

POLICY NAME	Code of Conduct
Approving body	Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Deanery Executive Committee
Initial approval date	<i>April 30, 2003</i>
Date of previous major review	<i>June 17, 2019</i>
Date of most recent major review	<i>June 7, 2021</i>
Executive Sponsor	<i>Vice-President (Health Affairs) and Dean of Medicine and Health Sciences</i>
Audience	<i>All members of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences</i>

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

1. PURPOSE

In accordance with the mission of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, this Code of Conduct (the “Code”) intends to inform and guide the conduct of all members of the Faculty in their interactions with each other and with persons external to the Faculty with whom they come into contact, whether in the classroom or in work-related settings (e.g., clinics, operating theatres, rotations, clinical practica, fieldwork, research laboratories, conferences or other venues). The Code applies to all forms of verbal, written and visual communication, and includes video conference, emails, phone calls, web and social media.

Another purpose of the Code is to provide all members of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (hereafter “the Faculty”) with a framework that states and brings awareness to other policies that are applicable to them. As such, the Code is a reference tool to help all members of the Faculty navigate their rights and responsibilities, as well as to know where to take their concerns relating to those rights and responsibilities.

The Code does not, itself, contain procedures of enforcement. Alleged breaches of the Code and policies referenced will be investigated and adjudicated in compliance with the relevant policies that govern them.

2. SCOPE

The Code applies to all members of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences who:

- (i) hold University appointments (includes nil salary) through the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at McGill University, whether or not they also hold appointments in affiliated teaching hospitals or health care centres (academic staff);
- (ii) are teachers or supervisors of students within a course or program of the Faculty of Medicine



and Health Sciences, whether or not that teaching/supervision is occurring in a different organization or setting from the University and/or its affiliated teaching hospitals (generally academic staff, but may also include teachers contractually engaged to teach in specific courses, who may not be appointed as academic faculty within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at McGill);

- (iii) are students registered in any degree, program, including residency program, postdoctoral fellowship or course(s) offered by the University within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, whether the instruction is offered on campus or off campus at an affiliated teaching site, or whether they are attending the University on a temporary basis as part of an elective or other program; this Code also applies to applicants to the Faculty's education programs;
- (iv) are administrative and/or support or research staff employed by the Faculty, whether or not that function is occurring in a different organization or setting from the University and/or its affiliated teaching hospitals (non-academic staff).

II. EXPECTATIONS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

With respect to this Code, all members of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences are required to demonstrate the behaviours and to meet the expectations of professional conduct set out below, in all interactions related to the Faculty.

1. *Honesty*

- 1.1. **All members of the Faculty are required to conduct themselves honestly and with integrity in their daily work, whether in education, research, clinical care or administration.** This includes the appropriate acknowledgement of the contributions made by others.
- 1.2. In the context of caring for patients and their families, all members of the Faculty are required to adhere to the highest standards of integrity and follow the requirements of professional orders that may be applicable with regard to confidentiality and consent.
- 1.3. In addition, all members of the Faculty are required to engage in ethical interactions with industry and other organizations by declaring and managing conflicts of interest, real or perceived. They must disclose to sponsors, universities, journals or funding agencies any material conflict of interest, financial or otherwise, that might influence their decisions about whether the teacher, academic staff or student should be asked to review manuscripts or applications, test products or be permitted to undertake work sponsored from outside sources.
- 1.4. As stated in the University's [Regulation on Conflict of Interest](#), trust is fundamental to the effective operation of the University. An assumption of personal integrity in every Faculty member underlies our policies and procedures. All members of the Faculty are expected to conduct themselves with integrity in accordance with the trust and confidence that is reposed in them and must immediately and in full honesty declare any conflict of interest situations.

2. *Respect for Others*

- 2.1. **In order to foster a healthy work and learning environment, it is incumbent on all to demonstrate respect and appreciation for their colleagues, students, patients, family members and others they interact with in their role as a member of the Faculty. In particular, all members of the Faculty must not** discriminate in interactions with others on the basis of age, race, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, unrelated criminal convictions or any other ground protected by human rights legislation.
- 2.2. All are called upon to create and maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, discovery and conducting professional work. All members of the Faculty are expected to maintain personal composure and consideration for others and to model language, appearance and demeanor appropriate to the academic or professional health care setting.
- 2.3. All written, verbal and visual communications, including those on websites and social media, must be respectful and meet the same level of professionalism as would be expected in face-to-face communications.
- 2.4. In order to ensure proper respectful relationships with patients, students, teachers, academic and non-academic staff, all members of the Faculty must establish and maintain appropriate personal boundaries, including, but not limited to, refraining from making unwanted romantic or sexual overtures, protecting personal information and respecting the individual workspace.
- 2.5.
 - a. All members of the Faculty must not engage in intimate relations with **patients with whom they have a professional relationship**. Coercive or exploitive relationships with colleagues, students, patients, research participants or their families for any purpose, including emotional, financial, research, educational or sexual purposes, are strictly forbidden.
 - b. All members of the Faculty must abide by the University's [Guidelines on Intimate Relationships Between Teaching Staff and Students](#).
 - c. Those who are involved in clinical care must ensure that patients and families, as well as members of the health care team and academic community, are always treated with respect and dignity both in their presence and in discussions with other members of the health care team or academic community. Feedback to members of the health care team or academic community, whether verbal, written or visual, must be provided in a timely, constructive and respectful manner.

