Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct

Student Honor Code

Summary
Decisions to admit or retain a student will be made on the basis of non-academic as well as academic aspects of a student's life. In order to be considered for admission or to be retained, a student must demonstrate the personal traits of honesty, integrity and regard for others. Based on Honor Council and Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee recommendations, any academic or non-academic offense which violates the MUSM Student Honor Code may, at the discretion of the Dean, become part of the student's record and may be grounds for dismissal. When a violation of the Honor Code is observed, the student or faculty observer should make an attempt to resolve the matter through direct confrontation with the student. If violations continue or an individual situation warrants, the violation will be reported to the Honor Council, to the Dean of Student Affairs, to the Dean of Academic Affairs or an Unprofessional Behavior Report may be filed.

Introduction
The monitoring of student honor and professional conduct comes under the aegis of both the students and the faculty. As a result, violations of the Honor Code will primarily be dealt with by the Honor Council. Issues pertaining to professionalism may be referred to the Student Professionalism Assessment Committee (SPAC). When a possible infraction is reported to a member of the Honor Council, the Dean of Student Affairs or the Academic Affairs Dean, a meeting of the Honor Council Chair, Dean of Student Affairs, the Academic Affairs Dean, the Chair of the Ethics and Professionalism Oversight Committee (EPOC), the Chair of the Student Professionalism Assessment Committee and the chair of the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee (SAPC) is held. It is this body that decides whether the student’s case will be heard by the Student Honor Council of the Student Professionalism Assessment Committee.

Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct (SCHPC)
1. I realize that upon entering medical school, I am beginning my career as a physician and I do so believing that I have sufficient strength of character to enable me to become a licensed, practicing physician of the highest caliber.

2. The health and lives of the persons committed to my charge in the future could depend on my knowledge and skills. Thus, I will strive to develop that knowledge and skill to the best of my ability.

3. I will, both in my behavior and speech, show respect for all patients, their families, the staff and fellow students, regardless of their age, gender, race, national origin, religion, socio-economic status, state of health or handicap, sexual orientation, personal habits and cleanliness. I will aspire
to interact with patients, their families and visitors in a courteous and considerate manner.

4. I am committed to the concept that exemplary moral character and a strong sense of personal integrity are an integral part of professional practice. I will endeavor to maintain the highest standards of honor and ethical behavior. I understand that neither personal nor academic dishonesty can be condoned, therefore I pledge myself neither to give nor to receive aid during an individually assigned task or examination, nor to use any information other than that allowed by the faculty. I further pledge that I will endeavor never to participate in any other form of academic or clinical dishonesty nor allow to go unchecked any violation of the Code of Honor. I understand that failure to report an observed violation is a violation on my own part. I recognize that my responsibility to support the Code of Honor parallels the responsibility of the individual physician to maintain the high ethical standards of his profession by persistent efforts to eliminate unethical practices.

5. I recognize the confidentiality of medical records and the fact that these records are official and legal. Under no circumstances will I knowingly record false information or statistics.

6. I will respect the integrity of the patients with whom I deal and the confidential nature of their communications. I will not discuss cases except under appropriate professional or academic circumstances.

7. I recognize that the best physicians are those who communicate well with their patients and are thus able to obtain their confidence and trust. I will therefore maintain standards of ethical and decorous behavior. Since attire is another form of communication between the physician and others, I will maintain a professional appearance, hygiene and demeanor with attire that is appropriate to the patient care setting.

8. I will not participate in patient care under circumstances in which I am under the influence of any substance or other conditions that impair my ability to function. I will come to the aid of a colleague whom I recognize as impaired (substance abuse or emotional disability) and, if necessary, take an active role in preventing the impaired student from being involved in patient care.

9. I will clearly identify my role as a medical student to each patient. I will not undertake any clinical procedure unless I have been judged competent or am supervised by a qualified instructor. I will not attempt to advise, prescribe, or prognosticate for the patient without appropriate consultation. I will accept the responsibility to question plans or directives for patient care when, after careful consideration, I believe such plans not to be in the best interest of the patient.
10. I recognize that I am an important member of the health care team and I will abide by the rules and regulations and Code of Honor in all settings in which I train or work. When given responsibility for some portion of the total care of a patient, I will assume this obligation and follow it through to the full extent of my abilities. If for some reason I am unable to fulfill my obligation, I will promptly notify the physician in charge of the patient and secure a colleague who can and will assume the care of the patient. I will be punctual, reliable, conscientious and truthful in fulfilling clinical responsibilities, never purposely falsifying information or misrepresenting a situation.

