

The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine Policy on Conduct in Teacher/Learner Relationships and Learner Mistreatment (“Learner Mistreatment Policy”)

I. Statement of Philosophy

The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine is committed to fostering an environment that promotes academic and professional success in learners and teachers at all levels. The achievement of such success is dependent on an environment free of behaviors which can undermine the important missions of our institution. An atmosphere of mutual respect, collegiality, fairness, and trust is essential. Although both teachers and learners bear significant responsibility in creating and maintaining this atmosphere, teachers also bear particular responsibility with respect to their evaluative roles relative to learner work and with respect to modeling appropriate professional behaviors. Teachers must be ever mindful of this responsibility in their interactions with their colleagues, their patients, and those whose education and training has been entrusted to them.

II. Responsibilities in the Teacher/Learner Relationship

A. Responsibilities of Teachers

1. Treat all learners with respect and fairness.
2. Treat all learners equally regardless of sex, gender, marital status, pregnancy, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, veteran status, or other legally protected characteristic.
3. Provide current materials in an effective format for learning.
4. Be on time for didactic, investigational, and clinical encounters.
5. Provide timely feedback with constructive suggestions and opportunities for improvement/remediation when needed.

B. Responsibilities of Learners

1. Treat all teachers and fellow learners with respect and fairness.
2. Treat all teachers and fellow learners equally regardless of sex, gender, marital status, pregnancy, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, veteran status, or other legally protected characteristic.
3. Commit the time and energy to their studies necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of each course.
4. Be on time for didactic, investigational, and clinical encounters.
5. Communicate concerns/suggestions about the curriculum, didactic methods, teachers, or the learning environment in a respectful, professional manner.

III. Behaviors Inappropriate to the Teacher/Learner Relationship

Behaviors that demonstrate disrespect for others or lack of professionalism in interpersonal conduct are inappropriate in the teacher/learner relationship. Certain actions are clearly inappropriate and will not be tolerated by the institution. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- unwanted physical contact (e.g. hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing) or the threat of the same;
- loss of personal civility including shouting, personal attacks or insults, verbal threats, or displays of temper (such as slamming or throwing objects);
- dating, romantic, and/or sexual relationships that fail to preserve the integrity of the teacher/learner relationship, as outlined in the [University's Personal Relationships Policy](#) (Policy HR043);
- discrimination or harassment based on sex, gender, marital status, pregnancy, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, veteran status, or other legally protected characteristic, where all such allegations must be reported to the University's [Office of Institutional Equity](#) (oiie@jhu.edu, 410-516-8075) ("OIE");
- requests for others to perform demeaning or inappropriate errands or tasks unrelated to the didactic, investigational, or clinical program or task; and
- grading/evaluation on factors unrelated to performance, effort, or level of achievement.

IV. Avenues for Addressing Inappropriate Behavior in the Teacher/Learner Context

A. Learners' Concerns

Learners may address situations in which they feel that they have been the object of behaviors inappropriate to the teacher/learner relationship at various levels. Initially, the most effective way to handle a situation may be to address it immediately and non-confrontationally. Sometimes, a person may be simply unaware that their behavior has offended someone, and if made aware, will correct the behavior appropriately if given the opportunity to do so in a way that is not threatening. Learners are advised to raise the issue by describing the behavior factually ("When you said..."), describing its impact ("I felt ..."), and stating that the behavior needs to stop ("Please, don't do that again.").

If the initial approach is not successful, the person repeats the behavior, or the learner does not feel comfortable speaking directly to the teacher about their behavior, it may be helpful to discuss the matter with course directors, laboratory mentors, program directors, or department chairs. In addition, learners who have experienced or witnessed learner mistreatment may submit a complaint via the "Resources for Reporting Mistreatment" website at <http://mistreatment-reporting.med.jhmi.edu/>.

Learners may also elect to seek advice and counsel from their respective Associate or Assistant Deans. These individuals may offer suggestions for resolving the matter informally, such as, for example, speaking to the teacher on the learner's behalf or on behalf of an entire class or group, raising the general issue in a faculty meeting, assisting the learner with writing to the individual teacher, or direct intervention.

