



Policy Title

Honor and Professionalism System

Identifier

UofSCSOMG – STAF – 5.03

Prepared by: Office for Student Affairs and Admissions	
Reviewed by: Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee	Review Date: 04/20/2022
Approved by: UofSCSOMG Policy Committee	Approval Date: 04/25/2022
	Effective Date: 05/01/2022

LCME Standards

- 3.5 – Learning Environment / Professionalism
- 3.6 – Student Mistreatment
- 7.7 – Medical Ethics
- 7.9 – Interprofessional Collaborative Skills
- 9.4 – Variety of Measures of Student Achievement / Direct Observation of Core Clinical Skills
- 10.6 – Content of Information Materials

Scope

University of South Carolina (UofSC) School of Medicine Greenville students

Policy Statement

The purpose of the Honor and Professionalism System of UofSC School of Medicine Greenville is to promote and maintain the basic ethical and professional principles paramount to the success of a student preparing for the profession of Medicine. The Honor and Professionalism System obligates medical students, as future physicians and representatives of the UofSC School of Medicine Greenville, to conduct themselves with honor and integrity in all aspects of their lives.

There are three aspects of the Honor and Professionalism System:

- [UofSC Policy STAF 6.25: Academic Responsibility - The Honor Code](#)
- [UofSC Policy STAF 6.26: Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [UofSC School of Medicine Greenville STAF 5.01 Expectation of Personal and Professional Conduct](#), which includes the UofSC School of Medicine Greenville Statement of Professionalism

The Honor and Professionalism System is introduced to new medical classes each year at M1 Orientation, and each student is asked to sign a statement acknowledging that they have been informed of the Policies and Procedures of the Honor and Professionalism System. The acceptance of the Honor Code assures that the

integrity of students is unquestioned and accepted by all in the academic, clinical and research communities.

The Honor and Professionalism Council (HPC) is a committee of medical students elected from the second, third, and fourth year classes with endorsement by the Dean. It functions to ensure the upholding of the Honor and Professionalism System for all actions that directly bear upon students and their relationships with their colleagues, faculty, patients, the institution and the community.

Every student enrolled at UofSC School of Medicine Greenville is expected to abide by the Honor and Professionalism System at all times while on the campuses of UofSC School of Medicine Greenville, partner health system campus, as well as off campus and in the community. The [UofSC Policy STAF 6.26: Student Code of Conduct](#) extends to incidents off campus which may adversely affect the UofSC School of Medicine Greenville community, or which may affect the school's pursuit of its mission.

Any conduct within the UofSC School of Medicine Greenville community that undermines the spirit of the Honor and Professionalism System is a violation. Specific incidents will be considered with regard to the context in which they occur, the alleged infraction, and the magnitude of the alleged offense.

Violations of the Honor Code, Professionalism or Student Code of Conduct standards include, but are not limited to:

- Lying - including any form of dishonesty or misrepresentation, omission, fabrication or falsification of documents or clinical reports
- Cheating - using or attempting to use any unauthorized materials, devices or study aids in or prior to an examination, OSCE or any other academic work. Giving or receiving any unauthorized assistance in the completion of any examination, OSCE or other academic work as well as preventing or attempting to prevent others from using authorized materials
- Plagiarism or copyright violation
- Stealing
- Violations of the Chemical Dependency policy
- Unprofessional behavior, including but not limited to, any breach of patient confidentiality
- Inappropriate conduct on campus, in the community or via social media
- Repeated lack of accountability

Reason for Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide UofSC School of Medicine students clarity on the Honor and Professionalism System.

