

**Robert Wood Johnson Medical School  
Code of Professional Conduct**

- I. Preamble (Adapted from AAMC, Preservation of Student Rights and Confirmation of Student Responsibilities: Recommendations and Guidelines for the Students of the Organization of Student Representatives)

A primary goal of medical school is the education of physicians who will meet the health care needs of society in a caring, competent, and professional manner. Thus, students are taught more than a series of facts and procedures, but are also socialized into the profession. A profession based on the ideals of service to others should be sensitive to the humanity of its practitioners, especially during training. Insensitivity during training runs counter to the fundamental tenets of medicine and impairs the ability of many physicians to maintain their idealism, caring, and compassion past training into their careers. This affects the quality of patient care as well as collegial relationships.

II. Statement of Purpose

This Code of Professional Conduct is designed to foster a sense of trust, responsibility, and professionalism among students, and between students and faculty. Its fundamental purposes are to ensure the integrity of the examination process, to promote ethical behavior in academic and clinical situations, and to develop a sense of responsibility to promote the integrity of the medical profession.

III. Code of Professional Conduct

- A. The Code of Professional Conduct is an individual and collective responsibility of students and faculty of UMDNJ Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, who will work together to maintain honorable academic and clinical conduct.
- B. Student, faculty, and administration must advocate for a widely disseminated and assiduously implemented policy that addresses student conduct and treatment by:
1. setting forth expected standards of behavior for teachers, administrators, and students
  2. clearly describing examples of inappropriate and unacceptable behavior, such as:
    - a. harassment, intimidation or bullying as defined in Student Rights, Responsibilities and Disciplinary Procedures
    - b. sexual harassment
    - c. discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability or any other legally-protected characteristic
    - d. grading used to punish rather than to objectively evaluate performance
    - e. assigning tasks for punishment rather than educational purposes

- f. requiring the performance of personal services
  - g. requiring the performance of tasks irrelevant to the student's education
  - h. taking credit for another individual's work
  - i. intentional neglect or lack of communication
3. delineating procedures for dealing with breaches of the standard while protecting students from possible retribution for complaints. These procedures should include:
    - a. clearly defined avenues for complaints
    - b. procedures for investigation
    - c. protection and maintenance of confidentiality
    - d. procedures for conflict resolution, including mediation
    - e. disciplinary measures (sanctions); and
  4. outlining a mechanism for prevention and education.

C. Student Responsibilities:

As a rule, rights and responsibilities go hand in hand in all facets of life. The following has been adapted from the American College of Physicians' Ethics Manual (4th Edition, 1998) and modified towards students.

A student shall be dedicated to providing competent medical service with compassion and respect for human dignity. In all instances, the student must maintain the dignity of the person, including respect for the patient's modesty and privacy.

1. NONDISCRIMINATION

It is unethical for a student to refuse to participate in the care of a person based upon race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, age, or sexual preference. It is also unethical to refuse to participate in the care of a patient solely because of medical risk, or perceived risk, to the student.

It is not, however, unethical for the pregnant student to refuse to participate in activities that pose a significant risk to her fetus.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY

The patient's right to the confidentiality of his/her medical record is a fundamental tenet of medical care. The discussion of the problems or diagnoses of an identified (or potentially identifiable) patient by professional staff or medical students in public places (for example, in elevators or in cafeterias) violates patient confidentiality and is unethical. Under no circumstances can any medical record be removed from the institution, nor is photocopying of the

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record permitted. For presentations or rounds, students are permitted to extract information but not copy wholesale parts of the chart.

### 3. PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR

The student should be thoughtful and professional when interacting with patients and their families. Inappropriate behavior in the academic or clinical setting includes the use of offensive language, gestures, or remarks with sexual overtones.

Students should maintain a neat and clean appearance and dress in attire that is generally accepted as professional by the patient population served.

Under pressure of fatigue, professional stress, or personal problems, students should strive to maintain composure. The student should seek supportive services when appropriate.

