



McGill

Faculty of
Medicine and
Health Sciences

Faculté de
médecine et des
sciences de la santé

Policy Name: UGME Student Professional Behaviours Policy

Approved By: MDCM Program Committee

Approved On: August 17, 2020

Updated by: Governance Officer, Medical Education

Updated On: August 14, 2020

Pertinent to: MDCM Students

Purpose: Outline student professional behaviours policy.

Preamble

Professionalism is an attribute that guides physician behaviour and that is valued by the MDCM Program (see: [MDCM Program Learning Objectives](#) page 6 and [Professional Identity and Practice \(Physicianship theme\)](#)). As students develop professional identities as physicians, they will become increasingly familiar with the professional behaviours expected of physicians and physicians-in-training. From the time of admission to the MDCM Program, students are considered to be trustworthy. Lapses in professional behaviours may erode this trust.

The issue of professionalism applies to students, teachers, as well as the learning and clinical environments. Professional behaviours exist on a spectrum from exemplary to inexcusable; the Faculty will therefore attempt to recognize, encourage, and reward exemplary behaviours as well as identify and remediate sub-optimal or unacceptable behaviours. While the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences aims to promote high standards of professionalism in everyone within its sphere of influence, this particular document outlines policies and regulations applicable to students registered in the MDCM program and is focused on breaches in professionalism.

Principles

1. Students represent the medical profession, the McGill University Faculty of Medicine, and the MDCM Program from the time of admission to the MDCM Program.
2. As students in a professional program, medical students are expected to behave professionally in their interactions and communication, whether this be within McGill University (eg. in the UGME Office, classroom, anatomy laboratory, Med Annex) or at clinical training sites (eg. clinics, hospitals), with external organizations (ex. other medical schools, Medical Council of Canada, Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada, Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools) or in the public forum (ex. social media, news media).
3. Students are expected to demonstrate professional behaviours in their interactions with patients and their loved-ones, faculty, residents, other healthcare professionals, peers and administrative staff; this

includes face-to-face, telephone, email and online exchanges. Examples of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours can be found in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences [Code of Conduct](#).