Procedures

The HPC is composed of:

- Four elected student representatives from each M2-M4 class for a total of twelve students. M1 students will be elected by their class prior to the start of the first year spring semester and begin attending meetings as non-voting members throughout the spring to gain experience with HPC meeting policies and procedures. Formal voting service will begin on May 1 of the M1 year and end on April 30 of the M4 year. Each student elected to the HPC will serve until graduation. The HPC will annually elect a chair and an alternate chair to lead the council.
- A minimum of two faculty advisors are appointed by the Dean to the HPC, one representing the M1 and M2 years and the other the M3 and M4 years. Additional faculty advisors may be appointed at the Dean's discretion as needed to meet the needs of the HPC. Faculty advisors / representatives are invited by the Dean to serve year-long terms; but are eligible for reappointment if recommended by the HPC. Faculty advisors / representatives are not voting members of the HPC but are present to advise and guide student members in meetings. Faculty representatives may be asked to abstain from participation in

cases involving potential academic infractions in modules taught by that faculty member as they are at liberty to levy academic penalties and therefore should not be involved in both academic and HPC disciplinary actions.

Upon resignation of a student member, the HPC will promptly select a replacement from the same class. Any of the following constitute grounds for request of resignation from the HPC:

- Academic or professional probation
- Being found responsible for an Honor code violation
- Pattern of absence from meetings or functions without professional excuse
- A student may request to be removed from the committee

Meetings of the HPC to recommend changes to policies and procedures or for Formal Hearings require seven student representatives to constitute a quorum with at least one faculty advisor to attend.

Reporting:

Any student, faculty or staff member may report infractions. Students observing suspected Honor Code violations have an obligation to report, and failure to do so may be considered a breach of professionalism. Self-reports of Honor Code violations may be favorably considered for reduced sanctions. Infractions should be reported online: https://greenvillehealthsystem.formstack.com/forms/honor_system_violation. Infraction reports must include the name of purported offender, name of reporter, the purported offense and context in which it occurred and any evidence or support speaking to the offense.

Reported infractions will be screened by an investigative subcommittee of designated HPC members to determine whether they fall within the HPC's scope:

- If deemed within the Council's scope, all members of the Council will be notified of the existing potential infraction.
- All reports will receive an acknowledgement of receipt including a copy of their submission.
- Screening of reported infractions will occur within a 7-day period unless specified extenuating circumstances require more time.
- All parties involved will be notified of the subcommittee's decision on whether the infraction will be investigated by the full HPC no later than the end of the 7-day screening period.

Procedures:

- Upon receipt of an initial infraction report, an HPC faculty advisor and the chair of the HPC will be notified at which time they will appoint two student representatives from the HPC as the investigative subcommittee. The investigative subcommittee will consist of a M3 or M4 council member and one other council member. If a council member feels they cannot remain impartial to the investigation they can recuse themselves from the investigative subcommittee at any time.
- The investigative subcommittee is responsible for collecting evidence, interviewing witnesses and presenting findings during a Notification Conference of the HPC.
 - Confidentiality is important during this investigative process, and representatives will remind each witness that discussions are confidential.
 - The identity of the individual reporting an Honor Code violation is to remain anonymous to the accused during the investigation and Notification Conference.
 - Frivolous accusations will be considered a breach of professionalism.
 - Sincere accusations not found to merit a formal hearing shall not result in retaliation to the reporter.
- The Notification Conference includes the investigative subcommittee members, faculty advisor and 2 additional HPC members appointed by the HPC chair.
 - The purpose is to determine whether the charges of the accused student have reasonable factual support and represents misconduct sufficient for a formal hearing.

- Neither the accused student nor the reporting individual will be allowed to attend the notification conference.
- Investigating council members will present relevant evidence to be assessed during the notification conference.
- Voting - if at least two council members conclude that the evidence provides reasonable factual support and represents a sufficient infraction of the honor code then the accused student will be informed that a formal hearing of the HPC will take place.
- Voting against proceeding with a formal hearing warrants notification of dismissal of the case to the accuser and accused.
- If the decision is made to convene the HPC for a formal hearing, the student in question and the Office for Student Affairs at UofSC School of Medicine Greenville will be notified that the student has been formally accused of a violation of the Honor Code.
 - A written notification will be delivered by UofSC e-mail to the accused by the Office for Student Affairs. If the accused does not respond to the notification within 2 business days, a second and final attempt at notification will include contact by phone, in person and via US mail.
 - The written notice will include the following information:
 - A formal hearing will be conducted into the alleged Honor Code violation
 - The location, date, and time of the hearing
 - A description of the specific act resulting in the alleged violation
 - The Honor and Professionalism System rule that the student is accused of violating.
 - The accused shall not harass or impugn the accuser or witnesses.
 - A description of the Formal Hearing process will be provided.
 - The student has two business days to respond to the notification of a hearing and confirm that they will attend the Formal Hearing. The student must provide a list of possible witnesses or documents they plan to present at the Formal Hearing. If the student fails to respond, the hearing will take place as scheduled in their absence.