### 4. MISREPRESENTATION

A student should accurately represent herself or himself to patients and others on the medical team. Students should never introduce themselves as "Doctor" as this is clearly a misrepresentation of the student's position, knowledge, and authority.

### 5. HONESTY

Students are expected to demonstrate honesty and integrity in all aspects of their education and in their interaction with patients, staff, faculty, and colleagues. They may not cheat, plagiarize, or assist others in the commission of these acts. The student must ensure the accuracy and completeness of his/her part of the medical record and must make a good faith effort to provide the best possible patient care. Student must be willing to admit errors and not knowingly mislead others or promote himself or herself at the patient's expense. The student is bound to know, understand, and preserve professional ethics and has a duty to report any breach of these ethics by other students or health care providers through the appropriate channels. The student should understand the protocol of these channels.

### 6. CONSULTATION

Students should seek consultation and supervision whenever the care of a patient may be inadequate because of a lack of knowledge and/or experience.

## 7. CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

When a conflict of interests arises, the welfare of the patient must at all times be paramount. A student may challenge or refuse to comply with a directive if its implementation would be antithetical to his or her own ethical principles, when such action does not compromise patient welfare.

Gifts, hospitality, or subsidies offered by medical equipment, pharmaceutical or other manufacturers or distributors should not be accepted if acceptance would influence the objectivity of clinical judgment. Student interactions with commercial interests should conform to the American Medical Association (AMA) guidelines.

## 8. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The student will not engage in romantic, sexual, or other nonprofessional relationships with a patient while the student is involved with the patient's care, even if the patient initiates or consents to the contact. The student is not expected to tolerate inappropriate sexual behavior on the part of other medical personnel or patients.

## 9. IMPAIRMENT

The student will not use alcohol or drugs in a manner that could compromise patient care. It is the responsibility of every student to protect patients from an impaired colleague and to assist a colleague whose capability is impaired. The student is obligated to report to an appropriate authority any member of the health care team whose behavior exhibits impairment or lack of professional conduct or competence, or who engages in fraud or deception. Such reports must conform to established institutional policies.

## 10. CRITICISM OF COLLEAGUES

It is unethical for a student to disparage the professional competence, knowledge, qualifications, or services of a colleague to a patient or a third party or to state or imply that a patient has been poorly managed or mistreated by a colleague without substantial evidence.

Professional relations among all members of the medical community should be marked by civility. Thus, scholarly contributions should be acknowledged, slanderous comments and acts should be avoided, and each person should recognize and facilitate the contributions of others to the community.

The medical student will deal with professional staff and peer members of the health care team in a cooperative and considerate manner.

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## 11. RESEARCH

The basic principle underlying all research is honesty. Scientists have a responsibility to provide research of high quality; to gather facts meticulously, to keep impeccable records of work done; to interpret results objectively, not force them into preconceived molds or models; and to report new knowledge through appropriate channels. Coauthors of research reports must be well enough acquainted with the work of their coworkers that they can personally vouch for the integrity of the study and the validity of the findings, and they must have been active in the research itself.

Plagiarism is unethical - to consciously incorporate the words of others, either verbatim or through paraphrasing, without appropriate acknowledgement is unacceptable in scientific literature and may have legal consequences.

## 12. EVALUATION

Students should seek feedback and actively participate in the process of evaluating their teachers (faculty as well as house staff). Students are expected to respond to constructive criticism by appropriate modification of their behavior.

When evaluating faculty performance, students are obliged to provide prompt comments.

## 13. TEACHING

The very title doctor, from the Latin docere, "to teach," implies a responsibility to share knowledge and information with colleagues and patients. It is incumbent upon those entering this profession to teach what they know of the science, art, and ethics of medicine. It includes communicating clearly with and teaching patients so that they are properly prepared to participate in their own care and in the maintenance of their health.

The following are not specific responsibilities of students; they are physician's responsibilities, although students are frequently asked to take these on.

