

HWCOM POLICY TITLE: Medical Student Behavior and Professionalism

HWCOM POLICY NUMBER: AA.168

INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE:	LAST REVISION DATE:	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT, DIVISION:
May 4, 2026	February 2026	Curriculum Committee

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy outlines professionalism standards for medical students at FIU HWCOM. It defines core professional attributes, expectations for behavior, and procedures for addressing lapses described below. Faculty provide direct feedback for minor issues, while serious or recurrent concerns are formally reported via the FIU Student Conduct and Academic Integrity portal and may result in review by the Medical Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee. All students are expected to uphold ethical conduct, respect, accountability, and professionalism across clinical, academic, and digital environments.

This policy takes effect as of May 4, 2026.

Professional Expectations

All HWCOM students, faculty, and staff are expected to demonstrate the following professional attributes.

- **Accountability.** The individual demonstrates a willingness to accept responsibility for actions, admit error, and be accountable to self, team, patients, and society. Accountability includes the ability to self-assess balance and emotional well-being and to seek help if unable to carry out duties.
- **Adaptability.** The individual is able and willing to adjust to meet the needs of new or changing circumstances.
- **Collaboration.** The individual effectively works with others, demonstrating respect, clear communication, and willingness to cooperate in an open-minded fashion.
- **Conscientiousness.** The individual demonstrates thoroughness and dependability in following through with assigned tasks.
- **Critical Thinking.** The individual uses an investigatory and analytic approach to all situations. The individual is inquisitive, thoughtful, and able to work through a problem.
- **Discernment.** The individual demonstrates awareness of the limits of their own knowledge or skills and applies knowledge and skills appropriately for their level of training.
- **Emotional Intelligence.** The individual demonstrates awareness of emotions of self and others and uses this information to act with situational awareness.
- **Ethical Behavior.** The individual demonstrates ethical behavior in the classroom and patient care environments (demonstrating beneficence and non-maleficence and promoting autonomy and justice) and is compliant with FIU and HWCOM policies and regulations.



- **Integrity.** The individual demonstrates truth-telling and the absence of deception in their interactions with others.
- **Respect.** The individual demonstrates proper regard toward faculty, staff, patients, and peers in diverse settings and interactions.
- **Self-Improvement.** The individual is responsive to feedback and is willing to assess self and set personal goals for development. This includes assessing personal coping strategies, managing conflicts between personal and professional responsibilities, and seeking appropriate help when needed.

Additional expectations include punctual attendance, appropriate attire, responsible use of social media, and professional written and verbal communication.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students.

REASON FOR POLICY

To articulate standards for professional behavior in clinical clerkships, outline processes for documenting lapses, and define consequences for unprofessional conduct during the third year of medical school. Professionalism is integral to medical education and essential for safe, effective, and compassionate care.

The policy relates to LCME Standard 3.5, Learning Environment/Professionalism, which reads: “A medical school ensures that the learning environment of its medical education program is conducive to the ongoing development of explicit and appropriate professional behaviors in its medical students, faculty, and staff at all locations. The medical school and its clinical affiliates share the responsibility for periodic evaluation of the learning environment in order to identify positive and negative influences on the maintenance of professional standards, develop and conduct appropriate strategies to enhance positive and mitigate negative influences, and identify and promptly correct violations of professional standards.”

DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITIONS
Intentional HIPAA Violation	A knowing and willful disregard or breach of Protected Health Information (PHI) rules, where an entity or person deliberately accesses, uses, or discloses PHI without authorization, often for personal gain, malicious reasons, or with a reckless indifference to privacy, distinguishing it from accidental breaches.

Unintentional or Accidental HIPAA Violation	The unauthorized disclosure or access of PHI that occurs due to mistakes, oversight, or a policy misunderstanding, rather than malicious intent.
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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Assistant Dean for Foundational Sciences Curriculum, Assistant Dean for Clinical Education, Associate Dean for Curriculum and Medical Education

RELATED RESOURCES

Please see the Policy: Professionalism Reporting and the Policy: Reassessment, Remediation, and Medical Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee Referral.

CONTACTS

Questions about this policy should be directed towards the Assistant Dean for Foundational Sciences Curriculum (AY1 and 2), the Assistant Dean for Clinical Education (AY3 and 4), the Associate Dean for Curriculum and Medical Education.

HISTORY

Initial Effective Date: May 4, 2026

Review Dates (*review performed, no updates*): N/A

Revision Dates (*updates made to document*): February 20, 2026

Comments on Revision (*if applicable*):



HWCOM PROCEDURE TITLE: Medical Student Behavior and Professionalism

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PROCEDURE STATEMENT

Response and Process

Faculty members that observe unprofessional medical student behaviors should follow the following procedure.

1. Initial Concern and Feedback:
Faculty provide direct feedback to the student. Should the faculty member have concerns regarding a pattern of behavior, the faculty member should consult with the relevant course or clerkship director/assistant clerkship director and the relevant curriculum dean [Assistant Dean for Foundational Sciences Curriculum (AY1 and 2) or Assistant Dean for Clinical Education (AY3 and 4)].
2. Formal Reporting and Review:
Recurrent, unresolved, or egregious lapses prompt submission of a Professionalism Incident Report through the FIU Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI) portal at <https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?FloridaIntlUniv>. Professionalism Incident Reports are reviewed initially by the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI) office of FIU. Once adjudicated by SCAI, the students are referred back to HWCOM for further professionalism review with relevant deans from the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) and the Office of Medical Education (OME) as per the HWCOM Student Handbook. This OSA/OME review may result in referral of the student to the Medical Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee.

Documentation and Reporting of Lapses

Course or clerkship faculty observing recurrent, unresolved, or egregious unprofessional behavior should discuss the incident with the relevant course or clerkship director/assistant clerkship director and the relevant curriculum dean [Assistant Dean for Foundational Sciences Curriculum (AY1 and 2) or Assistant Dean for Clinical Education (AY3 and 4)]. After that discussion, the designated person, either the faculty member or a member of the course or clerkship director team, should document concerns using a Professionalism Incident Report submitted to the SCAI office of FIU. Reports must be specific, non-anonymous, and submitted promptly. After filing the report, the filer should notify the student and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, to ensure due process.

Behaviors that may trigger reporting on the first occasion include but are not limited to:

- Unexcused absences



- Plagiarism
- Cheating
- Dishonesty (e.g., falsifying records)
- Intentional HIPAA violations

Behaviors that may trigger reporting, especially if repetitive or unresolved, include but are not limited to:

- Frequent unplanned absences
- Frequent tardiness
- Accidental HIPAA violations
- Disrespectful interactions
- Failure to meet responsibilities
- Frequent late assignments
- Non-compliance with policies or instructions
- Ethical violations or boundary infractions
- Frequently leaving early
- Non completion of onboarding materials

Grading Implications

Professional behavior impacts third-year clerkship grades:

- Honors/Near Honors requires zero instances of a Professionalism Incident Report.
- Pass requires all professionalism concerns to be resolved/remediated.
- Fail results from repeated or unresolved professionalism issues, or one instance of egregious misconduct.

Unexcused absences or late/missing assignments may also contribute to professionalism concerns and affect grades.

Additional Notes

- Professionalism standards apply in all settings, including online behavior and public representations.
- Faculty are encouraged to consider equity and avoid biased interpretations of professionalism.
- When providing counsel regarding frequent unplanned absences, the relevant curricular dean will consider any relevant disability accommodations.

FORMS

N/A

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RELATED RESOURCES

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