Overview

The Post-Secondary Learning Act gives General Faculties Council (GFC) responsibility, subject to the authority of the Board of Governors, over “academic affairs” (section 26(1)) and “general supervision of student affairs” (section 31), including authority concerning “student discipline.” General Faculties Council has thus established a Code of Student Behaviour, as set out below.

The MD Program Committee is responsible for setting undergraduate medical education policy and has final oversight of undergraduate medical education procedure.

Purpose

As future physicians, medical students accept the responsibility of maintaining high standards of honour and professional conduct. This responsibility begins not upon graduation, but at the inception of medical education. This policy outlines the various standards and codes that medical students are guided by.

POLICY

1. PROFESSIONAL STANDARD OF STUDENTS – UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

In the journey to become successful practitioners, the students of the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry have constructed this code of values, expectations and conduct to reflect the ideals that are integral to professionalism. The faculty has endorsed this document, which is consistent with the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry Code of Conduct, and, in turn, expects the students to commit to the code.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT – FACULTY OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

The Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Alberta values scholarship, respect, compassion and caring, integrity, excellence, partnership, and stewardship.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to provide guidance for all those working and learning in the faculty environment and make standards of accountability explicit. Behaviors identified in the Code of Conduct support the values of the faculty and may be used in evaluations and assessments. Recognizing that individuals have multiple roles such as learner, teacher, and supervisor, this code is to be applied in all circumstances.

The Code of Conduct is meant to be both aspirational and inspirational in purpose and encourages voluntary corrective action to address misjudgment or improper conduct. The components of the code are not intended to be exhaustive and may be amended from time to time.

3. CODE OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR – UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The university is defined by tradition as a community of people dedicated to the pursuit of truth and advancement of knowledge, and as a place where there is freedom to teach, freedom to engage in
research, freedom to create, freedom to learn, freedom to study, freedom to speak, freedom to associate, freedom to write and to publish. There is a concomitant obligation upon all members of the university community to respect these freedoms when they are exercised by others. For these freedoms to exist, it is essential to maintain an atmosphere in which the safety, the security, and the inherent dignity of each member of the community are recognized.

The enduring value of university life and of degrees the university confers is also dependent upon the integrity of the teacher-student learning relationship and upon the honesty and soundness of the evaluation process. Conduct by any member of the university community that adversely affects this relationship or process must, therefore, be considered a serious offence.

Included in the Code of Student Behaviour are descriptions of unacceptable behaviour for students in the university, the sanctions for commission of the offences, and explanations of the complete discipline and appeal processes. The definition of student” used in this document is a very broad definition, one that includes current and former students, as well as informal and formal student groups (see 30.2 for a definition of “student”). Accordingly, the offences, sanctions and procedures of this code apply equally to groups and individuals. Other members of the university community are governed by other disciplinary regulations.

The offences listed in the Code of Student Behaviour describe, in general terms, behaviours which if left unchecked would, to an unacceptable degree, infringe upon the freedoms described above and thus threaten the proper functioning of the university. Nothing in this code shall be interpreted in such a way as to prohibit the activities or to violate the principles that are set out in the first paragraph of this section. Nothing in this code shall be construed to prohibit peaceful assemblies and demonstrations, or lawful picketing, or to inhibit free speech. Nothing in this code shall prevent the university from referring an individual matter to the appropriate law enforcement agency, should such action be considered necessary.

In order to protect the integrity of the degrees conferred by the university, the university may suspend or rescind any degree awarded to any graduate who, during the application process or while registered in a program or in a particular course in a program, commits an act of academic dishonesty which, if it had been detected before the granting of the degree, would have resulted in a sanction sufficiently severe that the degree would not have been granted.

The Code of Student Behaviour shall be followed in all cases of disciplinary action with students except in situations where disruptive, threatening or violent conduct may inflict great harm to members of the university community or university property. In those cases the Protocol for Urgent Cases of Disruptive, Threatening or Violent Conduct (§ 91, General Faculties Council Policy Manual) will be followed before action is taken under the code.

The Code of Applicant Behaviour provides charges, sanctions and procedures for application-related offences involving applicants, as defined in section 11.8.3.4 of that Code. When a person registers for classes and has passed the registration deadline as published in Section 11 of the University Calendar, that person ceases to be an applicant. Application-related offenses identified after the registration deadline will be administered under the Code of Student Behaviour. (EXEC 04 MAY 2009).

4. CPSA CODE OF CONDUCT

The CPSA Code of Conduct clarifies the college’s expectations for Alberta’s physicians in all stages of their careers, in all facets of medicine, and in all methods of care delivery.

The code is consistent with the Canadian Medical Association’s Code of Ethics and complements the CPSA’s Standards of Practice. Alberta physicians are expected to know and abide by these rules; any breach of professional behavior will be judged against all three of these foundation documents.
While the code outlines expectations regarding professional behavior, the college will consider the following when inappropriate behavior occurs:

- The well-being of the physician
- Systemic issues within the health care system.
- Note: Although these stressors must be identified and considered, they cannot be used as an excuse for inappropriate behavior.

The CPSA Code of Conduct is the product of collaboration between the college and other key groups and a comprehensive consultation incorporating feedback received from physicians and other interested parties.

5. CMA CODE OF ETHICS

This code has been prepared by the Canadian Medical Association as an ethical guide for Canadian physicians, including residents, and medical students. Its focus is the core activities of medicine – such as health promotion, advocacy, disease prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, palliation, education and research. It is based on the fundamental principles and values of medical ethics, especially compassion, beneficence, non-maleficence, respect for persons, justice and accountability. The code, together with CMA policies on specific topics, constitutes a compilation of guidelines that can provide a common ethical framework for Canadian physicians.

DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use.

RELATED LINKS

- Professional Standards for Students, Undergraduate Medical Education
- Code of Conduct, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Alberta
- Code of Student Behaviour, University of Alberta
- CPSA Code of Conduct, College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta
- CMA Code of Ethics, Canadian Medical Association
- Post-Secondary Learning Act (Government of Alberta)

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