

RESIDENT HANDBOOK

SECTION III: TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

RESPECTFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The Kirk Kerkorian School of Medicine at UNLV promotes a learning and working environment where all members of the Health Sciences Center community interact in a mutually respectful fashion where personal dignity, cultural awareness and civility are maintained. UNLV strives to foster an environment that promotes learning through positive and courteous interactions between teachers and learners. This is an environment free of harassment, intimidation, exploitation, and abuse.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define inappropriate conduct in the teacher-learner relationship and to provide a mechanism and procedures to allow medical students and residents to report violations without fear of retaliation. In addition, the policy aims to ensure that educational programs aimed at preventing student mistreatment are provided to the entire community on a regular basis. The “community” is defined as all sites where UNLV medical students and residents receive training.

DEFINITIONS/EXAMPLES

Mistreatment of students can occur in a variety of ways and may impair learning. Types of abuse include verbal, power, ethnic, physical, and sexual harassment. Examples of mistreatment of students include, but are not limited to instances or a single egregious instance of public humiliation or belittlement, criticism or other actions that reasonably can be interpreted as demeaning or humiliating, unwarranted exclusion from reasonable learning opportunities, unwelcome sexual comments, jokes, innuendos, or taunting remarks about one’s body, attire, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or marital status, intentional physical contact such as pushing, shoving, slapping, hitting, tripping, throwing objects at, or aggressive violation of personal space.

ONGOING EDUCATION TO PROMOTE A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND DISCOURAGE MISTREATMENT AND ABUSE

The Kirk Kerkorian School of Medicine at UNLV provides ongoing education to its community on promotion of a positive learning environment respectful of all individuals. This policy is included in the student handbooks and posted on the medical school website; the topic will be addressed at orientations at matriculation and at the beginning of the third year. The policy will be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee, the GME office and the faculty of the Kirk Kerkorian School of Medicine at UNLV on a regular basis and modified as necessary. A letter will be sent each year from the dean to all faculty (including voluntary faculty) reminding them of the school's statement on supporting an abuse-free environment, of the trainee mistreatment policy, and of the existence of resources for resolution.

Integrity - Learning environments that are conducive to conveying professional values are based on integrity. Students learn professionalism by observing and emulating role models who epitomize professional values and attitudes.

Respect - Respect for every individual is fundamental to the ethic of medicine. Mutual respect is essential for nurturing that ethic. Teachers have a special obligation to ensure that students are always treated respectfully.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS AND LEARNERS

I. Teachers should:

- a. Treat students fairly and respectfully
- b. Maintain high professional standards in all interactions
- c. Be prepared and on time
- d. Provide relevant and timely information
- e. Provide explicit learning and behavioral expectations early in the course of instruction
- f. Provide timely, focused, accurate and constructive feedback on a regular basis and thoughtful and timely evaluations at the end of instruction
- g. Display honesty, integrity and compassion
- h. Practice insightful questioning, stimulate self-discovery and avoid questioning which may be perceived as humiliating, degrading or punitive
- i. Solicit feedback from students regarding their perception of the educational experience
- j. Encourage students who experience mistreatment or who witness unprofessional behavior to report the facts immediately

II. Students should:

- a. Be courteous of teachers and fellow students
- b. Be prepared and on time
- c. Be active, engaged and curious learners
- d. Demonstrate professional behavior in all settings
- e. Recognize that not all learning stems from formal and structured activity
- f. Recognize their responsibility to establish learning objectives
- g. Recognize their responsibility to participate as an active learner
- h. Demonstrate a commitment to life-long learning
- i. Recognize personal limitations and seek assistance as needed
- j. Display honesty, integrity and compassion
- k. Recognize the privileges and responsibilities that come from the opportunity to work with patients
- l. Recognize the duty to place patient welfare above their own
- m. Recognize and respect patient privacy

- n. Solicit feedback on their performance
- o. Recognize that criticism is not synonymous with abuse

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Students and teachers should recognize the special nature of the teacher-learner relationship which is in part defined by role modeling, mentorship and supervision. Students and teachers should strive to develop their relationship to one characterized by mutual trust, acceptance, and confidence. There is a power differential as teachers often evaluate student performance and the results of evaluations may impact a student's future. Students also evaluate the quality of their teachers and to an extent, may impact the teacher's career.

Both should recognize the potential for conflict of interest and respect appropriate boundaries.

- I. Actions that give the appearance of violating boundaries should be avoided. These include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Romantic involvement
 - b. Business relationships
 - c. Faculty or students accepting services or personal favors from each other (e.g., baby-sitting, work in the office)
 - d. Accepting substantial gifts
 - e. Special treatment of a student, including gifts, meals, entertainment or social contacts that differ from the usual teacher-learner relationship with other students.