STANDARDS OF CONDUCT IN THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Preamble

The University of Utah School of Medicine will provide a learning environment for students that facilitates and reinforces behaviors and attitudes of mutual respect between medical school teachers (faculty, fellows, residents and staff) and medical student learners.

Standards of Conduct

Medical students have a right to support and assistance from the School of Medicine in maintaining a climate conducive to thinking and learning. University teaching reflects consideration for the dignity of students and their rights as persons. Medical student mistreatment in the course of the teacher-learner environment will not be tolerated. Examples of behaviors or situations that are unacceptable include:

(1) Discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, sex, age, sexual orientation, physical disability and veteran status (see University policy);
(2) Sexual harassment (see University policy);
(3) Unwelcome physical contact;
(4) Verbal abuse, profanity, or demeaning comments;
(5) Inappropriate or unprofessional criticism which belittles, embarrasses or humiliates a student;
(6) Unreasonable requests for a student to perform personal services;
(7) Grading used to punish a student rather than to evaluate performance;
(8) A pattern of intentional neglect or intentional lack of communication;
(9) Requiring students to perform dangerous tasks beyond their level of competency;
(10) Student work hour expectations that exceed resident work hour guidelines.

Feedback is necessary for all students. When students fail to meet educational standards, appropriate constructive feedback is necessary. A formative evaluation that is painful is not, by definition, abusive. However, comments should be made in such a way as to promote learning, avoiding student humiliation.

Dissemination and Education

Policies and Procedures for Handling Student Complaints
Policies and procedures for handling student complaints including a reporting mechanism for students, due process procedures for both complainant and perceived abuser; and an appeals mechanism.

AAMC suggestions: These procedures should address (1) channels of communication; (2) privacy and confidentiality concerns; (3) legal and criminal issues; (4) record keeping; (5) a method of communication back to the parties involved throughout the process and at resolution of the process. Ideally, an informal process precedes a formal one.

Reporting mechanism

Most schools utilize a layered approach: direct discussion between individuals involved, course/clerkship director, school administration, OEO

School administration options:
Student Affairs Dean (Known by students; efficient; fear of dean’s letter repercussions)
Nonadministrative faculty person(s) appointed by the dean (Impartial; Inefficient)
Newly formed committee (Very inefficient)

The role of this individual is to investigate claims, collect information, effect an informal resolution when possible, and to track data.

Consequences for serious and/or repeated violations of the standard

Report to the supervisor (department chair, residency director etc)
Report to the Dean/VP
Newly formed Grievance/Conflict Resolution Committee to reinvestigate the matter and then refer to the dean if necessary
UUMG/GME Committee

Record keeping
Should written forms be utilized in this process?
Anonymous complaints — track but not act upon unless a pattern emerges?