



Policy Title

Professionalism in Student Research

Identifier

USCSOMG – RSCH – 1.05

Prepared by: Office for Research	
Reviewed by: Director for Research Strategy and Operations	Review Date: 05/20/2024
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LCME Standards

3.2 Community of Scholars/Research Opportunities

Scope

University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Greenville students in relationship with faculty, staff, students, and external affiliates in research.

Policy Statement

Students at the USC School of Medicine Greenville are responsible for maintaining the highest levels of professional conduct and ethical behavior when participating in academic research.

Reason for Policy

This policy is intended to set expectations, identify expected behaviors, and provide standards for action for not meeting expectations as it pertains to medical student research. By providing a standardized set of descriptors for students and faculty, those that follow standard professionalism behaviors will rise to the level of professionalism set forth by our school, collaborate effectively with all disciplines, and identify and respond to unprofessional behaviors.

Procedures

The USC School of Medicine Greenville vision of professionalism has the primacy of patient welfare as its central tenet. The Guiding Principles upon which the USC School of Medicine Greenville is founded express core values of altruism, integrity, a commitment to excellence, and high moral and ethical standards as the necessary foundations for the development of medical professionals. Based on review Liaison Committee of Medical Education (LCME) standards, other medical schools, and peer-reviewed articles, professionalism in research has been separated into three distinct categories: Engagement, Honest and Respectful Behaviors, and Self-Awareness.

Engagement

Defined as not just producing data, but actively working with all involved in the entire research process. Engagement in research emphasizes working together to enhance collaboration, mutually beneficial learning, recognizing the contributions of each member, and respecting different viewpoints while working towards goals to facilitate scientifically robust projects and deliverables, address challenges, and improve the science of

medicine. Expected activities include:

- Being present for assigned activities
- Meeting deadlines and communicate issues in a timely manner
- Taking initiative
 - Engaging with the project/team, participating where appropriate, communicating proactively, and bringing a positive attitude
- Being organized and maintaining clean data and records.
- Rising to the highest level of performance, being reliable, following all procedures and scientific principles.
 - Working with mentors to produce high quality deliverables such as manuscripts and posters
 - Producing drafts that exhibit thorough thought and a knowledge of the literature/project
- Fostering good teamwork
 - Supporting their team members and discussing issues promptly and respectfully
 - Maintaining a team-centered mindset
 - Interacting appropriately with different groups (mentors vs. patients, etc.)

Honest and Respectful Behaviors

Honest and respectful behaviors in research refers to a range of practices that ensure integrity, credibility, and professional practices in research. It involves a commitment to ethical principles, rigorous methodology, and accountability at every stage of the research process, and avoiding behavior that undermines the trust and credibility of science. Expected activities include:

- Dedication to good science practices
- Following Good Clinical Practices, CITI certifications, and other certifications as required
- Ensuring the Informed Consent process is followed correctly with from participants and is acquired as needed
- Citing sources appropriately and taking all precautions not to plagiarize or fail to give credit where needed
- Obeying rules and regulations of research sites
- Being honest with data and recusing or blinding themselves as needed
- Not falsifying patient or participant records
- Not misrepresenting themselves or their project
- Gaining approval of the investigators before submitting any abstracts, manuscripts, or data to present
- Being ‘good stewards’ of the research dollars awarded for science
- Using respectful communication both verbally and in writing
 - Proactively communicating with the research team and participants as needed
 - Responding in a timely manner to communication efforts and in the platform expected (email, telephone, etc.)
 - Addressing other researchers and participants appropriately
- Maintaining confidentiality and privacy
- Not bullying, discriminating, or harassing others, and reporting violations

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness in medical school research refers to abilities that encourage one to reflect introspectively on one's own abilities, strengths, weaknesses, biases, and limitations within the context of a research setting.

Expected activities include:

- Accepting feedback and providing helpful feedback to others where appropriate
- Rising to the standards of behavior and encouraging those around them to do the same
- Being open to change
- Respecting limitations and communicating needs
- Dressing appropriately for the setting

- Knowing when to seek answers independently versus when to seek support

Sanctions

In the event of a reported violation of this policy, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the Director for Research Strategy and Operations, Biomedical Sciences Department Chair, and the USC School of Medicine Greenville Clinical Research Mentors will meet to determine the validity of the report. If a violation has occurred, sanctions will include warning, counseling, or referral to HPC depending on the severity of the violation.

Contacts

Director for Research Strategy and Operations
Office for Student Affairs

Related Information

USC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook
Carolinian Creed
USCSOMG – ACAF – 4.00 Student Evaluation, Remediation, Requirements for Promotion, and Appeal Process
USCSOMG – STAF – 5.01 Expectation of Personal and Professional Conduct
USCSOMG – STAF – 5.04 Social Media and Social Networking
USC – STAF – 6.25 Academic Responsibility - The Honor Code
USC – STAF – 6.26 Student Code of Conduct
USC Responsible Conduct of Research Policies and Procedures
USC Safety and Compliance Policy for Minors in Research Laboratories

History

Date of Change	Change
February 2025	Updates to branding and titles. Revised to strengthen the language; provide clarity.
May 2024	Policy created