integrity:** Learning environments that are conducive to conveying professional values must be based on integrity. Students and residents learn professionalism by observing and emulating role models who epitomize authentic professional values and attitudes.

**Respect:** Respect for every individual is fundamental to the ethics of medicine. Mutual respect is essential for nurturing that ethic. Teachers have a special obligation to ensure students and residents are always treated respectfully.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONDUCT OF TEACHERS AND LEARNERS:**

#### **Teachers should:**

- Treat students fairly and respectfully
- Maintain high professional standards in all interactions
- Be prepared and on time
- Provide relevant information in a timely fashion
- Provide explicit learning and behavioral expectations early in a course or clerkship
- Provide timely, focused, accurate and constructive formative feedback on a regular basis and thoughtful and timely evaluations at the end of a course or clerkship
- Display honesty, integrity and compassion
- Practice insightful (Socratic) questioning, which stimulates learning and self-discovery, and avoid overly aggressive questioning which may be perceived as hurtful, humiliating, degrading or punitive

- Solicit feedback from students regarding their perception of their educational experiences
- Encourage students who experience mistreatment or who witness unprofessional behavior to report the facts immediately

#### **Students should:**

- Treat fellow students and faculty fairly and respectfully
- Demonstrate professional behavior in all settings
- Be prepared and on time
- Demonstrate honesty, integrity and compassion
- Be active, enthusiastic, curious learners
- Recognize learning stems beyond formal and structured activities and requires responsibility and commitment
- Recognize their responsibility to learn established learning objectives and to participate as an active learner
- Demonstrate a commitment to life-long learning, a practice that is essential to the profession of medicine
- Recognize personal limitations and seek help as needed
- Recognize the privileges and responsibilities coming from the opportunity to work with patients in clinical settings
- Recognize the duty to place patient welfare above their own concerns
- Recognize and respect patients' rights to privacy
- Solicit feedback on their performance and recognize criticism is not synonymous with "abuse"

#### **Relationships between Teachers and Students**

Students and teachers should recognize the special nature of the teacher-learner relationship, which is in part defined by professional role modeling, mentorship, and supervision. Because of the special nature of this relationship, students and teachers should strive to develop their relationship as one characterized by mutual trust, acceptance, and confidence and limited to that of education and mentoring. They should both recognize the potential for conflict of interest and respect appropriate boundaries.

#### **Conduct/Responsibilities of Teachers and Learners:**

- Treat each other with respect at all times
- Treat each other equally, without regard for age, sex, gender, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, military or veteran status
- Act fairly in all dealings with each other
- Communicate with each other in a respectful and professional manner at all times
- Be prompt to appointments, classes and lectures

#### **Inappropriate Conduct:**

- Unwanted physical contact or the threat of such contact

- Sexual harassment (including voluntary romantic relationships between teachers and learners in which the teacher has authority over the learner's academic status and progress)
- Harassment based on age, sex, gender, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, military or veteran status
- Discrimination in any form based on age, sex, gender, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, military or veteran status
- Loss of civility or professionalism, including displays of temper, demeaning or humiliating behavior to another, the use of personal threats, attacks or insults, or any other conduct that is disruptive to patient care and/or learning
- Asking others to perform personal errands unrelated to education, research or patient care activities
- Providing health and/or psychiatric or psychological services to any student for which a teacher has involvement in the academic assessment or in decisions about the promotion of that student, except in an emergency situation.

#### **Process for Reporting Inappropriate Conduct:**

- The general process and procedures for learners and teachers is outlined below. This policy provides guidelines for the learner and teacher to address the issue, including some initial resources to consider. The underlying concern is for the comfort of the individual raising the concern. The SOM will not tolerate any form of retaliatory conduct by or toward teachers or learners who report inappropriate conduct in good faith. Individuals who believe that retaliatory action has been taken against them as a result of reporting or raising concerns regarding inappropriate conduct, may report such action through the procedures set forth herein.
- In addition to the SOM process for reporting, learners and teachers may report concerns within the University. This includes contacting the Title IX Coordinator at the Office of Affirmative Action and Title IX at (816) 235-6910 and/or to the University's Ethics and Compliance Reporting Line either online at <https://www.compliance-helpline.com/UM.jsp> or by calling 1-866-447-9821 (reports to the Ethics and Compliance Reporting Line may be made anonymously). Additionally, UMKC Human Resources or University administrators could be contacted to raise a concern.
- Learners and teachers are directed that they may report their concern to the Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion who is directly responsible for hearing and addressing concerns raised regarding the teacher/learner relationship. Confidentiality of the reporter will be maintained to the extent possible based on the situation. The Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion will notify additional SOM leadership based on the situation:
  1. Associate Dean for Student Affairs for BA/MD and MD student related issues
  2. Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies for graduate student related issues
  3. Council on Evaluation Chair for academic and professionalism issues of students
  4. Honor Council Chair for issues in violation of Student Honor Code
  5. Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education for resident related concerns. (The Human Resources Department of the residents employer may need to be involved based on the situation.)

6. Associate Dean for the Clinical Affiliates for patient and work environment related concerns.  
(The hospital's Human Resources department may need to be involved based on the situation.)

