



**Policy Title**

Honor and Professionalism System

**Identifier**

USCSOMG – STAF – 5.03

<b>Prepared by:</b> Office of Student Affairs	
<b>Reviewed by:</b> Interim Associate Dean of Student Affairs	<b>Review Date:</b> 4/6/2023
<b>Approved by:</b> USCSOMG Policy Committee	<b>Approval Date:</b>
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**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 (USC) School of Medicine Greenville students

**Policy Statement**

The purpose of the Honor and Professionalism System of USC 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 USC 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:

- [USC Policy STAF 6.25: Academic Responsibility - The Honor Code](#)
- [USC Policy STAF 6.26: Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [USC School of Medicine Greenville STAF 5.01 Expectation of Personal and Professional Conduct](#), which includes the USC 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 USC School of Medicine Greenville is expected to abide by the Honor and Professionalism System at all times while on the campuses of USC School of Medicine Greenville, partner health system campus, as well as off campus and in the community. The [USC Policy STAF 6.26: Student Code of Conduct](#) extends to incidents off campus which may adversely affect the USC School of Medicine Greenville community, or which may affect the school's pursuit of its mission.

Any conduct within the USC 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, which includes repeated inappropriate behavior, as well as one-off incidents that may be disruptive. Such behavior is contrary to the professional standards or ethics of the profession of medicine, and includes but is not limited to:
  - Bullying, intimidation, harassment, or discrimination based on immutable characteristics/chosen identities
  - Intentional unsolicited physical contact (shoving, kicking, unwanted touching, etc.)
  - Verbal threats of physical harm

- Repeated verbal or nonverbal insensitivity or rudeness towards others which may present as disruptive, demanding, aggressive (including passive aggressive), offensive, degrading and/or overly critical comments or behavior
- Repetitive tardiness
- Refusal to meaningfully participate and/or work collaboratively with others or to follow best practice
- Inappropriate communication (in-person, email or via social media)
  - e.g., consistent unhelpful and off-topic contributions, sharing of sexually explicit language and/or images, HIPAA violation including personal identifiable information, etc.
- Inappropriate personal appearance, attire, and/or hygiene based on USC School of Medicine Greenville or Prisma Health policies
- Inappropriate conduct on campus or in the community

## **Reason for Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide USC 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 or chairs and an alternate chair to lead the committee.
- 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 directed 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 work with the Office of Student Affairs to fill the vacant position. Any of the following constitute grounds for request of resignation from the HPC:



- Academic or professional probation
- Honor code violation
- Pattern of absence from meetings or functions without professional excuse
- 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](https://greenvillehealthsystem.formstack.com/forms/honor_system_violation). Infraction reports must include the name of purported offender, 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 the HPC informal hearing.
  - 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 HPC informal hearing.
- Frivolous accusations will be considered a breach of professionalism.
- Retaliation in response to an accusation will be considered a breach of professionalism. Retaliation is any conduct causing interference, coercion, restraint, or reprisal against a person making a complaint or against a person assisting in any way in an investigation and resolution of the complaint
- Sincere accusations not found to merit a formal hearing shall not result in retaliation to the reporter.
- The HPC informal hearing 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 accused and the accuser (if identified).
- If the decision is made to convene the HPC for a formal hearing, the student in question and the Office for Student Affairs at USC 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 USC 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(s) 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 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 recommended 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.

### **Appeal Process:**

A student should follow the appeal process outlined in the [Student Evaluation, Remediation, Requirements for Promotion, and Appeal Process Policy](#).

### **Sanctions**

If the HPC finds the student to be responsible for an Honor and Professionalism System infraction, the HPC will make a recommendation to the SEPC, for its consideration and review, as to the level and kind of sanction. Recommendations consider (i) the severity and flagrancy of the violation; (ii) premeditation and intent, or lack thereof; (iii) whether the student was



previously determined to have violated the Honor and Professionalism standards; (iv) the student's truthfulness and contrition; (v) the student's ability to abide by the Honor and Professionalism standards and succeed in the future; (vi) other mitigating circumstances.

The final decision on responsibility and the sanction rests with the SEPC. 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 entry in a student's academic file that chronicles the misconduct. These will be destroyed after the student's graduation if there are no further honor code violations.
- **Probation** may include, but is not limited to:
  - A 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 suspension or expulsion from USC School of Medicine Greenville
  - 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.
  - Loss of Good Standing
  - 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 USC School of Medicine Greenville 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.
- **In-Kind Restitution** may be issued requiring a student to make restitution when the student has engaged in conduct, including, but not limited to damage to or destruction of School of Medicine and/or clinical property or property of any person, the theft or misappropriation of property, or fraudulent behavior.
- **No Contact Requirement** is a requirement of no contact with any individuals who are Complainants, victims, or witnesses in the student conduct process. This includes, but is





not limited to, verbal, written, electronic, cellular, physical or social contact, contact with second or third parties, or allowing others to make any contact on the Respondent's behalf. This can also be issued as an interim sanction prior to the completion of the sanctioning process or as a sanction in and of itself.

- **Disciplinary Removal** is removal from the learning environment pending investigation
- **Emergency Removal** of a student from an educational program or activity may occur if, after an individualized safety and risk analysis, the University determines that the student presents an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or individual arising from the alleged conduct.
  - During emergency removal, a student may be denied access to the campus (including classes) and/or all other University activities or privileges for which the student might otherwise be eligible. Emergency removals become effective on the date and time specified in the notice of emergency removal. A student shall be notified in writing of an emergency removal, its restrictions, and the reasons for it, and shall also be notified of the time, date, and place of a subsequent meeting with the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or designee at which the student may contest the grounds for the emergency removal, including the reliability of the information concerning the alleged actions and the identification of the student.
  - Except in the case of exigent circumstances or other good cause, this meeting shall occur no more than 3 business days following the notice of emergency removal and may occur prior to the effective date of the emergency removal. Following such a meeting, the SEPC may lift, modify, or continue the interim suspension while the disciplinary process continues. A student may, upon any grounds, appeal the decision of the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or designee regarding the emergency removal to the Dean. The appeal must be submitted in writing to SEPC within 5 business days.
- **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 to the Office of Student Affairs. 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 of Student Affairs  
 Honor and Professionalism Council (HPC)  
 Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC)  
 Ombudsperson

### **Related Information**

USC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook  
[Carolinian Creed](#)  
[USCSOMG – STAF – 5.01 Expectation of Personal and Professional Conduct](#)  
[USCSOMG – STAF – 5.04 Social Media and Social Networking](#)  
[USCSOMG – STAF – 8.02 Chemical Dependency](#)  
[USC STAF 6.25 Academic Responsibility - The Honor Code](#)  
[USC STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#)  
 USC ACAF 4.00 [Student Evaluation, Remediation, Requirements for Promotion, and Appeal Process Policy](#)

### **History**

<b>Date of Change</b>	<b>Change</b>
May 2023	Clarifications made in the Appeals section to align with SEPC
April 2023	Editorial changes made due to branding updates and titles; clarity on where to return security badge and electronic devices
December 2022	Based on feedback from HPC, the options for sanctions have been expanded and expectations for behavior has been more clearly defined
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