



**THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY**
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Responsible University Official: Senior Associate Dean for Health Sciences

Responsible Office: Health Sciences Dean’s Office

Last Revised Date: March 7, 2018

Ethical Behavior and Professionalism

Policy Statement

It is the policy of Health Sciences Programs at the George Washington University (GW Health Sciences) to encourage its faculty, staff, students, and volunteers to engage in ethical behavior and demonstrate professionalism in all aspects of their academic life.

Reason for Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define and maintain appropriate standards of ethical behavior and professionalism to all persons who represent GW Health Sciences.

Who is Governed by this Policy

This policy applies to all faculty, staff, students, and volunteers who represent GW Health Sciences.

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Policy

GW Health Sciences is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in education, research and service. All individuals who represent GW Health Sciences, including its faculty, staff, students, and volunteers, will demonstrate the highest standards of ethical behavior in order to promote and maintain a healthy, safe learning environment and honor its organizational values.

Members of the GW Health Sciences community adopt and demonstrate the following core values and behaviors of ethical conduct and professionalism. It is important to note that consistent demonstration of these values may require regular self-reflection and moral courage.

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Empathy
- Selflessness
- Teamwork

Many facets of professionalism are universal to GW Health Sciences and across myriad learning environments. Examples include punctuality, appropriate dress, respectful interpersonal communication, appropriate interpersonal boundary setting, promise-keeping, and humility. In some cases, expectations of professionalism may be further defined by an individual program of study or delineated for specific educational settings, such as during training in a community-based or patient care setting of an affiliated entity. GW Health Sciences encourages regular dialogue and reflection among its teachers, learners, staff and volunteers (e.g. clinical preceptors, dissertation advisers, mentors) to explore ethical conduct and professionalism, which are fundamental activities to foster personal and professional growth.

Patient care environments serve as settings for education, research and service for many members of the GW Health Sciences community. Participants in patient care settings must adhere to ethical standards that serve to promote a safe, healthy, high quality environment for learning and patient care. Participants in patient care environments will consistently demonstrate the following professional behaviors:

- Communicate and interact with patients and families, members of the care team, staff, learners, and volunteers in a courteous, respectful way.
- Refrain from any form of communication or interpersonal interaction that is consistent with harassment, exploitation, verbal or physical abuse, or intimidation.
- Refrain from any form of discrimination, such as on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender, age, marital status, cultural beliefs, political affiliation, or employment role.
- Support a culture of safety for all patients and families, health care professionals, staff, learners and volunteers.
- Protect patient privacy and the confidentiality of patient information in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations or policies.
- Recognize one’s own limitations in the patient care setting, and seek assistance or guidance from a qualified professional if it is in the best interest of the patient and family.
- Support interprofessional collaborative practice and teamwork in the patient care setting.
- Engage regularly in self-care to promote and maintain personal well-being.
- Abstain from any behavior and substance that potentially impairs one’s ability to participate with or provide high quality, safe care.

Members of the GW Health Sciences community also adopt and adhere to a set of ethical guidelines published by the University online at: <https://compliance.gwu.edu/code-conduct-policies> under “Ethical Standards.” These resources provide guidance regarding non-retaliation, political activity, disabilities, equal opportunity, and religious accommodation. Further, individuals in GW Health Sciences engaged in research should refer to University published guidelines for expectations on research integrity and the responsible conduct of research: <https://research.gwu.edu/research-integrity>.

Ethical behavior and professionalism are the responsibilities of each faculty, staff, student and volunteer within the GW Health Sciences community. Consistent adherence to and demonstration of the above stated ethical behaviors, values, and professionalism are requirements for participation in education, research, and service activities within GW Health Sciences. Students who fail to demonstrate these standards may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal from a program of study.

Contacts

Contact	Telephone	Email
Health Sciences Dean’s Office	202-994-0384	hsp@gwu.edu

Document History

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Who Approved This Policy

Reamer Bushardt, Senior Associate Dean for Health Sciences
Mary Lynn Reed, Senior Counsel, Medical Center

This policy, as well as all [university policies](#), are located on the [Office of Compliance and Privacy's](#) home page.