7. Academic Department Chair and Vice Dean for faculty related concerns

- The Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion will work with the reporter of the concern in association with other SOM leadership to investigate and resolve the matter. The ability to provide feedback to the reporter regarding the resolution of the matter may be limited due to the confidentiality of the person about whom the concern is raised.
- The Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion will keep a confidential record of all reports, including resolution status. This record will include the date, reporter, category of issue (student, resident, teacher, environment), status (resolved/how, ongoing). Information from this record will only be shared in a de-identified manner, except that such information may be shared with University administrators and officers with a need to know such information, or as may be required by University policy, law or court order.
- An annual report of teacher/learner relationship concerns including suggestions and actions to further enhance the teacher/learner relationship will be provided by the Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion to the SOM Coordinating Committee and reviewed by the Dean. This report would include the number of reports, category of the issue, status of the issue, and overall recommendations to enhance the student teacher relationship.
- Title IX concerns must be reported to Title IX Coordinator at the University of Missouri-Kansas City for investigation. Reports may be made to the Office of Affirmative Action and Title IX at (816) 235-6910.
- Reports may be made to the University's Ethics and Compliance Reporting Line either online at <https://www.compliance-helpline.com/UM.jsp> or by calling 1-866-447-9821; reports to the Ethics and Compliance Reporting Line may be made anonymously.

#### **For Learners (Students):**

- Learners may report the inappropriate conduct of another through a variety of mechanisms. First and foremost, learners (only if comfortable doing so) may address the situation immediately and non-confrontationally with the person engaging in such conduct. If the learner is not comfortable raising the matter with the person engaging in the conduct, or the conduct continues, the learner may discuss the issue with course directors, program directors, department chairs, the student's education team coordinator (ETC), the student's docent or the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies, or the Associate Dean for the Clinical Affiliate.
- If the issue cannot be addressed/resolved in this manner and/or if the issue is deemed to represent a significant violation of the responsibilities/conduct described in this policy, the student and/or the individual the student confided in should report the incident to the Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion. Confidentiality of the student will be maintained to the extent possible according to the situation.

#### **For Learners (Residents/Fellows):**

- Each UMKC graduate medical education program sponsored by the SOM has a working and learning environment policy that should be followed.

- Additionally, the Graduate Medical Education Resident/Fellow Working and Learning Environment Policy describes the methods and procedures for residents/fellows to report concerns at: [http://med.umkc.edu/docs/gme/policy\\_pdfs/GME\\_Working\\_Environment.pdf](http://med.umkc.edu/docs/gme/policy_pdfs/GME_Working_Environment.pdf)

If the issue cannot be addressed/resolved in this manner and/or if the issue is deemed to represent a significant violation of the responsibilities/conduct described in this policy, the resident/fellow and/or the individual that the student confided in should report the incident to the Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion. Confidentiality of the resident/fellow will be maintained to the extent possible by the situation.

#### **For Teachers:**

- Teachers who feel that a learner or teacher has engaged in inappropriate behavior may address the situation immediately with that learner or teacher. Additionally, for student concerns, the teacher can report the concern to the course/clerkship director, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies, or the Council on Evaluation Chair for investigation. For resident concerns, the teacher can report to the program director or Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education for investigation. For teacher concerns, the faculty member can report to the Academic Department Chair and/or the Associate Dean for the Clinical Affiliates for investigation.
- If the issue cannot be addressed/resolved in this manner and/or if the issue is deemed to represent a significant violation of the responsibilities/conduct described in this policy, the teacher and/or the authority the teacher reports contact the Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion. Confidentiality of the teacher will be maintained to the extent possible based on the situation.

#### **Education:**

The University and hospital affiliates require education of students and teachers, including training about:

- Title IX;
- Sexual harassment and discrimination;
- Hospital compliance; and
- Cultural sensitivity

#### **Monitoring:**

The SOM regularly reviews internal surveys completed by learners, as well as course evaluations, and one of several objectives in this process is to identify possible problems with regard to inappropriate conduct by or between teachers and learners, and if necessary, to take appropriate action with regard to such conduct. The Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion is charged with reviewing this data annually and reporting to the Coordinating Committee and Dean a summary and recommendations.

Reports made to the Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion are investigated, tracked, and reported to the SOM Coordinating Committee and Dean.

Reports made to the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies are investigated, tracked and reported to the Dean.

Reports made to the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education are investigated, tracked, and reported to the Dean.

Reports made to the Associate Deans for the Clinical Affiliates are investigated, tracked, and reported to the Dean.

Reports made to the Honor Council Chair are investigated, tracked, and reported to the Dean.

Reports made to the Office of Affirmative Action and Title IX are investigated, tracked, and reported to the Dean.

**Miscellaneous:**

1. If the reported conduct involves unlawful discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment, the matter will be referred to the Office of Affirmative Action and Title IX, and will be handled through University policies established for such reports.
2. The SOM will not tolerate any form of retaliatory conduct by or toward teachers or learners who report inappropriate conduct in good faith. Individuals, who believe that retaliatory action has been taken against them as a result of reporting or raising concerns regarding inappropriate conduct, may report such action through the procedures set forth herein.
3. If it is determined that a report of inappropriate conduct has not been made in good faith, the reporting individual may be referred for disciplinary action in accordance with appropriate University procedures identified elsewhere.

\*Adapted from the AAMC LCME Standard, the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Code of Professional Conduct and the AAMC Uniform Clinical Training Affiliation Agreement

*Approved by Coordinating Committee on June 2, 2017*