



Policy & Procedure Title: Professionalism-Learner
Functional Area: ACADEMIC
COCA Element: 5.1 (Learner)

Status: Final
Effective: 12/05/2017
Approved by: Leadership Council
Policy Contact: Assoc. Dean Admissions & Student Affairs
Responsible Office: Office of Student Affairs
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Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the learning environment of the osteopathic medical education program at UIWSOM is conducive to the ongoing development of professional behaviors in learners at all locations and is one in which all individuals are treated with respect.

Policy Statement

1) Description

UIWSOM is committed to ensuring the professional conduct of all its members. Learners must demonstrate that they can become safe, effective, ethical physicians and life-long learners. They must display ethical judgment, a sense of responsibility and morality, sensitivity and compassion for individual needs and the ability to synthesize and apply knowledge.

Professionalism implies that the interests of patients are consistently held above self-interest (Beneficence).^{1,2}

Professionalism includes but is not limited to honesty, respect for colleagues, faculty, staff and peers and behavior in public that is not disrespectful or embarrassing to the ideal of the physician. Continual self-reflection about one's attitudes and behaviors must occur as one strives to be a better physician.

UIWSOM learners are expected to follow the components of professional behavior as outlined below.

- Unprofessional behavior is detrimental to the UIWSOM community, patients, colleagues, and individuals themselves, and does damage to the practice of medicine.
- Unresolved incidents of a learner's unprofessional behavior will prevent the learner from academic advancement. That is, a learner may not progress to the next unit or phase without documented resolution of any professionalism issue.

The UIWSOM also subscribes to the [AOA Rules and Guidelines of Professional Conduct](#).

2) Components of Professional Behavior

Complete Components of Professional Behavior can be found in the UIWSOM Handbook at the following link:

[2020-2021 Student Handbook](#)

Patient Safety

Representation of Level of Training and Knowledge:

- Learners should accurately represent themselves to patients and others on the medical team as an “osteopathic medical student”.
- Learners should never introduce themselves as “Doctor” at any time as this is clearly a misrepresentation of the learner’s position, knowledge, and authority.
- Learners should never provide care without supervision and beyond what is appropriate for their level of training.

Disclosure:

- Learners must understand the ethics of full disclosure. The patient must be well informed to make health care decisions and work intelligently in partnership with the medical team.
- Learners who participate in disclosing information to patients must do so only with the guidance and supervision of the attending physician.

Informed Consent:

- Learners must understand the obligation to obtain informed consent from patients but are not responsible for obtaining such consent.
- Learners who participate in obtaining informed consent must do so only with the guidance and supervision of the attending physician.

Honesty:

- Learners are expected to demonstrate honesty and integrity in all aspects of their education and in their interactions with patients, staff, faculty, and colleagues. They may not cheat, lie, steal, or assist others in the commission of these acts.
- Learners must not commit fraud or misuse funds intended for professional activities.
- Learner must ensure the accuracy and completeness of his or her part of the medical record and must make a good-faith effort to provide the best possible patient care.
- Learners must be willing to admit errors and not knowingly mislead others or promote themselves at the patient’s expense.
- The learner is bound to know, understand, and preserve professional ethics and has a duty to report any breach of these ethics by other learners or health care providers through the appropriate channels.
- Plagiarism is dishonest and unethical. To consciously incorporate the words of others, either verbatim or through paraphrasing, without appropriate acknowledgment is unacceptable in scientific literature or in medical writings.

Patient Confidentiality:

- The patient's right to the confidentiality of their medical record is a fundamental tenet of medical care.
- For presentations or rounds, learners are permitted to extract information but not copy wholesale parts of the chart.
- All learners are required to undergo periodic training in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and they must adhere to its tenets.

Sexual Misconduct:

- Learners must not engage in romantic, sexual, or other non-professional relationships with a patient while involved in the patient's care, even at the apparent request of a patient.
- Learners should not tolerate inappropriate sexual behavior on the part of patients, their families or other health professionals.
- Training in sexual harassment and assault takes place twice during medical school, during the first year and again before learners start their clinical rotations.
- UIW has a strict policy regarding sexual harassment and assault and can be accessed on the UIW [Title IX website](#).

Impairment:

- Learners must not use alcohol, drugs or any other substance in a manner that could compromise patient care or bring harm to themselves or others.
- Learners are obligated to report members of the health care team whose behavior exhibits impairment or lack of professional conduct or competence.

