

University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine Code of Professionalism and Ethical Conduct

Preamble:

As an institution of healthcare and higher education, the University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC) is committed to the pursuit and development of knowledge, delivery of competent clinical care, and academic excellence. Each member (students,¹ staff,² and faculty²) of the School of Dental Medicine (SDM) community shall be expected to uphold and embody the [Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct](#) set forth by the American Dental Association (ADA) guidelines in order to establish an environment conducive to education, research and patient care. By establishing these codes of conduct, professionalism,³ and ethical behavior, the ultimate goal of this document is to insure that all students, staff and faculty in the SDM share a collective responsibility for maintaining the highest ethical standards and professional conduct in their relationships with each other and with patients.

The Code of Professionalism and Ethical Conduct (“the Code”) is not intended to dictate behavior or set forth regulations that act in a disciplinary fashion when conduct is breached. The main purpose of the Code is to act as a guide for appropriate and acceptable behavior and to uphold the traditions and integrity of the healthcare professions. While the compact cannot fully address every ethical situation that may develop, it shall attempt to serve as a model to invoke appropriate behavior in three areas of conduct: Academic, Professional, and Clinical.

Academic: All members of the SDM community involved in the academic process shall abide by the regulations of the UCHC Honor Board and conduct themselves in the appropriate manner as delineated in the [UCHC Honor Code](#).

Professional: All members of the SDM community are expected to manifest the highest level of professional behavior towards each other as well as in the doctor-patient relationship.

¹ Includes predoctoral dental students, graduate and combined degree students, and residents in certificate programs.

² Nothing in this policy shall be construed to violate the rights of staff and faculty established under union contracts. If and to the extent that there is conflict between this policy and a relevant union contract, the terms of the union contract will prevail.

³ See Appendix I

Clinical: Proper and appropriate clinical conduct is essential to comprehensive patient care. Anyone involved in the clinical setting, whether they are in direct, or indirect patient contact, shall be expected to comply with appropriate clinical conduct. Professionalism and ethical behavior are integral components of the healthcare professions and must be diligently observed to maintain the integrity of the profession. Appropriate clinical behavior is specified in the SDM clinic manual.

To aid in the understanding, execution and reinforcement of the above areas of conduct, the following guiding principles shall be the framework for the three areas of conduct. Lapses in professional conduct by faculty, staff and students shall be handled as described in Appendix III. Breaches or suspected breaches of academic integrity should be handled as described in the [UCHC Student Honor Code](#). Breaches or suspected breaches of research integrity should be reported as described in the [Review of Alleged Misconduct of Research Policy](#).

Guiding Principles:⁴

- 1) Mutual Respect: The diversity of our society, and the necessity to achieve diversity in our profession, obligates teachers and learners to respect each individual, at all times and in all settings. All individuals must be treated fairly and equitably, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age (40 and over), sex, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability status, veteran status, genetic information, political belief, political affiliation, membership or non-membership in any labor organization, or any other characteristic protected by law. Teachers must set the example, and learners must emulate their teachers.
- 2) Integrity: Teachers and learners must uphold the highest level of integrity, in the classroom, in the laboratory, in the clinic, and in their personal conduct. In all these settings, integrity demands honesty, truthfulness, and respect for the rights, property and physical well-being of others, including confidentiality. Integrity also demands positive action when unprofessional or unethical behavior is observed.
- 3) Commitment: Teachers must be committed to the highest professional standards in all interactions with learners, colleagues and patients. Teachers must provide the best information possible in an environment conducive to

⁴ Adapted from [Compact Between Teachers and Learners of Medicine](#) (AAMC guidelines). "Learners" includes students at all levels; "teachers" includes faculty and staff, as well as students involved in a teaching role, at UCHC and at off-campus locations.

learning, and are obligated to provide fair and impartial assessments of learners' performance. Teachers also must respect the confidentiality of learners' assessments, and may divulge them only in appropriate settings. Teachers must realize that individual learners acquire their knowledge in different fashions and at different rates. Teachers also must respect the other obligations that learners have, both within and outside of the university. Learners must be committed to acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors required of dental professionals. Learners must respect the fact that individual teachers have different styles of teaching and transmit information in different ways. As learners begin to apply their new knowledge and skills, they must do so in a fashion consistent with the highest professional standards. Learners also have a commitment to assist their fellow learners in meeting their professional obligations.

