

New York Medical College

Student Code of Academic Integrity and Professionalism

(Approved December 15, 2010)

I. Purpose

Academic integrity and respect for the dignity of the individual are essential in any educational endeavor. In scholarly endeavors, all participants must commit themselves to truthfulness and honesty in the search for new insight and knowledge. In addition, honesty, integrity and respect in all interactions with colleagues, peers, teachers and support staff, as well as with patients and their families, are essential professional attributes.

As a community devoted to the health sciences, professionalism is a core value. The attitudes and behaviors described by the term professionalism serve as the foundation of the expectations that society has of us as members of the medical and health sciences community. Therefore, as professionals, practitioners, scientists and students, we value attitudes, behaviors and habits expected of professionals – e.g., commitments to high standards of competence and performance; integrity, honesty and ethical behavior; respect for all individuals regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, age, national origin, marital status, veteran status, disability, or occupation or level of training; meeting responsibilities and commitments; excellent communication skills, reflecting behaviors expected of professionals; maintaining appropriate relations with patients, colleagues and others; managing conflicts of interest; continuous self-improvement; and honoring the trust that is placed in us by society.

By accepting admission to New York Medical College, students commit to the ideals, ethics and appropriate conduct of their chosen profession.

[NOTE: All NYMC policies referenced in this document will be available at
<http://www.nymc.edu/UniversityPolicies/>]

II. General Responsibilities

All faculty and students at NYMC are responsible for maintaining an atmosphere of honest inquiry, academic integrity and professionalism. All should be familiar with the provisions of this Code. All should strive to conduct themselves and their academic and scholarly activities within the spirit of the highest traditions of truthfulness, integrity, and respect for the rights of others. They should refrain from any action violating the principles of the Code, whether in letter or in spirit.

Each student is responsible for the content and the integrity of all work performed or documents submitted, including but not limited to examinations, papers, laboratory work, clinical rotations, practicum work products and scientific and scholarly publications. Similarly, each student has the responsibility to adhere to the principle that students and teachers have a duty to respect each other and promote a professional environment in which the educational, research and clinical missions of the university are pursued.

A student should never engage in any act of academic or professional misconduct, as described below. Examples of misconduct are provided below to assist in understanding the various types of behaviors that violate this Code. They should not be interpreted as all inclusive. That is, misconduct is not limited to the examples provided.

III. Misconduct: Definitions and Examples

A. Plagiarism.

Plagiarism is derived from the Latin word meaning to “kidnap”. In modern terms, it is more analogous to “theft”. A more formal definition employed for purposes of federal research grants is the “...appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit” 42 CFR §93.103(c). In other words, if you present someone else’s work as your own, you are stealing from that person and, in academic circles, this is a very serious violation of the principles of academic integrity, respect for others, and professionalism. This definition applies regardless of the medium from which you plagiarize and whether or not the source of the copied material is itself copyrighted.

Plagiarism takes many forms. Flagrant forms include but are not limited to purchasing or copying a paper from the internet or from a fellow student or anyone else, whether or not that paper is published; copying or cutting and pasting portions of others’ work (whether a phrase, sentence, paragraph, chart, picture, figure, method or approach, experimental results, statistics, etc.) without attribution; copying clinical notes/materials without personally performing the patient examination. A more subtle, but equally flagrant, form is paraphrasing or attempting to put in your own words the theories, opinions or ideas of another without proper citation. Carelessly, inadequately or inaccurately using citations is also a form of plagiarism. Fabricating citations is a very serious form and may also be considered fraudulent behavior. Re-using your own previous work without appropriate citation is a form of plagiarism, and may mislead the reader into believing that what you are currently writing or reporting is new work. Even inappropriately assuming that a fact or idea is common knowledge and, therefore, not providing a citation might be viewed as plagiarism and should be avoided.

Proper use and citation of resources is essential in all scholarly work. A class assignment, paper or thesis represents a scholarly endeavor, whether or not your work is to be “published.” As such, the quality and integrity of these documents will be held to a professional standard.

B. Cheating

Generally, cheating is defined as improperly obtaining and/or using unauthorized information or materials to gain an advantage on work submitted for evaluation. Providing such unauthorized assistance to others is also cheating.

Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to: giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another on quizzes, examinations, or assignments; using materials or devices not specifically authorized during any form of a test or examination; exceeding the restrictions put in place for “take home” examinations, such as unauthorized use of library sources, intranet or internet sources, or unauthorized collaboration on answers; sitting in for someone else or permitting someone to sit in for you on any form of test or examination; working on any form of test or examination beyond the allotted time; hiding, stealing or destroying materials needed by other students; and altering and resubmitting for re-grading any assignment, test or examination.

C. Misleading or Fraudulent Behavior

Misleading or fraudulent behavior, put simply, is lying and includes acts contributing to or associated with lying. It takes on any form of fabrication, falsification or misrepresentation.

Examples include, but are not limited to: making up information, data or research results; altering or manipulating information, clinical or laboratory records, practicum experiences, research results/equipment/processes; reporting such false information to gain an advantage; omitting information or data that results in misrepresenting or distorting findings or conclusions; providing false information to explain lateness or to be excused from an assignment, class or clerkship function; falsely accusing another of misbehavior or otherwise misrepresenting information about another. Providing false information about yourself, such as on an application or as part of some competition is an example of fraud, as is taking credit for accomplishments that you did not perform and, therefore, properly belongs to others. Sometimes, particularly in the case of research and other scholarly endeavors, it may be misleading **not** to provide information about yourself, such as possible conflicts of interest in which you stand to gain financially by the results of your work.

D. Research Misconduct

*The integrity of the scientific enterprise, in general and at this institution, requires adherence to the highest ethical standards in the conduct of research and research training. Students and other trainees conducting research, therefore, are bound by the same ethical guidelines that apply to faculty investigators. These standards are described briefly in the **New York Medical College Guidelines for Ethical Practices in Research and Policies for Dealing With Instances of Alleged Violations of Ethical Standards** and more fully in the **US Public Health Service Policies on Research Misconduct**¹ Research misconduct is defined in the USPHS Policy as “fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.”²*

Fabrication means making up data or pretending to have performed experiments that were not, in fact, conducted. Falsification means inappropriately manipulating data or images so that, for example, one possible conclusion or interpretation is favored over another. Plagiarism is dealt with elsewhere in this document, but may additionally constitute *research misconduct* if it is committed in the context of a research effort. Other related unethical behaviors, such as stealing credit for research accomplishments, misappropriation of research funds, or failure to disclose significant conflicts of interest may be more properly classified as fraudulent behavior.

Allegations of research misconduct must be evaluated and, if appropriate, adjudicated by specific procedures described in the College’s **Guidelines for Ethical Practices in Research** cited above.

E. Failure to Abide by Standards of Professional Behavior

*Professionalism standards preclude any behavior that may be perceived as injurious to the mental or physical well-being of another or to the academic freedom of any student. Students are expected to be familiar with and to adhere to specific standards of behavior prescribed by pertinent professional/accrediting organizations, as well as standards prescribed by NYMC. Among such university policies and guidelines are **Sexual Harassment Policy, Smoke-Free Policy and the Policy on Professional Conduct in Student-Student and Teacher-Student Relations.***

An overriding principal of professional conduct is to treat others (whether colleagues, peers, patients, faculty, staff or students) with the same respect and dignity you would wish them to show you. Among behaviors that violate these codes or standards are: making “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other physical, verbal or visual conduct based on sex ... include[ing] explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendoes, suggestive comments,

¹ 42 CFR § 93 (2005), available at http://ori.hhs.gov/documents/42_cfr_parts_50_and_93_2005.pdf

² *Supra* at §93.103.

sexually oriented practical jokes, or obscene language or gestures"; physically, verbally or psychologically harassing others; discriminating against another based on gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, age, national origin, marital status, veteran status, disability or occupation or level of training; taking without permission or damaging another's property; not being truthful and honest in all communications with colleagues and patients, including not acknowledging errors of omission or commission; using offensive language; failing to maintain the highest level of confidentiality on matters relating to colleagues, students and patients; failing to obtain appropriate consent from patients/clients prior to any photographing, videotaping, or other visual recording; violating any local, state or federal law or regulation. Although students retain basic rights to free speech and to offer legitimate criticisms of other members of the university community in proper contexts and forums, it is inappropriate to breach confidentiality, invade another's privacy, or to belittle or demean others in a seriously hurtful manner (including cyberbullying), whether in or out of their presence, whether on- or off-campus, whether in the real or virtual world (e.g., various web sites, blogs, social networks and media, etc.). Additionally, failing to dress in appropriate, professional attire is a sign of disrespect of others and is a violation of this Code.

