

**THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT IN TEACHER/LEARNER RELATIONSHIPS**

**(Student Mistreatment Policy)**

**I. Statement of Philosophy**

The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine is committed to fostering an environment that promotes academic and professional success in learners and teachers at all levels. The achievement of such success is dependent on an environment free of behaviors which can undermine the important missions of our institution. An atmosphere of mutual respect, collegiality, fairness, and trust is essential. Although both teachers and learners bear significant responsibility in creating and maintaining this atmosphere, teachers also bear particular responsibility with respect to their evaluative roles relative to student work and with respect to modeling appropriate professional behaviors. Teachers must be ever mindful of this responsibility in their interactions with their colleagues, their patients, and those whose education has been entrusted to them.

**II. Responsibilities in the Teacher/Learner Relationship**

A. Responsibilities of teachers

1. Treat all learners with respect and fairness.
2. Treat all learners equally regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
3. Provide current materials in an effective format for learning.
4. Be on time for didactic, investigational, and clinical encounters.
5. Provide timely feedback with constructive suggestions and opportunities for improvement/remediation when needed.

B. Responsibilities of learners

1. Treat all fellow learners and teachers with respect and fairness.
2. Treat all fellow learners and teachers equally regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
3. Commit the time and energy to your studies necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of each course.
4. Be on time for didactic, investigational, and clinical encounters.
5. Communicate concerns/suggestions about the curriculum, didactic methods, teachers, or the learning environment in a respectful, professional manner.

### **III. Behaviors Inappropriate to the Teacher-Learner Relationship**

These behaviors are those which demonstrate disrespect for others or lack of professionalism in interpersonal conduct. Although there is inevitably a subjective element in the witnessing or experiencing of such behaviors, certain actions are clearly inappropriate and will not be tolerated by the institution. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

unwanted physical contact (e.g. hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing) or the threat of the same;

sexual harassment or harassment based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability or sexual orientation;

loss of personal civility including shouting, public or private humiliation, displays of temper (such as throwing objects);

discrimination of any form including in teaching and assessment based upon age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation;

requests for others to perform inappropriate personal errands unrelated to the didactic, investigational, or clinical situation at hand;

grading/evaluation on factors unrelated to performance, effort, or level of achievement.

### **IV. Avenues for Addressing Inappropriate Behavior in the Teacher/Learner Context**

#### **A. Learners' Concerns**

Learners may address situations in which they feel that they have been the object of inappropriate behavior at various levels. At the most basic level, the most effective way to handle a situation may be to address it immediately and non-confrontationally. Oftentimes, a person is simply unaware that his/her behavior has offended someone, or even if aware, will correct the behavior appropriately if given the opportunity to do so in a way that is not threatening. The way to raise such an issue is to describe the behavior factually ("When you said..."), describe how the behavior made you feel ("I felt ..."), and state that the behavior needs to stop or not be repeated ("Please, don't do that again.")

Sometimes, such a request is not successful, or the person repeats the behavior, or the learner does not feel comfortable speaking directly to the teacher about his/her behavior. In those cases, it may be helpful to discuss the behavior with course directors, laboratory mentors, program directors, or department chairs. Students may also elect to speak to their respective Associate or Assistant Deans for informal advice and counsel about these issues. These individuals may offer additional suggestions for resolving the matter informally, such as, for example, speaking to the individual on the learner's

behalf or on behalf of an entire class, raising the general issue in a faculty meeting, assisting the learner with writing to the individual teacher or even direct intervention to get the behavior to stop.

If no satisfactory resolution is reached after these discussions or the learner does not feel comfortable speaking to these individuals, he/she may bring the matter formally to the attention of the School of Medicine administration. The avenues for this more formal reporting vary depending upon the status of the reporting individual.

1. If the person reporting the behavior is a medical student:

The student should speak with one of the Associate or Assistant Deans in the Office of Student Affairs.

2. If the person reporting the behavior is a graduate student or M.D./Ph.D. student pursuing their graduate studies:

The student should speak with the Associate Dean for Graduate Student Affairs and/or the Director of the M.D./Ph.D. program.

3. If the person reporting the behavior is a post-graduate trainee (i.e. resident or clinical fellow):

The trainee should speak with the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education.

4. If the person reporting the behavior is a research fellow:

The trainee should speak with the Associate Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs.

B. Teachers' Concerns

If a teacher feels that a learner has engaged in inappropriate behavior, it is likewise most effective to address the situation immediately and non-confrontationally. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the teacher should contact the course director, program director, or laboratory mentor to discuss the matter. If the teacher wishes to make a formal allegation of misconduct, they should contact the following members of the administration:

1.. If the matter involves a medical student, contact the Associate/Assistant Dean for Student Affairs;

2. If the matter involves a graduate student, contact the Associate Dean for Graduate Student Affairs;

3. If the matter involves a postgraduate trainee, contact the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education;

4. If the matter involves a research fellow, contact the Associate Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs.

These allegations will be handled according to established School of Medicine policies published elsewhere.

#### **V. Procedures for Handling Allegations of Inappropriate Behavior in the Teacher/Learner Context**

- A. If the behavior involves unlawful discrimination or sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment, the matter will be referred to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Actions Programs and be handled through University policies established for that office. The student may also directly contact that office.
- B. If the behavior involves unwanted physical contact or other forms of violent or threatening acts, the matter may be referred for evaluation under the University's Policy Addressing Campus Violence.
- C. Upon being notified of alleged inappropriate behavior, the Associate or Assistant Dean will notify senior administration officials in a written report within 5 business days of the allegation as follows:
  1. If the complaint is lodged against a faculty member, the Vice Deans for Education and Faculty will be notified. Other than those matters referred to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Programs, the matter will be handled in accordance with the School of Medicine's Procedures for Dealing with Issues of Professional Misconduct.
  2. If the complaint is lodged against a post-graduate trainee, the Vice-Dean for Education and the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education will be notified. If the complaint is lodged against a research fellow, the Vice Dean for Education and the Associate Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs will be notified. Other than those matters referred to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Programs, if based on the written report, those Deans decide that a formal investigation is merited, they will convene an ad hoc committee to investigate the complaint and will notify the complainant, the respondent and appropriate department chairs and program directors of such an action. The ad hoc committee will be composed of three faculty members from departments other than those of the complainant or respondent. The committee will be responsible for gathering information and interviewing the complainant, respondent, and other individuals as they deem appropriate. Based upon information gathered and their deliberations, the committee will submit a written report to the Deans involved within thirty days from when they were convened which will include their findings and recommendations for dismissal of the complaint or for disciplinary action(s). The senior Deans will then communicate to the complainant and respondent in writing that a

determination has been made. If the committee finds against a post-graduate trainee, the findings will be communicated to the appropriate Department Chair and Program Director and sanctions will be determined and enforced according to the policy on Probation, Suspension, and Termination of Post-Doctoral Fellows published elsewhere which also includes an avenue of appeal.

D. The School of Medicine is committed to the fair treatment of all individuals involved in this process. All efforts will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the resolution process to the extent possible and subject to the overriding concern of a prompt and fair investigation and/or resolution of the complaint.

E. The School of Medicine will not tolerate any form of retaliatory behavior toward learners who make allegations in good faith. Individuals who believe that action has been taken against them in retaliation for raising concerns under this policy, may address those concerns through the procedures described in this policy.

F. Records of all communications as well as the written reports of the Associate Deans and ad hoc committee will be kept in the Office of the Vice Dean for Education.

G. If it is determined that the allegations from the complainant were not made in good faith, the student or post-graduate trainee will be referred for disciplinary action under the appropriate University procedures which are described elsewhere.