



University of Toronto Governing Council

Standards of Professional Behaviour for Medical Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students of the Faculty of Medicine

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Standards Which Require Assessment in Medical Academic Programs

In this statement, "student" means a registered medical undergraduate or postgraduate student of the Faculty, and includes an intern, resident, clinical or research fellow or equivalent.

Preamble

Within the Faculty of Medicine the academic programs include training in ethics and the engaging of the students in the profession and practice of medicine under supervision. Throughout history, society has expected and physicians have held sacred, a standard of behaviour and ethical values of the highest order. Traditionally, the Oath of Hippocrates has represented one such code of behaviour. By registering in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, the student accepts that the profession demands universal integrity, exemplary behaviour and dedication to the search for truth and service to humanity. A student will adhere to the standards of ethical behaviour for the medical profession and his/her professional activities will be characterized by honesty, integrity, conscientiousness and reliability. Behaviour inconsistent with being a physician is viewed as a demonstration of lack of suitability to be a physician.

Assessment of Behavioural and Ethical Performance

The assessment will be related to the following educational objectives:

1. The student should display skill at communicating and interacting appropriately with patients, families and health care personnel.
2. The student should demonstrate:
 - a) empathy and compassion for patients and their families;
 - b) concern for the needs of the patients and their families to understand the nature of the illness and the goals and possible complications of investigations and treatment;
 - c) concern for the psycho-social aspects of the patient's illness;
 - d) respect for, and ability to work harmoniously with, other physicians and allied health care personnel;
 - e) recognition of the importance of self-assessment and of continuing medical education and a willingness to teach others in their own specialty, as well as other allied health care personnel;
 - f) understanding of the appropriate requirements for involvement of patients and their families in research;
 - g) awareness of the effects that differences in gender and cultural and social background may have on the maintenance of health and the development and treatment of illness.

Breach of any of the above principles of behaviour may, after appropriate evaluation of a student, be cause for dismissal from a course or program or failure to promote.

3. Behaviour unacceptable to the professional practice of medicine may include:
 - a) referring to oneself as, or holding oneself to be, more qualified than one is;
 - b) theft of drugs;
 - c) violation of the criminal code;
 - d) failure to be available while on call;
 - e) failure to respect patients' rights;

- f) breach of confidentiality;
- g) failure to provide transfer of responsibility for patient care;
- h) failure to keep proper medical records;
- i) falsification of medical records;
- j) sexual impropriety with a patient;
- k) being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while participating in patient care or on call;
- l) any other conduct unbecoming of a practising physician.

Review of Behavioural and Ethical Performance

The Faculty will value the professional and ethical performance of its students and will assess these in accordance with the Grading Practices Policy of the University of Toronto.

The In-Training Evaluation Report may include a numerical mark based on the opinion of the assessors and will include written opinions by these assessors as part of the student record. It should be understood that these assessments are related to the performance expected of a professional as outlined above. They should be timely in relation to the end of a rotation and communicated to the student. If appropriate, and necessary, opportunities for remediation should be offered. Appeals against decisions made under the above standards may be made in the usual way to the Appeals Committee of the Faculty of Medicine and are subject to the regulations of the Faculty which cover such appeals.

Breaches of the ethical and behavioural standards are serious academic matters and represent failure to meet academic standards. Such failures will be included in the considerations of the Board of Examiners, as well as in In-Training Evaluation Reports of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Poor performance may be grounds for the requirement of remedial work, denial of promotion, or dismissal from a program.

These standards do not replace legal or ethical standards defined by organizations or bodies such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the Canadian Medical Association, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

Action by the assessing bodies does not preclude action under other University policies or the Criminal Code.