

Compact Between Teachers and Trainees in Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

Preparation for a career in the science and/or practice of medicine demands the acquisition of a large fund of knowledge and a host of special skills. It also demands the strengthening of those virtues that undergird scientific inquiry and/or the doctor/patient relationship. This Compact serves both as a pledge and as a reminder to teachers and trainees that their conduct in fulfilling their mutual obligations is the medium through which our profession(s) instills ethical values. Trainees encompass the broad spectrum of learners within the USA College of Medicine and Health System including MD and PhD students, undergraduate researchers, postdoctoral fellows, residents and clinical fellows.

Guiding Principles

DUTY

Medical and biomedical science educators have a duty, not only to convey the knowledge, skills and practices required for their contemporary professions, but also to instill the values and attitudes required for preserving the profession's ethical and social contract across generations.

INTEGRITY

The learning environment conducive to conveying professional values must be suffused with integrity. Trainees learn enduring lessons of professionalism by observing and emulating role models who epitomize authentic professional values and attitudes.

RESPECT

Respect for every individual is fundamental to the ethics of the science and/or practice of medicine. Mutual respect between trainees, as novice members of the medical and biomedical science professions, and their teachers, as experienced and esteemed professionals, is essential for nurturing that ethic. Given the inherently hierarchical nature of the teacher/trainee relationship, teachers have a special obligation to ensure that trainees are always treated respectfully and without discrimination.

Commitments of Faculty

- We pledge our utmost effort to ensure that all components of the educational program for our trainees are of high quality.
- As mentors for our trainees, we maintain high professional standards in all of our interactions with professional colleagues, and staff.
- We respect all trainees as individuals, without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify and expression, pregnancy, religion, age, genetic information, disability or veteran status. To that end, we will not tolerate any behavior construed as disrespect or bias towards any trainee.
- We acknowledge the need for and support a healthy balance of time spent in training and with family, time for rest and time for recreational activities. We monitor, and when necessary, adjust the time required on duty.
- In nurturing both the intellectual and the personal development of trainees, we celebrate expressions of professional attitudes and behaviors, as well as achievement of academic excellence.
- We do not tolerate any abuse or exploitation of trainees and encourage trainees to report unprofessional behavior immediately without fear of retaliation or reprisal of any kind.
(<http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/financialaffairs/hr/resources/discriminationharassmentpolicy72412.pdf>)

Commitments of Trainees

- We pledge our utmost effort to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors required to fulfill all educational objectives established by the faculty.
- We agree to appropriately balance our commitments as trainees and those in our personal life, so as to continue our training in the most productive and responsible way possible.
- We cherish the professional virtues of honesty, compassion, integrity, fidelity, and dependability.
- We pledge to respect all faculty members and all other trainees as individuals, without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify and expression, pregnancy, religion, age, genetic information, disability or veteran status.
- As physicians and scientists in training, we embrace the highest standards of our intended professions and pledge to conduct ourselves accordingly in all of our interactions, including anonymous evaluations, with faculty, our trainee colleagues, staff and the community.
- In fulfilling our own obligations as professionals, we pledge to assist our fellow trainees in meeting their professional obligations as well.

Reference:

University of South Alabama Policies and Procedures: <http://www.southalabama.edu/departments/financialaffairs/hr/policies.html>