

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE GUIDELINES FOR THE TEACHER-LEARNER RELATIONSHIP

The University of Virginia School of Medicine strives to achieve a respectful, cooperative, and professional environment for students in the School of Medicine and affiliated educational and clinical settings. Effective learning is best fostered in an environment of mutual respect between teachers and learners. Thus, UVA SOM expects all teachers and learners¹ to share responsibility for creating an appropriate learning environment that encompasses both formal learning activities and the attitudes, values, and informal “lessons” conveyed as teachers and learners interact across all educational and clinical settings. Recognizing the nature of the teacher-learner relationship – defined in part by formal pedagogy, professional role modeling, mentorship, and supervision – teachers and learners should develop relationships characterized by mutual trust, acceptance and confidence, acknowledge the potential for conflict of interest and respect appropriate boundaries. To this end, UVA SOM expects all teachers and learners to be familiar with the Association of American Medical Colleges’ *Compact Between Teachers and Learners of Medicine* and to adhere to the guiding spirit captured in their listing of teacher and learner responsibilities as adapted for UVA SOM.

COMPACT BETWEEN TEACHERS AND LEARNERS OF MEDICINE

Preparation for a career in medicine demands the acquisition of a large fund of knowledge and skills. It also demands the strengthening of those virtues that undergird the doctor-patient relationship and that sustain the moral and ethical obligations of the profession of medicine. This Compact serves both as a pledge and as a reminder to teachers and learners that their conduct in fulfilling their mutual obligations is the medium through which the profession inculcates its ethical values.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

DUTY: Medical educators have a duty, not only to convey the knowledge and skills required for delivering the profession’s standard of care, but also to instill the values and attitudes required for preserving the medical profession’s social contract with its patients.

INTEGRITY: Learning environments that are conducive to conveying professional values must be based on integrity. Professionalism is reinforced by observing and emulating role models who epitomize authentic professional values and attitudes.

RESPECT: Respect for every individual is fundamental to the ethic of medicine. Mutual respect is essential for nurturing that ethic. Given the hierarchical features inherent in the teacher-learner relationship, teachers have an obligation to ensure that learners are always treated respectfully.

¹ In the context of medical education the term “teacher” is used broadly to include peers, resident physicians, full-time and volunteer faculty members, clinical preceptors, nurses and other healthcare workers, as well as others from whom learners learn. In the context of this document, the term “learner” refers to medical students, but similar commitments apply to resident physicians who learn in the same settings.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS AND LEARNERS:

Teachers shall:

- Treat learners fairly and respectfully
- Maintain high professional standards in all interactions with learners
- Demonstrate what it means to place patient welfare above one's own and to respect patients' right to privacy
- Be prepared and on time for all professional and educational interactions
- Provide relevant and timely information, including disclosures related to any financial interest in relation to educational materials
- Provide explicit learning and behavioral expectations early in a course
- Provide timely, focused, accurate and constructive feedback on a regular basis and thoughtful and timely evaluations at the end of a course
- Display honesty, integrity, and compassion in interactions with learners and patients
- Practice insightful (Socratic) questioning, which stimulates learning and self-discovery and avoid overly aggressive questioning which may be perceived as hurtful, humiliating, degrading or punitive
- Solicit feedback from learners regarding their perception of their educational experiences
- Encourage learners who experience mistreatment or who witness unprofessional behavior to report the facts immediately

Learners shall:

- Be courteous of teachers and fellow learners
- Be prepared and on time
- Be active, enthusiastic, curious learners
- Demonstrate professional behavior
- Recognize that not all learning stems from formal and structured activities
- Recognize a responsibility to establish one's own learning objectives and to participate as an active learner
- Demonstrate a commitment to life-long learning, a practice that is essential to the profession of medicine
- Recognize the privileges and responsibilities coming from the opportunity to work with patients in educational and clinical settings
- Recognize the duty to place patient welfare above one's own
- Recognize and respect patients' right to privacy
- Solicit feedback on one's performance and recognize that criticism is not synonymous with "abuse"

Adapted from:

- Cohen JJ. Compact between Teachers and Learners of Medicine. *Academic Medicine*. 2002;77:480.
- AAMC Uniform Clinical Training Affiliation Agreement, Exhibit A: Teacher-Learner Expectations. Version 2013-10-15 (available at <https://www.aamc.org/download/360852/data/uniformclinicaltrainingagreement10-16-13.pdf>; accessed 2014-04-03)