

PROCEDURE GME 32

Subject: CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR
FACULTY AND MEDICAL STAFF

EFFECTIVE DATE:
July 1, 2016

Applies to:
HOUSTON METHODIST HOSPITAL SYSTEM—GME

Date Revised:

Originating Area:
GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Target Review Date:
JULY 1, 2019

I. GENERAL STATEMENT

Houston Methodist Hospital is committed to providing unparalleled quality, safety, service, and medical education training of both graduate and undergraduate learners. This commitment also extends to ensuring that the educational environment is one in which faculty teachers and clinical supervisors display professionalism and respect for all learners.

The office of Graduate Medical Education (GME) maintains responsibility for ensuring that members of the training community are civil and respectful towards all learners regardless of individual differences. The office of GME wholly supports the mission of Houston Methodist and strives to foster an institution free of behaviors that damage the academic and clinical training mission of the hospital.

Houston Methodist has in place policies, standards of conduct and procedures that govern the relationships between the Hospital, medical staff, and members of the community. Consistent with these institutional policies, the purpose of this code of conduct is to transparently establish the institution's expectations for the professional conduct of its faculty when functioning in the learning environment. This Code is intended to be consistent with and augment existing Houston Methodist policies, rather than to replace any pre-existing policies or procedures.

II. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

All HMM teaching faculty and attending staff interacting with learners in the context of patient care, or functioning in a supervisory role with learners are charged with conducting these interactions according to a code of professional conduct consistent with the HMM ICARE values, Section 8.7 of the Bylaws of the Medical Staff, the HMM Human Resources conduct policy, and the code of professional conduct for faculty and medical staff educators as outlined below. All employees are subject to HR01, Managing for Performance regarding conduct and performance.

- A) The guiding principle of professional behavior in interactions with learners is the absolute requirement of dignity and respect for other persons. Unprofessional interpersonal behavior and/or behavior that is disrespectful of others interferes with the effectiveness and safety of both the working and learning environment and will not be tolerated.
- B) The optimal teacher-learner relationship is predicated on demonstration of honesty, civility, and fairness.

- C) Learners of all levels of training should be guaranteed an environment free of bias based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
- D) Faculty and staff should provide learners clear direction and timely feedback, as well as constructive suggestions and opportunities for improvement or remediation when needed. Conflict resolution and counseling of learners should be conducted in a non-threatening and constructive manner. If concern arises regarding the underperformance of a learner, teaching faculty should contact the program leadership for assistance.
- E) Learners should be guaranteed an environment free of unwanted physical contact, threats of such contact, sexual harassment, verbal threats, intimidation, and demeaning behavior (both real or perceived.)
- F) Faculty should familiarize themselves with and follow Houston Methodist institutional policies and procedures applicable to their work and require those reporting to them to do the same.
- G) Professional behavior in accordance with ICARE values is also expected of learners, particularly residents, as they assume teaching responsibilities.

III. PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGATIONS OF TRAINEE MISTREATMENT

- A) Mechanisms for reporting violations of the code of professional conduct are provided to and acknowledged by learners, including visiting learners, to ensure that any violations can be registered and investigated without fear of retaliation.
- B) If a formal complaint is made to the GME Office by a learner or another individual on behalf of the learner, the GMEC executive committee will review the complaint and begin a formal investigation into the allegations. Throughout this procedure, attempts to maintain learner anonymity will be made, as requested.
- C) In addition to corrective action that may be employed per medical staff policy, the first complaint to GME will result in prompt discussion of the incident(s) between GME administrative leadership, respective training program director, and the faculty/staff member involved in the alleged complaint. If the allegations of mistreatment are founded, a plan to avoid a recurrence of these actions will be outlined and implemented. The plan will be acknowledged by the faculty and program director, through signature on the plan.
- D) Repeat incidents with the same faculty member from any learners will follow the process stated above, with the addition of discussion with the department chair of the respective training program. A thorough investigation will proceed with an immediate, temporary suspension of interaction between the involved learner(s) and the faculty member and continuing until the investigation is complete. If the allegations of mistreatment are founded, a plan to address the recurrence of

these actions will be outlined and additional actions regarding future learner interaction will be implemented. These actions may include temporary or permanent suspension of teaching responsibilities. The plan will be acknowledged by the faculty, program director, and department chair through signature on the plan.

IV. ONGOING EDUCATION AND EFFORTS TO PROMOTE OPTIMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- A) Departmental and GME-level Faculty development and education on professionalism, emotional intelligence, and burnout will be available.
- B) Information and acknowledgement of the Houston Methodist learner ombudsman program will be distributed to learners and faculty.
- C) Optimal Learning Environment subcommittee within the GMEC Work Environment subcommittee will be created on an ad hoc basis.
- D) GME will periodically evaluate the learning environment by several methods, including conducting a rigorous audit of ACGME and GME Survey results, encouraging ongoing participation by learners appointed to the GMEC Work Environment subcommittee, and by reviewing routine reporting by the appointed ombudsmen.

V. FACULTY WITH MEDICAL STAFF APPOINTMENTS

- A) Faculty who are not employed by Houston Methodist or its entities, yet maintain active medical staff appointments are reminded that their conduct is also governed by the policies and procedures of Houston Methodist in their relationship with learners within the hospital. Conduct or behavior that violates these policies may also constitute a violation of applicable hospital policies for which disciplinary action may also be taken under the applicable Medical Staff Bylaws.

VI. COMMITTEE REVIEWING OR APPROVING PROCEDURE

- A) Graduate Medical Education Committee [_____ 2016]