



## MSUCOM STUDENT PROFESSIONALISM POLICY

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<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	8/30/2023	<b>NEXT REVIEW:</b>	6/1/2024
<b>APPROVAL:</b>	Dean's Executive Board	<b>DATE:</b>	5/27/2026
<b>CATEGORY:</b>	Academic: DO, DO/PhD, DO/MBA, PA		
<b>APPLIES TO:</b>	Students in the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) Program		
<b>CONTACT:</b>	Assistant Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs		

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### REFERENCES AND RELATED POLICIES:

- Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities
  - Common Ground Professionalism Initiative
  - Common Ground Framework for Professional Conduct
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### PURPOSE

The purpose of the MSUCOM Student Professionalism Policy is 1. to uplift professionalism and promote and reward excellence in professional behavior, and 2. to ensure compliance with policies and procedures addressing professional conduct, and to address conduct that does not align with MSUCOM community norms and values.

### POLICY AND PROCEDURES

#### Acknowledgement of Expectations

Students are expected to review and comply with the expectations outlined in this policy throughout their enrollment at MSUCOM. Acknowledgment of applicable University and College policies, including professionalism expectations, is administered through official MSUCOM onboarding and compliance processes.

#### Preamble

In medicine, one of the most important qualities you have is your credibility. The trustworthiness of your name will be what earns the faith of your patients and medical colleagues. You begin building your professional identity as soon as you enter medical school, and every decision you make from that time on plays a role in your future self. It is our hope that you act with a strong moral and ethical compass, of which includes being held accountable for your word. Throughout your career you will be asked to attest to medical records, deliver court testimony, and make life-altering decisions – all of which require that your word can be trusted.

All members of the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine (MSUCOM) community are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional and ethical behavior. The MSUCOM [Technical Standards](#) establish certain behavioral and social attributes, as well as ethical standards and professionalism expectations for all medical students. Students must exercise good judgment and exhibit professionalism, personal accountability, compassion, integrity, concern for others, the ability to accept

and apply feedback and to respect boundaries and care for all individuals respectfully regardless of gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or any other protected status. Students must understand and function within the legal and ethical framework of the practice of medicine and act morally, commensurate with the role of a physician or PA in all interactions with patients, faculty, staff, fellow students, and the public.

### **Statement of Professionalism**

The goal of the College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM) is to create individual professionals; medical providers who can access and examine critically, a reliable and extensive fund of knowledge and apply it consistently to maximize the clinical benefit of patients. COM students are expected to demonstrate academic professionalism and honesty, and to maintain the highest standards of integrity according to a code of honor that embodies a spirit of mutual trust and intellectual honesty. Michigan State University's [Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) (MSRR) document has established that medical students have certain rights and responsibilities and affirmed that students are a party to the social trust shared by all in the university community. COM supports the policies and procedures described in this MSRR document.

COM recognizes that a code of professional behavior cannot encompass all potential issues of conduct that may arise, and that judgments regarding professional behavior are subjective thereby making it impossible to specify all behaviors deemed to be unprofessional. Students are expected to hold themselves and their peers to professional standards of behavior throughout their course of study.

Included among these standards are five fundamental values of academic integrity including honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and personal accountability. Codes of professional conduct as outlined in the MSRR document are provided to COM students at the time of their enrollment in medical or PA school and these principles should be reinforced throughout the curriculum. Students shall also be bound by the precepts of professional behavior contained within the [AOA Code of Ethics](#) or [AAPA Guidelines for Ethical Conduct](#) and the institutions where they complete medical rotations.

### **Common Ground Framework for Professional Conduct**

Professionalism is an important part of training to become successful, well-rounded medical providers for future patients. It is the responsibility of every member of the MSUCOM community to hold each other accountable for achieving professionalism standards. The Common Ground Framework provides the MSUCOM community with a reminder of the unity of mind, body, and spirit that underlines the field of osteopathic medicine. The framework is a set of guiding, foundational principles that underpin professional conduct and integrity and applies to all professionals at work within the shared college community, independent of their specific roles or responsibilities.

This framework is built around the acronym **CORE**, representing Collaboration, Opportunity, Responsibility, and Expertise. Each domain encompasses values and examples of how they are demonstrated.

#### **Collaboration:** Working together with others

Interactive: Interact effectively and respectfully with people you encounter; demonstrate honesty, genuineness, humility, and compassion.