Formal Hearing:

- The Formal Hearing is to be closed unless the HPC and the student both agree in writing to an open meeting.
- A member of the Notification Conference will summarize the alleged Honor and Professionalism System infractions and present the evidence collected by the investigative subcommittee including witnesses and documents.
- The accused student will be given the opportunity to question or rebut witnesses and documents presented by the representative from the Notification Conference. The accused student may also present his/her side of the issue including presenting witnesses and documents germane to the alleged infraction. The accused student is allowed to have one representative present at the meeting. The representative's role is limited to giving advice to the student and does not include questioning witnesses or addressing the hearing.
- A witness should only be present while providing their testimony and should not be permitted to stay for the entirety of the formal hearing. Witnesses must pledge to be truthful and maintain confidentiality.
- After the allegation, witnesses, and relevant documents have been presented by the HPC and charged student, the student is dismissed from the hearing. The HPC and faculty advisors will then discuss the charge and evidence presented. Next the HPC will vote by secret ballot to affirm the charges or dismiss them; the faculty advisors will not participate in the vote.
- The student may request a copy of a record of the hearing proceedings as it relates to his/her appearance before the HPC.
- If the charged student is found responsible by a majority plus one, the HPC will then discuss sanctions. A motion for recommended sanctions will be agreed by a simple majority through a secret ballot. The HPC will then provide a summary of the case and a recommended sanction to the SEPC. The final decision on responsibility and the sanction rests with the SEPC. The SEPC will provide the accused

student with a written decision regarding the hearing outcome including sanctions within two business days following the SEPC meeting.

Appeal Process:

1. An appeal is a request for procedural review, not a new hearing. A student may request review of the HPC proceedings. If the student feels that there was a deviation from procedural rules prejudiced the findings of the committee or if new evidence has become available that was not available at the time of the hearing. A student may also appeal the SEPC decision and/or sanction by submitting, in writing to the Dean's designee (as stated in the SEPC letter) for a request for review within five (5) business days of receipt of the SEPC letter. The Dean's designee will convene an ad hoc committee comprised of four additional faculty members in accordance with the SEPC recusal policy and the Conflict of Interest in Student Assessment policy. Students will have the opportunity to discuss the rationale for their appeal before the ad hoc appeal committee but may not bring legal representation to this meeting or any subsequent meetings, although they may seek legal advice. The ad hoc appeal committee will make a decision, and the Dean's designee will make a final disposition of the request within fifteen (15) business days from the receipt of the student's request for appeal.
2. An appeal of the decision of the ad hoc committee is to the Dean. A student must make a written request to the Dean within five business days of receipt of the decision of the Dean's designee. After reviewing relevant information and meeting with the student, the Dean of UofSC School of Medicine Greenville shall make a decision on the appeal within fifteen (15) business days.
 - If the violation involves patient safety or physical violence of any nature, a student may be placed on administrative leave throughout the appeal process meaning they will not be allowed attendance at UofSC School of Medicine Greenville classes or activities.
 - In the event of a suspension, the student will continue enrollment at UofSC School of Medicine Greenville during the time period for the appeal, and if the student has provided written notice of appeal, pending the outcome of the appeals process.
 - In the event of an expulsion, the student will NOT continue enrollment at UofSC School of Medicine Greenville during the time period for the appeal unless permission is explicitly granted by the SEPC, and if the student has provided written notice of appeal, pending the outcome of the appeals process.

