

	Appropriate Treatment of Learners Policy	Effective Date:	August 14, 2018
		Current Date:	August 14, 2018
		Contact:	Office of Admissions
Approved By: SOM Executive Faculty		Date Approved:	August 14, 2018

1) GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

The Tulane University School of Medicine (SOM) is committed to creating and maintaining a positive learning environment for learners. This learning environment is one that is respectful, appropriately attentive to their learning needs and free from conduct by teachers that could be interpreted by the learner as mistreatment. Behavior that violates this stated expectation will be investigated, and if found to represent mistreatment, may become the subject of disciplinary action by the SOM.

a) **Scope:** This policy applies to the entire School of Medicine.

b) **Responsible Department/Party/Parties:**

- i. **Policy Owner:** Office of the Dean
Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Faculty Affairs, Biomedical Graduate Program, and Departments
- ii. **Procedure:** same as above
- iii. **Supervision:** Dean’s Office

c) **Policy Rationale:**

The SOM adopted in 2018 the "Compact Between Teachers and Learners of Medicine" as articulated by the AAMC and this additional policy is designed to clarify and expand on the goals articulated there. Both documents are based on the premise that students learn how to be professionals by observing and imitating their role models, and therefore the teachers of a medical school have an obligation to convey professional values by demonstrating appropriate standards of behavior. This policy is not intended to abridge the academic freedom of teachers, and will be applied in a manner that protects those freedoms.

2) DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Policy, the following terms and definitions apply:

- A learner is any student.
- A teacher is any person employed or volunteering on behalf of the School of Medicine who is attempting to impart knowledge and skills to students.

3) POLICY STANDARDS

I. Expected conduct of those in a teaching role to create a positive learning environment by:

1. Taking responsibility for learners assigned to one's course or service, and ensuring a safe, fair, supportive, unbiased learning environment that respects learners' physical and social boundaries and encourages their development as medical professionals.
2. Clearly communicating expectations, and applying consistent evaluation and grading methods which are communicated in advance of learner performance.
3. Assigning tasks to learners based on their knowledge, skills and experience.
4. Providing supervision and appropriate remediation when learners are not adequately prepared.
5. Providing feedback to learners in a timely, constructive, personalized and explicit manner.
6. Abiding by the Duty Hours Policy and other policies of the SOM.
7. Adhering to Tulane University's policies on Harassment and Consensual Relationships.

II. Examples of conduct that is considered inappropriate in a teaching role include, but are not limited to:

1. Threatening or intimidating behavior or words (e.g. verbal threat of intent to harm, making a gesture as if to strike, screaming or yelling at a learner, standing over a learner or getting "in your face").
2. Using obscenities, profanity, or racially/culturally-derived/gender-based terms or names directed at a learner, OR using such verbal expressions so as to create a negative environment even if not directed at the learner. (e.g., cursing at a learner or other members of the team, using a gender- or racially-charged epithet to refer to a learner).
3. Using threatening or obscene gestures, cartoons, or jokes in the presence of a learner.
4. Degrading a person or group on the basis of a personal or cultural characteristic (e.g., "people like you are all stupid", "your people all expect me to read your minds", "I can't believe you want to go into specialty X and become a drone").
5. Ignoring learners assigned to you or failing to complete assigned learner evaluations.
6. Requiring learners to perform personal services at any time (e.g., get me coffee, pick up laundry, pet-sit this weekend, pick up something I forgot in my office, listen to my personal problems).
7. Inviting learners who are being currently supervised, evaluated, or graded to romantic or sexual relationships; sexual assault, or sexual or gender-based discrimination or

harassment through words, gestures, and behaviors (e.g. inviting on a date, commenting repeatedly on attractiveness or clothing, making sexually suggestive comments or gestures)

8. Taunting, mocking, or humiliating a learner through acts and words (e.g. mimicking something the student got wrong, giving highly pejorative feedback in the presence of others).
9. Using aggressive questioning to the point of badgering or humiliation in the guise of the "Socratic method" (e.g. after questioning the student to the limits of his/her knowledge, persisting in asking the same question the student can't answer or more difficult questions for the purpose of humiliation).
10. Endangering the safety of a learner (e.g. inflicting physical harm, requiring the learner to go somewhere unsafe or to be exposed to dangerous objects or substances without education and proper protection, asking learners to perform tasks they are not trained to do, telling a learner not to report an occupational exposure).
11. Endangering the learner's professional development (e.g. telling learners to ignore institutional or school policy, inviting learners to do something unethical or illegal)
12. Grading based on factors other than performance on previously announced grading criteria; creating disadvantage in learning opportunities, teaching, feedback or grading based on personal characteristics of the learner (e.g. giving a better grade because someone is going into your field or you like him/her best).
13. Acting in retribution against any learner who reports perceived inappropriate treatment (e.g. telling others that a learner is a "snitch" or to "watch out for that one", giving the learner a grade less than s/he deserves, calling a residency program to "warn" them about a learner).

Perceived inappropriate treatment of a learner, either experienced or witnessed, should be reported according to the process outlined in Tulane School of Medicine's Professional Conduct document.

4) REVIEW/REVISION/IMPLEMENTATION

- a) Review Cycle: This policy shall be reviewed by the Executive Faculty of the School Annually.
- b) Office of Record: After authorization, the Dean's Office (Office of Admissions and Student Affairs) shall be the office of record for this policy.

5) RELATED POLICIES:

6) GOVERNING LAW OR REGULATIONS:

7) ATTACHMENTS: AAMC Compact Between Teachers and Learners of Medicine



Compact Between Teachers and Learners of Medicine

Preparation for a career in medicine 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 doctor/patient relationship and that sustain the profession of medicine as a moral enterprise. 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 profession inculcates its ethical values.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- DUTY** Medical educators have a duty, not only to convey the knowledge and skills required for delivering the profession's contemporary standard of care, but also to inculcate the values and attitudes required for preserving the medical profession's social contract across generations.
- 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 is respect for every individual. Mutual respect between learners, as novice members of the medical 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 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 are of high quality.
- As mentors for our student and resident colleagues, we maintain high professional standards in all of our interactions with patients, colleagues, and staff.
- We respect all students and residents 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.
- We pledge that students and residents will have sufficient time to fulfill personal and family obligations, to enjoy recreational activities, and to obtain adequate rest; we monitor and, when necessary, reduce the time required to fulfill educational objectives, including time required for "call" on clinical rotations, to ensure students' and residents' well being.
- In nurturing both the intellectual and the personal development of students and residents, 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.
- We encourage any student or resident 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

- We pledge our utmost effort to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, 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 as individuals, without regard to gender, race, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation.
- As physicians in training, we embrace the highest standards of the medical profession and pledge to conduct ourselves accordingly in all of our interactions with patients, colleagues, and staff.
- In fulfilling our own obligations as professionals, we pledge to assist our fellow students and residents in meeting their professional obligations, as well.