

STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

INTRODUCTION:

As professionals, physicians are committed to improving the health and well-being of individuals and society through ethical practice, profession-led regulation, and high personal standards of behaviour.¹

The Faculty of Medicine at Memorial University strives to create an environment which is optimal for learning, teaching, conducting research and providing patient care. In order to achieve and maintain an optimal learning environment the Faculty of Medicine expects all medical students, residents and faculty to display professionalism at all times in interactions with each other, with patients, and their families/significant others, staff, and with members of the public. The attributes of professionalism form the basis of a social contract between a physician and society. Society grants physicians considerable autonomy and the privilege of self-regulation with the understanding that they are accountable to those served.²³⁴⁵

PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES:

All faculty members, medical students, and residents are expected to demonstrate the following attributes:

Respect for others

Professionals demonstrate consideration and respect for others including patients, their families and support persons, colleagues, classmates, teachers, other professionals and the public. We strive to :

- Accept all people equally regardless of age, race, colour, nationality, ancestry, place of origin, ethnicity, beliefs, religion, religious creed, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
- Demonstrate respect for the dignity and rights of patients and their families or support persons, taking into account their diversities, both while in their presence and while in discussion with other members of the healthcare team.

¹Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, 2005

²Creuss and Creuss; Teaching and Learning in Medicine, 16(1),74-76

³CanMeds competencies, Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada, 2005

⁴Dalhousie University, Faculty of Medicine Professionalism Policy, 2011

⁵Rourke J. AM Last Page: Social Accountability of Medical Schools, Academic Medicine, March, 2013

- Accept and promote patient autonomy in decision-making, and when the patient lacks capacity, consult with and appropriately take direction from designated surrogate decision-makers.
- Respect the personal boundaries of others and refrain from making unwanted or inappropriate sexual overtures towards others.
- Communicate respectfully with others verbally, non-verbally and in writing.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of those to whom we owe that duty, including the responsible use of social media.
- Show courtesy to patients and colleagues.
- Respect those with whom we work (i.e. peers, preceptors, support staff).
- Be conscious of appropriate dress and hygiene.
- Not let our conduct negatively affect others' learning or clinical activities.

Honesty and Integrity

Professionals demonstrate adherence to the highest standards of personal, professional and academic honesty and integrity. We strive to:

- Communicate truthfully with others verbally, non-verbally and in writing.
- Prepare and maintain documents or records that are accurate.
- Acknowledge and manage conflicts of interest appropriately.
- Admit and disclose errors.
- Make accurate records of conversations, histories, physical findings and other information pertinent to patient care.
- Give proper attribution to the work of others.
- Work independently during all examinations or on the completion of all assignments unless permission is duly granted to do otherwise.
- Conduct research in an ethical manner, analyzing and reporting results accurately and fairly.
- Give proper attribution to the work of others and make efforts to credit the ideas and work of others appropriately and fairly.
- Seek advice from other medical professions when assistance is required.

Compassion and Empathy

Professionals demonstrate compassion and empathy for others and especially for patients, their families and support persons. We strive to:

- Demonstrate effective listening.
- Be aware of and respectful of others' differences and respond appropriately to their needs
- Show compassion and provide support for patients, their families and support persons dealing with illness and/or dying and death.

Responsibility and Duty

Professionals acknowledge their duties to patients, their profession and society and accept the responsibilities that flow from these duties. We strive to:

- Attend to patients' best interests and well-being as the first priority.
- Work cooperatively with others for the benefit of our patients and contribute to a healthy working environment for all.
- Make equitable and prudent use of healthcare resources under our control.
- Be responsible to society for matters relating to public health.
- Recognize and adhere appropriately to policies, codes, guidelines, and laws that govern us and our work.
- Participate in the process of self-regulation of the profession.
- Address misconduct, incompetence, or behaviours that put patients or others at risk.
- Share resources and expertise, and assume responsibility for our portion of a fairly distributed workload. Where issues of fair distribution arise, we act most immediately in the patient's best interests, and seek to resolve issues of fairness through appropriate channels.
- Respond in an appropriate, non-judgmental and non-demeaning manner when our expertise is sought.
- Not take advantage of colleagues, learners, patients, their families or support persons, or others for emotional, financial, sexual or other personal purposes.
- Conduct research and educational activities with colleagues, learners, patients, their families or support persons, or others only with appropriate informed consent and in accordance with established policies.
- Fulfill commitments, meet deadlines, and are punctual particularly where these behaviours have significant impact on others. Where we are unable to do so, we communicate appropriately to mitigate any negative impacts.
- Engage in lifelong learning, maintain clinical competence, and strive for continuous quality improvement.
- Take appropriate and necessary responsibility for our personal health and wellbeing.
- Recognize our own limitations and seek assistance appropriately.
- Display dress, behaviour and demeanor in the educational and healthcare setting in keeping with appropriate pedagogical, clinical, or safety standards.

This document is intended to complement Canadian law, policies, guidelines and codes of conduct established for the profession of medicine, and as well as other policies, regulations and ethical standards that govern students, residents, faculty and staff of Memorial University, the Faculty of Medicine, the Undergraduate Medical Education program and all Postgraduate (Residency Training) Medical Education programs.

For reference, these documents and resources include but are not limited to the following:

- **Memorial University Respectful Workplace Policy**
- **Memorial University Sexual Harassment Policy**
- **Memorial University**
Code of Student Conduct, and any other relevant Memorial University documents.
- **Memorial University Medical Student Code of Conduct**
- **Respectful Workplace and the Learning Environment Policy, Faculty of Medicine (draft)**
- **Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada**
CanMEDS Physician Competency Framework
- **College of Family Physicians of Canada**
Four Principles Family Medicine
- **College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador**
Policies and Guidelines
- **Canadian Medical Association**
Code of Ethics

Acknowledgements are owed to the previous Faculty of Medicine Ad hoc Committee on Professionalism for their work submitted January 5th, 2009. This policy draws as well upon policies in other faculties of health professions across the country and more particularly upon a Dalhousie University Policy entitled Faculty of Medicine Professionalism Policy (2009).