

Fundamentals and Principles of Professionalism Adopted July 28, 2009

I. Preamble

The University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) School of Medicine (SOM) is a community of professionals dedicated to education, patient care, and research. The SOM community is committed to maintaining academic and clinical environments in which faculty, fellows and residents,¹ students,² and staff³ can work together to further education and research and provide the highest quality of ethical and compassionate care at its affiliated hospitals and clinics. Mutual respect between faculty and learners (students/residents) is expected; each member within the community must be accepted as an individual and treated with civility. Diversity in background, outlook, and interest is inherent, necessary, and important in medical education and the practice of medicine.

The school's goals include the following: to enable all members of the SOM community (medical students, residents and fellows, faculty, and staff) to meet the highest standards of professionalism and to create and support a learning environment in which professional behaviors are manifest in daily work, as described in the UM System Policy on Maintaining a Positive Work and Learning Environment. Every member of the medical school's community, including the faculty, will strive to uphold these standards and to act in all endeavors with integrity, compassion, and respect. This is the essence of professionalism and the spirit with which the following Fundamentals and Principles of Professionalism were developed and embraced by faculty as their aspirations and ideals.

II. Fundamentals and Principles of Professionalism

Members of the UMKC community including faculty will strive to uphold these fundamentals, principles, and professional responsibilities.

Fundamentals

A. Professional Competence

- maintains and updates medical knowledge as well as clinical and team skills
- seeks consultation and supervision as needed

B. Ethics/Confidentiality

- adheres to professional and/or ethical standards
- behaves with high morality
- maintains and protects patient privacy and confidentiality
- provides informed consent to patients as appropriate to level of responsibility
- deals with confidential information discreetly and appropriately
- does not misuse resources
- recognizes and discloses conflicts of interest

¹ See Residents' Manual, Disciplinary Action Policy and Procedure, UMKC School of Medicine.

² See Standards of Professional Conduct, University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine.

³ See Human Resources policy7 Manual HR 119 Maintaining a Positive Work and Learning Environment; HR 505 Personal Conduct; and HR 502 Grievance Procedure.

- adheres to institutional policies relevant to acceptance of equipment and other goods from pharmaceutical and medical equipment companies
- maintains appropriate relationships with patients (refer to the AMA Principles of Medical Ethics), peers and subordinates

C. Communication Skills/Collegiality/Language Use/Discretion

- listens well
- communicates with appropriate terminology and vocabulary
- communicates with appropriate gestures and mannerisms
- communicates with discretion appropriate to circumstances
- demonstrates team spirit
- is willing to act jointly with others
- knocks on the door of the patient's hospital or examination room
- shakes hands when appropriate with and introduces oneself to patients and patients' families
- wears name tags that clearly identify his/her name and roles
- keeps legible, appropriate, and up-to-date medical records; does not communicate disputes or criticisms via the patient record
- responds promptly to phone messages, pages, and e-mails

Principles of Professionalism

D. Excellence and Quality of Care

- puts forth a conscientious effort to exceed ordinary expectations
- masters techniques and technologies of learning
- is self-critical and able to identify own areas for learning/practice improvement
- has internal focus and direction, setting own goals
- participates in life-long learning
- demonstrates awareness of own limitations and identifies developmental needs and approaches for improvements
- admits mistakes
- accepts and responds to constructive criticism by appropriate modification of behavior
- looks at self objectively
- takes steps to correct shortcomings
- takes initiative in organizing, participating, and collaborating in peer study groups
- participates in continuous health care quality improvement and seeks to optimize health care outcomes
- seeks to improve patient safety and reduce medical errors
- promotes continuity of care
- promotes research and upholds scientific standards

E. Altruism

- acts for the welfare of others
- advocates for and empowers patients to make informed decisions
- places legitimate needs of others above his/her own interests
- takes time and gives effort to help others

- commits to improving access to care and works to eliminate barriers to care

F. Humanism

F. 1. Honesty

- demonstrates integrity (does not lie, cheat, or steal)
- is forthcoming with information; does not withhold and/or use information for power
- admits errors
- is honest with patients, colleagues, learners, and supervisors

