



<b>Policy:</b> Student Code of Professional Conduct	<b>Applicability:</b> MMC Students
<b>Policy Owner:</b> Student Affairs	<b>Approved By:</b> Office of the President
<b>Effective Date:</b> January 1, 2016	<b>Last Reviewed:</b>
<b>Next Review:</b>	<b>Contact:</b>

**PURPOSE:** Meharry Medical College (MMC) strives to educate and train students in health professions who have high capacity for ethical professional behavior. Therefore, students should comply with all regulations regarding conduct established by the policies and procedures of Meharry Medical College. Professionalism lies within the realm of academics and a failure to uphold these professional standards may jeopardize a student's academic future, just like other academic actions. The standards upheld by MMC are in conjunction with those established and expected of health professionals in the fields students are training in, and are in place to serve as a catalyst for professional expectations in a health professional career.

**POLICY:** The Code of Conduct is designed to promote the professional development of students at MMC. However, it cannot include, nor force each potential infraction. Therefore, unprofessional behavior that falls outside of those within this code is still subject to discipline. These specific incidents will be considered in the context in which they occur. This code is designed to serve as guidelines for our students and includes activities and conduct during their time at MMC. While this code of conduct is not meant to govern behavior of a student's private life disconnected with their academics, it should be noted that health professionals are held to high standards of conduct within society. Therefore, this behavior has the potential to come before the Student Disciplinary Committee for investigation.

The Code of Professional Conduct applies to MMC students currently enrolled at the College. If an incident occurs while a student is on a Leave of Absence, the incident shall be taken into consideration when a student applies for a return from leave request. As a condition to return from Leave of Absence, students must submit to a background check, at their own expense.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

1. "Code of professional conduct" is a series of principles and rules that govern professional interactions. Such principles include both obligatory and desirable components. Obligatory behaviors refer to necessary professional practice, teaching, and learning. Desirable professional behaviors refer to components, which enhance professional excellence. Honesty is a central element of each component.
2. "Exoneration" is committee clearance of alleged violations.
3. "Suspension" is defined as temporary exclusion from academic, research, and/or clinical activities.



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4. "Probation" is a period of time, which a student must remain free of violations prior to reinstatement, or removal of restricting conditions.
5. "Reprimand" means written censure for specified college regulatory violations.
6. "Restriction of Privilege" is defined as loss or diminution of academic, research, and/or clinical activities for a prescribed period of time.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

Acceptance into a healthcare college community is the beginning of a challenging, rigorous, and continuous process of education and enculturation into one of the most demanding professions. Education in the health professions goes beyond graduation requirements of knowledge in science and research. Students studying and training in the health professions must also consistently validate that they possess the necessary character traits that shape the health professions. Students who are unable to consistently demonstrate an understanding, appreciation for, and compliance with the standards of professionalism and academic integrity set forth in the Code lack the vital and indispensable elements of a health professional.

MMC expects and requires that faculty, students, and staff adhere to and uphold fundamental standards of conduct expected of members of a medical college community in their interactions with one another. Being in a medical and health professional college community reaches beyond mere academic commitment; it brings a long a willingness and acceptance of students to act responsibly in the health professions. For faculty members, this extends beyond educating the next generation of health professional; it is a commitment to mentor and lead by example for students of the standards in the health professions. Integrity and a strong ethical grounding together build the foundation of a health professional, and set the tenor and culture of the teacher-learner environment at MMC. MMC requires students to demonstrate a range of skills and abilities beyond academia. This includes, but is not limited to, good judgment, a sense of responsibility and morality, sensitivity and compassion for individual needs, and most of all evidence that the student is able to become a safe and effective physician.

Within the health professions, students are going to come across challenging moral and ethical situations. The practice of health sciences requires the highest standards of personal and social



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responsibility. Accordingly, the Code should guide and encourage students to always practice our expected behaviors, challenge unprofessional behavior, and educate students, as well as faculty, to confront these situations.

A community requires participation from each member. Therefore, it is the joint responsibility of the students and faculty of MC to uphold and execute the integrity and ethical standards of our community. The specific conduct following serve as an outline of some of the general responsibilities of students and faculty share in a teacher-learning environment. As stated above, every desirable responsibility cannot be included in any policy or code. For that reason, students and faculty should read these responsibilities as a baseline for what MMC strives for our community.

Any alleged violation shall be immediately reported by the President of the Honor Council or Faculty Advisor to the principal clinician or scientific investigator, after the alleged violation is received. Breach of these rules, regulations, policies, and procedures governed by the disciplinary procedure shall include, but is not limited to:

**Furnishing False or Misleading Information.** It shall be a breach of conduct for any student to intentionally:

- Furnish false information to the College with the intent to deceive, forge or in any way alter or falsify documents or evidence required for admission to the College.
- Give false information or testimony during the investigation or hearing of a disciplinary matter.
- Forge, alter, destroy, damage or misuse College documents, records, or identification.
- Present the work of another individual or source as one's own concepts or ideas.
- Submit the work of another individual or source without proper citations or credits to the original author.
- Submit for credit any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or that is being submitted to another course or assignment.