Dynamics and communication: Demonstrate respect, civility, and courtesy in communication; communicate effectively with diverse individuals and groups for a variety of purposes using available technologies; employ active listening.

Use of feedback: Identify sources of feedback; deliver and receive effective feedback for initiatives, evaluations and assessments, quality improvements, conflict resolution, and peer review.

**Opportunity:** Encouraging an environment of mutual support

Shared leadership: Exhibit advocacy for self and others; accept situational leadership as needed, establish mutual support and respect, participate as a support for others regardless of title or position.

Problem solving: Recognize and define problems, analyze data; implement solutions, evaluate outcomes, include the perspectives of others.

Decision making: Fulfill commitments; be accountable for actions and outcomes, discuss and contribute your perspective in group settings, listen to multiple viewpoints prior to making a decision.

**Responsibility:** Supporting a shared culture of accountability

Effective Use of Time and Resources: Invest time, energy, and material resources efficiently in order to provide effective services; demonstrate integrity and stewardship of resources.

Critical Thinking Skills: Recognize and differentiate facts, illusions, and assumptions; question logically; identify gaps in information and knowledge.

Mindfulness and Self- Care: Actively engage in surrounding circumstances and activities; self-assess, self-correct, and self-direct; identify sources of stress and develop effective coping behaviors.

**Expertise:** Having relevant skills or knowledge

Core of knowledge: Develop core professional knowledge; apply the knowledge in clinical, academic, and administrative settings.

Technical Skills: Show competency and proficiency in performing tasks that are integral to the scope and practice of your profession. Identify needs and resources for learning; continually seek new knowledge and understanding in your profession.

## **Background**

Michigan State University is a land grant institution with deep roots in agriculture. From those beginnings we have seen the benefits of companion growth, where plants with different strengths and needs are brought together to enrich the soil of their common ground and support each other's development. The unity of mind, body, and spirit that underlies the field of osteopathic medicine bears out this natural truth in our practice: that health is best supported by successful collaboration of the constitutive elements. Although they may each mature in their own way with their own needs, the students, staff, and faculty of MSUCOM will grow best when they grow together.

Each member of the MSUCOM community is a necessary part of a very significant undertaking: the preparation and delivery of the highest quality of healthcare now and in the future. From our first moments on campus, administration, faculty, students, and staff begin working together in inter-professional teams to accomplish this purpose. Our professional conduct impacts the quality and substance of our working relationships and the quality and climate of our working environment. We are expected to interact with an open and welcoming attitude toward each other and to present ourselves in a manner that inspires trust and confidence.

Integrity requires community members to maintain professional standards even when we are not being monitored. We should be conscientious about our work, engaging as active participants in the process of teaching, learning, practicing health care and engaging with each other. Throughout our time here, we are expected to be thoughtful of how our actions reflect on ourselves and the institution. One of the initiatives encouraged by the larger university is “advancing the common good with uncommon will.” As MSUCOM strives to be a community of excellence within the larger university, the establishment of clear and transparent expectations for professional conduct is important. Specific expectations of professional conduct must be well defined and aligned to strategic external professional expectations for our community. The practice of medicine is fundamentally an act of service, and that service should be borne out of a sincere and sympathetic concern for the physical and emotional well-being of those in need. Recognition of the dignity of other humans should be exemplified by all those involved in health care, not only while practicing medicine, but in everyday life. The tenets of osteopathic medicine should help shape our plans and guide our actions. All MSUCOM community members should seek to learn about, and reflect on, life experiences different from their own.

In 2020, members of the Common Ground Professionalism Initiative (CGPI) outlined the ideals and behaviors that students, staff, and faculty should embody as members of the MSUCOM community: [Common Ground Framework and Appendix](#). The Common Ground Framework for Professional Conduct is intended as a set of guiding, foundational principles that underlie professional conduct regardless of whether you are staff, student, or faculty at MSUCOM. This framework is intended to encourage collaborative energy, shared leadership, and restoration of mind, body, and spirit. We hope it will spark discussions and creativity for ways to live these principles at MSUCOM.

As part of the Common Ground Professionalism Initiative, the Spartan Community Clearinghouse (SCC) is a group of faculty, staff, administrators, and students who uphold the values of the Common Ground Framework for Professional Conduct to serve as mentors and educate members of MSUCOM about professionalism. Members of the SCC are also invited to provide insight from all perspectives across the college on trends concerning professionalism. The SCC is intended to provide insight and consider multiple perspectives in an informal, collegial manner, with confidentiality and respect for all.