F. 2. Compassion, Empathy, Sensitivity

- considers and appreciates others' positions and perspectives
- is considerate of patients, colleagues, learners, and supervisors
- is sensitive to patient's pain, emotional state or condition (i.e., disabilities, gender, ethnicity issues)
- communicates bad news with sincerity and compassion
- deals with sickness, death, and dying in a professional manner with patient and family members
- supports a balance in personal and professional activities for peers and subordinates

F. 3. Respect for Other People Regardless of Background

- treats other people including patients and their families respectfully and without bias
- treats the patient as an individual, taking into account lifestyle, beliefs, personal idiosyncrasies, support system
- respects institutional staff and representatives
- respects faculty during teaching session
- treats colleagues and co-workers and leaders in a respectful manner without bias (i.e., age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, national origin or role in education)
- promotes mutual respect between teachers and learners (e.g., insightful rather than aggressive questioning; constructive feedback with opportunities for remediation)
- asks how to address patient and family members
- adheres to established dress codes of the medical school and affiliated institutions
- wears attire generally accepted as professional by the patient populations served
- maintains a neat and clean appearance acceptable to practice setting
- observes hand washing protocols

G. Accountability/Dependability/Reliability/Responsibility/Punctuality

- cares for self appropriately and presents self in a professional manner
- appropriately observant of order, authority, or rule
- strives to see that collaborating colleagues within the profession are competent
- strives to report physicians deficient in character or competence, or engaging in fraud or deception, to appropriate entities
- recognizes and reports errors/poor behavior of peers

- informs others when not available to fulfill responsibilities and secures replacement
- takes responsibility for appropriate share of teamwork
- arrives to classes, clinics, meetings and appointments on time
- meets deadlines; completes assignments and responsibilities on time
- answers letters, pages, e-mail, and phone calls in a timely manner
- responds to societal needs; advocates for fair distribution of healthcare resources and actively works to eliminate discrimination in healthcare
- contributes to the medical profession; is active in local and/or national professional organizations

Other Standards

H. Initiative/Leadership

- is self-directed in undertaking tasks
- is self-motivated and appropriately independent
- demonstrates ability to guide peers
- leads by example
- teaches others
- helps build and maintain a culture that facilitates professionalism
- does not provide disruptive leadership (e.g., organizing pranks, inappropriately confronting authority figures)

I. Stress Management/Well-being

- makes reasonable effort to remain calm, level-headed and composed in difficult or critical situations
- demonstrates ability to relax and recoup after stressful situations
- does not use coping strategies that impair his/her ability to perform necessary work

This aspirational document, written for faculty of the SOM and its particular ethos, is not intended to conflict in any manner with the University's Collected Rules and Regulations nor should it be interpreted as such. If any such conflict should occur, the Collected Rules and Regulations will always prevail. The Collected Rules and Regulations provide for annual departmental review of performance including professionalism of an individual non-regular, tenured, or tenure-track faculty member. Applicable sections of the Collected Rules at <http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/departments/gc/rules/> include but are not limited to:

- 310.010-.090 Tenure Regulations (please note that these apply to all academic appointees and not only to those tenured or on tenure-track)
- 310.035 Non-tenure Track Faculty
- 320.035 Policy and Procedure for Promotion and Tenure
- 330.010 Personal Conduct of Employees
- 330.015 Policy on Conflict of Interest
- 330.080 Maintaining a Positive Work and Learning Environment
- 330.060 Sexual harassment
- 330.065 Consensual Amorous Relationships

Additional references

The national alliance for physician competence: <http://gmpusa.org/> (last viewed 4-10-09)

Compact between faculty and learners, Association of American Medical Colleges:
medical students: <http://www.aamc.org/newsroom/pressrel/compact>
residents: <http://www.aamc.org/students/residents/start.htm>
graduate students:
<https://services.aamc.org/Publications/showfile.cfm?file=version127.pdf>

Strengthening professionalism through humanistic narratives, Thompson GS and Arnold L, UMKC School of Medicine:
www.umkc.edu/profstories based on Arnold L, Stern DT. What is Medical Professionalism? In Stern DT ed. Measuring Medical Professionalism. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 15-37.