

I. POLICY

Compact Between Teachers and Learners of Medicine and Health Professions

II. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the expectations for the faculty of the School of Medicine (SOM) and the School of Health Professions (SHP) at the Virginia Health Sciences (VHS) at Old Dominion University (ODU) to abide by the Association of American Medical Colleges' Compact between Teachers and Learners of Medicine.

III. RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE

[SOM and SHP Student Affairs](#) will review this document annually.

IV. ACCREDITATION REFERENCES

LCME 3.5	Learning Environment/Professionalism
LCME 3.6	Student Mistreatment
SACSCOC 12.3	Student Rights
SACSCOC 12.4	Student Complaints

V. DESCRIPTION

Preparation for a career in medicine or health professions 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 relationship between professionals and patients that sustain the healthcare profession as a moral enterprise. Likewise, professional training entails both formal education in a specific discipline and an apprenticeship in which the graduate student trains under the supervision of investigators who are qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor. 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 medical and health professions inculcate their ethical values.

Guiding Principles

- **Duty.** Medical and health professions educators have a duty not only to convey the knowledge and skills required for delivering their profession's contemporary standard of care or research but also to inculcate the values and attitudes required for preserving their 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 ethics of medicine and health professions is respect for every individual. Mutual respect between learners, as novice members of a 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/fellows 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/fellows are of high quality.
- As mentors for our students and resident/fellow colleagues, we maintain high professional standards in all of our interactions with patients, colleagues, and staff.
- We respect all students and residents/fellows as individuals, without regard to race, color, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity/transgender status, and pregnancy or parental status), national origin, religion, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information, opposition to unlawful discrimination (i.e., retaliation), or any other protected basis as set forth in federal or state laws and/or Old Dominion University (ODU) and/or SOM and SHP policy; we will not tolerate anyone who manifests disrespect or who expresses biased attitudes towards any student or resident/fellow.
- We pledge to uphold the duty hour requirements for students and residents/fellows as stipulated in the applicable accreditation standards.
- In nurturing both the intellectual and personal development of students and residents/fellows, 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/fellows.
- We encourage any student or resident/fellow 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/Fellows

- We pledge our utmost effort to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, 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/fellows as individuals, without regard to race, color, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity/transgender status, and pregnancy or parental status), national origin, religion, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information, opposition to unlawful discrimination (i.e., retaliation), or any other protected basis as set forth in federal or state laws and/or ODU or SOM and SHP policy.
- As physicians or health professionals in training, we embrace the highest standards of our profession and pledge to conduct ourselves accordingly in all of our interactions with patients and/or colleagues and staff.
- In fulfilling our own obligations as professionals, we pledge to assist our fellow students and residents/fellows in meeting their professional obligations as well.

Adapted from: J. Cohen, Academic Medicine, Vol. 77, No. 6 / June 2002

VI. HISTORY OF APPROVALS AND UPDATES

The following list documents policy approvals and updates by oversight authority, date, and summary of changes. This policy is housed on the [Institutional Student Handbook webpage](#).

- On June 9, 2020, the Eastern Virginia Medical School Board of Visitors approved the update to separate the policy from the Institutional Student Handbook.
- On July 1, 2024, this policy was transitioned to a SOM and SHP policy as part of the integration with Old Dominion University.