- 4) Communication: Communication is essential to learning, and teachers are responsible for fostering an environment in which communication is open and encouraged. Teachers are expected to clearly communicate their expectations of learners at the beginning of each course and clinic session. Teachers and learners must be open to legitimate questions and constructive criticism. Learners also must be assured that, to the extent possible, confidential discussions with teachers will remain confidential.

Professional Demeanor:⁵

Professional demeanor addresses the ethical and moral behavior expected of all School of Dental Medicine personnel, as well as the appropriateness and safety issues associated with proper dress in the workplace. Specific policy relative to Professional Demeanor is as follows:

- 1) Professional Conduct: Dental learners and teachers are expected to be honorable at all times, to possess moral integrity, and to treat others with respect. They will not lie, cheat, steal or plagiarize, mislead or deceive, or facilitate academic dishonesty.
- 2) Diligence: Learners are expected to attend class and laboratory sessions as required and be prepared for the day's activities. Teachers are expected to be available and prepared to carry out their assignments.
- 3) Interpersonal relationships: Appropriate role boundaries between SDM personnel and patients must be maintained. It is the responsibility of the teacher to insure that social and professional interactions with learners are

⁵ See Appendix II for links to relevant University of Connecticut, University of Connecticut Health Center, and other organizational codes and policies.

appropriate. No behavior suggesting favoritism of one individual over another is permitted. This includes the giving and accepting of gifts between patients, faculty, staff and students. The SDM considers the standards set forth in the State Code of Ethics to be guiding with regard to the giving and accepting of gifts between and among members of our community.

- 4) Professional Appearance and Clothing Policy: When contacting the public/patients, the appearance and clothing of faculty, staff and students must be neat, clean, dignified and in apparent good condition. Where applicable, appropriate protective clothing must be worn in accordance with Federal and State safety standards.
- 5) Use of UCHC and SDM resources: Institutional resources such as classrooms, laboratories, clinics, library facilities, research and clinical instruments, computer hardware and software, and internet services are provided for the purposes of education, research and patient care. Use of these resources for personal business is allowed only where prior written approval has been obtained in accordance with applicable Health Center policy (such as consulting activities). Use of UCHC and SDM resources must be appropriate to the situation, in accord with accepted professional, moral and ethical standards, and in compliance with UCHC and SDM policies.
- 6) Full-time adherence to the Code: The SDM will use a variety of communication methods to inform members of its community about the Code of Conduct (See Appendix V). All members of the SDM community will be expected to abide by the Code of Conduct in all situations and at all locations on and beyond the UCHC campus. Unprofessional behavior at off-campus locations reflects badly on the individual, the SDM and the University. Reports of unprofessional behavior will be referred to the SDM Code of Conduct Committee regardless of the location where it occurred.

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Appendix I

Professionalism⁶

While knowledge and technical skills are crucial in dentistry and science, the manner in which they are used is equally important. In addition to competence in their field, all dental professionals must strive to retain those humanistic qualities - integrity, respect, and compassion - that constitute the essence of professionalism. The core of professionalism thus includes altruism, accountability, excellence, duty, service, honor, integrity, and respect for others. These qualities apply to all aspects of the professional's life, including the relationships between dental and medical professionals, between specialties, and between professional organizations.

Altruism is the essence of professionalism. The best interest of others including patients, colleagues, mentors and trainees, rather than self-interest, is the rule.

Accountability. Dental professionals are accountable to their patients, colleagues and society as a whole for the oral health needs of the public and the advancement of science. They are accountable to their profession for adhering to dentistry's time-honored ethical principles.

Excellence is a conscientious effort to exceed expectations and to make a commitment to life-long learning. Commitment to excellence is an acknowledged goal for all dental professionals and should begin on the first day of dental school.

Duty is the free acceptance of a commitment to service. This commitment entails being available and responsive when needed, accepting inconvenience to meet the needs of patients, advocating the best possible care regardless of ability to pay, seeking active roles in teaching and professional organizations, and volunteering skills and expertise for the welfare of the community. Dental professionals, therefore, are encouraged to participate in professional organizations, community programs and institutional committees.

Honor and integrity are the consistent regard for the highest standards of behavior and the refusal to violate personal and professional codes. They imply

⁶ Adapted with permission from the University of Kansas School of Medicine Professionalism Initiative.

being fair and truthful, keeping one's word and meeting commitments. They also require recognition of possible conflicts of interest and avoidance of relationships that allow personal gain to supersede the best interest of the profession.