## 14. DISCLOSURE

In general, full disclosure is a fundamental ethical requirement. The patient must be well informed to make health care decisions and work intelligently in partnership with the medical team. Information that the patient needs for decision making should be presented in terms the patient can understand. If for some reason the patient is unable to comprehend, there should be full disclosure to the patient's authorized representative.

## 15. INFORMED CONSENT

Students are to understand the importance of the obligation to obtain informed consent from patients, but are not responsible for obtaining such consent. It is the physician's responsibility to ensure that the patient or his/her surrogate be appropriately informed as to the nature of the patient's medical condition, the objectives of proposed treatments, treatment alternatives, possible outcomes, and the risks involved. The physician's presentation should be understandable to the patient and unbiased. The patient's or surrogate's concurrence must be free and uncoerced.

### IV. General Procedures (adapted from the Dartmouth Medical School Honor Code)

- A. Student allegations of infractions of the Code of Professional Conduct will be investigated by the Student Professional Conduct Committee (SPCC) or by Associate Dean of Student Affairs. After all allegations have been thoroughly investigated, the Committee may decide:
  - 1. No infraction has occurred.
  - 2. An infraction may have occurred with satisfactory explanation.
  - 3. An infraction may have occurred with unsatisfactory explanation.
- B. When no infraction has occurred, the case will be dismissed. Instances in which an infraction may have occurred with satisfactory explanations will be kept in the committee's records until the student's graduation, at which point they will be destroyed. Instances in which an infraction may have occurred with unsatisfactory explanation will be referred to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and to the Hearing Body for Student Rights for review.
- C. Review of allegations of infractions of the Code of Professional Conduct by the SPCC does not preclude further consideration or action by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or by the Hearing Body on Student Rights convened pursuant to the UMDNJ Student Disciplinary Procedure. In cases where the Hearing Body is convened, recommendations shall prevail and supersede any decision by the SPCC.

### V. Procedures for Reporting Suspected Infractions of the Code

- A. When a student or faculty member witnesses an event he/she feels is an infraction, he/she may:
  - 1. approach the individual and gain a satisfactory explanation that there was no intent to breach the code. It is hoped that most events will be dealt with in this manner.
  - 2. contact a member of the Student Government and request an SPCC meeting.
  - 3. report the incident to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for review and to the Hearing Body for Student Rights

- B. The chairperson of the SPCC shall inform the accused student(s) that the issue is being brought to the Committee. The accused student(s) has the right to know of his/her accuser.
- C. If a student accused by a fellow student refuses to participate in the Committee investigation, the chairperson shall submit all known information to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for review and to the Hearing Body for Student Rights.

#### VI. Procedures for Selection of the Student Professional Conduct Committee

- A. At the beginning of each academic year, the student body shall elect from among its members a chairperson for the Student Professional Conduct Committee. This individual shall convene all SPCC meetings throughout the academic year. The chairperson shall have no vote on the committee.
- B. If an event warrants investigation by the SPCC;
  - 1. The chairperson shall draw a list of ten students randomly from the medical school enrollment, including third- and fourth-year students.
  - 2. The accused student may exclude members of his/her own class prior to the random selection of ten students.
  - 3. The accused student may exclude a maximum of five students from the selected ten students to avoid personal conflict.
  - 4. A committee of five is then constituted from the remaining eligible students in rank order or their selection.
  - 5. Every student has an obligation to serve on the SPCC. Exemptions may be approved by the chairperson in instances of major conflict.

#### VII. Committee Procedures

- A. The Student Professional Conduct Committee shall meet within 10 days after the selection of its five members.
- B. Minutes shall be recorded of all Committee meetings. The minutes shall be maintained with strict adherence to confidentiality.
- C. All deliberations of the Committee shall be kept in strictest confidence by all involved.
- D. An accused student may invite witnesses to the event. The Committee chairperson shall be informed of such invitations so that witnesses for the accused student may be duly notified of the meeting.
- E. The Committee shall listen to complete statements from the accused and all invited witnesses. Faculty members may be consulted by the Committee if clarification regarding the infraction is necessary.
- F. After all available facts have been heard, the Committee must decide the following:

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

1. No infraction has occurred.
2. An infraction has occurred with satisfactory explanation.
3. An infraction has occurred with unsatisfactory explanation.