### **Reporting Professionalism Concerns**

Community members who notice a lapse in professionalism of another community member may submit an observation via the CGPI website. It should be noted that submission of an observation does not replace acting in the appropriate manner to either coach the behavior or bring the behavior to the appropriate person's attention. If the professionalism breach of a student is significant enough, it may be reported directly to the Sr. Associate Dean of Student Affairs. If a concern is brought to the CGPI or administration, the student will meet with the appropriate person to discuss the concern and provide coaching. All concerns brought to the CGPI or administration are kept in either student or HR files. If no other professionalism issues occur throughout the student's tenure in medical or PA school, record of the incident will not be recorded in the student's permanent file.

If a student accumulates more than two concerns and/or a pattern of behavior is observed or exhibits a single behavior that is an egregious professionalism lapse, the professionalism concern is submitted to the administration of the College Hearing Committee (CHC) for review by the CHC Administrator who then will notify the Associate Dean of the respective site. The Associate Dean of the respective site and the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs will meet with the student and allow the student to respond to the allegation. Based on the response of the student, the case may be forwarded to the Committee on Student Evaluation (COSE) or PA students to the Promotion Committee. If forwarded to the COSE or the Promotion Committee, the committees may take actions such as recommending an

adjustment to one’s academic standing including Academic Probation, Warning, or inclusion of the professionalism concerns in the medical student’s Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE)/PA student’s future letters of recommendation. Ultimately, the Committee on Student Evaluation or the PA Promotion Committee may recommend to the dean a student be dismissed from MSUCOM for academic and/or professionalism reasons, including failure to demonstrate appropriate ethical or professional behavior. If the case is determined to not be forwarded to the COSE by administration, it will be reviewed by the CHC Board and a determination of a formal CHC hearing is made.

### Online Reporting System

This is a confidential, web-based [form](#) for individuals to report both exemplary behaviors and lapses in professionalism to the CGPI. These forms are reviewed by MSUCOM’s Sr. Associate Dean of Student Affairs and/or Director of Human Resources, which is triaged based on parties involved. These designees also follow up on each observation filed and document that the concern was addressed as a system of checks and balances to hold everyone in the college accountable. The Sr. Associate Dean of Student Affairs and/or HR also monitor for trends in behavior among faculty, staff, students, or specific work and learning environments (departments, clerkships, etc.) that may require more in-depth evaluation and education. These trends are then brought to the SCC for exploratory and solution-oriented multi-perspective discussion on the 'why' behind trends, and how we can work together to combat negative behaviors and amplify positive behaviors.

Reporting exemplary professional behavior is also valuable and much appreciated. Those exhibiting exemplary professional behavior may receive a formal letter of acknowledgement from the SCC. The letter is also copied to that person's supervisor or college administrator as appropriate (e.g., for students, the letter would be copied to the Sr. Associate Dean of Student Affairs; for faculty or staff, to their supervisor/department head, etc.).

Below outlines the potential actions of the administration regarding individual MSUCOM students.

Submission Level	Action
First unsatisfactory professionalism concern*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the behavior as a trend in the college and for the individual(s)</li> <li>• Mandatory coaching provided by a faculty Member</li> </ul>
Second unsatisfactory professionalism concern*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the behavior as a trend in the college and for the individual(s)</li> <li>• Mandatory coaching provided by a faculty member or administrator</li> <li>• Add notes to eSAF and/or Student Information System</li> </ul>
Third unsatisfactory professionalism concern*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COSE/Promotion Committee referral and review of standing</li> <li>• Detailed comments provided to the individual student’s <a href="#">Medical Student Performance Evaluation</a> (MSPE) if a medical student</li> </ul>

Fourth unsatisfactory professionalism concern*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COSE/Promotion Committee referral</li> <li>• Summarize performance trends in MSPE</li> </ul>
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\*If the referral to CGPI is considered egregious (example academic dishonesty), administration may elect immediate COSE referral.

If the lapse in professionalism falls within the parameters of another College or University disciplinary system (e.g., plagiarism; falsification of documents; verbal or physical assault; sexual harassment), the issue will be referred to the associated policy and/or committee (Medical Students Rights and Responsibilities (MSRR), Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RVSM), Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), etc.).

### **MEDICAL STUDENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Michigan State University is a community of scholars. The basic purposes of the University are the advancement, dissemination, and application of knowledge. While engaged in these activities, the University seeks to provide an environment conducive to instruction, research, and service.