Students should expect to be treated in a professional manner, consistent with this Code. Examples of behavior that violate this principle are being required or asked to perform personal services by one's supervisors; or being assessed or graded in a punitive manner (other than under the terms of this Code).

F. Inebriation

*Inebriation means being under the influence of any substance that impairs your ability to function. It is a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity and Professionalism and the University's **Policy on Drug-Free School and Campus** to appear in class, in a laboratory, at a practicum or clinical rotation site, in the library or any other public site on campus or otherwise related to NYMC while impaired by any legal or illegal substance.*

G. Failure to Attend Required Course/Clerkship Functions or other Clinical Assignments

It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with and adhere to the attendance/absence policy of her/his school within NYMC.

In general, each student must attend all academic activities scheduled for each course or clerkship, as specified by the instructor, course director, clerkship director, director of clinical education, or research supervisor. Anticipated absences should be arranged in advance with the appropriate instructor, course or clerkship director. Lack of attendance for any reason does not relieve the student of responsibility for the material covered during her/his absence. Students may be required to make-up the time missed. Repeated absences, whether or not approved, may result in one or more of the outcomes listed below.

H. Violating University Policies and Guidelines on Electronic Communications

*It is a violation of this code to fail to adhere to the practices prescribed by the Health Sciences Library, academic departments and the administration which expand on this Code. Among the specific policies incorporated into this Code of Academic Integrity and Professionalism are the university's Health Sciences Library's **Policy on Attributing Works of Others** and the university's **Electronic Communications Policy Statement**.*

Examples of email behaviors that violate this Code are: forging other users' email or attempting to read another's email; sending harassing, obscene or threatening email messages to others; sending via email copyrighted materials not within fair use guidelines or without prior permissions from the author or publisher; deleting, copying or unauthorized posting files (excluding those on the X: drive) on university's network.

I. Violating rules, policies or procedures of affiliated institutions or clinical/practicum sites.

New York Medical College students and faculty are expected to know and abide by such rules, policies and procedures as are applicable to them at any site.

Examples of such rules, policies and procedures include HIPAA and other protections of confidentiality, building access, computer use, and appropriate professional codes (Standard of Ethics).

J. Failure to report an infraction

Any alleged violations of this Code of Academic Integrity and Professionalism must be reported in a timely manner to the appropriate program/course/clerkship director, department chair, or Dean. Failure to report a violation is itself a violation of the Code.

IV. Outcomes

While this Code applies to all students in each of the College's schools, each school has its own procedures for addressing potential and actual violations of this Code. Thus, any act in violation of this Code or any allegation of misconduct related to this Code involving a student is to be reported and addressed in accordance with the procedures of the student's school.

An act of academic misconduct will have consequences. Depending on the specific nature and circumstances of one's behavior and in accordance with the rules, regulations and procedures of each school within New York Medical College, a student who is found to have violated the Code of Academic Integrity and Professionalism may be subject to one or more of the following:

- Taking additional course(s) intended to assist the student in avoiding future misconduct.
- Redoing the work, up to and including repeating the entire class/clerkship.
- Reduction in grade on a particular submitted piece of work, segment of work required for a course/clerkship or the entire course/clerkship down to and including a failing grade.
- Indication of the disciplinary action in reference letters, licensure forms, etc.
- Limitation or revocation, either temporarily or permanently, of certain privileges, such as use of campus email or library access.
- Notification to an appropriate external agency, such as a regulatory body or accrediting agency.
- Notification of the violation to the other schools within the university
- Suspension
- Expulsion/dismissal
- Revocation of one's degree, where the violation is identified after graduation.

Other sanctions may be imposed, as deemed appropriate.