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- Falsify or alter any institutional, research, and/or academic record or make use of such forged or altered records.
- File false charges or accusations against another individual.

**Theft or Misappropriation of Funds.** It shall be a breach of conduct for any student to intentionally engage in the following:

- Theft, destruction, or damage of intellectual or informational property of the College or an affiliate's property.
- Theft or misappropriation of school funds.
- Theft, destruction, or damage of College property.
- Theft, destructions, or damage of the property of another person.
- Theft of supplies, property, equipment, or examinations.

**Breach of Rules.** Breach of recognized ethical and professional standards applicable to health professional schools includes, but are not limited to, the following:

- Unauthorized entry to College facilities and/or possession of keys to College facilities.
- Failure to comply with directives of College officials acting in the performance of their duties.
- Violation of written College policies and regulations.
- Violation of terms of probation.
- Attempt to commit or to be accessory to the commission of any act in violation of this or other standards of conduct.
- Breach of any municipal, state or federal laws, rules, and regulations ordinances on College property.
- Breach of rules of any institution while on rotation at that institution.

**Assault and Harassment.** Any form of assault or harassment, verbal, physical, or otherwise by any person on College-owned or controlled property or conduct which threatens or endangers in the health or safety of any person will be considered a breach of conduct.



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**Examination Dishonesty.** Any use of unauthorized assistance during an examination constitutes dishonesty and represents unacceptable examination behavior. Examples of examination dishonesty include:

- Communication with another student in any manner during an examination.
- Copying material from another student's examination.
- Permitting a student to copy from an examination.
- Use of unauthorized books or notes; falsification/misrepresentation of academic or clinical performance.
- Impersonation of another student at any examination or other form of academic work;
- Interference with an instructor's administration of an examination.
- Giving and/or receiving aid during an examination.

**Improper Patient Care.** Improper patient care includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Failure to provide care for assigned patients or to carry out assigned activities.
- Failure to respect patient and/or professional confidentiality.
- Unsupervised patient care.
- Provision of patient care or conduct of professional activities when physical, mental or emotional factors may compromise adequate care or results.
- Willful disregard of patient care/other directives from supervising faculty.
- rendering of patient care or other professional activities when under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- Intentional or negligent mishandling of protected health information.

**Sexual Harassment.** Sexual harassment is prohibited by college policy and by law. Sexual harassment is defined as any sexual solicitations, advances, remarks, or actions that are demeaning or intimidating. Sexual harassment constitutes any sexual attention that is unwanted, deliberate, and/or repeated advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:



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- Submission of such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly the terms or conditions of an individual's employment or academic standing;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or education decision affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for working or teaching and learning

Responsibility for implementing the Sexual Harassment and Gender Based Violence Policies is delegated by the President to the General Counsel for assuring implementation of the policy. The complete policy on sexual harassment is presented in The College Policy Manual and the Academic Policy and Procedure Manual for each school.

**Substance/Alcohol Abuse.** The following behaviors conduct code violations:

- Possession of illegal drugs/substances
- Sale of illegal drugs/substances
- Drunken or disorderly conduct on the campus or affiliate site

Violation of provisions of the Code of Conduct shall result in the imposition of one or more of the disciplinary actions set forth in the Substance Abuse Policy and Drug-Free Workplace Statement, which is presented in the College Policy Manual and the Academic Policy Manual for each school. Violation of these standards of conduct may result in severe criminal penalties under local, state, and federal law.

### **Non-Academic Disciplinary Action**

#### **Student Disciplinary Committee**

Accusations involving violation fo the College's Code of Professional Conduct and Honor code must be transmitted in writing to the College's Student Disciplinary Committee (SDC). The SDC is



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appointed by the President and is comprised of seven (7) members of the MMC community, two (2) faculty members from each school and one (1) student. Members are appointed for a two-year term with the exception of the student member who is appointed for one year.

The College makes every effort to protect the privacy of the individual(s) involved in disciplinary actions. The location and time of the SDC hearings are not made public and each member is required to sign a confidentiality agreement, which requires that the names of individuals appearing at the committee hearings not be disclosed.

Please refer to the College's Academic Catalog for the full policy.

\*Please refer to your respective School's Academic Policies & Procedures Manual for Academic Disciplinary Action and Appeals policies.

#### **PLEDGE OF THE PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT: HONOR CODE**

This Professional Code of Conduct—Honor Code and pledge to act in accordance with the highest principle of ethical and professional conduct, binds all Meharry Medical College students. These principles condemned any act of dishonesty relating to the academic, clinical, research, and professional program at Meharry Medical College. I have read carefully the honor code of Meharry Medical College and understand its meaning and significance. I agree to abide by this Professional Code of Conduct-Honor Code while a student at the College and agree to accept all of its implications without reservation.

**EXHIBITS:** None.

**RELATED POLICIES:** None.