Dartmouth
GEISEL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Learning Environment Policy and Complaint Review Procedures

Summary of Purpose

This Learning Environment Policy (this "Policy") was created to confirm expectations for interpersonal academic and professional conduct in the learning environment of the Undergraduate Medical Education ("UME") program at the Geisel School of Medicine ("Geisel"), to encourage conduct supportive of these expectations, and to clarify procedures for the filing and review of complaints for violations of these expectations.

Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all members of the Geisel academic community engaged in the UME Program.

Definitions

Professionalism: The set of skills and competencies expected of members of our profession including a shared set of principles and expectations. Expectations for professional conduct for students are further set out in the applicable student handbooks and the UME Student Professionalism Policy, while expectations for faculty, staff and non-faculty academics are set out in other policies on professional conduct applicable to such groups (e.g., but not limited to the Geisel Policy on Expectations for Professionalism for Faculty, Non-Faculty and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Code of Ethical Conduct).

Mistreatment: [1]The Association of American Medical Colleges defines mistreatment as behavior that shows disrespect for the dignity of others and unreasonably interferes with the learning process. Many examples of mistreatment may be explicitly covered by Dartmouth's broader policies on nondiscrimination, research misconduct, sexual or gender-based misconduct, or other institutional policies or by law.

Examples of conduct that may be mistreatment include, but are not limited to:

[1] https://students.med.psu.edu/academics/respectful-learning-environment/definitions/; http://med.stanford.edu/md/student-affairs/student-wellness/mistreatment.html

- Being subject to or an observer of offensive remarks, including those directed against race,color, citizenship, national origin, regional origin, religion/spirituality (and atheism), sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital or parental status, disease state, age, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information, military or veteran status, political affiliation, or any other category protected by law or Dartmouth/Geisel policy[2].
- Receiving lower grades or lesser evaluations predicated on criteria enumerated above.
- Being asked to perform personal services for supervisors including, but not limited to obtaining food or running errands not related to clinical care or academic obligations.
- Being subject to any behavior that is prohibited by Dartmouth's Sexual and Gender based Misconduct Policy.
- Holding students responsible for academic/clinical obligations not clearly delineated and/or for making detrimental assessments of students based uponacademic/clinical obligations not clearly delineated.
- Being subject to retaliation with respect to any protected activity, such as the good faith reporting of a suspected violation of applicable laws, government or Dartmouth/Geisel policies.
- Taking inappropriate credit for the contribution of a student or other team member, including not providing appropriate acknowledgment on scholarly work(e.g., as expected by Geisel according to ICMJE guidelines).
- Pressuring students to not abide by their work hour limits.
- Pressuring students to perform patient care duties without sufficient training or supervision.
- Threatened or actual violence against individuals or damage to property (e.g., throwing objects, slamming doors).

To determine if conduct may constitute mistreatment, individuals may contact the Director of the Learning Environment (DLE), course/clerkship directors, student advisors, any of the Associate Deans (Student Life, Pre-clerkship, Clinical, Diversity and Inclusion) or the Learning Environment, Student Life or DICE offices at Geisel.

Individuals should also contact the Learning Environment, Student Life or DICE offices at Geisel for assistance in filing a report under the appropriate policy and procedures.

In adhering to the stated goal that Geisel is committed to fostering an environment that promotes academic and professional success in learners and teachers at all levels, we support and strongly encourage reports of positive and inclusive learning environments so we may publicly recognize students, staff, faculty, residents, nurses, and others who contribute positively to the Geisel educational experience.

[2] For acts of bias against members of a protected class, please also consider notifying Dartmouth Inclusive Excellence/Achieving Community Together, and please note that if you report behavior that violates Dartmouth's nondiscrimination policy, faculty and staff may be obligated to report this to the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity at Dartmouth.

Procedures for acknowledging behaviors for promoting a positive and inclusive learning environment and for reporting potential unprofessional behavior/mistreatment are set out below.

Policy Statement

Geisel is committed to fostering an environment that promotes academic and professional success in learners and teachers at all levels. Members of our learning community are responsible for treating each other with mutual respect, and for acting in appropriate ways to monitor and continuously develop behaviors that are consistent with applicable professionalism policies.

The vast majority of Geisel community members engage in conduct that is supportive of a positive and inclusive learning environment, and Geisel encourages reports of such conduct so that the positive contributions of students, staff, faculty, healthcare providers, and community members to the Geisel educational experience may be recognized.

Mistreatment of any member of the Geisel community is inappropriate and will not be tolerated. Students and others who witness or experience mistreatment are strongly encouraged to address it as described in the reporting protocols referenced below. Processes for reporting and addressing a complaint of mistreatment or other unprofessional behaviors by faculty, non-faculty academic (NFA) appointees, and other non-NFA staff at Geisel[3] are set out in the Procedures for Reporting andResolution of Complaints Against Faculty and Non-Faculty Academics, and Staff of the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth.

