**Professionalism Policy (formerly Professional Expectations policy)**

**Purpose:**

Professionalism is one of the core competencies of the ACGME as evidenced by the Common Program Requirements (CPR IV.A.5.e.1-5) which state: Residents must demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities and an adherence to ethical principles. Residents are expected to demonstrate: compassion, integrity, and respect for others; responsiveness to patient needs that supersedes self-interest; respect for patient privacy and autonomy; accountability to patients, society and the profession; and, sensitivity and responsiveness to a diverse patient population, including but not limited to diversity in gender, age, culture, race, religion, disabilities, and sexual orientation. Professionalism is also included in the ACGME CLER Pathways to Excellence with the following four pathways: Formal educational activities are essential to creating a shared mental model of professionalism that contributes to high quality patient care; Resident attitudes, beliefs, and skills related to professionalism directly impact the quality and safety of patient care; Faculty members’ engagement in training on professionalism directly impacts the quality and safety of patient care; Periodic monitoring of physician professionalism is essential to identifying vulnerabilities and designing and implementing actions to enhance patient care.

It is the responsibility of the institution, WSU SOM GME, to provide systems for education in and monitoring of residents and core faculty members’ fulfillment of educational and professional responsibilities, including scholarly pursuits; accurate completion of required documentation by residents and identification of resident mistreatment.

**POLICY**

Each program must have a program level professionalism policy which describes how the program provides professionalism education to residents and how professionalism is evaluated. That policy should include but not be limited to the following WSU School of Medicine Professional Values and Attributes:

- **Professional Responsibility:** Sound medical practice and good medical care of patients are the resident’s and the physician’s highest priority. The resident shall be internally motivated at all times and in all settings to place the patient’s concerns before his or her own. He or she will always help to create a positive learning environment, be appropriately dressed, be punctual and prepared, and attend all required activities in their entirety. The resident is to be reliable and honest in completing all tasks, which include duty hour reporting, evaluation completion and other tasks required by their training program.
• **Competence and Self-Improvement**: It is the expectation that residents will be committed to the learning and mastery of medical knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs. The motivation for this learning is the optimal care of all patients. The resident will know the limits of his or her abilities and appropriately seek help to improve the care of patients while continuously expanding his or her knowledge base. This commitment extends to life-long learning; an acknowledgement that what begins in the residency never ends as long as the physician is committed to the practice of medicine.

• **Respect for others and professional relationships**: Residents always respect their patients as individuals. There is respect for the patient’s dignity, privacy, cultural values, and confidentiality. Residents demonstrate sensitivity, respect, compassion, emotional support, and empathy at all times—to patients, patients’ families, other health care team members, and peers. In this context, a fundamental component of professionalism is altruism; putting the best interests of patients and colleagues over self-interest. Respect and altruism are attributes that must extend outside of the clinical setting as the resident is a constant representative of the School of Medicine and of the profession itself.

• **Honesty including academic integrity**: Residents are committed to honesty at all times. This commitment extends beyond the office, examination room, or operating room in his or her training environment. Absolute honesty in written notes entered into patient’s records and in oral presentation of findings is expected; medical findings are true, complete, and verifiable. This attribute includes the responsibility for reporting the dishonesty of others. As with other core values, honesty is not limited to the School of Medicine and its affiliated teaching sites because the public expects honesty in its physicians as much as the School of Medicine expects it in its residents.

• **Personal responsibility**: The resident is responsible for maintaining his or her own health and wellness. Drug and alcohol abuse are prohibited. Residents are expected to seek care as needed to maintain physical and mental health. The resident should freely access resources for help in managing health or personal issues that are negatively impacting performance in their residency program. Residents need to be proactive in recognizing those of their peers who are affected by drug abuse, alcohol abuse, or other personal issues detrimental to health, well-being, and/or safety, their safety, or the safety of patients. Residents with such concerns about their peers should notify their program director, a faculty member, or administrator.

• **Social responsibility**: Societies place physicians in positions of power and authority. Physicians and residents must always conduct themselves in a manner to be worthy of that trust. Residents must demonstrate concern for and responsiveness to social ills and other factors which detract from the medical, cultural, spiritual, and emotional health of society.

In observing the above Professional Values and Attributes residents are expected to behave professionally by:

• Demonstrating appropriate sensitivity to patients and their families
Completing tasks in a timely manner
Demonstrating honesty and integrity
Maintaining a professional demeanor, including:
  - Having an appearance and dress that are in line with professional standards as established by departmental policies
  - Exhibiting respectful and courteous behaviors
  - Being responsive to questions and accommodating to requests
  - Adhering to professionally accepted boundaries for patient relationships
  - Conforming to sexual harassment and discrimination policies

Unprofessional conduct, to include but not limited to the following, is unacceptable and may be subject to performance improvement actions (see Performance Improvement Policy and Due Process):
  - Failure to be truthful in all circumstances
  - Violation of state and federal rules/laws as standards of practice
  - Chronic lateness and/or failure to complete tasks in a timely manner
  - Failure to complete duty hour logs, evaluations and other tasks assigned by the program
  - Disregard for other team members
  - Disrespect for authority
  - Inappropriate behavior with patients, families or other members of the health care team
  - Failure to follow up on clinical activities
  - Abuse of power
  - Failure to respect policies of the WSU School of Medicine and affiliated hospitals
  - Unexplained absences
  - Failure to adhere to departmental dress standards

Procedure

The WSU SOM GME Professionalism policy will be provided to each incoming resident during the onboarding process via the GME Trainee Manual and Benefits Guide. Residents will be asked to verify their receipt of the manual via the onboarding checklist in the residency management system. The policy will also be available electronically on the WSU SOM GME website and in the residency management software.

The institution will verify that each program has a program level professionalism policy which describes how the program provides professionalism education to residents and how professionalism is evaluated, and will ensure that all program policies relating to professionalism are distributed to Residents and Faculty.

Program directors will be responsible for investigating any complaints/reports involving professionalism and if a violation of the policy is identified he/she will confer with the Clinical Competency Committee to develop a performance improvement plan if one is indicated, as specified in the Performance Improvement Policy and Due Process.
Monitoring:

The GMEC will monitor compliance with the institutional and program policies through the following venues:

- Reporting of successful completion of online modules during the onboarding process for incoming residents on Professionalism, Impairment, Clinical Work and Education Hours and Fatigue Mitigation and any other modules as determined by the GMEC.
- Annual Program Evaluation
- Special Review of the Program
- ACGME Annual Resident Survey
- Annual GME Resident evaluation of the program
- ACGME Annual Faculty Survey
- Annual GME Faculty evaluation of the program
- Resident Council
- Anonymous contact via hotline and/or online complaint form

Resources:

WSU School of Medicine Professionalism information
ACGME CLER Pathways to Excellence information