

Teacher-Learner Relationship Policy

Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine

Expectations of Faculty and Students in the Teacher-Learner Relationship to foster the Learning Climate of the CWRU School of Medicine

An underlying principle of the medical school is that students and faculty will work together as partners to ensure that every student achieves his/her fullest potential and succeeds in the educational program.

We as faculty - physicians, researchers, residents, fellows, and other health care and research professionals - are committed to treating our students as our professional colleagues who, like faculty members, will exercise privileges and responsibilities throughout their education.

We expect students and faculty to demonstrate respect for others by upholding a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning, interacting in a considerate and cooperative manner with other students and faculty, judging colleagues fairly, and attempting to resolve conflicts with respect for the dignity of others. We expect students and faculty to neither practice nor tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, religion, age, sex, color, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national or ethnic origin, political affiliation, status as a disabled veteran or other protected veteran under US federal law, or socioeconomic status.

We expect students and faculty to demonstrate responsibility by striving for excellence and professional growth, by recognizing their own limitations and seeking help when needed, by avoiding the use of alcohol and other drugs in a way that could interfere with clinical or educational responsibilities, by seeking frequent constructive feedback on their interactions with one another, and by conducting themselves professionally at all times in demeanor, language and appearance in the classroom, with patients, and in health care settings.

We expect faculty to commit their time and effort to ensure appropriate delivery of an interactive curriculum. We expect students to attend all sessions for their own learning, to enhance the learning environment for their peers, and out of respect for faculty effort.

We expect teachers and students to demonstrate respect and professional concern by holding each other to the highest standards in learning, without abuse, humiliation or harassment of any kind, by not exploiting a relationship for personal gain or advantage, and by demonstrating the highest standards of ethical conduct in all settings.

We expect teachers to demonstrate strict confidentiality when providing health care to students and complete impartiality when assessing student performance. The CWRU School of Medicine prohibits any faculty member or resident who has provided health services to a student to complete any

formative or summative assessment of that student. Students must not ask any faculty or resident who has provided them health care to provide any assessment of their performance.

Mistreatment arises when behavior shows disrespect for the dignity of others and unreasonably interferes with the learning process. Examples of mistreatment include public belittlement or humiliation, threats of physical harm or punishment, inappropriate requests to do personal services (shopping or babysitting), sexual harassment, and discrimination or harassment based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.

Neglect might be used to describe situations in which a student is openly ignored, is excluded from important decisions, or made to feel “invisible.” Neglect is different from overt mistreatment but can still interfere with the learning process.

Harassment, mistreatment and neglect policies are discussed at new student orientation, orientation to year 2, and again prior to starting clerkships. **If a student feels that he or she has been harassed, mistreated or experienced neglect during the conduct of the curriculum, and is uncomfortable addressing this directly with the colleague involved, we urge the student to discuss his/her concerns as soon as possible through one of the options detailed below.**

- Students in any phase of the curriculum may address their concerns with the course, block or clerkship director, Assistant Dean charged with that phase of the curriculum, or the Associate Deans for Curriculum.
- Students in any phase of the program are strongly encouraged to bring the matter to the attention of their Society Dean, Dean of Student Affairs, or their Physician Advisor, or, because the deans work as a group practice, students may choose to speak to another Student Affairs dean if they feel more comfortable doing so.
- Alternatively, students have the option of contacting Dr. Patricia Thomas, School of Medicine Vice Dean for Medical Education, pat30@case.edu, or G. Dean Patterson, Jr., Associate Vice President of the University Office for Student Affairs. The University Student Affairs office is not part of the medical school administration. Students can e-mail Mr. Patterson at gdp2@case.edu or call the office at 216.368.2020 to make an appointment. The office is located at 110 Adelbert Hall on Adelbert Road.
- Online Reporting: Both the University and College programs have established an online “Early Concerns” reporting mechanism, by which students can report experiences of harassment, mistreatment or neglect. These reports are confidential *but not anonymous* and will be reviewed by the appropriate Student Affairs dean. The Early Concerns report is available on the eCurriculum (<http://case.edu/medicine/faculty-staff/ecurriculum-resources/>).
- Box Reporting: Both the University and College programs have established a hardcopy reporting system. Boxes to leave these reports are located outside SOM E-405 and on the CCLCM campus at NA2-90 (Student Lounge). These reports are confidential and will be reviewed by the

appropriate Student Affairs dean. Note: Without specific information, the School may be limited in its ability to respond to the report.

What Happens with a Report?

All reports are handled confidentially, and wherever possible, de-identified information about the event is used. The School of Medicine is obligated to follow federal guidelines (Title IX) for reporting sexual misconduct. For other situations, the Society Dean or Associate Dean of Student Affairs will pursue the report as follows:

1. Reports are collected by medical school staff in the Offices of Student Affairs.
2. If known, the reporting student will be contacted by Student Affairs Dean, basic information verified, and additional information requested if needed.
3. The report is logged in the Office of Student Affairs on the University's Log of Student Complaints.
4. If appropriate, the report is redirected to University (i.e., Title IX).
5. A de-identified report is reviewed by the Student Affairs Dean with the appropriate curricular leader.

Depending on the judged severity of event and timing related to grades and evaluation, the Student Affairs Dean may determine any of the following is appropriate:

- Report is shared with the professional involved
- Report is shared with course director, clerkship director and/or program director
- Report is shared with the professional's supervisor
- Report is shared with department chair (in the case of a faculty member)
- Report is shared with Dean
- Report is shared with Office of Faculty Affairs

When deemed appropriate the professional and his/her supervisor are asked to create an action plan that is shared with the Society Dean or Student Affairs Dean.

The Society Dean or Student Affairs Dean will post an incident report summary including outcome to the eCurriculum or student portal (without any identifying features) and if known, sent to the student who submitted the report.

Unprofessional behavior with learners that is severe or repeats despite feedback will result in removal from the teaching program and may be cause for learners' dismissal from their degree program or faculty members' termination for just cause as provided in the CWRU Faculty Handbook.

Aggregated Reports

The School of Medicine reports aggregated de-identified data on learner mistreatment to each department chair and the Dean on a quarterly basis.

Approved by the Committee on Medical Education: 7/28/2016.

Discussion/Reporting Resources:

- Your Society Dean, Student Affairs Dean or Physician Advisor
- Pat Thomas, Vice Dean for Medical Education: pat30@case.edu
- G. Dean Patterson, Associate Vice President of the University Office for Student Affairs: gdp2@case.edu
- [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Bias Reporting System \(BRS\)](#)