

## **Standards of Ethical and Professional Behaviour**

Members of the Faculty of Medicine have a commitment to uphold the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviour consistent with the values of the University of Ottawa and with the values of the medical profession as exemplified in the Code of Ethics of the Canadian Medical Association.

The following serves as a statement for all students, trainees, support staff and Faculty of their ethical and professional obligations. Such commitments extend to their relations with patients, students, colleagues, staff, outside agencies, organizations, and industry in respect of their University and professional responsibilities for education, research, clinical care, and administration. Members have a responsibility for their own individual behaviour as well as a responsibility to promote adherence to these standards by other members of the student body, support staff and Faculty.

Alleged or admitted violations of such professional and ethical standards will lead to investigation according to University policy, in addition to compliance with any other obligations that may be imposed by professional bodies such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO), and may lead to disciplinary action provided for under University policies and procedures or those of other related agencies. Such disciplinary action may include reprimand, suspension, expulsion or other appropriate measures. Such violations if established will be taken into account in decisions regarding promotion for students and Faculty members, and in decisions regarding appointment, contract renewal and tenure for Faculty members.

The following list though not exclusive, outlines the ethical commitments expected of students, support staff and Faculty.

- To personal honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness.
- To respect others including refraining from harassment or discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical handicap, illness or age.
- To abstain from use of illicit drugs and to avoid inappropriate use of medication, mood altering drugs or alcohol.
- To work in partnership with other colleagues and members of the health care team.
- To assist other colleagues in need of help in meeting their professional and ethical obligations.
  
- To uphold the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviour in respect to patient care. It is acknowledged that particularly high standards of behaviour are expected of physicians in respect to patient care in view of the real or perceived inequality in the relationship and the potential for physical, psychological and emotional dependency between patient and physician. This includes the following commitments:

- To put the rights, needs and interests of the patient foremost, while respecting the professional obligations to society to participate in matters related to health care planning and resource allocation.
  - To respect the patient and to observe the need for consent and confidentiality in all dealings with patients.
  - To uphold the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, patient autonomy and honesty in one's dealings with patients.
  - To recognize the limitation of one's own competence and to continually strive to improve one's knowledge, skills, and competence as a physician.
  - To provide for continuity of care once professional responsibility has been accepted, until such care is no longer required or alternative arrangements have been made.
  - To avoid all forms of sexual exploitation of patients including abuse, harassment or impropriety. Sexual conduct of any kind by a physician with a patient is always unethical whenever a doctor-patient relationship exists, and generally indefinitely thereafter when the doctor-patient relationship existed for purposes of psychotherapy or counselling.
  - To avoid all forms of discrimination or harassment.
  - To seek help from others when needed.
  - To avoid taking physical, emotional, or financial advantage of patients.
  - To behave in a way beyond reproach and to respect the obligations to professional bodies to help ensure that one's colleagues do not behave in a manner that might be generally considered as unbecoming to the profession.
- To uphold the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviour in regards to research. This includes the following:
    - To ensure integrity and honesty in the collection, interpretation and reporting of data.
    - To ensure that any research carried out is scientifically and ethically valid and has received appropriate consent and approval.
    - To avoid taking advantage of real or perceived inequality in relationships in dealing with students, fellows or employees.
    - To uphold standards and rules of any sponsoring agencies and of the journals in which the results of research studies are published.
    - To avoid all forms of scientific misconduct, misrepresentation or falsification of data; to refrain from assisting or colluding with any other colleagues in committing scientific misconduct either tacitly or overtly and to report to the appropriate authorities any knowledge of such behaviour.
    - To adhere to the highest standards of integrity and to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest in the conduct of clinical trials and the evaluation of drugs, medical devices or other diagnostic and therapeutic modalities, and avoid taking undue financial or other advantage from information gained from or by reporting on such studies.
- To uphold the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviour in regard to industry. This include the following:
    - To avoid whenever possible any real or potential conflict of interest or commitment and to seek to resolve such conflicts that may exist while ensuring that the physician's primary objective is patient welfare.
    - To ensure that participation in CME activities, surveillance studies etc. are consistent with the CMA guidelines relating to physicians and the pharmaceutical industry.

- To the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviour in regards to education recognizing the potential for real or perceived inequality in the relationship between teachers and students. This includes the following:
  - To respect the confidentiality of student records.
  - To treat all students fairly and equitably.
  - To promote the student-teacher relationship and not to abuse this trust for personal gain.
  - To promote and uphold high educational standards of the Faculty and to ensure competence of trainees being promoted.
- To ensure that examinations and evaluations are carried out fairly and honestly. This includes the following:
  - To observe the highest standards of honesty and integrity in one's personal conduct during the course of examinations.
  - To avoid giving any assistance to other fellow students during the course of examinations unless specifically permitted or requested by the examiner.
  - To support the highest standards of integrity and honesty among one's colleagues by neither assisting, colluding or tacitly permitting other colleagues to behave in a manner which is in violation of these standards or could be construed to be so.

For further information the reader is referred to the statements on Standards and Attitudes for undergraduate medical students and that on Sexual Harassment both adopted by the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Ottawa, the Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Research and Procedures for Investigating Misconduct adopted by the University of Ottawa, articles 10 and 39 of the Collective Agreement of the University of Ottawa dealing with professional ethics, policies and procedures regarding student and Faculty discipline, and the Code of Ethics and policy statement on Physicians and the Pharmaceutical Industry of the Canadian Medical Association.

**Approved by**

*The Faculty Advisory Board, October 5, 1993*

*The Faculty Council, November 23, 1993*

*The University Senate, March 7, 1994*

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