Plagiarism and Cheating
The term ‘cheating’ includes, but is not limited to, the following:
1. Use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations;
2. Dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
3. The acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material before such material is revealed or distributed by the instructor;
4. The misrepresentation of papers, reports, assignments, or other materials as the product of a student’s sole independent effort, for the purpose of affecting the student’s grade, credit or status in the university;
5. Failing to abide by the instructions of the proctor concerning test-taking procedures; examples include, but are not limited to, talking, laughing, failing to take a seat assignment, failing to adhere to starting and stopping times, or other disruptive activity;
6. Influencing, or attempting to influence, any university official, faculty member, graduate student, or employee responsible for processing grades, evaluating students, or for maintaining academic records, through the use of bribery, threats or any other means of coercion in order to affect a student’s grade or evaluation;
7. Any forgery, alteration, unauthorized possession, or misuse of university documents pertaining to academic records. Alteration or misuse of university documents pertaining to academic records by means of computer resources or other equipment also is included within this definition of cheating.

It is further considered an infraction of the Honor Code to share test items for the NBME Shelf Exams and USMLE Step Exams with students or proprietary organizations.

Computers: User’s Guidelines
The University’s computing and telecommunications facilities are provided for the use of students in fulfilling their needs which relate to the mission of the college. Other usage is not acceptable. Examples of unacceptable usage which are also honor code violations are:
1. Solicitation for charity or other benefits;
2. Activities related to the promotion or running of a personal for-profit venture or other activities unrelated to the provision of an undergraduate education;
3. Using foul or abusive language on the network or any electronic communication;
4. Promoting and sending chain letters;
5. Harassing students or employees at the university or other institutions;
6. Sexual harassment comments directed to another person;
7. Racial comments directed to another person.
Succinctly, usage should be businesslike and appropriate to the college mission. Complaints against any student for violation of the rules will result in immediate revocation of computing and telecommunications privileges. The complaint will then be provided to the student court for disposition and action. Computing and telecommunications privileges will be restored only at the request of the student court or the Dean of Student Affairs.

**Mechanism for Handling Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct (SCHPC) Violations**

A. If a student is concerned about a fellow student's behavior as outlined in the SCHPC he/she may:
- counsel with the student directly;
- request a friend, respected intermediary or Student Council officer to speak with the student;
- discuss the matter with the Dean of Student Affairs to help decide what is the appropriate course of action to take or
- report the violation to the Honor Council by completing an Unprofessional Behavior Report.

B. If an administrator, staff member, or faculty member is concerned about a student's behavior as outlined in the Student Code of Honor and Professional Conduct he/she should counsel with the student directly or bring the matter to the attention of the Dean of Student Affairs or the Dean of Academic Affairs. The Dean of Student Affairs and the Dean of Academic Affairs in consultation with each other will attempt to resolve the situation. If resolution does not occur then the administrator, staff member, or faculty member that initiated the consultation will be directed to complete an Unprofessional Behavior Report. Filing of an Unprofessional Behavior Report will cause the Dean of Academic Affairs to call a meeting of the Honor Council Chair, the Dean of Student Affairs, the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Chair of the Ethics and Professionalism Oversight Committee, the Chair of the Student Professionalism Assessment Committee and the Chair of the Student Appraisal and Promotion Committee. This committee will determine whether the incident is further investigated by the Student Honor Council or the SPAC. It is understood that a faculty member may, in extreme cases, summarily request a student who does not meet these standards to leave the group or rounds. The incident should then be documented by the completion of an Unprofessional Behavior Report.
C. If, in any case, the Honor Council recommendation is unacceptable to the student in the case, he/she may appeal to the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee.

The Student Honor Council
A. Composition, Officers and Their Duties

1. The Honor Council shall be composed of eight students who shall be elected representatives of each of the four medical school classes and the Dean of Student Affairs who shall serve in an advisory capacity without vote. The members of the Honor Council shall be elected by each class at the time of election of class officers and shall be chosen in the following manner: The freshman class shall elect two members, one for a one year-term and one for a two-year term; the sophomore and junior classes shall elect a single member for a two-year term; and the senior class shall elect one member for a one year term. The Council shall function from the beginning to the end of the academic year for which it is elected. Should any member be required to drop out of the Council for academic or personal reasons, the class which he/she has represented should elect a replacement as soon as possible.