Respect for others, including patients and their families and other professional colleagues is the essence of humanism, which is both central to professionalism, and fundamental to enhancing collegiality among dental and medical professionals.

A personal commitment to life-long learning is essential to assure the highest quality of dental care and scientific progress and stay abreast with the constant changes in scientific information, technology and tools. This commitment must be accepted from the very beginning, and must be honored throughout one's life as a dentist and scientist.

The dental profession, and academic dentistry in particular, is recognized by society for its service to societal goals, its commitment to oral health care and the advancement of knowledge. Professionalism is enhanced by the high standards of the educational environment and its dedication to collegiality, support of formal mentoring programs, and formal recognition of faculty, staff and student role models. As members of the academic dental and medical communities, all faculty, staff and students are obligated to set an example for others in and beyond the UCHC community.

The values of professionalism as described above combine to create a milieu which enhances patient care, a continued commitment to scholarship and high standards of research, the health care needs of society, and the ability of all colleagues in the health professions to interact and carry out their responsibilities optimally.

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Appendix II

University of Connecticut, University of Connecticut Health Center and other Organizational Codes and Policies:

University of Connecticut Code of Conduct

<http://www.audit.uconn.edu/doc/codeofconduct.pdf>

UHC Rules of Conduct

http://www.policies.uhc.edu/policies/policy_2002_3.pdf

Affirmative Action Policy Statement

http://www.policies.uhc.edu/policies/policy_2002_44.pdf

Conflicts of Interest in Research

<http://www.compliance.uconn.edu/conflict.html>

Drug Free Workplace and Alcohol Abuse Policy

http://www.policies.uhc.edu/policies/policy_2003_39.pdf

FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act)

<http://grad.uhc.edu/current/pdfs/ferpa.pdf>

HIV/AIDS Institutional Policies and Guidelines

www.policies.uhc.edu/policies/policy_2002_45.pdf

<http://diversity.uhc.edu/affirmaction/pdfs/hiv aids.pdf>

Racism and Acts of Intolerance Policy Statement

http://www7.uhc.edu/ppf/policies/pdfs/policy_racism.pdf

Review of Alleged Misconduct of Research Policy and Procedures

http://www.policies.uhc.edu/policies/policy_2003_41.pdf

Sexual Harassment Prohibition Statement

http://www.policies.uhc.edu/policies/policy_2002_48.pdf

Common Space Use Policy

http://www.policies.uhc.edu/policies/policy_2002_50.pdf

Workplace Violence Task Force

http://www.policies.uhc.edu/policies/policy_2004_07.pdf

Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens

<http://www.ors.uhc.edu/ehs/xposplan.html>

American Student Dental Association Student Code of Ethics

<http://www.asdanet.org/about/structure/policies/government.asp - E-7>

American Student Dental Association Policy on Faculty-Student Interaction

<http://www.asdanet.org/about/structure/policies/government.asp - E-8>

American Dental Education Association Statement on Professionalism in Dental Education

<http://www.adea.org/Pages/Professionalism.aspx>

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Appendix III

Procedures for Reporting Violations

1) Informal resolution of the complaint:

- a) When alleged violations of the Code of Conduct occur, involved persons should attempt to achieve a resolution among themselves. This may be accomplished by the witness(es) approaching the violator(s) and discussing the violation with him/her/them. Alternatively, the witness may approach a staff supervisor, faculty member, course director, division chief or department head, who may then discuss the alleged violation with the accused individual(s).

2) Formal complaints:

- a) If the issue remains unresolved, or if the witness does not feel that s/he can approach the other individual, the witness or other involved individuals shall file a formal written complaint to the Code of Conduct Committee (CCC) within five business days⁷ of the suspected violation.
- b) A formal written complaint form (see Appendix IV) is available on the Course Documents page of each dental class in Blackboard (<http://blackboard.uchc.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>) or through the Code of Conduct links on the SDM web page (<http://sdm.uchc.edu/current/index.html> or <http://sdm.uchc.edu/faculty/index.html>). Submission instructions are clearly stated on the complaint form.
- c) The individual submitting the complaint must identify him-/herself on the complaint form; anonymous complaints are not acceptable.
- d) Confidentiality must be maintained throughout the investigation and hearing process to the extent allowed by law.

