

Last Approved: 18 April 2024 | Review every 3 years (Next review due in 2027)

Professionalism Policy for the MD Program

Office of Accountability:	Dean, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry
Office of Administrative Responsibility:	MD Program
Approver:	MD Curriculum & Program Committee (MDCPC)
Scope:	Compliance with this policy extends to all members of the MD Program.

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 Curriculum and Program Committee (MDCPC) 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 guide medical students.**

POLICIES

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 the [Professional Standards of Students](#), which is consistent with the



Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry's [Professionalism Values](#) and, in turn, expects the students to commit to those values.

2. PROFESSIONALISM VALUES FOR FOMD MEMBERS – 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 [Professionalism Values for FoMD Members](#) is to provide guidance for all those working and learning in the faculty environment to navigate challenging situations by lending clarity when the appropriate course of action is not clear. It is intended to be both aspirational and inspirational in purpose. It encourages the promotion and maintenance of professional behavior as well as the voluntary actions that could be taken to address situations of complexity that might lead to misjudgment, lapses in professional behavior or improper conduct. The guiding values addressed are not intended to be exhaustive and may be amended from time to time.

3. CODE OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR & STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY – 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 offense.

Included in the [Code of Student Behaviour](#) and the [Student Conduct Policy](#) are descriptions of unacceptable behaviour for students in the university, the sanctions for commission of the offenses, 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 offenses, 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 offenses 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 offenses 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.

4. CPSA CODE OF CONDUCT OF ETHICS & PROFESSIONALISM

The College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta’s [Code of Ethics & Professionalism](#). The code follows the Canadian Medical Association’s Code of Ethics & Professionalism 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.

5. CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (CMA) CODE OF ETHICS & PROFESSIONALISM

The CMA [Code of Ethics & Professionalism](#) has been prepared by the Canadian Medical Association and “articulates the ethical and professional commitments and responsibilities of the medical profession. It is founded on and affirms the core values and commitments of the profession and outlines responsibilities related to contemporary medical practice.”

6. ANTI-RACISM POLICY - FACULTY OF MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY

Racism has always been present in our society and built into the Health Care System. With the 2015 findings of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action, and the more recent resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, anti-racism has gained prominence in our conscience. The Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (FoMD) Anti-Racism Commitment To Change (ARCTC) task force developed a Phase 1 Report, which includes thoughtful recommendations to prevent and eliminate racism within the faculty. This [policy document](#) is a formal acknowledgement of the importance of anti-racism for FoMD and outlines an approach to manage racism within our institution.

RELATED LINKS

Professional Standard for Students (FOMD)
Professionalism Values for FoMD Members (FOMD)
Post-Secondary Learning Act (Government of Alberta)
Anti-Racism Policy for the FoMD
CMA Code of Ethics & Professionalism
CPSA Professional Standards
Code of Applicant Behaviour (University of Alberta)
Code of Student Behaviour (University of Alberta)
Student Conduct Policy (University of Alberta)



APPROVAL HISTORY

APPROVER	STATUS	DATE
MD Program Committee	Approved	15 February 2013
MD Curriculum & Program Committee	Approved	22 July 2021
Dr. Joanne Rodger, Director, Program Quality & Accreditation	Minor edits to update links that were broken.	13 September 2023
MD Curriculum & Program Committee	Approved with minor changes to links and wording as part of the regular review of policies.	18 April 2024