



MERITUS SCHOOL OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

Student Code of Conduct Policy

Policy Number:

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Approved by: Dr. Murray Berkowitz

Student Code of Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct serves to uphold the highest standards of academic, professional, and ethical behavior expected of students enrolled at MSOM. This Code ensures a learning environment that is respectful, inclusive, and conducive to the professional development of future physicians. All students are expected to familiarize themselves with and abide by the standards outlined herein. This Code applies to all students enrolled at MSOM, including those participating in clinical rotations, off-campus educational and research activities, and school-sponsored events. Students are accountable for their behavior both within and outside the classroom or clinical setting when such conduct reflects on their suitability to practice medicine.

Academic Integrity

MSOM expects all students to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty undermines the trust upon which the educational mission is built and will not be tolerated. Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to the principles of honesty, accountability, and ethical behavior in all academic settings.

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

- *Cheating*: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, assistance, or study aids during examinations or academic work. Examples include copying from another student's exam, using hidden notes, accessing exam materials in advance without permission, or receiving answers from others during an assessment.
- *Plagiarism*: Representing another's words, ideas, data, or work as one's own without appropriate citation or acknowledgment. This includes copying text, images, or research from published sources, websites, or peers without proper attribution.
- *Fabrication or falsification*: Inventing or altering information in any academic exercise, such as clinical logs, patient encounters, research data, or official records.
- *Unauthorized collaboration*: Working with others on assignments or assessments intended to be completed individually.
- *Facilitating academic dishonesty*: Helping another student engage in academic misconduct, such as sharing exam questions or providing completed assignments.
- *Unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI)*: Using AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, image generators, translation bots, or other medical AI, such as ClinicalKey AI) to complete or alter

coursework, examinations, writing assignments, or other academic deliverables without the express permission of the course director or instructor. This includes submitting AI-generated text as original work, using AI to bypass academic effort, or failing to disclose AI assistance when required.

Students are encouraged to seek clarification from instructors regarding expectations for assignments, including the permissible use of tools and collaboration. Any student suspected of violating the academic integrity policy may be referred to the Student Progress Committee (SPC) or subcommittee for review and may face academic penalties, remediation requirements, or dismissal.

Professional Behavior

Professional behavior is a core expectation of all MSOM students and reflects the values of the osteopathic medical profession. Professionalism encompasses accountability, ethical conduct, respect for others, and adherence to standards of dress, communication, and responsibility in both academic and clinical environments.

Students are expected to:

- Demonstrate honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior at all times
- Treat peers, faculty, patients, clinical staff, and administrative personnel with respect and courtesy
- Maintain confidentiality in academic and clinical settings, including safeguarding protected health information (PHI)
- Arrive on time and be prepared for all classes, labs, clinical rotations, and other institutional obligations
- Adhere to institutional dress codes and hygiene standards in classrooms and clinical environments
- Communicate professionally in both verbal and written forms, including emails, reports, and digital messaging platforms
- Accept feedback with maturity and take responsibility for their learning and conduct

Unprofessional behavior may include, but is not limited to:

- Disruptive conduct in class or clinical settings
- Repeated tardiness or absenteeism without appropriate notification
- Insubordination, rudeness, or verbal abuse toward faculty, staff, or peers
- Misuse of institutional resources or property
- Failure to comply with institutional policies or the directives of faculty and administrators

Students found to have demonstrated unprofessional conduct may be referred to the Student Progress Committee (SPC) or subcommittee for review and potential corrective or disciplinary action. MSOM encourages students to uphold the highest standards of professionalism as they develop into future osteopathic physicians.

Clinical Responsibilities

In clinical settings, students are entrusted with sensitive responsibilities that impact the well-being, dignity, and safety of patients. As future physicians, students must demonstrate the highest level of ethical conduct and professionalism in all patient care settings.

Students must comply with all applicable federal and state laws, institutional policies, and clinical site protocols. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Strict adherence to patient confidentiality and privacy laws under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Comply with all Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards (i.e., wear required PPE, etc.)
- Maintaining secure and professional documentation in all clinical systems and patient records
- Reporting any observed misconduct or unsafe behavior by healthcare personnel, including peers, staff, or supervisors
- Practicing only within the scope of their training and level of supervision
- Refraining from any independent medical decision-making or procedures not approved or directly supervised by a licensed preceptor
- Wearing proper professional attire and displaying MSOM identification while on clinical rotations
- Demonstrating respect, compassion, and cultural sensitivity in every patient interaction

Students are required to follow all preceptor instructions, complete clinical duties on time, attend all scheduled rotations, and notify appropriate personnel in the event of illness or unavoidable absence. Any lapse in clinical responsibility, including failure to attend, falsifying documentation, or compromising patient safety, may result in referral to the SPC or SPC subcommittee and disciplinary action.