Cultural CompetenceNondiscrimination:

- It is unethical for a learner to refuse to participate in the care of a person based on race, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship status, ethnicity, national origin, age, marital status, disability, genetic information, gender identity or expression, veteran status, pregnancy, religion, or any other characteristics protected by law.
- Learners must show respect for patients and families as well as everyone involved in their care. This includes physicians, nurses, other learners, residents, fellows, and administrative staff.
- Under no circumstances will the learner exhibit prejudice in words, action or deed towards a colleague based on race, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship status, ethnicity, national origin, age, marital status, disability, genetic information, gender identity or expression, veteran status, pregnancy, religion, or any other characteristics protected by law.
- The following is the UIW/ Non-Discrimination Policy:
Discrimination and harassment are contradictory to the mission of UIW and will not be tolerated. UIW complies with all applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws and does not engage in prohibited discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship status, ethnicity, national origin, age, marital status, disability, genetic information, gender identity or expression, veteran status, pregnancy, religion, or any other characteristics protected by law. As a Catholic institution of higher education sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, UIW is, however, exempt from the prohibition against religious discrimination of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and some provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. With respect to government contracts and in accordance with 41 CFR Section 60-1.5, it shall not be a violation of the equal opportunity clause required by Executive Order 11246 for

UIW to establish a hiring preference for applicants of the Catholic faith. UIW reserves the right to exercise this hiring preference as required to maintain its Catholic identity.

Social Determinants of Health:

- Through UIWSOM curriculum and experiential learning, learners should increase self-awareness about the social determinants of health, and how the presence of barriers to gaining knowledge, attitudes, and skills for enhancing service delivery to diverse patient populations can adversely affect patients, families, friends, oneself, colleagues, and society on the whole.

Interprofessional Collaborative Practice

Behavior towards Colleagues:

- Learners will interact with professional, staff, and peer members of the academic and healthcare team in a cooperative and considerate manner, including their mentors.
- All professional interactions should be marked with civility, and each person should recognize and facilitate the contributions of others to the community.

Arrogance:

- Arrogance means an offensive display of superiority and self-importance and will not be tolerated.

Professional Demeanor:

- The learner should be thoughtful and professional when interacting with patients, families, peers, and co-workers. Inappropriate behavior includes the use of offensive language, gestures, or remarks with sexual overtones, extreme lack of interest and/or dishonesty.

Professionalism as an Adult Learner and Osteopathic Medical Student/Learner (OMS)

Professional Formation includes:

- Commitment to Life-long Learning
Commitment to reading and participating in Research.
- Recognition, avoidance, and management of conflicts of interest represent a core issue of professionalism.
- Commitment to not accepting gifts, hospitality or subsidies offered by medical equipment, pharmaceutical or other manufacturers or distributors including companies that write or distribute board review materials.
- Self-reflection and evaluation
- Conscientiousness
 - Learners are expected to be thorough and dependable and to commit the time and effort required to meet personal responsibilities and responsibilities to patients, to the institution, other health care professionals and to administrative staff.
- Teaching
 - The very title “Doctor” – from the Latin *docere*, “to teach” – implies a responsibility to share knowledge and information with colleagues and patients.
 - It is incumbent upon those entering this profession to teach what they know of the science, art, and ethics of medicine.
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- It includes communicating clearly with and teaching patients so that they are properly prepared to participate in their own care and in the maintenance of their health.

Reports of Unprofessional Behavior

Phase I:

- Alleged unprofessional behavior on the part of an osteopathic medical learner will be reported to the Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs who will review the complaint and refer the matter to the SPC.

Phase II:

- Reports of unprofessional behavior by UIWSOM students on clinical clerkships should be reported to the student's supervising preceptor and/or Core Site Director.
- Information is then forwarded to the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs who will review the complaint and refer the matter to the SPC.

Violations in professional conduct will be addressed as follows:

- First violation – the learner is required to meet with the Director of Student Affairs. A record of the meeting, the violation, and the Notice of Action due to Unprofessional Conduct will be kept in the learner's file until graduation.
- Second violation – the learner is required to meet with the Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs. A record of the meeting, the violation, and the Notice of Action due to Unprofessional Conduct will be kept in the learner's file until graduation.
- Third violation – the learner is required to meet with the Student Progress Committee (SPC). Record of the SPC meeting, the violation, and the Notice of Action due to Unprofessional Conduct will be kept in the learner's file with possible notation made on the learner's MSPE. Other disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal from the program, depending on the nature of the violation, may occur.
- If a singular violation is deemed egregious, a learner may be required to meet with the SPC immediately, nullifying the abovementioned actions for a first and second violation. Unresolved incidents of a learner's unprofessional conduct may prevent the learner from academic advancement. That is, the learner may not progress to the next unit or phase without documented resolution of any professionalism issue.