Policy for a Healthy Learning Environment and Learner Mistreatment

Policy:

The School of Medicine is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and healthy learning environment. Appropriate professional behavior is expected from all learners, teachers, and support staff in every venue across all encounters. This commitment extends to our regional campuses and other collaborative educational sites.

General Procedure:

1. **Reporting.** Learners are encouraged to report any behavior which they perceive to be inappropriate or disrespectful. This includes behavior directed toward them as individuals, as well as toward other learners, teachers, patients, and staff. The school provides several mechanisms for such reporting, including personal meetings, confidential online reporting, and anonymous reporting using web-based and telephone-based systems.

2. **Monitoring and Accountability.** The School of Medicine continuously monitors the health of the learning environment through a variety of assessment strategies targeted at systems as well as individual learners, teachers, and support staff. This monitoring occurs in collaboration with the university, UAB Hospital and UAB Health System, and other educational partners. Deans, department chairs, residency program directors, appropriate faculty, the SOM Professionalism Task Force, and others in leadership positions review data about student and teacher perceptions of the health of the learning environment during regularly scheduled meetings. They also review reports of learner mistreatment and hold parties accountable for investigation of such reports and development of appropriate action plans for remediation. Reports of commendable behavior are also reviewed and recognition is provided in appropriate venues. Accountability across clinical and educational platforms is provided by regular review of data at leadership meetings where collaboration can be facilitated.

3. **MSS Procedure for Reports of Inappropriate or Unhealthy behavior by and toward Medical Students.**
   
   A. **Review.** Administrators in Medical Student Services and the Department of Medical Education review reports of inappropriate behavior by or mistreatment of medical students along with results of regular data collection instruments. Summarized data is formally reported at the School of Medicine Executive Committee and shared with Health System leadership.
   
   B. **Instances of Student Mistreatment.** Individual reports of student mistreatment are thoroughly investigated by Medical Student Services senior staff, and results are reported to the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education. The Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education, who also serves as Chair of the Department of Medical Education, interfaces with department chairs, center directors, hospital and health system Chiefs of Staff, compliance offices, and the university to adjudicate such cases and make recommendations to leaders who implement appropriate actions according to School of Medicine and university policies.
Medical Student Services administrators actively support students in such circumstances and may adjust students' schedules and provide appropriate referrals for counseling if needed.

C. **Student Misconduct.** Reports of student misconduct are also investigated by Medical Student Services. Students who demonstrate inappropriate and/or unprofessional behavior receive timely verbal and/or written feedback from instructors. Faculty members, staff, students and other observers are strongly encouraged to report such concerns to Medical Student Services, where a support system exists to provide for coaching, advising, constructive feedback, accountability, and monitoring. The Early Alert Report and Response System provides rapid intervention with coaching and mentoring for minor behavioral concerns. This system provides for longitudinal monitoring so that students who demonstrate repeated minor difficulties are identified and a remediation action plan can be developed. Student behavior that is inconsistent with the school's Professional Code of Conduct and Best Practices, Honor Code, and/or Essential Capacities/Technical Standards, is handled through the Non-academic Conduct, Honor Council, or school administrative policies and procedures, including those regarding student impairment. Students who demonstrate evidence of impairment may be removed from the educational environment and placed on Voluntary or Involuntary Leave of Absence.

See also:

Medical Student Code of Conduct: [http://www.uab.edu/medicine/codeofconduct](http://www.uab.edu/medicine/codeofconduct)

Medical Student Conduct, Best Practices: [http://www.uab.edu/medicine/home/current-students/policies-procedures/conduct-best-practices](http://www.uab.edu/medicine/home/current-students/policies-procedures/conduct-best-practices)

Medical Student Essential Capacities/Technical Standards: [http://uab.edu/medicine/techstandards](http://uab.edu/medicine/techstandards)

Medical Student Non-academic Conduct Policy: [http://www.uab.edu/medicine/home/current-students/policies-procedures/non-academic-conduct](http://www.uab.edu/medicine/home/current-students/policies-procedures/non-academic-conduct)

Report It system: [www.uab.edu/reportit](http://www.uab.edu/reportit)

Student Impairment Policy: [http://www.uab.edu/medicine/home/current-students/policies-procedures/impairment-substance-abuse](http://www.uab.edu/medicine/home/current-students/policies-procedures/impairment-substance-abuse)

UAB Health System Medical and Dental Staff Handbook, Policies and Procedures

UAB Ethics: [http://uab.edu/ethics/](http://uab.edu/ethics/)


UAB Faculty Handbook-3.6: Standards of Behavior: [http://www.uab.edu/policies/content/Pages/UAB-AA-HBK-0000539.aspx](http://www.uab.edu/policies/content/Pages/UAB-AA-HBK-0000539.aspx)
UAB Faculty Handbook-3.8: Harassment Policy: http://www.uab.edu/policies/content/Pages/UAB-AA-HBK-0000540.aspx