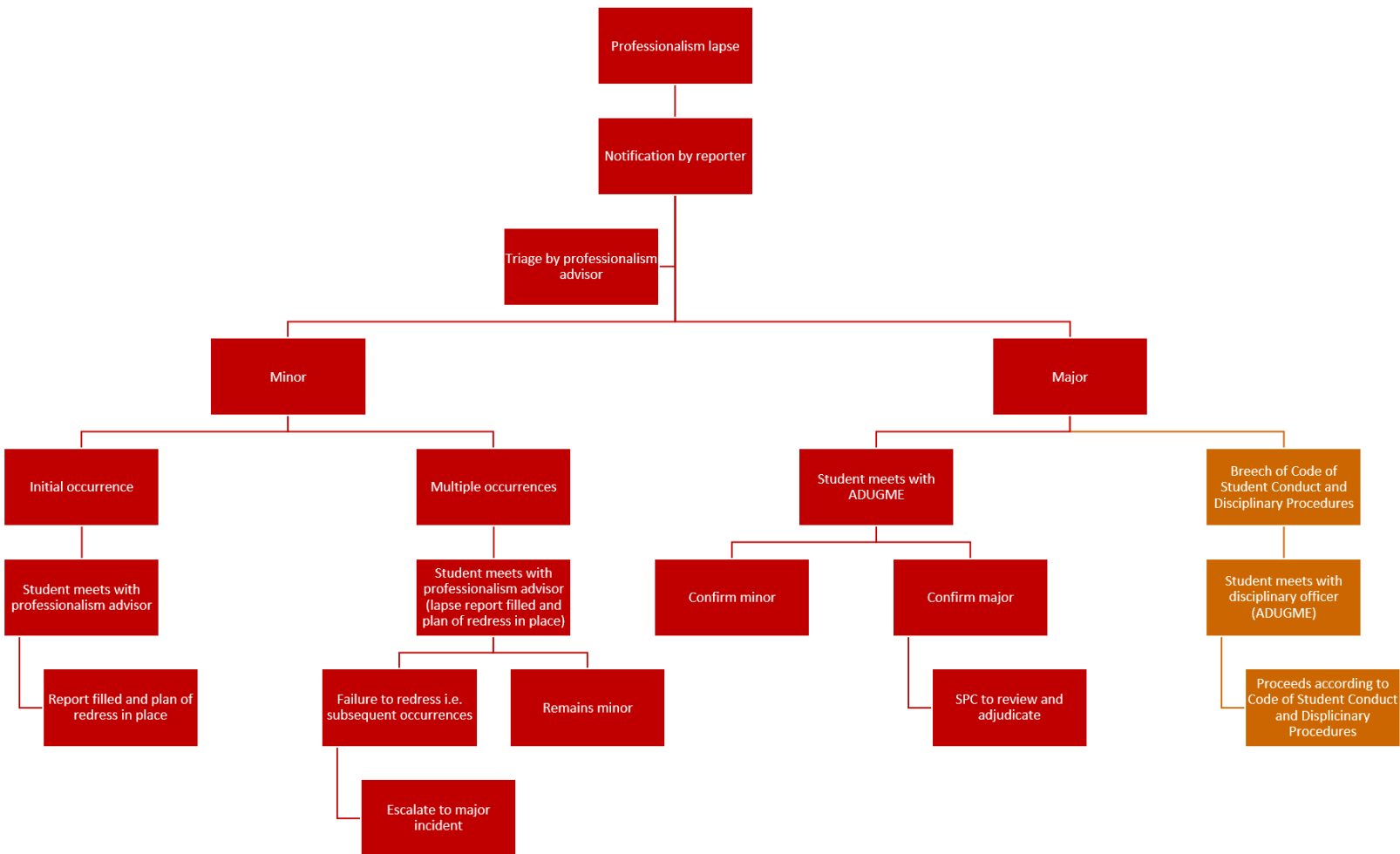
Policy

1. Students are expected to meet the professional standards of the [Collège des médecins du Québec](#), the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences [Code of Conduct](#) and our affiliated clinical institutions and to adhere to all [McGill University](#) and [UGME policies](#).
2. Students completing visiting electives or courses at other medical schools are expected to abide by the host institution's policies during the application process and during the elective course.
3. The MDCM Program considers student behaviour during curricular and non-curricular activities – both within and external to McGill University – as relevant to the assessment of professionalism. This includes conduct on social media platforms.
4. Alleged and actual professionalism lapses in behaviour are monitored longitudinally as described by the student professionalism lapse flowchart (see Appendix 1). Examples of minor and major professionalism lapses can be found in Appendix 2.
 - a. Based on specific circumstances, decision-makers will use their judgment to determine under which category a lapse falls.
 - b. The ADUGME can uphold or change the categorization of the lapse(s) done by the professionalism advisor.
5. Professionalism lapse is documented in the student's academic file.
6. A major professionalism lapse is brought by the Associate Dean, UGME, to the Student Promotions Committee (SPC) for review (see: [Assessment and Promotion Policy](#) point 5.7).
7. The SPC will determine whether a professionalism lapse will be noted in the Professional Attributes section of the Medical Student Performance Record (MSPR) and whether remediation is required.
8. Exemplary professional behaviours can be reported on narrative assessment forms, with prize nominations as well as by other informal means (e.g. e-mails).

APPENDIX I

Student professionalism lapses flowchart

This flowchart depicts potential student professionalism lapses and their respective processes.



*At Campus Outaouais, the Program Director, UGME, Campus Outaouais fills the role of professionalism advisor.

APPENDIX II

Categories of inappropriate behaviours

The following concepts will be used to determine the severity of a professionalism lapse:

- repetition of the events or lapses
- failure to redress
- clear intention to cause harm
- consequences or harm to others (patients, faculty, residents, other students, administrative staff, the public or institutions, donor bodies)
- potential for redress
- insight into behaviour
- accepting responsibility/expressing remorse

Based on specific circumstances, decision-makers will use their judgment to determine under which category a lapse falls. Examples of professionalism lapses include, but are not limited to, the following:

Minor professional lapses:

- Belittling or berating statements
- Name calling
- Use of profanity or disrespectful language
- Obtaining a commission for the provision of services directly relating to admissions
- Failure to work collaboratively with colleagues, staff and patients
- Failure to respect deadlines (e.g. late booking of an [elective](#))
- Unauthorized absence
- Failing to communicate to the site director, site administrator, and direct supervisor in a timely manner one's absence due to illness or other reason according to the [Absences & Leaves Policy](#)
- Repeated late arrivals for mandatory academic activities or clinical learning experiences
- Presenting an appearance that is not in adherence with the [Dress Code Policy](#)
- Using language in email, assignment or other communication that may be considered or perceived as inappropriate or disrespectful
- Failing to return phone calls and emails, or other communication unrelated to patient care in a timely manner

Major professional lapses:

- Failing to respect patients' rights, privacy or dignity
- Blatant failure to respond to patient care needs
- Degrading or demeaning comments regarding patients and their families, hospital personnel, health professionals, or administrative staff
- Physically threatening language or behaviour
- Sexual harassment

- Other forms of harassment including, but not limited to, persistent intimidating behaviour and repeated threats of litigation
- Stealing or misappropriating or misusing drugs, equipment or other property
- Unlawfully breaching confidentiality, including but not limited to accessing electronic records of patients for whom s/he is not on the care team
- Being under the influence of alcohol or recreational drugs while participating in patient/client care, at work, during academic activities, or on call
- Disrespectful or personal comments written in the medical or any other record
- Deliberate refusal to return phone calls, pages, or other messages concerning patient care or safety
- Being unavailable while on call or on duty
- Soliciting personal remuneration or reward of any kind from a patient or family beyond that which one is legally entitled to
- Misrepresenting or misleading anyone as to his or her qualifications or role
- Providing treatment outside of someone's level of qualifications or without appropriate supervision or authorization
- Behaving in a way that is in violation of relevant and applicable Canadian or provincial law
- Completing rotations out-of-province without College registration
- Registration of an elective under a different discipline (e.g., registering an elective in Cardiac Surgery as an elective in Cardiology)

Professionalism lapses that fall under the provisions of McGill's [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#)

- Engaging in plagiarism or otherwise misappropriating another's intellectual property
- Falsifying records whatever the reason for doing so
- Unauthorized release of confidential information including identifiable personal data of a research participant; a patient's health information or other breach of personal information

Document History

Approved by MDCM Program Committee: August 17, 2020

Updated: August 14, 2020
April 5, 2017
September 16, 2016