



Deakin Medical Student

Code of Conduct

The values, attitudes and behaviours to which all medical students and practitioners should aspire are outlined in the Australian Medical Council's, 'Good Medical Practice: A Code of Conduct for Doctors in Australia.' Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to this Code, to conduct themselves in a professional manner which demonstrates respect for staff and other students, and to comply with course rules, including attendance rules.

Development of professionalism is a critical component of the Deakin medical curriculum. The goal of the Deakin School of Medicine is to produce graduates who practice safe medicine and demonstrate the professional behaviour and conduct expected by the Australian community. The objectives of professional development training during the medical course include:

- To prevent harm to patients and their families, the community, students, healthcare professionals and other colleagues;
- To encourage self reflection on professional behaviour;
- To recognize limitations on the scope of an individual's medical practice;
- To monitor, support and maintain the mental and physical health of medical students and to recognize the impact of health problems on safe practice; and
- To encourage recognition of medical error.

Teaching and regulation of professionalism within the medical course has been designed to be consistent with regulatory processes for medical practitioners after graduation and includes elements of self-regulation. Students are expected to develop insights into their own strengths and weaknesses, and to understand the uncertainty which is inherent in the practice of medicine.

This Code of Conduct covers –

- *Attendance*
- *Verbal and written communication with university and health service staff, and with other students, including online communication*
- *Behaviour in tutorials and other teaching and learning activities*
- *Conduct and behaviour in clinical settings*

Professional Standards Subcommittee

Students who do not comply with the professional behaviour standards set out in this Code of Conduct may be referred to the Professional Standards Subcommittee (PSS) for possible remediation or disciplinary measures. All students referred to the PSS will be offered appropriate support (see <http://www.deakin.edu.au/health/medicine/professional-competence.php>).

Unsatisfactory outcomes from the PSS process will lead to referral for further disciplinary proceedings in accordance with Statute 4.1 – Student Discipline and Regulation 04.1(1). – Student Discipline (see <http://theguide.deakin.edu.au/>).

Good Medical Practice: A Code of Conduct for Doctors in Australia

Students must read and become familiar with 'Good Medical Practice: A Code of Conduct for Doctors in Australia' (<http://goodmedicalpractice.org.au/code/>).

Respect for Staff and Other Students

1. Students must be honest, reliable and responsible in their interactions with university and health service staff and with other students. This includes completing agreed tasks and duties, meeting deadlines, maintaining punctuality and informing staff and, where relevant, students of any intended absences.
2. Students must show respect in their interactions with university and health service staff and with other students irrespective of gender, age, culture, ethnicity, social and economic status, sexual preferences and beliefs.
3. Students must use appropriate language in all verbal and written communication, including online communication. Students must not communicate in a manner which is aggressive, hostile, derogatory or demeaning toward other students or staff.
4. Students are expected to contribute to all group learning activities in a manner consistent with the self-directed learning and collaborative learning principles which underpin the Deakin curriculum. Behaviour in teaching and learning activities must not interfere with the learning opportunities of other students.

Professional Behaviour in Clinical Settings: A Guide for Students

During all years of this medical course, students will undertake a wide range of placements at a variety of healthcare and community or welfare sites. The placements are an opportunity to demonstrate a strong code of professional behaviour and ethical practice, a crucial part of a student's medical education. The section on professional behaviour in the Clinical Placements Guide HME 101-102 & HME 201-202 & Ethics, Law and Professional Development Year 1 Theme Guide sets out the expected standards of professional behaviour in more detail.

During community or clinical placements students are expected to comply with the Australian Medical Council's, 'Good Medical Practice: A Code of Conduct for Doctors in Australia' and with this Code of Conduct. Students are also expected to observe all relevant protocols and policies of any health service/human service provider at which a student undertakes a community or clinical placement (e.g. Occupational Health and Safety procedures, emergency procedures, dress code,

infectious diseases policies). Students must be aware that protocols and policies do change from time to time. The School of Medicine will endeavour to inform students about these changes as quickly as possible, and students may be required to observe any additional policies and procedures which are communicated to them before or during placements.

Prior to undertaking a community or clinical placement, students must attend any briefing session which has been arranged and/or be able to demonstrate knowledge of the issues covered in the briefing session. Longer placements, mostly in the later years of the course, will generally be preceded by site specific briefing sessions.

Professional Appearance and Dress Standards

1. Students visiting patient contact areas must be appropriately dressed and conform to the standards of the hospital or practice setting. Inappropriately attired students may be excluded by the agency from the placement site.
2. Appropriate dress cannot easily be prescribed or itemised, but some examples include -
 - Generally, neat business or casual wear is acceptable but very casual wear is not appropriate in any clinical settings. The supervisor has the capacity to advise on this matter eg jeans, t-shirts, trainers are not appropriate wear in clinical settings.
 - Revealing attire generally is considered inappropriate to the work environment (eg plunging necklines, exposed midriff or very short hemlines).
 - More stringent requirements may be necessary for particular areas or activities (eg operating theatres).
 - Enclosed footwear must be worn at all times.
 - Hair that is longer than collar length should be neatly tied back.
 - Jewellery may be inappropriate in some placements (eg radiology) – advice should be sought from the clinical supervisor.
 - Facial piercings and visible tattoos are not acceptable in most clinical settings.
3. Good personal hygiene standards must be maintained at all times.

