

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT POLICIES OF
THE JACOBS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND
BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES¹

¹ Faculty Council approved—09/27/2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1	Standard of Conduct.....	3
1.2	Purpose of Policy.....	3
1.3	Definition of Student Mistreatment.....	3
2	GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	3
2.1	Duty.....	3
2.2	Integrity.....	3
2.3	Respect.....	4
3	COMMITMENTS OF FACULTY.....	4
4	BEHAVIORS THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED ABUSIVE OR EXPLOITIVE.....	5
5	REPORTING VIOLATIONS OF THIS POLICY.....	6
5.1	General Procedure.....	6
5.2	Investigations of Violations by Faculty.....	6
5.3	Investigations of Violations by Residents.....	6
5.4	Investigations of Violations by Hospital Personnel Employed by an Affiliated Hospital or Clinic.....	7

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Standard of Conduct

It is the expectation of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences that all members of the school's community will be treated with respect. The learning environment must be inclusive and supportive of individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, age, socioeconomic class, gender or sexual minority status, disability, military service, life experience or outlook.

1.2 Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define student mistreatment and provide mechanisms for reporting violations of this policy.

The Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences recognizes that 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 Policy 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.

1.3 Definition of Student Mistreatment

The Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences defines student mistreatment as any violation of the policies set forth in this document. The tenets described below are drawn from the Principles outlined by Cohen in "Our Compact with Tomorrow's Doctors" (Cohen. Our Compact with Tomorrow's Doctors. *Acad. Med.* 2002; 77:475 –480).

2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

2.3 Respect

Fundamental to the ethic of medicine is respect for every individual, be they students, staff, patients, or anyone who falls within their sphere of contact. Mutual respect between students, 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–student relationship, teachers have a special obligation to ensure that students are always treated respectfully.

3 COMMITMENTS OF FACULTY

The Faculty of the JSMBS pledge that:

- a. We will invest our utmost effort to ensure that all components of the educational program are of high quality.
- b. We will maintain high professional standards in our interactions with students, patients, colleagues, and staff.
- c. We will respect all students as individuals without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, age, socioeconomic class, gender or sexual minority status, disability, military service, life experience or outlook.
- d. We will not tolerate attitudes that manifest disrespect or bias towards any student.
- e. We will ensure that students will have sufficient time to fulfill personal and family obligations; and to obtain adequate rest. To ensure student's well-being, we will monitor and, when necessary, reduce the time required to fulfill educational objectives, including time required for "call" on clinical rotations. No student will be required to serve more than 80 hours/week in clinical and educational activities during clerkships.
- f. We will nurture the intellectual and personal development of students by celebrating expressions of professional attitudes and behaviors, as well as achievement of academic excellence.
- g. We will not abuse or exploit our students, nor will we tolerate this behavior from our colleagues.
- h. We will encourage any student who experiences mistreatment or who witnesses failure to uphold these commitments to report the facts immediately to appropriate faculty or staff; we will treat all such reports as confidential and not tolerate reprisals or retaliations of any kind.

4 BEHAVIORS THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED ABUSIVE OR EXPLOITIVE

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

- a. Failing to provide an environment that respects learning and education, such as ignoring the student or failing to complete a teaching assignment.
- b. Abusive questioning beyond the classic “Socratic” design. Merely being asked a question in public that a student does not know the answer to is not a violation of this policy, but questions intended to humiliate or badger the student are inappropriate.
- c. Romantic or sexual advances toward students. Sexual humor in the workplace is also inappropriate.
- d. Treating students solely as a member of a group. (“all of you (*insert group*) are alike”)
- e. Threats of physical violence or retribution in grading or evaluations.
- f. Requesting personal services from a student (“Would you go down and pick up my dry cleaning for me?”, “Could you come over and babysit tonight while you are studying?”)
- g. Mocking, mimicking or taunting.
- h. Excessive cursing or use of gender, racial, ethnic or other slurs.
- i. Requesting or requiring a student to do a task, procedure, or interaction that will directly or indirectly endanger them. (“Run down there and see what that patient’s family is fighting about. See if you can break it up. Let me know if you have a problem.”)
- j. Asking the student to do anything that is contradictory to the JSMBS policies and procedures.
- k. Assigning grades outside of the student’s performance in the activity. (“He wasn’t that strong, but he wants to go into xxx residency, so why don’t we just give him honors?” or the converse, “He’s not going into this field, I think we should save the honors grades for those students.”)
- l. Treating a student differently or prejudging them based on rumors or hearsay (“Watch out for that one, I hear she’s trouble.”)

Questions regarding this policy may be directed to the Senior Associate Dean for Student and Academic Affairs or the chair of the Learning Environment Committee (see below). Non-trivial questions and answers should be forwarded to the chair of the Learning

Environment Committee who will be responsible for compiling a FAQ that will be appended to the end of this document.

5 REPORTING VIOLATIONS OF THIS POLICY

5.1 General Procedure

The administration and faculty of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences have zero tolerance for violations of this Policy. Students who feel that they have been subjected to conduct which violates this Policy or have witnessed behavior that they believe violates this Policy are encouraged to report the incident verbally, or in writing, to the course coordinator in Phase 1, or the clerkship/elective director in Phase 2.

If the incident involved the course coordinator or clerkship/elective director, or if the student feels that these options are insufficient, or may result in negative outcome to their grade or evaluation, they may report these violations to the Office of Medical Education Coordinator, or the Post-Baccalaureate Coordinator in the Office of Medical Education. These individuals will attempt to resolve the matter, but if further intervention is required, they will contact the Senior Associate Dean for Student and Academic Affairs and the Senior Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion. The Senior Associate Dean contacted will convene a meeting of the Learning Environment Committee (“Committee”) which will consider the merits of the complaint and determine whether a violation of this Policy has occurred. The Committee will also maintain a record of all reports submitted to the Committee. If the complaint is found to have merit, the Committee will ask the appropriate supervisor (Chair, Program Director, Course Director, or supervisor of the individual) for disciplinary or corrective action. The supervisor will then be asked to provide a report to the Learning Environment Committee regarding the outcome.

Students also have the option of filing a complaint on the UB-wide EthicsPoint System at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/48992/index.html>.

5.2 Investigations of Violations by Faculty

For investigations of violations of this Policy by faculty, the committee will report to the Department Chair or the Dean’s Office if the report involves a chairperson of the Department. Faculty discipline will be in accordance with the UB policy on faculty mistreatment as detailed in the Faculty/Staff Handbook, III., University at Buffalo Academic Policies, III.C. Complaints against Faculty.

5.3 Investigations of Violations by Residents

For investigations of violations of this Policy by residents, the Committee will report the complaint to the Residency Program Director or the Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

5.4 Investigations of Violations by Hospital Personnel Employed by an Affiliated Hospital or Clinic

For investigations of violations of this Policy by hospital personnel employed by an affiliated hospital or clinic, the committee will report its concern to the Dean (or designee). The Dean or designee will then contact the director of human resources or the equivalent at that site and will be asked to report back to the Learning Environment committee with the results of the investigation.