

<b>Policy 2.1.1</b>
UAMS COM Undergraduate Medical Education
<b>Section</b>
Learning Environment
<b>Title</b>
<b>APPROPRIATE TREATMENT OF MEDICAL STUDENTS IN AN EDUCATIONAL SETTING</b>
<b>LCME Element(s)</b>
3.6 Student Mistreatment
<b>Approved By</b>
UAMS COM Curriculum Committee
<b>Version History</b>
December 18, 2002. Revised July 26, 2021, January 22, 2024.

**Preamble:** It is the philosophy of the UAMS College of Medicine that optimal learning occurs in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The medical learning environment is expected to facilitate students' acquisition of the professional and collegial attitudes necessary for effective caring and compassionate health care. The development and nurturing of these attitudes requires mutual respect between teachers (including faculty, residents, fellows, nurses, staff, and students in a teaching role) and students at all levels, and between each student and his or her fellow students. While it is the responsibility of the Faculty and the College to provide a proper atmosphere for education, it is also the responsibility of the student to develop and maintain personal honor and integrity, as well as compassionate and ethical behavior. Students must pledge their utmost effort to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors required to fulfill all educational objectives established by the faculty. This policy is set forth to assist in the maintenance of an optimal learning environment but is not meant to be used as an excuse for students to disregard their own responsibilities in the educational process.

**Definition of Mistreatment:**

Mistreatment is behavior that adversely affects the learning environment and negatively impacts the student/teacher relationship. Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors promote an atmosphere in which abuse is accepted and perpetuated in medical training.

Mistreatment arises when behavior indicates disrespect for the dignity of others and unreasonably interferes with the learning process. It can take the form of discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, sex, age or sexual orientation; sexual harassment; psychological cruelty; and physical punishment.

Examples of mistreatment include, but are not limited to:

- Harmful, injurious, or offensive conduct
- Verbal attacks or offensive remarks
- Insults or unjustifiably harsh language in speaking to or about a person
- Public belittling or humiliation
- Threats of physical harm, physical attacks (e.g., hitting, slapping, or kicking a person)

- Requiring performance of personal services outside of the educational environment (e.g., shopping, babysitting)
- Threatening with a lower grade or poor evaluation for reasons other than course/clerkship performance
- Disregard for student safety
- Intentional neglect/exclusion or being left out of communications
- Unnecessary or avoidable acts or words of a negative nature inflicted by one person on another person or persons intended to cause humiliation. (Pointing out during rounds, conferences, and the like, that a student has not adequately prepared for his/her assignments or learned required material is not mistreatment unless it is done in an inappropriate manner)

### **Procedures for Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Mistreatment:**

**Option 1:** Students can seek help from an ombudsperson (ombuds), who functions independently of the College of Medicine. The ombuds is neutral and not an advocate for any party in a dispute, regardless of their association with the university. The ombuds considers the interests and concerns of all parties and seeks ways to create mutual understanding and resolve disputes, with the purpose of helping to achieve a fair and equitable outcome. When necessary, the ombuds works with individuals to find the proper channel for making a report.

**Option 2:** Students may file a mistreatment report, as defined in this policy, in the COM O2 system. This is a **fully anonymous** reporting system that will allow the student to correspond with one of the UAMS COM officials who can help address the concerns. The report may be made under the “announcements” section in O2 at the right upper corner of the screen. (see screen shot below)

**Option 3:** Students may use the I-SAFE reporting form on the COM webpage or the Academic Houses webpage. This is also a fully anonymous reporting system.

**Option 4:** Students may seek assistance from representatives of the Student Advocacy Council. These elected peers in the various classes may, with the help of their faculty advisors or Student Affairs Dean, be able to resolve the matter by counseling the student with a complaint on appropriate steps to take.

**Option 5:** The student may directly consult the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or the Associate Dean for Northwest Arkansas College of Medicine.

**There are NEW and UPDATED notices**

### **Announcements**

- Set your [O2 PIN](#).
- Set your [default font size](#).
- Set your [default O2 year](#).
- You have [Requirement Checklist](#) items to complete.
- View your [GradeBook](#).
- View your [Academic History](#).
- Create a new [Mistreatment Report](#).

### **Mechanism for Investigating Mistreatment**

The Associate Dean for Student Affairs is responsible for the oversight of mistreatment against students. It is anticipated that most situations can be resolved in a timely manner by discussions with appropriate parties and/or their supervisor. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs will monitor trends by departments, as well as by individual residents and faculty. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs may report trends to the appropriate department chairs (or their designee) and/or to the associate deans at the involved sites so that the departments or deans can investigate the issues and decide if and what action is warranted on a systemic level. In addition, if the accused is within the College of Medicine, the student will be advised of their right to file a formal grievance utilizing the "Grievance Procedure" as defined under "Academic, Disciplinary, Administrative Actions, and Grievance Procedures" in the Student Handbook. If the accused is outside of the College of Medicine (e.g., Nurse, Respiratory Tech, etc.), the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs will communicate the problem to the accused's supervisor and they will work together to determine the appropriate formal grievance procedure.

**Protection from Retaliation:** Retaliation will not be tolerated. Every effort will be made to protect students from retaliation if they seek redress. To help prevent retaliation, those who are accused of mistreatment will be informed that retaliation itself is regarded as a form of mistreatment. If retaliation has occurred, it will be handled in the same manner as accusations concerning other forms of mistreatment.

**Malicious Accusations:** A complainant or witness found to have been dishonest or malicious in making the allegation of mistreatment will be subject to disciplinary action.

**Mistreatment based on sexual harassment:** Any allegations of mistreatment based on sexual harassment will be reported to the University Title IX coordinator and the COM Deputy Title IX Coordinator. Offensive remarks or names, or the denial of training opportunities because of membership in a protected category may constitute discrimination or harassment. These incidents must be reported to the Office of Diversity/Equity/Inclusion.

**Education:** Education is the cornerstone in the prevention of student mistreatment. A thorough and on-going effort should be made to inform all involved individuals about the appropriate treatment of medical students, and of this policy dealing with alleged mistreatment. To that end, the following notification mechanisms will be utilized:

- 1) Medical Students – This policy will be included in the Student Handbook. A discussion of mistreatment in general, as well as of this policy in particular, will take place each year during freshman and junior orientations. Each course and clerkship director will be encouraged to include this policy in course and clerkship related policy materials.
- 2) Faculty, Residents, and Fellows – An informative written message will be sent each year from the Dean's office to all Department Chairs. The Dean will direct the Basic Science Chairs to convey the information to all Basic Science Course Directors. The Course Directors, in turn, will be asked to convey the information to all faculty teaching in their courses. The Dean will direct the Clinical Chairs to assure that all clerkship and course directors of clinical courses, as well as all residency/fellowship training program

directors, faculty, fellows, and residents in their departments, are aware of the College's philosophy on the appropriate treatment of medical students, and of this policy. The Dean's Office will also ask the AHEC office to convey this information and policy to all AHEC directors, as well as to their faculty and residents.

- 3) Nurses – An informative written message will be sent each year from the Dean's Office to the individual in charge of nursing at each of the major teaching hospitals utilized by our students. They will be asked to make this information, and this policy in particular, known to the nurses in their institution by whatever means they feel the most appropriate.

**Summary:** It is hoped that this policy will promote a positive environment for learning in the College of Medicine and will affirm the importance of collegiality and respect for others.



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Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

January 22, 2024

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Date