

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine

Student Code of Academic and Professional Integrity

Academic integrity and the dignity of the individual are essential in any educational and clinical activity. Honesty, compassion and respect in all interactions with colleagues, peers, faculty and staff, as well as with patients and their families, are essential professional attributes. A commitment to life-long learning, the continuous development of knowledge and clinical skills and the capacity to work effectively within a system are cornerstones of professionalism.

As an institution committed to educating aspiring physicians and scientists to serve society using a community-based, patient-centered, interprofessional and evidence-based model of education that is committed to inclusion, promotes discovery and utilizes innovative techniques, professionalism is one of GCSOM's core competencies.

Successful progression through the curriculum and graduation with the MD degree are contingent upon the student's compliance with this Code of Academic and Professional Integrity. Evaluation of student performance under this code follows the procedures established in the Policy on Academic and Professional Standards Governing the MD Degree Program at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine.

Specifically, the College requires students to adhere to the tenants of professionalism and to avoid any behaviors that constitute misconduct, including but not limited to, the following:

1. Standards of Professional Behavior - Professionalism standards support a positive learning and work environment and precludes any behavior that may be perceived as injurious to the mental or physical well-being of another or to the academic freedom of any student. Standards of professional behavior include, but are not limited to:

- **Attendance at Course/Clerkship Functions or other Clinical Assignments.** It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with and adhere to the attendance/absence policy of GCSOM (See Attendance Policy).
- **Interpersonal behavior.** An overriding principal of professional conduct is to treat others (whether colleagues, peers, patients, faculty, staff or students) with the same respect and dignity you would wish them to show you. Students are expected to be familiar with and to adhere to specific standards of behavior prescribed by GCSOM. Specific expected behaviors are outlined in the GCSOM policies and guidelines including the Policy on Sexual/Gender Harassment, Discrimination and Misconduct, the Policy on Student Mistreatment and the Policy on the Teacher-Learner Relationship. (See these specific policies for details)
- **Respecting the property of others.** Taking any property without permission or damaging another's property is a violation of professionalism.
- **Interprofessional Communication and Behavior.** As an institution committed to interprofessional education and teamwork, students are expected to maintain the highest

commitment to cultural competence and patient centered care, demonstrate positive professional attributes (e.g. respect, compassion, accountability, dependability, rapport building, and integrity), recognize appropriate boundaries and practice conflict resolution when interacting with peers and interprofessional team members. Students are expected to prioritize the team and demonstrate sensitivity to team needs and behaviors.

Students are expected to be truthful and honest in all communications with colleagues and patients, including acknowledging errors of omission or commission; to refrain from using offensive language; and to promptly respond to email correspondence and requests from GCSOM faculty and administration for meetings.

- **Confidentiality, HIPAA and Social Media.** Failing to maintain the highest level of confidentiality on matters relating to colleagues, students and patients is a violation of professionalism (link to HIPAA and FERPA policies). Although students retain basic rights to free speech and to offer legitimate criticisms of other members of the academic community in proper contexts and forums, it is inappropriate to breach confidentiality, invade another's privacy, or to belittle or demean others (including cyberbullying), whether in or out of their presence, whether on- or off- campus, whether in the real or virtual world (e.g., various web sites, blogs, social networks and media, etc.). (See Social Media Policy)
- **Professional Dress.** Failing to dress in appropriate, professional attire is a sign of disrespect of others and is a violation of this Code. (See Dress Code Policy)
- **Student Mistreatment.** Students should expect to be treated in a professional manner, consistent with this Code. Examples of behavior that violate this principle are being required or asked to perform personal services by one's supervisors; or being assessed or graded in a punitive manner (other than under the terms of this Code). (See Student Mistreatment Policy)

2. Plagiarism – According to Webster's Dictionary, plagiarism is defined as "the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own."

Plagiarism takes many forms. It may include purchasing or copying a paper from the internet, a peer or another individual; copying or cutting and pasting portions of others' work (whether a phrase, sentence, paragraph, chart, picture, figure, method or approach, experimental results, statistics, etc.) without attribution. An important aspect of plagiarism is students' understanding medical or clinical plagiarism including copying clinical notes/materials without personally performing the patient examination.

Plagiarism may also include paraphrasing or attempting to put in one's own words the theories, opinions or ideas of another without proper citation. Carelessly, inadequately or inaccurately using citations is also a form of plagiarism. Fabricating citations may also be considered fraudulent behavior. Self-plagiarism or re-using your own previous work without appropriate citation is a form of plagiarism and may mislead the reader into believing that what you are currently writing, or reporting is new work. Even inappropriately assuming a fact or idea is common knowledge and, therefore, not providing a citation might be viewed as plagiarism and should be avoided.

Proper use and citation of resources is essential in all scholarly work. A class assignment, paper or thesis represents a scholarly endeavor, regardless of whether your work is to be “published.”