Identification Badges

Students must wear official identification badges at all times where this is required by the placement site. These should be displayed in a visible position such as on the shirt/coat lapel, rather than attached to your belt or trouser pocket.

Mobile Telephones

Mobile telephones are only to be used in accordance with the policy of the relevant hospital or service. Some health services require visitors, staff and students to turn off their mobile phones.

Medical Records and Confidentiality

1. Information provided to healthcare professionals must be treated with absolute confidentiality. People interviewed by a medical student will trust the student with personal, private and sometimes intimate information that they would normally not divulge. Students will also have

access to confidential files or other clinical information such as the results of investigations and information disclosed during confidential discussions. This is an enormous privilege and a great responsibility.

2. Medical records are highly privileged documents and are to be treated with absolute confidentiality. Any significant breach of this responsibility will attract disciplinary action.
3. Students are only authorised to access the medical and prescription records of patients they have seen or discussed on the ward or treatment area in which they are working. Students are not authorised to view the records of patients unless they have a particular and appropriate purpose for doing so.
4. Students are not authorised to consult case notes from Medical Records Departments without the permission of the managing clinician.
5. Students must not remove medical and prescription records from the immediate vicinity in which they are accessed (e.g. the ward or consulting room).
6. Students must comply with their responsibilities in relation to confidentiality. This includes –
 - the requirement that students not be involved in any conversation that would allow others to identify the patient/client, no matter how trivial the problem which has led them to seek advice, unless the student has the permission of the patient/client involved;
 - students taking particular care in any discussion in a potentially public places within the placement setting, such as lifts or common rooms;
 - students refraining from discussing patient details outside the confines of the placement setting or the School of Medicine or for any reason other than professional purposes; and
 - Students being aware of any special requirements concerning confidentiality and/or safety of any highly specialised services.
7. Any notes taken by students must be kept in a secure place and destroyed when no longer needed.
8. Students should never allow anyone who is not involved in a patient or client's care to read any notes or see any investigational material without the patient's/client's consent.
9. The patient or client should not be identified in any presentation to individuals not directly involved in provision of care.

Examination of Patients

1. The consent of the Nurse Unit Manager (or senior nurse on duty) must be obtained before examining or speaking to a patient in a hospital ward.
2. Students must use an appropriate hand washing technique. It is well documented that hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of nosocomial infections. Students must wash or disinfect their hands before and after every patient they examine. Students should never examine a patient unless their fingernails are clean.

3. Intimate examinations (eg PR or PV) should NEVER be performed without a doctor's supervision and the patient's consent.
4. For paediatric patients, if a parent is not available as a chaperone during an examination, the clinical supervisor should be asked to advise on an appropriate chaperone.

General Behaviour

1. Students are expected to display professional behaviour at all times. This includes being respectful to University/Hospital/Health Service staff, colleagues and other students and using appropriate language in all communications.
2. If there are any issues or problems that are impacting on a student's ability to attend practice, it is the student's responsibility to seek assistance and contact the
 - Year 1 & 2 students – Clinical Placement Coordinator & Placement site
 - Year 3 & 4 students – relevant Director of Clinical Studies
3. Any student who is concerned about an activity or procedure that they are requested to undertake by an on-site supervisor is required to speak in confidence to the
 - Year 1 & 2 students – Director of Pre-Clinical Studies or the Co-ordinator of Medical Programs
 - Year 3 & 4 students – relevant Director of Clinical Studies

Communications with the Media and Members of the Public

1. Students are not authorised to speak to the media, either about individual patients or about more general issues of media interest unless provided with authorisation from the relevant Manager/CEO/Director and University supervisor.
2. Any student who is concerned about any issue at the University or a placement site, which they believe to be of public interest, should discuss the issue in confidence with the Head of School, the Director of Pre-Clinical Studies, the Co-ordinator of Medical Education or the Director of Clinical Studies before committing to a course of action that may attract the attention of the media.

Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs

A student will be immediately dismissed from the learning environment and/or a placement site if it is believed he/she is intoxicated by alcohol or another substance. Disciplinary action would normally be taken if this occurred.

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STUDENT DECLARATION

I have read and understood the Deakin Medical Student Code of Conduct and agree to adhere to this Code throughout the course, including any revised versions.

Full Name	
Signature	
Date	

Please return this signed form to:

Claudia McLean
Clinical Placement Coordinator
School of Medicine