- Each right of an individual places a reciprocal responsibility upon others: the responsibility to permit the individual to exercise the right. The medical student, as a member of the academic community, has both rights and responsibilities. Within that community, the medical student’s most essential right is the right to learn. The University provides for the medical student those privileges, opportunities, and protections which best promote the learning process in all its aspects. The medical student has responsibilities to other members of the academic community and to patients, clients, and the general public.
- Regulations governing the activities and conduct of student groups and individual medical students do not attempt to specify all prohibited and permitted conduct. Rather, they are intended to govern conduct that seriously interferes with the basic purposes and processes of the community or with the rights of members of the community.
- The medical student is not only a member of the academic community, but also a citizen of the larger society who retains those rights, protections, and guarantees of fair treatment held by all citizens.

### **Professionalism Activities**

Several ceremonial mechanisms have been established to remind students, staff and faculty of the rewards and obligations of the medical professional. These include the White Coat Ceremony for incoming first year medical and PA students, the Transition Ceremony for third year medical students beginning their clinical rotations and the Hooding Ceremony where new doctors are vested with the traditions and responsibilities of the profession, including a recitation of the Osteopathic oath.

*I do hereby affirm my loyalty to the profession I am learning and to the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine.*

*I will be mindful always of my great responsibility to acquire the knowledge and skills to preserve the health and the life of my patients, and to employ only those recognized methods of treatment consistent with good judgment and with my skill and ability.*

*I will be ever vigilant in aiding the general welfare of the community, sustaining its laws and institutions, not engaging in those practices which will in any way bring shame or discredit upon myself or my*

*profession.*

*I will endeavor to work in accord with my colleagues in a spirit of progressive cooperation.*

*I will look with respect and esteem upon all those who are teaching me my art.  
I will be ever alert to further the application of basic biologic truths to the healing arts and to develop the principles of osteopathy, which were first enunciated by Andrew Taylor Still.*

*To my college I will be loyal and strive always for its best interests and for the interests of the students who will come after me. In the presence of this gathering, I bind myself to my oath.*

Teaching and practicing professionalism include workshops and lectures on the background and significance of professionalism.

The Spartan Spotlight Faculty/Staff Award, given by the students each year to a faculty or staff member who best represents the essence of professionalism in medicine.

The Spartan Spotlight Student Award, given by the college each year to a student who best represents the essence of professionalism in medicine.

### **Other Reporting Options**

Students may report incidents to any course or clerkship director, their student affairs dean, the medical education dean, or another trusted faculty member/MSUCOM administrator. That person, with permission from the student, may complete a professionalism observation form on behalf of students. This is useful even if that person has resolved the issue, as it allows MSUCOM to monitor for similar recurrent behavior as above. Students may also use resources and reporting mechanisms provided by the MSU main campus Dean of Students Office (<https://ossa.msu.edu>).

### **MSU Ombudsperson**

Whether you are a student, faculty member, or staff, the Office of the University Ombudsperson offers a confidential place to discuss both academic and nonacademic concerns including, administrative issues, workplace issues, or any concern that may relate to Michigan State University students. The Office of the University Ombudsperson offers an environment where you can talk with a confidential and impartial resource about a complaint, conflict, or problem.

The Office of the University Ombudsperson also is committed to providing unbiased, fair, and equitable services and support to all members of the Michigan State University community regardless of color, disability, familial status (i.e., having children under 18 in a household, including pregnant women), sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship status, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, class, sex, and any other identities the constituent may hold. Please click [here](#) to learn more and to request an appointment.

### **The Office for Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance**

The Office for Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance (OCR) is comprised of the Prevention, Outreach, and Education Department (POE), the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), the Office of the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, the Resolution Office, and the Office of Support and Equity. OCR supports the campus community in creating and maintaining a safe environment and a culture of respect through educating all campus community members regarding how to prevent, identify, appropriately respond to, and report discrimination, harassment, stalking, sexual assault, and relationship violence; conducting impartial, fair, supportive, and equitable investigations of complaints under MSU's Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct and Title IX Policy (RVSM Policy) and MSU's Anti-Discrimination Policy (ADP); and connecting those impacted by discrimination, harassment, relationship violence, and sexual misconduct with campus and community resources.

### **Academic Integrity and the Spartan Code of Honor Academic Pledge**

Michigan State University affirms the principle that all individuals associated with the academic community have a responsibility for establishing, maintaining, and fostering an understanding and appreciation for academic integrity. Academic integrity is the foundation for university success. Learning how to express original ideas, cite works, work independently, and report results accurately and honestly are skills that carry students beyond their academic career.

Students are encouraged to review the following websites to learn more about academic integrity, student rights and responsibilities, and the Spartan Code of Honor:

Spartan Life Handbook (Student Affairs)

- [University Ombudsperson](#)
- [Medical Students Rights and Responsibilities](#)

The Spartan Code of Honor was adopted by the Associated Students of MSU (ASMSU) March 3, 2016, endorsed by Academic Governance March 22, 2016, and recognized by the provost, president, and Board of Trustees on April 15, 2016.

The Spartan Code of Honor Academic Pledge:

*“As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor in ownership is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do.”*

### **Professional Commitment Statement**

As a medical student and future osteopathic physician or as a future PA, I have chosen to pursue a profession which requires individual responsibility, integrity, compassion, and a constant awareness of the commitment I have made to myself, to my patients, and to the other members of the teams with whom I work. Exhibiting personal and professional behaviors consistent with a respect for my chosen profession and having pride in my work are central tenets of professionalism which I will strive to incorporate into my daily life. To demonstrate my commitment to these responsibilities while enrolled at MSUCOM, I will:

- Be considerate and respectful of others’ (teachers, peers, patients, residents, and faculty) time, rights, values, religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, lifestyles, opinions, and choices, even when they differ from my own.
- Seek and accept feedback and constructive instruction from teachers, peers, residents, and faculty to continually improve my educational experience, knowledge, and clinical skills.
- Presume goodwill of those with whom I am learning and working.
- Communicate respectfully, verbally, via email, in MSUCOM-oriented group chat platforms, and other MSUCOM-oriented platforms.
- Commit to the highest standards of competence both for myself and for those with whom I work.
- Recognize the importance of life-long learning and commit to maintaining competence throughout my medical career.
- Be mindful of my demeanor, language, and appearance in the classroom, in the presence of patients, and in all health care settings.
- Be accountable to all members of the MSUCOM community, including students, residents, faculty, and support staff.
- Admit to and assume responsibility for mistakes in a mature and honest manner and develop productive strategies for correcting them.

- Refrain from using illicit substances. Refrain from using alcohol, non-prescription or prescription drugs in a manner that may compromise my judgment or my ability to contribute to safe and effective patient care.
- Meet the expectations for participation and timeliness that are communicated to me by those who teach me.
- Take an active role in my learning and in caring for the diverse patient population served by the community hospitals around me.
- Recognize my limitations and seek help when my expertise, knowledge, or level of experience is inadequate to handle a situation in the classroom, hospital, or research setting.

Establishing productive and respectful relationships with patients, faculty, residents, staff, and colleagues is an essential component of providing the best possible health care. To strive for professionalism and kindness in all my daily encounters, I will:

- Maintain appropriate relationships with patients, teachers, peers, residents, and faculty.
- Treat all members of the MSUCOM community, patients, and their families with respect, compassion, and dignity.
- Be mindful to avoid intentionally embarrassing or deriding others.
- Provide feedback to others (both colleagues and superiors) in a constructive manner, with the goal of helping them to improve.
- Treat those who participate in my education (e.g., standardized patients, faculty, curriculum assistants, staff) with dignity and respect.
- Actively work to create an atmosphere in classrooms, clinical settings and in laboratories that is conducive to optimal, interactive learning.
- Help and support my peers during difficult times in their academic, professional, and personal lives.
- Attend to my own physical and emotional well-being.

As a caregiver and representative of MSUCOM, I understand that specific personal values and behaviors are anticipated from me. Through my actions, I will exemplify my dedication to honoring and upholding the standards of the osteopathic medical profession. By doing so, I will actively contribute to preserving society's trust. I will:

- Maintain the highest standards of academic and scholarly honesty throughout my medical education, by behaving in a trustworthy manner.
- Recognize and function in a manner consistent with my role as a student on a team.
- Maintain a commitment to patient confidentiality, recognizing that patients will trust me with sensitive information.
- Place my patients' interests and well-being at the center of my educational and professional behavior and goals.
- Treat cadaveric and other scientific specimens with respect.
- Learn about and avoid conflicts of interest as I carry out my responsibilities.
- Contribute to medical knowledge through active scholarship and discovery.