3. Cheating– According to Webster’s dictionary, cheating is to act dishonestly or unfairly in order to gain an advantage, especially in a game or examination.

Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to: giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another on quizzes, examinations, or assignments; using materials or devices not specifically authorized during any form of a test or examination; unauthorized use of library sources, intranet or internet sources, or unauthorized collaboration on answers; sitting in for someone else or permitting someone to sit in for you on any form of test or examination; working on any form of test or examination beyond the allotted time; hiding, stealing or destroying materials needed by other students; and altering and resubmitting for re-grading any assignment, test or examination.

4. Misleading or Fraudulent Behavior –According to Webster’s Dictionary, fraudulent behavior refers to “wrongful or criminal deception intended to result in financial or personal gain.”

Examples of misleading or fraudulent behavior include, but are not limited to: making up information, data or research results; altering or manipulating information, clinical or laboratory records, practicum experiences, research results/equipment/processes; reporting such false information to gain an advantage; omitting information or data that results in misrepresenting or distorting findings or conclusions; providing false information to explain lateness or to be excused from an assignment, class or clerkship function; falsely accusing another of misbehavior or otherwise misrepresenting information about another. Providing false information about yourself, such as on an application or as part of some competition is an example of fraud, as is taking credit for accomplishments that you did not perform and, therefore, properly belongs to others. Sometimes, particularly in the case of research and other scholarly endeavors, it may be misleading not to provide information about yourself, such as possible conflicts of interest in which you stand to gain financially by the results of your work.

5. Research Misconduct - The integrity of scientific research requires adherence to the highest ethical standards. Research misconduct is defined in the USPHS Policy as “fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.”

Fabrication means making up data or pretending to have performed experiments that were not, in fact, conducted. Falsification means inappropriately manipulating data or images so that, for example, one possible conclusion or interpretation is favored over another. Plagiarism is dealt with elsewhere in this document but may additionally constitute research misconduct if it is committed in the context of a research effort. Other related unethical behaviors, such as stealing credit for research accomplishments, misappropriation of research funds, or failure to disclose significant conflicts of interest may be more properly classified as fraudulent behavior.

6. Violations of the Policy on Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol-Free Environment

Because of the serious responsibilities of the medical profession and the necessity to maintain public trust in the profession, students face disciplinary action by Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine if they abuse alcohol or drugs, consume illegal drugs, or possess, distribute or sell drugs illegally.

Each student agrees, as a condition of enrollment, to abide by this policy and to notify the Associate Dean of Student Affairs (ADSA), or their designee, of any arrest for a violation of a crime related to the Policy on Drugs, Tobacco and Alcohol Free Environment within two business days of the arrest that occurred during their tenure at the College.

7. Violating GCSOM Policies and Guidelines on Electronic Communications

It is a violation of this code to fail to adhere to the practices prescribed in the GCSOM electronic communications policies including, but not limited to, the Policy on Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources, Electronic Communications Policy, Electronic Resources Security Policy, Policy on Electronic Device Usage in the Classroom, and the Policy on Social Media Usage.

Examples of behaviors that violate this Code are: forging other users' email or attempting to read another's email; sending harassing, obscene or threatening email messages to others; sending via email copyrighted materials not within fair use guidelines or without prior permissions from the author or publisher; posting patient information, pictures or the Geisinger logo on social media.

8. Violating Other Rules, Policies or Procedures of GCSOM

GCSOM students are expected to know and abide by all rules, policies and procedures outlined in the Student Bulletin.

9. Violating Rules, Policies or Procedures of Affiliated Institutions or Clinical/Practicum Sites

GCSOM students are expected to know and abide by such rules, policies and procedures as are applicable to them at any Clinical or learning site. Examples of such rules, policies and procedures include HIPAA and other protections of confidentiality, building access, computer use, and appropriate professional codes.

10. Violating Local, State or Federal Laws

In accordance with this Student Code for Academic and Professional Integrity, GCSOM requires students to act honorably and with integrity in pursuit of the MD degree and be truthful about their actions as a student and accept responsibility for them.

Students involved in criminal matters before local, state, or federal courts may be found to be unfit for the medical profession and be dismissed by GCSOM or face lesser disciplinary sanctions.

Each student agrees, as a condition of enrollment, to abide by local, state and federal laws and to notify the Associate Dean of Students (ADSA), or their designee, of any arrest for a violation of local, state, or federal law within two business days of their arrest during their tenure at the College.

11. Failure to Report a Violation of the Code of Academic and Professional Integrity

This code applies to students enrolled in the MD degree program at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine. The code governs student professional behavior in all academic and clinical settings as well as all other settings which reflect upon the integrity and suitability of the student to practice medicine.

Any alleged violations of this Code of Academic and Professional Integrity must be reported in a timely manner to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs. Failure to report a violation is itself a violation of the Code. Retaliatory action of any sort during or following a report and possible investigation will be specifically prohibited,

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Adapted from New York Medical College Code of Academic Integrity and Professionalism