



# Standard of Practice: Professional Responsibilities in Medical Education (2022)

A **Standard of Practice** is the minimum standard of professional behavior and ethical conduct expected by the College on a specific issue.

## Professional Responsibilities in Medical Education

### Preamble

Education and training occurs in a variety of environments. A team-based approach to care which is collaborative and allows for optimal health care for patients and a respectful learning environment is required. An understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Educational Registrants and their supervisors is essential for ensuring a safe and effective delivery of health care to patients.

### Standard of Practice

#### Definitions

**Undergraduate Learner:** an undergraduate medical education learner registered on the College's Education Register.

**Postgraduate Learner:** a postgraduate medical learner registered on the College's Education Register.

**Educational Registrant:** an Undergraduate Learner, a Postgraduate Learner, or any other individual who is registered on the College's Education Register.

**Supervisor:** a medical practitioner who acts in a supervisory role to an Educational Registrant.

**Professional:** a commitment to the health and well-being of individual patients and society through ethical practice, high personal standards of behaviour, accountability to the profession and society, physician-led regulation, and the maintenance of personal health.<sup>1</sup>

### **Professional Responsibilities of Supervisors and Educational Registrants**

Supervisors and Educational Registrants must demonstrate professional behavior in all interactions with each other as well as with patients and their families, colleagues, and staff. Displaying appropriate behavior is particularly important for the Supervisor, as Educational Registrants gain knowledge and develop attitudes about professionalism through role modeling.

Supervisors must be mindful of the power differential in their relationships with Educational Registrants. They must not allow any personal relationship to interfere with their supervision, training and evaluation of the Educational Registrants.

Supervisors and Educational Registrants must avoid behaviours that interfere with quality health-care delivery or quality medical education. This includes the use of inappropriate words, actions, or inactions that interfere with the ability of the Supervisor and Educational Registrant to work well with each other. The College expects physicians to display professional behavior at all times.

### **Responsibilities of Supervisors**

Supervisors must provide appropriate supervision of Educational Registrants, including:

- Modeling professional, ethical, and appropriate care;
- Ensuring the best quality of care for the patient;
- Ensuring that the patient is informed of the identity of the Educational Registrant, their degree of involvement in the patient's care, and the identify of the most responsible (Note: as the Education Registrant is often the first point of contact with the patient, this information can be provided by them when appropriate);
- Providing appropriate supervision of the Educational Registrant based on their level of training and ability, as judged by ongoing timely evaluation of their clinical, technical, and management skills as well as their professional judgment;
- Communicating regularly with the Educational Registrant to discuss and review the care provided by the Educational Registrant to patients;
- Being willing and available to see patients when required and when requested; and
- Abiding by the training standards of the College of Family Physicians of Canada/Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University.

### Additional responsibilities of Supervisors:

- Supervisors **must not** engage in violence, harassment (including intimidation) or discrimination against Educational Registrants.
- Supervisors **must** take reasonable steps to stop violence, harassment, or discrimination against Educational Registrants if they see it occurring in the learning environment and **must** take any other steps as may be required under applicable legislation, as well as policies, by-laws, and codes of conduct of the College, Regional Health Authorities, and Memorial University.
- Supervisors **must** provide Education Registrants with support and direction in addressing disruptive behaviour in the learning environment.
- Supervisors **must not** enter into a sexual relationship with an Educational Registrant while responsible for supervising the Educational Registrant.

### Responsibilities of Postgraduate Learner

A Postgraduate Learner is not an independent practitioner. A Postgraduate Learner is pursuing a course to independent practice under the supervision of their attending staff, while following the guidelines of the program to which they are enrolled. A Postgraduate Learner must:

- Participate in the care of patients as appropriate to their competencies and specific circumstances;
- Ensure that their Supervisor is aware of their level of training and experience with clinical and technical procedures to ensure adequate supervision;
- Make the patient aware of their name, role and degree of involvement in the patient's care;
- Make the patient aware of the name and role of the most responsible physician and that this physician is ultimately responsible for the patient's care;
- Communicate effectively with the Supervisor in regards to clinical findings and management plans;
- Discuss all significant changes in the status of the patient with the Supervisor;
- Document appropriate findings and treatment plans;
- Maintain a professional relationship with their Supervisor, patients and their families, colleagues, and staff; and
- Abide by the standards of the College of Family Physicians of Canada/Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the curricular expectations, guidelines and codes of the Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University.

### Responsibilities of Undergraduate Learner

An Undergraduate Learner is not an independent practitioner. An Undergraduate Learner is completing their undergraduate curriculum and as such, requires supervision in the performance of their clinical duties. An Undergraduate Learner must:

- Participate in the care of patients as appropriate to their competencies and specific circumstances;
- Ensure that their Supervisor is aware of their level of training and experience with clinical and technical procedures to ensure adequate supervision;
- Make the patient aware of their name and role as a Student;
- Communicate effectively with the Supervisor;
- Maintain a professional relationship with their Supervisor, patients and their families, colleagues, and staff; and
- Abide by the curricular expectations, guidelines and codes of the Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University.

## Acknowledgements

<sup>1</sup> Frank, J., Snell, L., Sherbino, J. (2015) Royal College Publications. *CanMEDs 2015 Physician Competency Framework*. Ottawa: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

CPSO (2021) Professional Responsibilities in Medical Education

## Document History

Approved by Council	September 9, 2017
Reviewed & Updated	June 18, 2022
Expected Review Date	June 18, 2027
Publication Date	June 29, 2022