G. Cases ending in no infraction will be dismissed.

H. Cases in which an infraction may have occurred with satisfactory explanations will be kept in the Committee's records until the student's graduation, at which point they will be destroyed. Records will be held in an administrative office of Robert Wood Johnson Medical School that has no bearing on the evaluation or the medical student. Outdated cases will be destroyed by the chair of the SPCC on a yearly basis.

I. Cases in which an infraction may have occurred with unsatisfactory explanation will be referred to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and to the Hearing Body for Student Rights.

J. Accused student(s) shall be informed in writing of the Committee's decision and action within two (2) calendar days. In cases where the case is dismissed, if appropriate, the chairman will advise the student how to avoid such misunderstandings in the future.

#### VIII. Confidentiality

- A. Allegations of dishonesty and actual investigations require that the strictest confidentiality is maintained by Committee members and all others involved. An accused student has the right to know the nature of the accusation and the name(s) of his/her accuser, confidentiality must be maintained about a particular allegation. Violations of confidentiality will be construed as violations of the Code of Professional Conduct itself: and handled accordingly.
- B. The SPCC shall maintain confidential minutes of its meetings. Minutes pertaining to an individual student shall be maintained throughout his/her enrollment at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. These minutes will be stored in an administrative office of Robert Wood Johnson Medical School that has no bearing on the evaluation of the medical student. Outdated cases will be destroyed by the chair of the SPCC on a yearly basis

#### *Assessment of Professionalism*

Professionalism is an important and valued requirement of all components of a student's academic performance at RWJMS. Students are expected to perform in a consistently professional manner in order to successfully complete their academic program. Professionalism encompasses many facets of behavior expected of a physician, including actions reflecting the following:

- Appropriate interpersonal interactions/skills and respectful and effective relationships with patients, peers, and other professionals in

- the academic and clinical setting
- Striving for self-improvement and adaptability
- Commitment to professional responsibility, reliability, honesty, integrity, maturity and altruism

Since RWJMS is committed to training future physicians who possess these and other attributes that reflect adherence to professional standards of behavior, such attributes are formally assessed throughout our curriculum. Faculty may identify students who they feel have failed to exhibit professional behavior by completing a Professionalism Evaluation form.

Completed Professionalism Evaluation forms are reviewed by the appropriate committee of Course Directors or Clerkship Directors (e.g., a reported incident which occurred in a first-year course would be reviewed by the First-Year Course Directors Committee). A decision regarding whether or not to place a Professionalism Evaluation form in a student's file will be made by the reviewing committee. The student will be notified of the committee's decision by a Dean from the Office of Student Affairs.

In accordance with the Academic Rules and Regulations (Section VII LF.2), "The Academic Standing Committee will review the academic record of any student for whom Professionalism Evaluation forms have been submitted from two or more courses or clerkships. Such review may result in placement on Academic Warning or consideration for dismissal."

If, at the time of graduation only one Professionalism Evaluation form is in the student's file this form will not be included in the permanent record.

The Professionalism Evaluation forms may be found on the next pages of this Handbook.

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School  
**First & Second Year Students Professionalism Evaluation Form**

Student name (type or print legibly) \_\_\_\_\_

Course \_\_\_\_\_

Course Director (type of print legibly) \_\_\_\_\_

Semester \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Member/Course Director's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by Course Director Committee    Circle One    M1    M2

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This form is to be used to evaluate the level of professionalism of the future physicians in training at UMDNJ Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. The form is to be filled out by a faculty member/course director in the spirit of professional and collegial interaction.