Sanctions

If the HPC finds the student to be responsible for an Honor and Professionalism System infraction, the HPC will make recommendation for sanctions to the SEPC. The final decision on responsibility and the sanction rests with the SEPC. The decision of the SEPC will be effective immediately, unless there is an appeal to the Dean's designee. Where possible, sanctions should provide a process for remediation rather than punishment.

The following sanctions may be imposed upon a student found to have violated the Honor and Professionalism System:

- **Written Warning** is an official reprimand that makes the misconduct a matter of report to SEPC. The written warning for a first offense will be maintained by SEPC. Any further misconduct could result in further disciplinary action which at a minimum will include probation and official entry into the student's record and notation in their Medical School Performance Evaluation (MSPE).
- **Monitoring Period** is a specified period of review and observation during which the student is under official notice that subsequent violations of the Honor Code are likely to result in a more severe sanction, including, but not limited to probation, suspension or expulsion from the University.
 - The decision on whether to include the misconduct and monitoring period in the student's MSPE will be at the discretion of SEPC
- **Probation** may include, but is not limited to:
 - A Monitoring Period (see above)
 - Mandatory counseling by the Office for Personal and Professional Development and/or the

Employee Assistance Program (EAP). A component of mandatory counseling may include a monitored Personal Improvement Plan (PIP) designed to remediate or improve the student’s subsequent performance. Failure to successfully complete a PIP may result in an extension of the Probation period or be referred to the SEPC for consideration of additional sanctions.

- Recommendation to the relevant module director that a grade penalty or score reduction of an assignment be given. Final decisions regarding academic penalties are at the discretion of the module director.
- Termination of probation occurs at the end of the specified period of probation or at the discretion of SEPC and/or the Dean.
- Probationary periods will become a matter of record in University files and the misconduct and probationary period will be included in the student’s MSPE letter.
- **Suspension** is denial of enrollment, attendance and other privileges at the University for a specified period of time. The length of suspension will be decided by SEPC and may cover a semester, academic year, elective period or clerkship.
 - SEPC will determine implications for a student graduating late vs. on-time.
 - The suspension will appear on the student’s record permanently.
 - All suspensions will include the sanction options listed above for probation.
- **Expulsion** is official dismissal from the University; the SEPC can decide if the student has the option to apply for re-admittance for the following year or not be granted the ability to apply for re-admittance.

Any student suspended or expelled for disciplinary reasons must vacate the campus and return all provided electronic devices and ID badges. A suspended student may not return to the University or Partner Health System property for curricular or extracurricular reasons within the period of time noted in the notice of suspension.

A prior violation will be treated as a significant aggravating factor in determining the appropriate sanction for a subsequent offense.

The sanctions provided by this policy shall not be interpreted to limit the academic authority of a module director to determine an appropriate grade for a student who has violated the Honor Code.

Additional Contacts

Office for Student Affairs and Admissions
 Honor and Professionalism Council (HPC)
 Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC)
 Ombudsperson

Related Information

- UofSC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook
[Carolinian Creed](#)
[UofSCSOMG – STAF – 5.01 Expectation of Personal and Professional Conduct](#)
[UofSCSOMG – STAF – 5.04 Social Media and Social Networking](#)
[UofSCSOMG – STAF – 8.02 Chemical Dependency](#)
[UofSC STAF 6.25 Academic Responsibility - The Honor Code](#)
[UofSC STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#)

History

Date of Change	Change
April 2022	Based on feedback from HPC, voting timelines for student representatives have been clarified. Removed COVID-19 requirements due to change in university policy.

December 2021	HPC will make a decision on whether a student is responsible or not for reported HPC violations. HPC will make recommendations to SEPC regarding the sanctions. SEPC will make the final decision and communication regarding the sanctions.
April 2021	Updated link to Carolinian Creed and COVID guidance; formal approval not required
June 2020	Added requirement for COVID-19 adherence to physical distancing and face covering requirements, updated links.
July 2019	Editorial changes made due to branding updates and titles; formal approval not required.
Nov 2018	Policy formalized into standardized template, LCME CQI