3. *Confidentiality*

- 3.1. **All members of the Faculty must respect and maintain the privacy and confidentiality of information about patients, as well as research and educational participants.** This includes limiting discussion of patient health issues to appropriate settings for clinical or educational purposes and to those family member caregivers identified by patient consent.
- 3.2. All must take appropriate measures to avoid breaches of privacy and confidentiality when communicating, especially when using electronic communication and social media. It is mandatory to adhere to data access and security regulations in both academic and clinical settings. For example, login codes must not be shared, and personal information, including and importantly personal information of patients, should not be transmitted via unsecured networks

without consent of all parties.

- 3.3. All must act in accordance with obligations imposed by privacy legislation related to collection, storage and disclosure of personal information and maintenance and use of educational records, health records, research and personnel information. In particular, all members of the Faculty must not access personal information stored in files or computers in the University or clinical settings without appropriate authorization. In the case of research, data access must conform to the requirements of governing research ethics policies. In the case of clinical duties, access is governed by the rules of the health care institution and the expectations of professional orders. In particular, members may only view information on patients with whom they have a current health professional/patient relationship.

4. *Responsibility*

- 4.1. **All members of the Faculty must be accountable for their own actions** in the workplace, research and learning environments. Behaviours and actions are subject to all the requirements for honesty, respect and confidentiality listed above, which will be used to assess compliance of any particular behaviour with this Code of Conduct.
- 4.2. As responsible members of the community, all must seek to recognize their personal limitations in situations that exceed their level of experience or competence, and consult with and refer to appropriate professional colleagues. Similarly, all must demonstrate self-awareness and responsibility for their actions by accepting and responding appropriately to feedback regarding performance.
- 4.3. All members of the Faculty are expected to exhibit/model behaviour consistent with this Code and, where applicable, the deontologic codes of conduct within one's professional and licensing bodies. To this end, members are expected to maintain and enhance their competence through commitment to continuous professional development.
- 4.4. In the clinical context, all members of the Faculty are required to follow the rules of the health care institution and of their professional order in regard to disclosure of errors or misjudgments.
- 4.5. In the research context, all members of the Faculty are required to adhere to the highest standards of integrity and to conduct their work using best practices and, where appropriate, in accordance with the requirements of the relevant ethics board or committee, including [McGill's Ethics and Compliance](#) and the [Faculty's Institutional Review Board](#) requirements.
- 4.6. In the course of their work or study, all members of the Faculty are expected to promote fiscal responsibility and accountability.
- 4.7. All members of the Faculty must not use alcohol, cannabis or other drugs, including prescription drugs, in any way that could interfere with duties and responsibilities.
- 4.8. All members of the Faculty must report professional misconduct to the appropriate authorities while taking care to avoid unjustly discrediting the reputation of members of the health care team or of the academic community.
- 4.9. All members of the Faculty are required to meet expectations related to punctuality, attendance and participation in their workplace, academic classes or clinical settings, including student placements.
- 4.10. In addition to the previously mentioned requirements regarding communications, all members



of the Faculty must use social media responsibly in accordance with [social media guidelines](#) including refraining from posting any confidential or inappropriate information or comments related to colleagues, students or patients. They must not disclose personal or confidential information about members of the health care team, the academic community or the administration. They must not post information that is untruthful, hurtful or disrespectful, and must use discretion when posting their own personal information.

- 4.11. Computers, cell phones and similar devices provided in the academic or health care settings must be used in accordance with the applicable policies, including those regarding personal use. Use of personal communication devices must not be disruptive or interfere with interactions with patients, families, health care providers, students, co-workers, administrative or support staff.