2. The two-year representative elected by the junior class shall automatically become Chair of the Council during his/her senior year, and the two-year representative elected by the sophomore class shall automatically become vice-chair of the Council during his/her junior year. The two-year representative elected by the freshman class shall automatically become the recorder of the Council during his/her sophomore year. Officers will thereby have had the experience of having sat on the Council for one year before taking on the duties of their representative offices.

3. When electing their Honor Council representatives, each class should choose students in good academic standing who demonstrate a high degree of responsibility, sound moral character, and mature judgment. Consideration should also be given to the availability of the members.

4. The duties of the Chair of the Council shall be:
   a. To meet with the Dean of Student Affairs, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Chair of the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee to ascertain whether a proposed infraction of the Code of Honor and Professionalism by a student should be heard by the Student Honor Council or the Faculty Committee on Student Professionalism.
   b. To meet with the other members of the Council as early in
the school year as possible and explain in detail the function of the Council and the duties of its members.
c. To meet with the officers of the freshman class before their first examination and explain the Honor System.
d. To arrange a time and place for meetings to be held, and to notify the other members of the Council of such meetings.
e. To take charge of and conduct all meetings in a timely manner with respect for individual rights and in compliance with procedures outlined in the Student Handbook.
f. To determine that adequate minutes of the meetings are recorded and that all minutes, all correspondence, and any formal statements received by the Council are kept in proper order.
g. To be responsible for communications between the Honor Council and the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee or the Administration of the School of Medicine, and to report to the other members of the Council on resulting matters of importance. Such communications shall include a year-end written report to the Dean to summarize the actions of the Honor Council during the school year without student names.

5. The Vice-Chair of the Council shall assume all of the duties of the Chair in his/her absence or the recorder in his/her absence.

6. The duties of the recorder of the Council shall be:
   a. To take and formally record adequate minutes of every meeting.
   b. To take charge of and record the receipt of all correspondence, any written statements, and all other official papers received by the Council.
   c. To file the minutes of the Council meetings and the official papers and documents in proper order in a special Honor Council file in the office of the Dean of Student Affairs.
   d. To code, using the special coding system, all minutes, papers and documents kept in the Honor Council files to insure anonymity of records.

7. When a representative of the Medical School Faculty is asked to take part in a meeting of the Council, he/she shall not be required to perform any special function, but rather shall be considered to be an advisor only.

B. Functions of the Council
1. The Honor Council shall consider all cases of alleged violations of the Honor Code reported to it.
2. Meetings shall be called by the Chair of the Honor Council when an infraction of the Honor Code is reported. The Chair may also call meetings at any other time for a special purpose. The meeting place shall be an appropriate room within the School of Medicine or affiliate hospital buildings.
3. A quorum shall consist of six of the Council’s elected members.
4. The Council shall have the right to call students before it for the purpose of hearing testimony concerning the cases which are reported or referred to it. Students called before the Council are to be notified, in writing, of the meeting and of the nature of the accusation by a member of the Council no less than three school days prior to the meeting time. They shall be called individually and questioned in such a way as to preserve as nearly as possible the anonymity of all persons involved.
5. Reasonably accurate and complete minutes of each meeting are to be recorded and kept in the Honor Council files. Written statements made by a person bringing a charge against a student should also be properly filed. All such documents should be codified to preserve the anonymity of the individual persons.
6. The official and confidential file of the Honor Council shall be kept in a file in the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs. The officers of the Honor Council and the Dean of Students are the only persons having direct access to this file.

C. Order and Nature of Proceedings
1. Having been apprised of a situation requiring the attention of the Honor Council, the Chair shall arrange to have the student or students involved and all others who might contribute information concerning the situation notified, in writing, as to the time and place their presence is requested at a Council meeting. This notification should occur within ten school days after the alleged violation has been reported to the Chair.
2. When the Council has assembled, the Chair shall inform the other members of the nature of the meeting and shall read any written statement or communications received concerning the situation. The Council may then discuss the matter to determine the best approach for its resolution.
3. Witnesses shall be called before the Council individually and with reasonable precautions for privacy. It shall be determined that each individual appearing before the Council is familiar with the rules of the Honor System.
4. Questioning of any persons by the Council members shall be conducted in a dignified manner showing respect for the person being questioned.
5. The accused person or persons shall be advised, in writing, of the nature of the accusation which has been brought before the
Council and shall receive copies of all written documents relative to the case prior to the meeting. Should the accused person or persons admit the truth of the accusations they may be requested to write a formal statement regarding the circumstances of the event in question, describing their part in it.