This student needs further education or assistance with the following: (check all that apply)

**Reliability & Responsibility**

- Development of accountable and dependable behavior as it relates to oneself and others.
- Performing duties & tasks, assigned, in a timely manner.

**Honesty/Integrity**

- Being truthful with patients, peers, and professional work (documentation, research, presentations, representation of work).

**Maturity:**

- Taking responsibility for own actions.
- Accepting constructive feedback.
- Recognizing limitations and seeking help.
- Incorporating feedback in order to make change in behavior.

**Interactions with Patients:**

- Acting and dressing in a professional manner when patients are present.
- Establishing a rapport.
- Being Sensitive to the needs of respectful patients.
- Establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries in clinical work and learning situations.

Relationships with students, faculty, & staff:

\_\_\_\_\_ Conveying respect for other students, faculty and staff through attitudes, actions and behaviors.

\_\_\_\_\_ Interacting constructively and behaving appropriately with others in small groups and group discussion settings.

\_\_\_\_\_ Relating well to fellow students, faculty and staff in a learning environment.

Please explain above:

Other feedback: (on reverse)

**Robert Wood Johnson Medical School Clerkship Professionalism Evaluation Form**

Student name (type or print legibly) \_\_\_\_\_

Clerkship \_\_\_\_\_

Site Director/Clerkship Director \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Rotation \_\_\_\_\_

Site \_\_\_\_\_

Clerkship Director's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Was this discussed with the student?     No     Yes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by M3/M4 Clerkship Committee

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This form is to be used to evaluate the level of professionalism of the future physicians in training at UMDNJ Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. The form is to be filled out by a faculty member/clerkship director in the spirit of professional and collegial interaction.

This student needs further education or assistance with the following: (check all that apply)

**Professional Responsibility:**

- Student needs frequent reminders regarding attendance/punctuality.
- Student needs frequent reminders to fulfill responsibilities toward patients and toward others on the health care team.
- Student does not seek help appropriately.
- Student cannot be trusted to perform tasks independently within his or her ability.
- Student misrepresents or falsifies data/information/patient- own care activities.
- Student does not assume appropriate share of team work/call.
- Student does not inform supervisor when mistakes occur.
- Student dresses inappropriately (context specific) or is deficient in personal hygiene.

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Self-Improvement and Adaptability:

- \_\_\_ Student displays arrogance or disrespect in relationships toward other health care team members/patients.
- \_\_\_ Student resists/is defensive toward constructive criticism.
- \_\_\_ Student does not recognize inadequacies/does not seek advice and/or resists appropriate help in making changes.

Relationships with Student, Faculty, Staff, Patients:

- \_\_\_ Student uses inappropriate language in discussion with patients or other health care profess
- \_\_\_ Student becomes abusive or critical during times of stress.
- \_\_\_ Student does not maintain appropriate boundaries in work/learning/patient care situations.
- \_\_\_ Student abuses his own privileges and power with patients/others.
- \_\_\_ Student does not respect the wishes of patients.
- \_\_\_ Student shows disrespect for others based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, intelligence and SES.

Please explain a bove:

Other feedback:



Robert Wood Johnson Medical School Standards of Conduct: Teacher-Learner Relationship

I. Preamble

UMDNJ Robert Wood Johnson Medical School is committed to the highest standards of behavior concerning the teacher-student relationship. It is important to provide members of the medical school community an environment where teaching and learning takes place in a climate of mutual respect.

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School maintains its commitment to preventing student abuse through education, by providing support for victims and by responding with corrective action. This policy addresses the behaviors required from all teachers, which include faculty members, residents, staff, or students in a teaching role. It is intended to assure an education environment in which students, staff, volunteers, and faculty may raise and resolve issues without fear of intimidation or retaliation.