Procedures

Reporting Procedures

[3] As defined in the document entitled, Appointments Promotions and Titles at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth, or “APT Document”.

Reports of supportive conduct or of mistreatment may be filed in connection with the conduct of:

- Geisel faculty members (at the Academic Medical Center including Geisel School of Medicine, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, and the White River Junction Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and all affiliated locations)
- Other Dartmouth students (all programs)
- Other Geisel or Dartmouth staff members
- Members of the community (including non-faculty clinical staff members or other employeesof clinical affiliates, patients, and patients' families)

Supportive conduct may be reported using the Report of Positive Learning Environment form.

Mistreatment may be reported using the Student Mistreatment Report form.

Both forms are available for use at any time via the Office of the Learning Environment webpage and links to them are included in all post-course and post-clerkship surveys, and on all course learning management system (Canvas) pages.

Please note that where individuals engaging in alleged mistreatment are not Geisel or Dartmouth College community members (for example, a patient or member of a patient's family; Dartmouth-Hitchcock staff without Geisel appointments), Geisel will take steps as appropriate and in accordance with applicable law to ensure that the alleged mistreatment is reported to the appropriate entity (e.g., Dartmouth-Hitchcock Human Resources) and to ensure that appropriate supportive measures are put in place where possible for any Geisel community member who is adversely affected by this mistreatment.

In addition to the Student Mistreatment Report form, there are many ways in which students may report an incident of alleged mistreatment (or other violations of applicable policies on appropriate conduct), including via:

- Dartmouth's EthicsPoint Hotline (anonymous)
  - https://student-affairs.dartmouth.edu/resources/student-resources/dartmouth-compliance-and-ethics-hotline

- Dartmouth College's Office of Human Resources
  - https://www.dartmouth.edu/hr/

- Safety and Security at Dartmouth
  - https://www.dartmouth.edu/security/

- Dartmouth's Title IX Office (for reports of sexual or gender-based misconduct)
  - https://sexual-respect.dartmouth.edu/compliance/title-ix/about-title-ix

- Dartmouth's Inclusive Excellence/Achieving Community Together reporting form (for incidents that may undermine the Dartmouth Principle of Community, such as acts of biasagainst members of a protected class).

- The Dartmouth College Ombuds Office ombuds@dartmouth.edu

- The Associate Deans and/or leadership in the Geisel Dean's Office (including the Dean of Faculty Affairs, the Executive Dean for Administration, or the Dean's Chief of Staff).

- The Geisel Office of Student Life (see offices/officers at: https://geiselmed.dartmouth.edu/students/about/staff_information/)

- Contacting your course or Clerkship Director.

Complaint Review Procedures

Unless otherwise specified by superseding polices, when Geisel receives a report of mistreatment that may have an impact on an UME student, such reports will be referred to the Director of the Learning Environment (DLE). If complaints/reports received by the DLE have not already been lodged with appropriate Dartmouth or Geisel offices (e.g., the Title IX Office). The DLE will refer incoming reports to the appropriate office or individuals as required by any superseding Dartmouth/Geisel policy or by law (e.g., any faculty member receiving a complaint related to sexual or gender-based misconduct must refer that information to the Dartmouth College Title IX Office).

For reports that would not be handled via other Dartmouth/Geisel policies and procedures, and where action through the Geisel Office of the Learning Environment is otherwise appropriate, the DLE will de-identify the report, and have it screened by the Committee on Respectful Learning Environment (CRLE). The following individuals will constitute voting members of the CRLE: a pre-clerkship Geisel faculty member, three clinical Geisel faculty members, the Student Government Chair(s) for Diversity, two additional students who serve as DICE or other Student Government Representatives in Phase 2 or 3, a member of nursing leadership, a DHMC resident, and one other clinical health professional (nonphysician) engage in the UME program (e.g., staff member, advanced practice provider, social worker, psychologist). Voting members shall serve renewable terms of three years. The DLE and Associate Dean for Student Life (ADSL) shall serve on the CRLE as non-voting members.

The CRLE will determine if the complaint might constitute mistreatment, and if additional information needs to be gathered related to the report. This might include but would not be limited to interviewing the complainant, interviewing the reported source of mistreatment, and/or interviewing any witnesses to the incident. The complainant would be informed if there is a need for more information to be gathered and could withdraw a report at that time. The DLE would also have access to and be able to review documentation related to the complaint, including but not limited to written notes, course evaluations, emails, and text messages.

Once the DLE has reviewed the complaint and relevant additional data, the information will be de-identified and shared with the CRLE, which determines whether the reported instance constitutes “mistreatment.” Depending on this determination, the CRLE will refer the reported instance to the appropriate Geisel/Dartmouth office or procedure, or, as appropriate and in accordance with applicable data privacy requirements, to the appropriate Geisel clinical affiliate, for further review. Unless otherwise provided by superseding policies, and where possible due to the nature of the complaint, students and other reporting parties may choose to be identified or remain de-identified during this process and will given an opportunity to express reasonable preferences regarding the timing of action undertaken through the CRLE. If a complaint includes a member of the CRLE or a close associate (e.g., a clinical partner, other close relationship) that committee members shall recuse themselves from review of the case.