If no satisfactory resolution is reached after these discussions or if the learner does not feel comfortable speaking to these individuals, the learner may bring the matter to the attention of the School of Medicine administration as outlined in Section IV.C below.

B. Teachers' Concerns

If a teacher feels that a learner has engaged in behaviors inappropriate to the teacher/learner relationship, it likewise may be most effective to address the situation immediately and non-confrontationally. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the teacher should contact the applicable course director, program director, or laboratory mentor to discuss the matter. If the teacher wishes to make a formal complaint of misconduct, they may bring the matter to the attention of the School of Medicine administration through the appropriate individual as outlined in Section IV.C below.

C. Reporting Inappropriate Behavior

The avenues for reporting behaviors inappropriate to the teacher/learner relationship depend upon the status of the individual alleged to have been mistreated ("complainant").

1. If the complainant is a faculty member, the person reporting the behavior should speak with the Vice Dean for Faculty.
If the complainant is a medical student, the person reporting the behavior should speak with the Associate Dean for Medical Student Affairs.
2. If the complainant is a graduate student or M.D./Ph.D. student pursuing their graduate studies, the person reporting the behavior should speak with the Associate Dean for Graduate Biomedical Education or the Director of the M.D./Ph.D. program.
3. If the complainant is a resident or clinical fellow, the person reporting the behavior should speak with the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education.
4. If the complainant is a postdoctoral research fellow, the person reporting the behavior should speak with the Associate Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs.

The allegation(s) will be handled according to this policy and other applicable School of Medicine policies and procedures.

V. Procedures for Handling Allegations of Inappropriate Behavior in the Teacher/Learner Context

- A. Upon being notified of alleged behaviors inappropriate to the teacher/learner relationship, the Associate Dean will promptly notify senior School of Medicine administration officials based upon the status of the individual against whom the allegation is made ("respondent") as follows:
 1. If the respondent is a faculty member, the Vice Dean for Faculty will be notified. The matter may be referred for consideration under the School of Medicine's Procedures for Dealing with Issues of Faculty Professional Misconduct.
 2. If the respondent is a medical student, the Associate Dean for Medical Student Affairs will be notified. The matter may be referred for consideration under the University's Student Conduct Code.
 3. If the respondent is a graduate student, the Associate Dean for Graduate Biomedical Education will be notified. The matter may be referred for consideration under the University's Student Conduct Code.
 4. If the respondent is a post-graduate trainee (*i.e.*, resident or clinical fellow), the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education will be notified. The matter may be referred for consideration under the School of Medicine's Probation, Suspension and Dismissal of Residents/Clinical Fellows Policy.

5. If the respondent is a postdoctoral research fellow, the Associate Dean for Postdoctoral Affairs will be notified. The matter may be referred for consideration under the School of Medicine's Probation, Suspension, and Termination Policy for Postdoctoral Fellows.

The applicable Associate Dean will notify the respondent of the receipt of the allegation and assemble relevant information. The applicable Associate Dean will review the information, reach a determination on findings and recommendations, and communicate the same to the respondent in writing.

Efforts will be made to keep the complainant apprised of any major updates throughout the processes outlined above, as appropriate and in a manner consistent with applicable policies and procedures, including those regarding confidentiality.

- B. If the alleged behavior involves potentially unlawful discrimination or harassment, the matter will be referred to OIE and will be handled through University policies established for OIE, including those regarding notification of outcome. The complainant may also directly contact OIE.
- C. If the alleged behavior involves unwanted physical contact or other forms of violent or threatening acts, the matter may be referred for evaluation under the [University's Policy Addressing Campus Violence](#) (Policy OPS300) or other applicable policies.
- D. The School of Medicine is committed to the fair treatment of all individuals involved in this process. Efforts will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the process to the extent possible and subject to the overriding concern of a prompt and fair review and/or resolution of the allegation.
- E. The School of Medicine will not tolerate any form of retaliatory behavior toward individuals who make allegations in good faith. Individuals who believe that action has been taken against them in retaliation for raising concerns under this policy should report those concerns through the procedures described in this policy.
- F. If it is determined that the allegation(s) from the person reporting the behavior or complainant were not made in good faith, they may be referred for disciplinary action under the applicable University or School of Medicine policies or procedures.