Students are reminded that they are ambassadors of MSOM and the medical profession in all clinical environments and must conduct themselves accordingly.

Research Conduct

As future physicians and scholars, MSOM students are expected to abide by the guidelines for responsible conduct of research set forth by the Federal Office of Research Integrity (ORI) and adopted by the MSOM Office of Research. Students must uphold the highest standards of integrity, ethics, professionalism, and compliance in all research- and scholarly activity-related activities. Participation in research and other scholarly pursuits is a privilege that carries the responsibility to conduct work aligned with institutional, state, and federal legal and ethical guidelines. All students are required to complete the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training modules as part of the Research I course.

MSOM students engaging in research and scholarly activity must:

- Comply with all federal regulations, institutional policies, and ethical principles governing human subjects research, animal research, data management, and authorship.
- Ensure that all required institutional compliance and administrative approvals have been secured before beginning any research activity.
- Avoid all forms of research misconduct, including fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism (FFP).
- Properly cite all sources and contributions.
- Promptly report any concerns regarding research misconduct or suspected violations to the MSOM Office of Research.
- Communicate findings honestly and responsibly.
- Handle sensitive or identifiable information in strict accordance with HIPAA and Meritus Health data governance policies.
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and authorship early.
- Communicate openly with research mentors and team members, acknowledge all

- contributions fairly, and follow agreed-upon roles and timelines
- Respect institutional and cross-institutional policies and agreements.
- Maintain accurate and complete records of research activities and data to ensure replicability and accountability.
- Promptly report any real or perceived conflicts of interest that could influence research integrity or objectivity.
- Disclose and manage financial or personal interests that could affect objectivity or trust.

Violations of research conduct will result in disciplinary action. Students are encouraged to seek guidance from faculty mentors, the Office of Research, or the Institutional Review Board if questions or concerns arise.

Substance Use

The use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs, and the misuse of prescription medications, alcohol, or other recreational substances, is prohibited on school premises and during any school-sponsored activity. Students must not engage in clinical or academic duties while under the influence of or impaired by any substance. Violations may result in disciplinary action, including referral for evaluation and treatment.

Respect for Community

MSOM is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive community. Students are expected to refrain from harassment, discrimination, and retaliation based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or any other protected classes. Violations will be addressed according to the appropriate institutional policy and may result in corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Acceptable Use of Technology

Students are expected to use all MSOM technology resources, including computers, networks, systems, and software, in a manner that supports the academic, clinical, and professional goals of the institution. Acceptable use includes educational activities, research, communication with faculty and peers, and accessing institutional resources. Misuse of technology can compromise privacy, security, and academic integrity and may result in disciplinary action.

Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Unauthorized access or use of institutional systems or data
- Any violation of FERPA or HIPAA
- Deliberate disruption of network services or interference with system operations
- Downloading, uploading, or distributing offensive, illegal, or copyrighted materials without proper authorization
- Use of MSOM devices or internet access for personal commercial gain
- Sharing login credentials, attempting to breach security, or impersonating others

Students are responsible for adhering to all institutional IT policies, data protection laws, and professional standards when using MSOM technology.

Social Media

Social media platforms can be powerful tools for communication and networking but must be used responsibly and professionally by all MSOM students. Students are representatives of the medical profession and the institution at all times, including in their digital and online presence.

Students must not:

- Post patient information or any identifying clinical material, even if de-identified
- Disclose confidential academic or institutional information
- Harass, defame, or discriminate against others in any form
- Share material that reflects poorly on their character, MSOM, or the osteopathic medical profession
- Represent themselves as speaking on behalf of MSOM unless expressly authorized to do so

Students are encouraged to use privacy settings, think carefully before posting, and remember that online content is often permanent and widely accessible. Violations of professionalism or confidentiality on social media may result in referral to the Student Progress Committee (SPC) or subcommittee and potential disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Process

Alleged violations of the Student Code of Conduct will be reviewed by the Student Progress Committee (SPC), SPC subcommittee, Office of Student Affairs, or Office of the Dean, as appropriate. Upon review and investigation, students have the right to a fair and impartial process, including notice of the allegations, an opportunity to be heard, and the right to appeal a disciplinary outcome as outlined in the **Grievances Policy**. Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, warning, probation, administrative leave of absence, dismissal, or referral to professional boards.

Responsibilities and Acknowledgment

By enrolling in MSOM, students acknowledge their responsibility to uphold this Code of Conduct. Failure to adhere to these standards may affect academic standing and future licensure. Students are encouraged to seek guidance if uncertain about the appropriate course of action in any situation.