Code of Conduct Committee (CCC)

1) The roles of the CCC are to:

- a) Investigate alleged violations of the Code of Conduct to determine if the complaint has merit. If a complaint has merit/probable cause the committee determines whether a Hearing Committee should be convened, if the complaint should be forwarded to another appropriate forum (e.g.,

⁷ The time frames for all actions specified in these procedures must be adhered to, except in extenuating circumstances when a delay may be approved by the Dean.

Honor Board, Academic Performance Committee), or if the complaint has no merit and should be dismissed.

- b) Refer the complaint to Human Resources if the complaint has merit and a collective bargaining unit is involved.
- c) To constitute a Hearing Committee if the complaint is deemed to have merit. Consult with Human Resources prior to taking any action.

2) Composition of the CCC:

- a) The CCC consists of three primary members: one full-time SDM faculty member of senior rank appointed by the Dean, one SDM staff member appointed by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and one predoctoral dental student, appointed by the Associate Dean for Students. The faculty and staff members will serve staggered two-year terms, and may be reappointed for up to two additional two-year terms. The student member will serve a one-year term, and may be reappointed for one additional one-year term.
- b) Alternate members of the CCC will be selected by the same process as the primary members, and will serve in the event that a primary member of the CCC is the individual filing the complaint or is the individual accused of the alleged violation, or is otherwise unable to serve (illness, out-of-town, conflict of interest).
- c) The faculty member will serve as Chair of the CCC. The CCC Chair also will chair the Hearing Committee.

3) Investigation of an alleged violation:

- a) Following receipt of a complaint, the CCC shall meet to discuss the alleged violation, and determine how the complaint will be investigated. When a complaint involves a faculty or staff member, with or without union membership, the CCC will contact Human Resources for general advice on review of the complaint.
- b) The CCC may interview the individual(s) making the complaint, the individual(s) accused of the alleged violation, or any other individuals with knowledge of the alleged violation. The CCC may review any documents, including letters, emails, recorded conversations or videos, examination materials, etc., relevant to the alleged violation.
- c) The CCC must complete their investigation and make a recommendation to the Dean as to the disposition of the complaint within 10 business days of receipt of the complaint.

4) Disposition of the Complaint:

- a) If the CCC finds that the complaint has no merit, the complaint will be dismissed and the accused individual(s) and the individual(s) making the

- complaint will be notified. All records, notes and other materials arising from the investigation shall be destroyed.
- b) If the complaint would be handled more appropriately in another forum, the CCC will forward the complaint and the findings of their investigation to the Chair of the appropriate board or committee.
 - c) If the complaint is found to have merit and the accused is a student or faculty member, who is not a member of the AAUP, the CCC will constitute a Hearing Committee.
 - d) If the complaint is found to have merit and the accused is a staff or faculty member represented by a union, the complaint will be forwarded to Human Resources for appropriate action, consistent with union contracts.

Hearing Committee

- 1) The roles of the Hearing Committee are to:
 - a) Conduct a hearing to introduce evidence and to hear statements from the individual(s) accused of the alleged violation or from individuals in support of the accused, the individual(s) making the complaint and other individuals with knowledge of the alleged violation.
 - b) Based on the evidence and testimony presented at the hearing, to make a recommendation to the Dean.
- 2) Composition of the Hearing Committee:
 - a) The Hearing Committee will consist of the three members of the CCC, one additional faculty member, and one additional student member. The Chair of the CCC, in consultation with the Dean, will select the faculty member, and in consultation with the Associate Dean for Students, will select the student member. If the accused individual is a faculty member, the faculty member selected for the Hearing Committee must be from a different department. If the accused individual is a predoctoral student, the predoctoral student member selected for the Hearing Committee shall be from a different year than the accused student. If the accused individual is a postdoctoral student, the student member selected for the Hearing Committee shall be a postdoctoral student from a different program than the accused student.
 - b) *Ad hoc* Hearing Committee members may be appointed by the CCC, in consultation with the Dean and the Associate Deans, as deemed necessary.

Faculty Advocate

- 1) Role of the Faculty Advocate:
 - a) The Faculty Advocate serves to advise, counsel and support a student

accused of an alleged violation of the Code of Conduct. The Faculty Advocate works with the student before, during and after the Hearing on the alleged violation. The Faculty Advocate may help the student organize his/her appeal in a reasonable and logical fashion, and present that appeal during the hearing. The Faculty Advocate may confer with the Hearing Committee Chair regarding the circumstances of the case.

