**Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM)**

**Policy: Policy Five - Standards of Ethical and Professional Conduct for VTCSOM Community Members**

**Subject: Standards of Conduct**

**Administrator: David W. Musick, PhD, Senior Dean, Faculty Affairs**

**Original date: July 2014**

**Revision date: February 2021; September 2022; July 2023**

1. **Purpose**

To set forth standards of ethical and professional conduct for all persons who have a faculty appointment at VTCSOM. VTCSOM recognizes that students are exposed to multiple learning environments in clinical and non-clinical settings throughout the course of their medical education. These learning environments must support and reinforce the professional attributes, principles, and responsibilities outlined below. Faculty and students have a set of responsibilities to the learning environment and to the teacher-learner relationship that must be articulated and endorsed.

**SEE ALSO: Policy Six, Formal Allegations of Student Mistreatment by a Faculty Member**

1. **Policy**

Guiding Principles for the teacher-learner relationship have been outlined by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and have been adopted by VTCSOM. At the time of initial appointment, all faculty members will:

* Review and document their willingness to abide by these principles
* Notify the department chair and the Office of Faculty Affairs if either the license to practice and/or board certification are revoked, restricted, suspended or allowed to lapse; or if placed on probation.

**3 Procedures**

Faculty, staff and students of VTCSOM are expected to abide by the principles contained in this policy. Both learners and faculty have the opportunity to express concern about the professional conduct of others via several different mechanisms. The school strives to respond to all such concerns in a timely, fair and thorough manner, with attention to due process for all parties. VTCSOM prohibits mistreatment and/or harassment in any academic or clinical setting on the basis of any characteristic protected by law.

**Duty**: Medical educators have a duty not only to convey the knowledge and skills required for delivering the profession’s contemporary standard of care, but also to inculcate the values and attitudes required for preserving the medical profession’s social contract across generations. Examples of failure of duty include:

* + - * Knowingly participating in a research or clinical activity likely to cause grave injury without any chance of benefit to another person.
      * Refusing to respond to a life-threatening situation when specifically requested to perform actions within one’s scope of practice.
    - Failing to provide constructive objective feedback.
    - Failing to participate in the educational process in a meaningful manner.
    - Neglecting clinical responsibilities.

**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. To maintain integrity, faculty members shall not engage in any of the following activities:

* + - Plagiarism
    - Scientific fraud or misconduct
    - Concealing pertinent conflicts of interest in educational activities
    - Cheating on exams offered by the institution or by other professional organizations
    - Dishonesty
    - Falsification of documents or electronic records pertaining to patient care or student advancement
    - Violations of confidentiality
    - Mistreatment of patients
    - Unlawful activity when it is determined the interest of the school is involved
    - Misappropriation of funds or resources for personal benefit or use

**Respect**: Fundamental to the ethic of medicine is respect for every individual. Mutual respect between learners, as novice members of the medical profession, and their teachers, as experienced and esteemed professionals, is essential for nurturing this ethic. Given the inherently hierarchical nature of the teacher-learner relationship, teachers have a special obligation to ensure that students and residents are always treated respectfully.

Members of the academic community will demonstrate respect for others at all times. Inappropriate behaviors include:

* + - Unwanted physical contact or threat of the same
    - Sexual harassment
      * Loss of personal civility including shouting, personal insults or attacks, throwing items, or damaging personal or community property
    - Discrimination in teaching and assessment
      * Requests for others to perform inappropriate personal errands in return for educational advancement

**Responsibilities:** The above principles initiate the description of a set of responsibilities for teachers and learners.

The responsibilities for teachers will include:

* + - * + Treat learners with respect
        + Treat learners and colleagues equally without regard to gender, race, disability, cultural origins, age, or religious beliefs
        + Treat colleagues and patients in a professional manner
        + Provide current, high-quality materials in an effective format for learning
        + Respect the student’s time by:
      * Being on time for scheduled encounters
      * Developing educational experiences which are meaningful to the practice of medicine and reasonable for the time period allotted
      * Provide timely and constructive feedback
      * Provide a role model for professionalism

The responsibilities for students will include:

* + - * Treat residents, faculty, and patients with respect and professionalism
      * Treat residents and faculty equally without regard to gender, race, disability, cultural origins, age, or religious beliefs
      * Commit the time and energy necessary to attain the goals and objectives of the curriculum
      * Respect the time of other students and faculty by being on time for scheduled educational encounters
      * Contribute to the quality of group assignments and work products by actively engaging in discussion, problem solving, and development of materials
      * Communicate concerns and suggestions regarding learning environment and educational community in a timely, constructive, and professional manner