

Vanderbilt University School of Medicine Compact Between Teachers and Learners

Preamble

As a community of teachers, learners, physicians and physicians-in-training, we acknowledge the fundamental importance of our professional values in creating and maintaining an environment that promotes the highest standard of learning and the highest quality of patient care. The following principles characterize this environment and guide us in making daily decisions: **Respect, Service, Integrity, Accountability, Scholarship, and Compassion**. Recognizing that in an academic community we are teachers and learners simultaneously, we make the following commitments with the understanding that each applies to all of us, regardless of our status as faculty, resident or student.

Commitments of Teachers

- We will respect students, colleagues, staff and patients as individuals, without regard to race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or national origin.
- We will strive to provide the highest quality instruction, by preparing adequately for all teaching sessions, using evidence-based content, arriving on time, and admitting any gaps in knowledge. We will strive for continuous improvement in our teaching efforts by responding to feedback and evaluation.
- We will demonstrate respect for our learners by turning off cell phones and silencing pagers during sessions we teach, unless they are required for service responsibilities.
- We will clearly express learning objectives for all courses and teaching sessions, and understand how these promote the learning objectives of the school. We will clearly define any specific academic and behavioral expectations for our classes.
- We will be aware of institutional and national policies, such as duty hours, and make sure that our expectations are consistent with those policies.
- We will not demand that our learners take actions that are inconsistent with professional ethics. We will assign tasks that are appropriate for stage of learning, level of responsibility, and status as students. If an assigned task conflicts with the personal ethics of a learner, we will discuss this with the student and attempt to resolve the conflict in a manner that respects the student while placing priority on the interests and well-being of the patient.
- We will recognize the responsibilities implicit in our roles as mentors and coaches, and in the spirit of cultivating excellence in our learners, provide timely and constructive feedback.
- We will recognize our status as role models, and in our interactions with patients, staff, and students, we will exhibit the same standard of professional behavior that we expect from others.
- We acknowledge that the teacher-learner relationship is a model for the doctor-patient relationship, and will strive to know our students as individuals, answer their correspondences promptly, exercise concern for their well being, and treat them with compassion.
- We will respect the intellectual property of others and will use online resources, such as Knowledge Map, in a manner that is consistent with that respect.

- We will demonstrate honesty and integrity in all academic endeavors, including examinations, research efforts and patient care entries.
- We will strive to create a culture of safety. We will accept responsibility for errors and near-errors by disclosing them, analyzing them and implementing changes that would prevent similar events in the future.

Commitments of Learners

- We will respect students, peers, patients and teachers as individuals, without regard to race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or national origin.
- We will strive for excellence in attaining the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed for the highest standard of patient care.
- We will attend all learning sessions designated as required by our teachers, which will include all patient presentations and small group sessions. We will demonstrate respect towards teachers and peers by arriving on time, turning off cell phones, silencing pagers, and complying with other specific expectations defined by the faculty.
- We will wear appropriate attire. In the classroom setting, it should not cause distraction and in the presence of patients, whether in classroom or clinical settings, it should comply with patient expectations and the standards published by the institution.
- We will work effectively in teams, respecting the contributions of all members, assuming a fair share of responsibility, and performing leadership tasks with a sense of service to others.
- We will acknowledge and seek help when an assigned clinical task is beyond our level of skill. If an assigned task conflicts with personal ethics, we will discuss this with the supervising physician and strive to reach a resolution that places priority the interests of the patient.
- We will recognize our obligations as a collegial community, sharing knowledge and assisting peers in their quest to achieve professional and personal goals. We will assist our colleagues in distress.
- We will establish the habit of critical reflection, acknowledge gaps in our knowledge, recognize our limitations, and strive for constant self-improvement.
- We will respect the intellectual property of others and will use online resources, such as Knowledge Map, in a manner that is consistent with that respect.
- We will demonstrate honesty and integrity in all academic endeavors, including examinations, research efforts and patient care entries.
- We will strive to create a culture of safety. We will accept responsibility for errors and near-errors by disclosing them, analyzing them and implementing changes that would prevent similar events in the future.
- In the spirit of continuous quality improvement, we will accept the responsibility of constructive evaluation of our courses and teachers.

Acknowledgements - This document draws heavily from the following sources:

1. Association of American Medical Colleges, *Compact Between Teachers and Learners of Medicine*, <http://www.aamc.org/newsroom/pressrel/compact.pdf>, 11/04/2001.
2. National Board of Medical Examiners, Center for Innovation, *The Behaviors of Professionalism*, <http://ci.nbme.org/professionalism/Behaviors.asp>. 3/20/04
3. ABIM Foundation, ACP-ASIM Foundation, and European Federation of Internal Medicine, *Medical Professionalism in the New Millennium: A Physician Charter*, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 136:3, 243-6, 2002.

* Vanderbilt University Medical Center dress code found at: <http://vumcpolicies.mc.vanderbilt.edu/E-Manual/Hpolicy.nsf/AllDocs/1E5EC2E427F2D35D8625692000758C4E>