



Professionalism Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

Policy Contact(s)	Associate Dean for Student Affairs
Responsible	Office of Student Affairs
Accountable	Office of Student Affairs, Office of Medical Education, Course/Clerkship Faculty, and Medical Students
Consulted	MEAC, Advancement Committee, Judicial Board
Informed	Office of Medical Education, Course and Clerkship Directors, Faculty, Staff, and Medical Students
LCME Elements	3.5 Learning Environment/Professionalism 10.5 Technical Standards

LCME Standards

3.5 Learning Environment/Professionalism

A medical school ensures that the learning environment of its medical education program is conducive to the ongoing development of explicit and appropriate professional behaviors in its medical students, faculty, and staff at all locations. The medical school and its clinical affiliates share the responsibility for periodic evaluation of the learning environment in order to identify positive and negative influences on the maintenance of professional standards, develop and conduct appropriate strategies to enhance positive and mitigate negative influences, and identify and promptly correct violations of professional standards.

10.5 Technical Standards

A medical school develops and publishes technical standards for the admission, retention, and graduation of applicants or medical students in accordance with legal requirements.

Purpose and Scope

As future physicians, medical students are expected to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct. This policy outlines the expected professional behaviors and corresponding procedures for violations to ensure a respectful, responsible, and ethical learning environment.

The policy applies to all students enrolled in the MD program at the University of Maryland and outlines the procedures for evaluating and commending professional conduct, as well as the procedures for non-compliance.

This policy governs professionalism concerns that are reviewed through the Professionalism expectations including the Professional Conduct Evaluation (PCE) process and, where indicated, the Advancement Committee. Certain categories of conduct — including academic integrity violations, professional integrity violations, research misconduct, criminal activity, substance use, and repeated or severe conduct violations — constitute mandatory Judicial Board matters

and are governed by the Judicial Board By-Laws. See **Section III** (Infractions) and the Judicial Board By-Laws for routing guidance. Where the appropriate forum is not explicitly covered by this policy, the Office of Student Affairs and/or Office of Medical Education Dean will make the determination.

Policy Statement

Medical students are expected to demonstrate professionalism in all aspects of their education and interactions. Professionalism includes, but is not limited to, integrity, respect, responsibility, and adherence to ethical standards. The institution will conduct regular evaluations of student professionalism and provide commendations for exemplary conduct.

As outlined in the Doctor of Medicine program Technical Standards, SOM Judicial Board Bylaws, and the UMB Code of Ethics and Conduct, professionalism is a requirement for matriculation and advancement at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. In addition to campus and school expectations for professionalism, medical students must also adhere to any other professionalism requirements at all clinical affiliates, including those that are not a part of UMMS.

Infractions

Professionalism infractions are organized into two categories based on the appropriate review forum. This categorization is not exhaustive; the OSA/OME Dean retains triage authority for ambiguous cases.

Category A — Mandatory Judicial Board Referral

The following infractions constitute mandatory Judicial Board referral. Faculty, staff, and administrators who become aware of Category A concerns must refer them to the Judicial Board Chair or the OSA/OME Dean for Judicial referral. Category A matters may not be resolved through the Advancement Committee or PCE alone.

- Academic Integrity Violations: Cheating on examinations; plagiarism; fabrication or falsification of academic work; unauthorized collaboration; unauthorized use of artificial intelligence tools in assessed work; and any other conduct that misrepresents a student's academic performance.
- Professional Integrity Violations: Falsifying patient records or clinical documentation; misrepresenting clinical activities or attendance to supervisors; providing false information in any professional context, including to faculty, staff, licensing bodies, or institutional representatives; and fraudulent billing or documentation.
- Research Misconduct: Fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in the conduct or reporting of research; failure to comply with IRB requirements; and improper authorship practices.
- Criminal Conduct: Any conduct constituting a violation of applicable criminal law, whether or not criminal charges have been or are expected to be filed. A pending criminal investigation or prosecution does not prevent Judicial Board proceedings from occurring independently.
- Substance Use, Impairment, and Diversion: Using or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs during academic or clinical activities; diversion of controlled substances; and violations of UMSOM's Drug Screening Policy. See also: Drug Screening Policy.

- Harassment and Boundary Violations (non-sexual): Engaging in intimidation, threats, or repeated disrespectful or demeaning behavior toward patients, peers, faculty, or staff; and engaging in inappropriate personal relationships with patients. Note: Sexual harassment and sexual misconduct are governed by the UMB Title IX Policy and must be reported to the UMB Title IX Coordinator. Judicial Board proceedings may occur concurrently where applicable.
- Retaliation: Taking adverse action or engaging in conduct intended to intimidate, threaten, or penalize any person who in good faith reported a concern, participated in a proceeding, or exercised rights under this or any related policy.
- Hazing: Participating in or facilitating hazing of medical students for entry into or participation in SOM or UMB student organizations, in violation of the UMB Anti-Hazing Policy, where the conduct involves coercion, harm, or humiliation.

Category B — Advancement Committee / PCE Process

The following infractions are addressed through the Professional Conduct Evaluation (PCE) process and, where warranted, the Advancement Committee. Category B matters do not typically require Judicial Board referral unless a Category A violation is also present.

