

# University of Michigan Medical School Medical Student Mistreatment Policy

## I. Purpose

The purposes of this policy are to outline expectations of behaviors that promote a positive learning environment for UMMS medical students and other learners and to identify grievance procedures to address alleged violations. This policy offers a definition of these expectations through its Learning Environment Statement, provides examples of unacceptable treatment of medical students, and describes the procedures available to report incidents of mistreatment in a safe and effective manner.

## II. Policy

The University of Michigan Medical School is committed to assuring a safe and supportive learning environment that reflects the Institution's values: professionalism, respect for individual rights, appreciation of diversity and differences, altruism, compassion, and integrity. Mistreatment of medical students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Expectations of teachers and learners are described more fully in the Learning Environment Statement as endorsed by the Medical School Executive Committee.

<http://www.med.umich.edu/medstudents/policies/LearningEnvironmentStatement.pdf>

## III. Procedures

### A. Distribution by the Office of Medical Student Education

Expectations as outlined by this policy are to be shared with all students (new and continuing), all new residents and faculty teachers, and on an annual basis with all current teachers (e.g. residents, faculty, nurses, administrators).

### B. Examples of Mistreatment

Students should use this Mistreatment Policy to address discriminatory, unfair<sup>i</sup>, arbitrary or capricious treatment by faculty or staff.

The University of Michigan Medical School defines mistreatment as behavior that is inconsistent with the values in the University's Nondiscrimination Policy Statement noted below (referenced in III.C.) and which unreasonably interferes with the learning process. When assessing behavior that might represent mistreatment, students are expected to consider the conditions, circumstances, and environment surrounding such behavior. Examples of discriminatory, unfair, arbitrary or capricious treatment include, but are not limited to:

- Verbally abusing, belittling, or humiliating a student.
- Intentionally singling out a student for arbitrary treatment that could be perceived as punitive.
- Unwarranted exclusion from reasonable learning opportunities.
- Assignment of duties as punishment rather than education.
- Pressuring students to exceed established restrictions on work hours.
- Exploitation of students in any manner, e.g. performing personal errands.
- Directing students to perform an unreasonable number of “routine hospital procedures”, i.e. “scut” on patients not assigned to them or where performing them interferes with a student’s attendance at educational activities, e.g. rounds, classes.
- Pressuring a student to perform medical procedures for which the student is insufficiently trained (i.e. putting a student in a role that compromises the care of patients).
- Threatening a lower or failing grade/evaluation to a student for inappropriate reasons.
- Committing an act of physical abuse or violence of any kind, e.g. throwing objects, aggressive violation of personal space.
- Making unwelcome sexual comments, jokes, or taunting remarks about a person’s protected status as defined in the University’s Nondiscrimination Policy Statement. (Referenced in III.C.)

### C. Reporting Concerns of Possible Mistreatment

Medical students who themselves experience or observe other students experiencing possible mistreatment are encouraged to discuss it with someone in a position to understand the context and address necessary action. The individual considering making a report of mistreatment should first, if possible, attempt to resolve the matter directly with the alleged offender. Suggested options for medical students include:

1. **DISCUSS** it with their class counselor, the Assistant Dean for Student Programs, the clerkship/course/sequence director, or the Office of the Ombuds on main campus <http://www.umich.edu/~ombuds/>
2. **REPORT** it (utilizing one of three options below and hopefully prevent such behavior in the future).<sup>ii</sup> :
  - a. File a formal report with the Senior Associate Dean for Education and Global Initiatives. <http://sitemaker.umich.edu/medical.student.reporting/>
  - b. File an anonymous report via the Mistreatment Reporting website. This mechanism includes options for prompt attention OR withholding the report until a future date (e.g., the student’s graduation date). <http://sitemaker.umich.edu/medical.student.reporting/>

- c. File an identified or anonymous report on the University of Michigan Compliance hotline at (866) 990-0111 (<http://compliancehotline.umich.edu/>) or via the University of Michigan Health System Compliance website: <http://www.med.umich.edu/u/compliance/index.htm>

Medical Students requesting complete anonymity should be made aware that doing so may interfere with the University's ability to investigate the concern and their ability to receive information about the follow-up investigation.

Medical Students may also choose to pursue claims of unlawful discrimination or harassment in compliance with the University's Nondiscrimination Policy Statement:

*"The University of Michigan, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions. Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the Senior Director for Institutional Equity, and Title IX/Section 504/ADA Coordinator, Office of Institutional Equity, 2072 Administrative Services Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1432, 734-763-0235, TTY 734-647-1388. For other University of Michigan information call 734-764-1817."*

#### D. Responding to Concerns of Mistreatment

Every effort is made to respond to concerns of mistreatment in a professional manner to minimize the risk of retaliation.

The Senior Associate Dean for Education and Global Initiatives will be provided with written notice of reported concerns of mistreatment of Medical Students (corresponding with the date indicated on the report), and conduct an initial inquiry into the circumstances. Consistent with the UMHS Policy 04-06-047 Disruptive or Inappropriate Behavior by UMHS Personnel, and depending on the identity of the alleged offending party, the Senior Associate Dean for Education and Global Initiatives will engage the appropriate process channels for implementing notice to the offending party, and for investigation and implementation of potential corrective action.

Aggregate and de-identified data on reports of mistreatment of Medical Students will be shared with the Curriculum Policy Committee and the Medical School Executive Committee at least quarterly.

#### IV. No Retaliation

Retaliation is governed by the University of Michigan Retaliation Statement<sup>iii</sup>, which strictly prohibits retaliation against persons who in good faith report, complain of, or provide information in a mistreatment investigation or proceeding. Individuals who believe they are experiencing retaliation are strongly encouraged to contact the Associate

Dean for Medical Student Education, the Assistant Dean for Student Programs, their class counselor, the Compliance Hotline at 866- 990-0111 (<http://compliancehotline.umich.edu/>), or the University of Michigan Health System Compliance website: <http://www.med.umich.edu/u/compliance/index.htm>. Alleged retaliation will be subject to investigation and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion.

## V. References

UMHS Policy 04-06-047 Disruptive or Inappropriate Behavior by UMHS Personnel

UMHS Policy 01-04-001 UMHS Compliance Program & Code of Conduct:  
<http://med.umich.edu/u/compliance/code.htm>

Author: Office of Medical Student Education

Approved by: UMHS Compliance Officer – October 31, 2011

Approved by: UMMS Curriculum Policy Committee – November 1, 2011

Approved by: UMMS Executive Committee – November 3, 2011

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<sup>i</sup> Allegations of “research misconduct” (fabrication, falsification, plagiarism) will be addressed consistent with University Standard Practice Guide (“SPG”) 303.3, which is available here: <http://spg.umich.edu/pdf/303.03.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> As members of the UMHS workforce, Medical Students execute the University of Michigan Health System Code of Conduct Attestation and are expected to fulfill their responsibilities as outlined in that document, which is available here: <http://med.umich.edu/u/compliance/doc/ConductStatement.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> The University of Michigan Prohibition of Retaliation Statement is available here: <http://www.hr.umich.edu/oie/cc/prohibited/retaliation.html>