Students who provide their name in a report will be given direct individual feedback on the outcome by the DLE to the extent possible. Students might also choose to name a surrogate party to receive feedback through, while not entering their name in a report. This surrogate could be a coach, another dean, an advisor, course or clerkship director. The student would need to talk with their surrogate in order to receive feedback through them. A student who chooses to remain anonymous would not receive any individual feedback on the outcome of the reporting. Aggregate reporting will occur through semi-annual written reports and presentations to the student body and the greater Geisel community.

It is important to note that it may not be possible to provide feedback on reports of alleged mistreatment due to laws such as those protecting the confidentiality of personnel, student and/or patient records.

Reporting Mistreatment Concerns Regarding Grading

Students who believe that a faculty member or other clinical supervisor may evaluate or grade them unfairly in a course or a clinical rotation, based on comments made in their presence, are encouraged to report their concerns to the DLE or another reporting party before the course ends. If an evaluation or grade is given that may be the result of mistreatment (i.e.: misunderstanding, bias, or discrimination) students are encouraged to report those concerns to the DLE or another reporting party if there is a concern. Such cases will receive expedited review by the CRLE. However, the CRLE review of the complaint does not mean that any communication with involved parties or the course leadership would automatically occur. Reporting students would retain the ability to submit preferences regarding the timing, next steps, and sequencing of further data collection in addressing the complaint. Students are permitted to contest their grades through the Grade Appeal Policy UME-CNTRL-0015.pdf. This includes an opportunity to provide details as to when they believe that mistreatment impacted their grade or narrative evaluation in the course.

Retaliation

Members of the Geisel academic community engaged in the UME Program are reminded that retaliation with respect to any protected activity, such as the good faith reporting of a suspected violation of applicable Geisel/Dartmouth policies (including this Learning Environment Policy) is prohibited. Retaliation means engaging in conduct that may reasonably be perceived to:

- Adversely affects a person's educational, living, or work environment because of their goodfaith participation in protected activities.
- Discourage another person from making a report (e.g., on professionalism) or participatingin any review or other investigative activities associated with such reports.

LCME Standard

Standard 3.5 Learning Environment/Professionalism

A Medical school ensures that the learning environment of its medical education program is conducive to the ongoing development of explicit and appropriate professional behaviors in its medical students, faculty and staff at all locations and is one in which all individuals are treated with respect. The medical school and its clinical affiliates share the responsibility for periodic evaluation of the learning environment in order to identify positive and negative influences on the maintenance of professional standards, develop and conduct appropriate strategies to enhance positive and mitigate negative influences, as well as identify and promptly correction violations of professional standards.

Standard 3.6 Student Mistreatment

A medical education program defines and publicizes its code of professional conduct for the relationships between medical students, including visiting medical students, and those individuals with whom students interact during the medical education program. A medical school develops effective written policies that address violations of the code, has effective mechanisms in place for a prompt response to any complaints, and supports educational activities aimed at preventing inappropriate behavior. Mechanisms for reporting violations of the code of professional conduct are understood by medical students, including visiting medical students, and ensure that any violations can be registered and investigated without fear of retaliation.

Related Information: Documents, Policies, Links, Etc.

- Professionalism Policy-Undergraduate Medical Education Program
- Expectations for Professionalism for the Faculty and Staff at Geisel Policy and ProceduresSexual and Gender-Based Misconduct Policy and Procedures (Dartmouth)
- EO/AA and non-discrimination policies (Dartmouth)
- Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures (Dartmouth)

Note: policies and procedures set out in documents noted below may supersede Geisel policies whenactivities are outside the scope of Geisel-specific responsibilities and may apply, in addition to Geisel policies when overlap of authority exists.

- Notice of Non-discrimination in Health Programs (D-H)
- Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion, No FEAR and Whistleblower Rightsand Protection Statement (WRJ-VAMC)
- Research Compliance (D-H)
- Research Misconduct (WRJ-VAMC)
- Code of Ethical Conduct and policies on Clinical Consultation (D-H)
- Code of Ethical Business Conduct (Dartmouth)
- Privacy rights (D-H)

Policy Administration

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Reviewed By	Office of Learning Environment	**Effective**	January 18, 2021
Approved By	Office of Student Life	**Last Date Approved**	December 15, 2020

Policy Contact Information

Geisel Learning Environment Office
Geisel.Learning.Environment@dartmouth.edu

History

Date	History
January 18, 2021	Policy was created and put into effect.
December 15, 2022	Policy was reviewed and revised.
April 15, 2025	Updated to new policy template.

Background

None.