6. Legal counsel is permitted at the hearings as an observer only.

7. If at any point before or during the proceedings of the Council it becomes evident to the Chair that the matter in question might be referred to the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee, the Chair should seek counsel from the Dean of Student Affairs.

8. When all evidence has been submitted and all testimony heard, the Council shall consider the matter thoroughly and formulate and record its findings and recommendations for disposition of the case.

D. Action of the Council

1. In every instance the Council shall give written notification to the accused person or persons of its findings concerning the accusations which had been placed before it. All other parties involved in the case will be similarly notified of the Council's final disposition.

2. The Council may take any of the following proposed actions in regard to the cases presented to it.
   a. Find that the facts do not support the accusations and terminate its concern in the matter.
   b. Suspend its judgment on the matter because of lack of sufficient or convincing evidence. The Council may choose to notify the accused that his/her actions or behavior are not sufficiently above reproach and may recommend that he/she conduct himself/herself in a more acceptable and professional manner.
   c. Recommend action ranging from an official warning to dismissal, and
      i. Find the accused in violation of the Honor Code and because of the nature of the violation dispose of the case at Council level. The Council may make recommendations to the individual regarding future conduct with respect to the Honor Code. The accused retains the right of appeal to the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee if he/she does not agree with the findings of the Honor Council. Or

   II. When warranted by the seriousness of the case or the number of different cases against a single individual the Council shall present its findings on the matter, along with any recommendation for disposition it desires to make, to the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee for evaluation.
and appropriate action. This shall be done promptly and in a formal manner and should include any written evidence or statements which are available. Before a case may be referred to the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee at least six members of the Honor Council must agree that the facts support the accusation. If the Council refers a case to the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee, the committee shall then be given access, automatically, to all files which the Council may have on the accused, including those concerning past violations. It is expected that the Chair of the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee will notify the Council Chair of subsequent action which has been taken in making a final disposition of the case.

E. Procedure for Amending and Revising the Honor System

Amendments to or revision of the Honor System may be recommended by the Honor Council to the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee. If the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee approve the modification(s), it will forward the recommendation to the Executive Council for final approval.

The Student Professionalism Assessment Committee

1. The faculty endorse the concept that it is desirable and feasible to discern and assess any unprofessional behavior on the part of students throughout all four years of the curriculum. It is the proper role of the faculty to assess and to attest to the professionalism and other non-cognitive qualities necessary to function as a competent physician prior to the awarding of the MD degree.

2. Students shall be evaluated by faculty for the presence of basic professional traits and behaviors as part of the written evaluation for each nodal point of the curriculum (e.g., at the end of each phase of the BMP program, after each clerkship in the junior year, and all required courses). In addition, a faculty member may report an incident of unprofessional behavior (examples include but in no way are limited to lying to a faculty member or cheating on an assignment) to the Academic Affairs Dean (AAD) by completing an Unprofessional Behavior Report at any time.

3. Upon receipt of an Unprofessional Behavior Report describing a problematic behavior, the AAD, in consultation with the Dean of Student Affairs, the Chair of the Ethics and Professionalism Oversight Committee, the Chair of the Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee, the Chair of the Honor Council and the Chair of the Student Professionalism Assessment Committee (SPAC), shall meet to determine if the alleged infraction should be heard by the Honor Council or by the Student Professional Assessment Committee.
If the incident is assigned to the SPAC then appropriate assessment of the incident(s) will be conducted. Upon completion of the assessment, the SPAC may recommend repeating the year or curricular component, dismissal from medical school or other significant performance recommendations that may affect a student’s progress. Recommendations are made to the SAPC (Student Appraisal and Promotions Committee).

If the SPAC’s assessment of the incident(s) is that it warrants less than dismissal of the student, then it shall devise a remediation and/or monitoring program. A written description of its outcome shall be submitted to the AAD’s office to document the remediation and/or monitoring process. The SPAC shall inform the SAPC when a student fails to successfully complete a remediation and/or monitoring program.

4. When the SAPC is notified of a student who has committed an egregious breach of professional behavior or who has failed to successfully complete a remediation/monitoring program, it will review the relevant SPAC records and minutes, interview the student, and make a recommendation which may include dismissal.

5. The composition of the SPAC shall be determined annually by and be answerable to the AAD. The SPAC shall document all its activities appropriately. A copy of this documentation shall be forwarded to the Chair of the EPOC with all names and identifiers removed.

6. Nothing in this recommendation shall be construed as interfering with or replacing the function of the Student Honor Council.