III. Related Standards, Policies and Regulations

1.1 McGill University Policies and Regulations

- a) All members of the Faculty are expected to be familiar with and comply with the policies of the [University](#) relating to conduct. These include, *but are not limited to*:
- [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#)
 - [Policy on Harassment and Discrimination](#) (See also [website](#).)
 - [Policy Against Sexual Violence](#) (See also [website](#).)
 - [Regulation on Conflict of Interest](#)
 - [Regulation on the Conduct of Research](#)
 - [Policy on the Governance of Personal Information](#)
- b) Students, teachers, and academic and staff members are expected to abide by the standards of professional conduct at all times and in particular while in any setting where academic, research, clinical activities (including interactions with patients) or extra-curricular sports and social activities are carried out under the auspices of the University or where the student, teacher or academic or staff member is representing the University or its interests. This also applies to the use of [social media](#).
- c) Candidates for admission to any Faculty program are expected to be familiar and comply with this Code in the context of their application for admission and the admissions process.

1.2 Standards expected of students, teachers and academic staff, as members of the health professions

Membership in the health professions demands integrity, competence and adherence to ethical standards. Students, teachers and academic staff in health professions programs are expected to meet standards of professional behaviour set out in the codes of ethics and conduct of their respective or future professional organizations and regulatory bodies.



2. Students' professional conduct and academic evaluation

In the Faculty, students' professional conduct is evaluated as a component of the academic evaluation required by their program. Students in a Faculty program who fail to meet expectations regarding conduct set out in this Code, or in any applicable code of conduct of their respective professional organizations or regulatory bodies, may be deemed to be unsuitable for further training and may be dismissed from the program.

This Code does not supersede other University policies, standards and regulations but rather acts in alignment with them. Thus, in addition to complying with this Code, members of the Faculty must also conform to the requirements of other codes and policies that apply to them, such as:

i. For all members of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

[Code of conduct related to the Anatomy Lab](#)

ii. For Academic Staff and Teachers

[Guidelines for Academic Promotions](#)

[Policy on Clinical Faculty Appointments](#)

[Reappointment and Promotion of Tenure-Track Professors](#)

[Regulations on Consulting and Similar Activities by Academic Staff](#)

[Regulations Relating to the Employment of Academic Staff](#)

[Regulations Relating to the Employment of Contract Academic Staff](#)

[Regulations Relating to the Employment of Tenure Track and Tenured Academic Staff](#)

[Regulations Relating to Visiting Academic Appointments](#)

iii. For Staff

[Administrative Dismissals](#)

[Collective Agreement between McGill University non-academic certified association \(MUNACA\) & McGill](#)

[Collective Agreement between Association of McGill University Support Employees \(AMUSE\) & McGill](#)

[Disciplinary Measures Policy](#)

[Dispute Resolution Policy](#)

[Staff Files Policy \(re Confidentiality\)](#)

[Staffing Policy \(section 10 re hiring of family members\)](#)

[Strike Policy](#)



IV. Disciplinary Measures

A violation of this Code may lead to disciplinary measures in accordance with internal regulations, policies, codes or collective agreements to which the member is subject, in addition to any disciplinary measures that may be imposed by the professional body or other organizations to which the member belongs.

Such disciplinary measures may include processes of discovery, investigation and appeal, as appropriate.

V. Policy Review

The Policy will be **reviewed every five years** by the Faculty's Deanery Executive Committee, and will include a review of the Faculty's efforts to meet Policy objectives.

If the Deanery Executive Committee determines a need for revision, this will be undertaken by a working group whose comprehensive composition will be determined by the Deanery Executive Committee.



APPENDIX 1: Procedures to Address Breaches of Conduct

This Code is a foundational document for the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. Allegations of breaches of the Code and the policies referred to therein are taken very seriously by the Faculty and its leadership. Although the specific approach to be taken will depend on the context in which the alleged breach has taken place, the Faculty provides several avenues for the handling of such allegations, as follows:

- a. If the **potential breach took place in a clinical learning environment and involves a student in a health professions program**, the complaint should be lodged with the [Office for Respectful Environments](#).
- b. If the **potential breach involves a student in other education programs of the Faculty**, the complaint should be lodged with the appropriate local designate, such as the Program Director or [Associate Dean of Biomedical BSc, Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs](#); the [University's Dean of Students](#) may also be contacted as warranted, or the [Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education](#).
- c. If the **potential breach involves a member of the academic staff**, and is not covered in a) or b) above, the complaint should be lodged with the appropriate local designate, such as the Department Chair or Program Director or the [Academic Affairs Office](#).
- d. If the **potential breach involves a member of administrative/operations or research staff**, the complaint should be lodged with the [Faculty's Human Resources Office](#).
- e. If the **potential breach involves an applicant**, the complaint should be lodged with the office processing admissions for the applicable program.

SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES

- a. If the potential breach involves the integrity of the **conduct of research**, then the research integrity officer must also be contacted, regardless of the point of first contact: ([Regulations Concerning the Investigation of Research Misconduct; rio.vprir@mcgill.ca](#)).
- b. In cases of **sexual violence**, whether it be sexual harassment or assault, gender-based or intimate partner violence, or cyber violence, [McGill's Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education](#) should also be contacted.