

DEPARTMENT: Administration
NAME: Ethical Conduct
POLICY NUMBER: BOT 1.3.2e
ORIGINATOR: MSOM, Inc. Board of Directors
ORIGINATION: 1/10/23
UPDATED: 7/30/2025

SCOPE

This policy applies to all MSOM students, faculty and staff, it incorporates the Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine Code of Ethical Conduct as well as the AOA Code of Ethics, as follows:

PURPOSE

Guide all students, faculty and staff on the code of conduct

POLICY & PROCEDURE STATEMENT:

This policy incorporates the Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine Code of Ethical Conduct as well as the AOA Code of Ethics, as follows:

- Be guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of all human life;
- Pursue the advancement of knowledge and recognize the special responsibilities placed upon me;
- Adhere to the policies and procedures of the COM in all matters;
- Seek and communicate truth;
- Promote student learning and pursue excellence and innovation in medical education;
- Promote scholarly competence and integrity;
- Practice intellectual honesty in teaching, scholarly activities, research and relationships with commercial entities;
- Protect the academic freedom of students and will acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from students;
- Uphold the scholarly and ethical standards of my discipline;
- Promote scholarly activity by faculty and students;
- Demonstrate respect for all individuals and adhere to proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors;
- Foster honest academic conduct and ensure student evaluations reflect the student's true merit;
- Promote appropriate interaction between students and faculty, students and administration, and students and staff;
- Avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students or coworkers;
- Respect and defend the free inquiry of associates' exchange of ideas and show respect for the opinions of others;
- Seek to be an effective teacher and scholar;

- Give due regard to the paramount responsibilities within the institution in determining the amount and character of work done outside it.

All MSOM employees have the rights and obligations of other citizens and measure the urgency of these obligations in the light of responsibilities to colleagues, to students, to their profession, and to the institution. When SOM employees speak or act as private persons, they should avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for the college. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, employees have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom. This SOM statement is patterned after the American Association of University Professors Statement on Ethics and has been formatted to reflect Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine expectations.

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Code of Ethics is a document that applies to all physicians who practice osteopathically throughout the continuum of their careers, from enrollment in osteopathic medical college/school through post graduate training and the practice of osteopathic medicine. It embodies principles that serve as a guide to the prudent physician. It seeks to transcend the economic, political, and religious biases, when dealing with patients, fellow physicians, and society. It is flexible in nature in order to permit the AOA to consider all circumstances, both anticipated and unanticipated. The physician/patient relationship and the professionalism of the physician are the basis for this document. The AOA has formulated this Code to guide its member physicians in their professional lives. The standards presented are designed to address the osteopathic physician's ethical and professional responsibilities to patients, to society, to the AOA, to others involved in health care and to self. Further, the AOA has adopted the position that physicians should play a major role in the development and instruction of medical ethics.

All Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine Board Members, Faculty, Staff, and Students shall adhere to the entire AOA Code of Ethics as found on the website of the AOA: www.osteopathic.org.

The most current version of the AOA Code of Ethics is published below:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Code of Ethics is a document that applies to all physicians who practice osteopathically throughout the continuum of their careers, from enrollment in osteopathic medical college/school through post graduate training and the practice of osteopathic medicine. It embodies principles that serve as a guide to the prudent physician. It seeks to transcend the economic, political, and religious biases, when dealing with patients, fellow physicians, and society. It is flexible in nature in order to permit the AOA to consider all circumstances, both anticipated and unanticipated. The physician/patient relationship and the professionalism of the physician are the basis for this document. The AOA has formulated this Code to guide its member physicians in their professional lives. The standards presented are designed to address the osteopathic and allopathic physician's ethical and professional responsibilities to patients, to society, to the AOA, to others involved in health care and to self. Further, the AOA has adopted the position that physicians should play a major role in the development and instruction of medical ethics.

Section 1

The physician shall keep in confidence whatever she/he may learn about a patient in the discharge of professional duties. Information shall be divulged by the physician when required by law or when authorized by the patient.

Section 2

The physician shall give a candid account of the patient's condition to the patient or to those responsible for the patient's care.

Section 3

A physician-patient relationship must be founded on mutual trust, cooperation, and respect. The patient, therefore, must have complete freedom to choose her/his physician. The physician must have complete freedom to choose patients whom she/he will serve. However, the physician should not refuse to accept patients for reasons of discrimination, including, but not limited to, the patient's race, creed, color, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. In emergencies, a physician should make her/his services available.

Section 4

A physician is never justified in abandoning a patient. The physician shall give due notice to a patient or to those responsible for the patient's care when she/he withdraws from the case so that another physician may be engaged.

Section 5

A physician should make a reasonable effort to partner with patients to promote their health and shall practice in accordance with the body of systematized and scientific knowledge related to the healing arts. A physician shall maintain competence in such systematized and scientific knowledge through study and clinical applications.

Section 6

The osteopathic medical profession has an obligation to society to maintain its high standards and, therefore, to continuously regulate itself. A substantial part of such regulation is due to the efforts and influence of the recognized local, state, and national associations representing the osteopathic medical profession. A physician should maintain membership in and actively support such associations and abide by their rules and regulations.

Section 7

Under the law a physician may advertise, but no physician shall advertise or solicit patients directly or indirectly through the use of matters or activities which are false or misleading.

Section 8

A physician shall not hold forth or indicate possession of any degree recognized as the basis for licensure to practice the healing arts unless she/he is actually licensed on the basis of that degree in the state or other jurisdiction in which she/he practices. A physician shall designate her/his osteopathic or allopathic credentials in all professional uses of her/his name. Indications of specialty practice, membership in professional societies, and related

matters shall be governed by rules promulgated by the American Osteopathic Association.

Section 9

A physician should not hesitate to seek consultation whenever she/he believes it is in the best interest of the patient.

Section 10

In any dispute between or among physicians involving ethical or organizational matters, the matter in controversy should first be referred to the appropriate arbitrating bodies of the profession.

Section 11

In any dispute between or among physicians regarding the diagnosis and treatment of a patient, the attending physician has the responsibility for final decisions, consistent with any applicable hospital rules or regulations.

Section 12

Any fee charged by a physician shall compensate the physician for services actually rendered. There shall be no division of professional fees for referrals of patients.

Section 13

A physician shall respect the law. When necessary, a physician shall attempt to help to formulate the law by all proper means in order to improve patient care and public health.

Section 14

In addition to adhering to the foregoing ethical standards, a physician shall recognize a responsibility to participate in community activities and services.

Section 15

It is considered sexual misconduct for a physician to have sexual contact with any patient with whom a physician-patient relationship currently exists.

Section 16

Sexual harassment by a physician is considered unethical. Sexual harassment is defined as physical or verbal intimation of a sexual nature involving a colleague or subordinate in the workplace or academic setting, when such conduct creates an unreasonable, intimidating, hostile or offensive workplace or academic setting.

Section 17

From time to time, industry may provide some AOA members with gifts as an inducement to use their products or services. Members who use these products and services as a result of these gifts, rather than simply for the betterment of their patients and the improvement of the care rendered in their practices, shall be considered to have acted in an unethical manner.

Section 18

A physician shall not intentionally misrepresent himself/herself or his/ her research work in any way.

Section 19

When participating in research, a physician shall follow the current laws, regulations and standards of the United States or, if the research is conducted outside the United States, the laws, regulations and standards applicable to research in the nation where the research is conducted.

This standard shall apply for physician involvement in research at any level and degree of responsibility, including, but not limited to, research, design, funding, participation either as examining and/or treating provider, supervision of other staff in their research, analysis of data and publication of results in any form for any purpose.