- b) The Associate Dean for Students normally will serve as the Faculty Advocate. If the Associate Dean for Students has a conflict of interest, or the accused student requests that another faculty member serve as Faculty Advocate, the Dean will appoint a faculty member to serve as Faculty Advocate for that case only.

Conduct of the Hearing

1) Participants:

- a) All members of the CCC, the faculty, student and ad hoc members of the Hearing Committee, the accused individual(s), the Faculty Advocate, and all witnesses must attend the Hearing.

2) Timing of the Hearing:

- a) The Hearing will be held within 10 business days following determination that the complaint merits a Hearing. If the accused requires additional time to gather evidence or prepare a defense, or if crucial witnesses are unavailable, a delay of up to 10 additional business days may be granted by the CCC Chair.

3) Proceedings:

- a) The Hearing Committee Chair will read the written summary of the investigation, witnesses will give their testimony and evidence may be presented, and the accused may address the Committee. If the accused is a student and so desires, the Faculty Advocate may speak on his/her behalf.
- b) The Hearing Committee will then meet in executive session to discuss the evidence and testimony, and make a decision whether the evidence and testimony support the accusation or not. All members of the Hearing Committee have a vote, and a simple majority is required. The Hearing Committee will then consider previous violations by the accused. The Committee then proposes a recommendation for resolution of the incident, again determined by majority vote.
- c) The Hearing Committee then meets with the accused individual(s), and the Faculty Advocate as appropriate, to present the recommendation. The CCC Chair will prepare a written report of the Hearing, which is forwarded to the Dean, with copies distributed to all members of the Hearing Committee, the accused, and the Faculty Advocate.

Recommendations of the Hearing Committee

- 1) If a faculty member is determined to be at fault, recommendations may include:
 - a) Counseling.
 - b) Probation, counseling and education.
 - c) Notification of Senior Appointments and Promotion Committee.
- 2) If a student is determined to be at fault, recommendations may include:
 - a) Warning and counseling.
 - b) Probation, counseling and education.
 - c) Suspension, counseling and education.
 - d) Expulsion.
- 3) Disposition of the recommendation:
 - a) The recommendation will be sent to the SDM Dean or higher official as appropriate for final review and implementation.
 - b) The Dean or higher official will make a decision on the recommendation without unnecessary delay.

Appeals

- 1) Faculty:
 - a) The accused faculty member has the right to appeal the decision of the Dean to the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs or equivalent, or to the Health Center Appeals Committee.
 - b) Further appeals will be in accordance with the Health Center faculty grievance procedures (<http://facultygrievances.uhc.edu/>) and University By-Laws (<http://www.policy.uconn.edu/2011-03-23-By-Laws-Revised.pdf>).
- 2) Students:
 - a) The accused student has the right to appeal the decision of the Dean to the Student Evaluation and Appeals Committee (http://sdm.uhc.edu/pdfs/studenteval_appeals.pdf).

Flow Chart of Events

1. Parties attempt to resolve dispute informally and create record of event with manager, Team Leader, Associate Dean for Students, Division Chair or Department Head.
2. If informal resolution is not possible, claimant submits formal complaint to the CCC Faculty Advisor within ten working days of incident.

3. The Faculty Advisor removes all names and submits the complaint to the CCC for review.
4. If an infraction is deemed within the scope of this committee, a formal investigation will be performed by appropriate members of the CCC.
5. Upon completion of investigation, the Faculty Advisor will convene a formal hearing.
6. Formal hearing takes place within ten business days of the formal complaint
7. CCC forwards a recommendation to the Department Head, Associate Dean for Students or SDM Dean within 72 hours of the hearing, and the accused is notified verbally and in writing of case status
8. Accused may appeal CCC decision to the SDM Dean within seven business days.
9. SDM Dean appoints *ad hoc* appeals committee, which meets within ten business days.
10. *Ad hoc* appeals committee forwards its recommendation to the SDM Dean.
11. Further appeals are conducted according to University By-Laws.

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Appendix V

Notification:

1. A copy of the Code will be posted on the SDM website with appropriate links.
2. All current employees, staff, and faculty will receive an e-mail copy of the Code. When an e-mail address is not available, a good faith attempt will be made to inform the individual by other means.
3. New employee staff and faculty will receive a copy of the Code during orientation.
4. New students and residents will receive a copy of the Code in their prematriculation orientation materials.
5. It will be the responsible of each SDM Division to ensure that their volunteer faculty receive a copy of the Code