II. Standards

Student mistreatment, abuse, or harassment will not be tolerated in the course of the teacher-learner relationship. Examples of inappropriate behavior or situations that would be unacceptable include:

- Unwelcome physical contact, including any physical mistreatment or assaults such as hitting, slapping, kicking, or threats or the same nature;
- Harassment, intimidation or bullying as defined in Student Rights, Responsibilities and Disciplinary Procedures;
- Requiring a student to perform menial tasks intended to humiliate, control, or intimidate the student;
- Unreasonable requests for a student to perform personal services;
- Grading or assigning tasks used to punish a student rather than to evaluate or improve performance;
- Sexual assault (refer to Sexual Assault Policy #00-01-10-85:00)
- Sexual harassment (refer to Sexual Harassment Policy #00-01-35-25:00);
- Discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, sex, age, sexual orientation, physical disability or any other legally protected characteristic.

While criticism is appropriate in certain circumstances in the teacher-learning process, it should be handled in such a way as to promote learning, avoiding purposeful student humiliation. Negative feedback is generally more useful when delivered in a private setting that fosters discussion and behavior modification. Feedback should focus on behavior rather than personal characteristics and should avoid pejorative labeling.

III. Procedures to Address as Infraction of the Students

- A. Students who believe that a violation of this policy has taken place should immediately contact:
  - 1. The Dean of Student Affairs or his/her designee; or
  - 2. The Office of Ethics and Compliance
  
- B. If a formal complaint is reported to the Dean of Student Affairs or his/her designee, several options may be pursued:
  - 1. Discuss the allegations with the consent of the accuser among all involved parties in attempting to reach resolution among the parties. The mediation of the matter may involve contacting the chairperson relevant department, administrator, or Clerkship or Residency Program Director;
  - 2. Refer the matter through the Dean to the Hearing Body for Student Rights and Responsibilities if the abuse is student to student; or
  - 3. Refer the matter to the Office of Ethics and Compliance.

Students can contact the Office of Ethics & Compliance at 973-972-8093 or call the Ethics Helpline at 800-215-9664 when they wish to remain anonymous and keep the call confidential.

Computing Policies:

Policies Governing the University-Accessed

Electronic Information Systems

UMDNJ Policy: 00-01-10-40:00

Entire Policy and Procedures may be found online at:

General Principles:

- 1. The University owns its computing, networking, telephone and other communications systems and its information resources, and has the right to monitor them. The University also has various rights to the software and information residing on, developed on, or licensed for these computers and networks. The University has the responsibility for the security, integrity, maintenance and confidentiality of the electronic systems.
  
- 2. Computing, networking, telephone and information resources of the University, including access to local, national and international networks, exist to support students, faculty and staff as they carry out the education, research, health-care and public-service missions of the University, and its administration and management. Toward

these ends, the University encourages and promotes the use of these resources by the University community. Access to and use of these resources for purposes or activities which do not support the University's missions are subject to regulation and restriction to ensure that they do not interfere with legitimate work; any access to or use of these resources and services that interferes with the University's missions and goals is prohibited.

3. When demand for computing, networking, telephony and information resources exceeds available capacity or resources, priorities shall be established for allocating the resources, with a higher priority to activities essential to the missions of the University. The Deans and Vice Presidents, in conjunction with the Vice President for IST, shall set these priorities.
4. Data stewards and system administrators shall develop and publicize specific written procedures to protect the rights of legitimate authorized users, to protect the integrity of the information and systems under their management, and to delineate the responsibilities of users. The University has the authority to control or refuse access to anyone who violates these procedures or threatens the rights of other users or the availability and integrity of the systems and the information. Actions that may be taken under this authority include deactivating accounts, access codes or security clearances; stopping processes; deleting affected files; and disabling access to computing, networking, telephony and information resources.
5. Users' expectation of electronic privacy must be balanced against the University's reasonable need to supervise, control and operate the University's information systems.
6. The University does not archive E-mail that has been sent or received by its systems. The user is responsible for archiving E-mail messages that the user wishes to retain.

Rights of Users: