



# The Medical College of Georgia Office of Academic Affairs

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## Student Professionalism

The Student Academic Promotions and Professionalism Conduct Committee makes recommendations and decisions related to professionalism in accordance with the professionalism policies approved by the Curriculum Oversight Committee: <https://www.augusta.edu/mcg/coffice/curriculum/policies.php>.

As an academic competency, professionalism also falls under the purview of the Student Promotions Committee. The Medical College of Georgia strives to maintain a positive learning environment as detailed in the Achieving a Positive Learning Environment Policy.

All medical students are expected to consistently conduct themselves in a professional manner, consistent with both AU policy and MCG policy. Where MCG policy is inconsistent with AU policy, MCG policy supersedes AU policy. AU policies can be found at the following link: <https://www.augusta.edu/services/legal/policyinfo/policies.php>.

Physicians share a commitment to professionalism and regulate or govern themselves through peer reviews, hospital committees, and state medical boards. Physicians are also expected to practice in accord with a code of ethics. Therefore, medical students are expected to operate under similar guidelines throughout the course of their academic careers.

### A. Professional Misconduct:

1. Professional behavior is expected both on and off campus. The Associate Dean of Student Affairs and the Student Promotions Committee have the initial and primary responsibility for reviewing instances of unprofessional student behavior and determining the appropriate response. The one exception is for conduct flagged on a criminal background check which is reviewed by the Criminal History Review Committee. Professional misconduct by students has broad implications for the well-being of students, faculty, and staff at the Medical College of Georgia. It is important for students, as physicians in training, to understand that there are many behaviors that, although legal, are not professional or fitting of a physician. Professional misconduct may include, but is not limited to:
  - a. Violation of conduct described in course policies or syllabi, or as communicated by the instructor.
  - b. Violation of any code of ethics of the medical profession.
  - c. Academic dishonesty including cheating, or attempted cheating; stealing, or attempted stealing; plagiarism; misrepresentation; or academic misconduct.
  - d. Engaging in or contributing to any activity that disrupts or interferes with the intended teaching, research, or outreach programs of the Medical College of Georgia, on campus or at affiliated training sites.

\*DISCLAIMER: Printed version of this document is unofficial for reference only; official version can be found online: <https://www.augusta.edu/mcg/coffice/curriculum/policies.php>



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- e. Arriving late or leaving early for any curricular or professional activity, including classroom, lab, and clinical experiences, without an excused absence.
- f. Failure to do any of the following:
  - i. Participate in any required curricular experience, including assessments, without an excused absence
  - ii. Submit an assignment on time
  - iii. Keep an appointment with faculty, staff, or administration
  - iv. Complete assigned duties
  - v. Follow instructions
- g. Failure to show respect for faculty, staff, students, or patients, including failure to use requested forms of address.
- h. Failure to communicate and interact with professional staff and members of the health care team, including peers and patients, in a considerate manner and with a spirit of cooperation.
- i. Unprofessional dress (as outlined in the professional program, class, and/or clinical agency policies) during classes, clinical experiences, or when representing the Medical College of Georgia.
- j. Bringing family members, guests, and pets to the classroom or other instructional facilities (ex. gross anatomy laboratory, simulation lab) or to any curricular or professional academic activities without prior consent of the instructor.
- k. Falsifying application, forms, documents, reports, or records of any kind; or providing false or misleading information to Medical College of Georgia personnel prior to admission, or while an active member of MCG's academic programs.
- l. Unauthorized accessing or revealing of confidential information about faculty, staff, or students of the Medical College of Georgia.
- m. Violation of patient respect and confidentiality in any practice/learning setting.
- n. Theft, damaging, defacing, or unauthorized use or misuse of any property of the Medical College of Georgia or training sites.
- o. Improper internet behavior
- p. Computer usage that violates AU/MCG and/or clinical sites acceptable use policies.
- q. Sexual harassment as defined by AU and/or clinical sites. <https://www.augusta.edu/student-life/conduct/sexual-misconduct-policy.php>
- r. Harassment (including cyber bullying), threats of violence, intent to do harm. <https://www.augusta.edu/services/legal/policyinfo/policy/anti-harassment-non-discrimination-policy>
- s. Violation of the University System of Georgia Board of Regents Sexual Misconduct Policy <https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section6/C2655>
- t. Endangering patients, faculty, staff, and/or fellow students, or damaging their property.
- u. Intoxication, use, abuse, possession, and/or illegal sale of alcohol, drugs, and/or other prohibited substances/chemicals on campus or while acting as a student or representative of the Medical College of Georgia.
- v. Illegal possession of firearms, explosives, harmful chemicals, or other weapons on campus or while acting as a student or representative of the Medical College of Georgia.



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- w. Any violation that results in arrest, and/or conviction of any federal, state, or municipal law other than minor traffic violations (ex. speeding or parking tickets). Any individual violating these laws is required to report the violation to the Student affairs office within 7 days of the event.
- x. Any conduct which is flagged on a criminal background check for the purposes of admission or credentialing including a positive drug screen.
- y. Any violation of a Medical College of Georgia rule or rule at a professional experience site.
- z. Pleading no contest or being involved in adjudication that is withheld.
- aa. Failure to report any violation, arrest, or conviction of any federal, state, or municipal law to the Office of Student Affairs within 7 days of the event.

### B. Reporting Process

1. As outlined above, students are required to self report any violation that results in arrest, and/or conviction of any federal, state, or municipal law other than minor traffic violations (ex. speeding or parking tickets) to the appropriate Student Affairs Dean within seven days of the occurrence.
2. If a faculty member is aware that a student has violated the conduct policy outside of the classroom, they shall remind the student of the policy and direct the student to self-report any professional misconduct violations to the appropriate Student Affairs Dean within seven days of the occurrence.
3. The aforementioned faculty member is encouraged to report his/her finding independently to the appropriate Student Affairs Dean within seven days of the occurrence.
4. Any concerns regarding mistreatment of any student by peer, staff, or faculty should be reported using the Student mistreatment reporting portal.  
<https://www.augusta.edu/mcg/students/studentmistreatment.php>
5. For all current students, any conduct discovered on a criminal background check and deemed unprofessional by the Criminal History Review Committee is referred to the Student Promotions Committee directly (see below for further actions). For prematriculation students, any conduct deemed unprofessional by the Criminal History Review Committee is referred to the Admissions Committee directly (once referred to Admissions any further action is covered by Admissions Committee Policy and is beyond the scope of this policy).

**Please Note:** Clearance by the Criminal History Review Committee is an internal institutional decision only. It does not constitute clearance by affiliated hospitals, clinics, or external sites. External clinical partners retain discretion to obtain their own background checks and review those findings against their own institutional standards and may refuse placement or participation independently of the University's decision.

### C. Professionalism Actions

1. The Student Affairs Deans and Student Promotions Committee Chair are responsible for transferring cases to the Student Promotions Committee or appropriate Subcommittee which may issue or recommend disciplinary actions on behalf of the Medical College of Georgia. The Student Promotions Committee or Subcommittee will take all available information into consideration in its discussions of student professionalism concerns. Disciplinary action for



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professional misconduct will depend on the circumstances and may include dismissal or other action decided upon by the committee.

- a. The committee may review the circumstances and decide to issue a letter of warning via the decision letter from the Subcommittee/Full Committee chair. The letter of warning will become part of the student's promotions file, but will not be considered a deficiency.
  - b. The committee may review the circumstances and decide to issue a letter of reprimand via the decision letter from the Subcommittee/Full Committee chair. This will be considered a deficiency in terms of being used by the committee to determine next steps should further professionalism concerns arise. However, it will not be considered a deficiency in terms of being placed on the student's Medical School Performance Evaluation (MSPE). Any individual violating the DUI/DWI laws may be required to undergo an alcohol/drug evaluation through the Georgia Physicians Health Program (PHP).
  - c. Probation: Professionalism Concern:
    - i. A student may be referred to the full Committee by the Student Promotions Subcommittee for an Academic Performance Hearing to be considered for placement in the category of "Probation: Professionalism Concern" for any breach of professionalism that requires the Subcommittee's review and is felt to constitute a substantial breach of professional behavior.
    - ii. A student may be placed in the category of "Probation: Professionalism Concern" by the Student Promotions Committee for any breach of professionalism that requires the Full Committee's review and is felt to constitute a substantial breach of professional behavior.
    - iii. Probation: Professionalism Concern is considered to be a deficiency and will be reported in all official documentation.
  - d. Students may be placed on immediate leave of absence and suspension from the Medical College by the action of the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs or designee.
2. Requirements in the Category of Probation: Professionalism Concern: Students placed in the category of "Probation: Professionalism Concern" will:
- a. Be informed of their status and will be followed at specified intervals by their Student Promotions Subcommittee or Full Committee until the issues of concern are satisfactorily resolved. Students will also likely need to meet with their Class Dean on a regular basis as determined by their Student Promotions Subcommittee/Full Committee.
  - b. Be offered guidance and an appropriate professional referral(s) toward the resolution of behaviors of concern.
  - c. Remain in this category until the Student Promotions Subcommittee/Full Committee reviews and determines that it is appropriate to remove the designation. During this period, the student may not hold any leadership or officer position within MCG, will not be excused for travel for any professional conference. Students on professionalism probation may not be approved for any away electives at the discretion of the Student Promotions Subcommittee.
  - d. Students who are on Professionalism Probation may not enroll in the Dual Degree pathway.
  - e. Students may be dismissed from the Medical College of Georgia by action of the Full Promotions Committee in the event of additional academic or professionalism concerns while on probation.



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- f. Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE): Students placed on “Probation: Professionalism Concern” will have this noted on their Medical School Performance Evaluation (MSPE) with corresponding dates.



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3. Student Appeals of Professionalism Actions.
  - a. Students placed on Probation: Professionalism Concern have the right to appeal. Students must follow the process outlined in the section on appeals.