- Disrespect: Using inappropriate language, making discriminatory remarks, or showing a lack of respect toward patients, peers, or faculty (isolated or minor incidents; see Category A for repeated or severe conduct).
- Unprofessional Behavior: Consistently arriving late to classes or clinical rotations or not adhering to other expectations for comportment in an academic or clinical setting.
- Professional Image: Failing to maintain a professional image, including appropriate attire and demeanor as communicated by UME administration and faculty, and as described in the UMMC Medical Executive Committee Code of Professional Conduct.
- Inappropriate Use of Technology: Violating patient confidentiality (HIPAA) or student confidentiality and privacy (FERPA); using electronic devices in other inappropriate ways during clinical rotations; or failing to follow UMB Campus and/or UMSOM AI Policy. Note: Academic misuse of AI in assessed work (e.g., using AI to complete a graded assignment without authorization) is a Category A Academic Integrity Violation.
- Social Media: Failing to adhere to the UMB School of Medicine's Social Media Policy requirements. Students must respect the privacy and confidentiality of interactions with other medical students and patients while progressing through the program.
- Unethical Behavior: Participating in activities that violate ethical standards not otherwise addressed in Category A, such as accepting gifts from patients or engaging in unreported/unapproved conflicts of interest.
- Representation at Off-Campus Events: Failing to demonstrate appropriate professional behaviors when attending campus- and SOM-sponsored off-campus events; lapse of professionalism at non-sponsored events while representing oneself as a member of the UMSOM community.
- Legislative Matters: Failing to comply with UMB Policy on Governmental Relations, including obtaining prior approval for any legislative activities or testimonies through the UMB Office of Public Affairs.

Procedures

Professional Conduct Commendation (PCC)

A Professional Conduct Commendation (PCC) reflects exemplary conduct by a student. PCC comments will be noted in the "Academic Progress" section of a student's MSPE under "Professional Performance."

Professional Conduct Evaluation (PCE)

1. A Professional Conduct Evaluation (PCE) indicates that a student may be experiencing challenges in meeting professionalism requirements. A PCE seeks to identify individual accountability by identifying potential barriers to success, fostering understanding, and offering tailored support to help the student develop these skills in alignment with existing policies and procedures.
2. Faculty members submitting a PCE should first meet with the student to review the professionalism concern. Faculty are encouraged to use a Just Culture framework to assess professionalism concerns.
3. Any student who receives a PCE must meet with an assistant or associate dean in the Office of Student Affairs within two weeks of receipt of the PCE to discuss the evaluation and create a plan for improvement.
4. Students who receive two or more PCEs must be discussed at the Advancement Committee for consideration of disciplinary action and inclusion of professionalism concerns in the MSPE. A single PCE may also be referred to the Advancement Committee where the nature or severity of the concern warrants immediate review, regardless of prior PCE history.
5. Importantly, Category A matters (see Infractions, above) must be referred directly to the Judicial Board and do not proceed through the PCE process. Receipt of a PCE for a Category A matter does not fulfill the Judicial Board referral obligation and does not substitute for Judicial Board proceedings.

The submission forms for PCEs and PCCs may be found here:

Professional Conduct Evaluation

Professional Conduct Commendation

PCE Grievance Process

Any grievance regarding the content of the PCE will be discussed with an assistant or associate dean in the Office of Student Affairs. The student will have an opportunity to document any additional relevant information related to the incident or identify conflicting information in the original PCE. The student must submit any written response to the PCE within 14 days of the OSA meeting.

Judicial Board Referral

Category A infractions (see above) must be referred to the Judicial Board. Referrals may be made by any member of the SOM community — including faculty, staff, administrators, or

students — to the Judicial Board Chair or to any dean in the OSA/OME, who will forward the matter to the Judicial Board Chair. The OSA/OME Dean will confirm in writing to the person making the referral that it has been received and forwarded.

The Judicial Board will investigate the matter in accordance with the Judicial Board By-Laws. When a matter is referred to the Judicial Board, the Advancement Committee will defer action on that same incident pending the Judicial Board outcome.

Where the appropriate category for a concern is unclear, faculty or staff should consult the OSA/OME Dean before initiating either a PCE or a Judicial Board referral. The OSA/OME Dean has triage authority and will document the routing determination in writing.

Interim Measures

In circumstances where the nature of an alleged infraction poses a risk to patient safety, the learning environment, or the integrity of an investigation, the Dean of Student Affairs or the Dean of the School may impose interim measures pending completion of Judicial Board or Advancement Committee proceedings. Interim measures are temporary and do not constitute a finding of misconduct.

Appeal of Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action by the Advancement Committee or Judicial Board (e.g., Probation, Dismissal, or professionalism notation in the MSPE) may be appealed per the Appeals Policy and Procedures.

Related Policies

Technical Standards: Essential Requirements for Admission, Academic Advancement, and Graduation

SOM Judicial Board Bylaws

UMB Code of Ethics and Conduct

UMB IT Acceptable Use Policy

UMB Policy for Off-Campus Events

UMB Anti-Hazing Policy

SOM Social Media Policy

UMMC's Medical Executive Committee Code of Professional Conduct

Appeals Policy and Procedures (MD Student Appeals Committee)

Advancement, Graduation & Dismissal Policy

Drug Screening Policy

UMB Title IX Policy (Sexual Misconduct and Other Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination)

History

Revised: May 2025, June 2026

Approved: July 15, 2025, July 21, 2026