Procedures for Handling Breaches of Professionalism

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SOD Procedures for Handling Breaches of Professionalism

**Definition**

Professionalism is considered a core competency by the UCSF School of Dentistry. Breaches in academic professionalism are differentiated from instances of student misconduct. Any breach of academic professionalism will be addressed via the process outlined in the SOD Student Handbook's Professionalism Competency section.

Issues of student misconduct that do not qualify as breaches in academic professionalism (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, forgery, theft, lewd conduct) and violations of any of the policies outlined in Policies Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations and Students (PACAOS) 102.00 – 102.25 may result in the initiation of student conduct procedures.

**Implementation**

The procedures for breaches of professionalism that occur in courses or clinics is an interactive process that will be handled as follows:

1. A Course Director, Clinic Director, Clinical Coach or Residency Program Director (referred to as Director/Coach in this document) who is concerned about a learner’s professional behavior will do the following:
   a. Determine whether the incident(s) or issue(s) is:
      i. A development opportunity - a minor professionalism issue that can be discussed/reflected upon and identified as an area for future growth and development. No further action is necessary, other than completing and sending Part I and II of the PER to the Associate Dean for Education and Student Affairs for inclusion in the learner’s personal file.
      ii. Of moderate concern - a serious incident, issue, or pattern of repeated professionalism issues which, once addressed, will require follow-up assessment to ensure that improvements are made. (PER and Action Plan required).
      iii. A serious concern*, risk, or safety issue which may require immediate removal from the environment. (PER and Action Plan required).

   *Note: In the event of serious concern (i.e. immediate removal from the environment, harm to self or others) the faculty member must immediately notify the Executive Director of Clinic Education and the Associate Dean for Education and Student Affairs, who will determine the next course of action. Additionally, Associate Dean for Education and Student Affairs may report the incident to one or more campus partners including, but not limited to Student Health and Counseling, Risk Management, Student Disability Services, Disability Management, and/or the Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination.

   b. Complete the Professionalism Evaluation Report Form (PER) (download for the fillable form).
   c. Meet with the Learner to review the PER form and discuss the specific incident(s) or issue(s) which prompted the discussion.
   d. Ask the learner if there are outside factors which may be involved in the incident(s) or issue(s).
   e. If an Action Plan is required, develop the plan with the learner and complete section V of the PER.
   f. Work with the learner to identify resources available on campus and discusses professionalism expectations and behaviors.
   g. Give feedback to the learner and make suggestions for improvement, making reference to SOD expectations for professionalism and specific course outcomes related to professionalism.
   h. Maintain written documentation resulting from meetings with the learner. (All communication regarding a student’s progress is confidential and should not be shared with anyone outside of this professionalism process, except where otherwise permitted at law).
   i. Upon successful completion of the Professionalism Action Plan, complete the Professionalism Action Plan Follow Up Form (download for the fillable form). If the PER and Action Plan was not successfully completed, the Associate Dean for Education and Student Affairs will address the next course of action.

The course of action will be documented in writing and the learner may be expected to enter into a Return to Study Agreement which will outline the conditions upon which they may return. In some cases, SOD may require a fitness for duty evaluation in order for the learner to return.

To ensure that the learner is actively involved, the learner:

- Meets with the Director/Coach regarding the professionalism concerns raised, the required action plan, and to discuss their viewpoint.
- Has the opportunity to develop the Professional Action Plan with the Director/Coach and respond in writing on the PER form.
- Signs the PER form acknowledging receipt of the PER, not the learner’s agreement with the PER.
- May also meet with the Associate Dean for Education and Student Affairs depending on the incident or issue.

Staff members who have concerns regarding a learner’s professionalism should report the incident to their supervisor or the department chair, who will initiate the PER process.

The relevant Student Status Committee or Postdoctoral Department Student Review Committee will be notified of un-remediated professionalism issues at its regular quarterly review and Global Assessment meetings.

If a learner receives multiple PERs within one single-quarter or multi-quarter course, the learner could receive a non-passing grade (NP) for that course due to this pattern of unprofessional behavior. This may be done at the discretion of the Course Director, even if the learner has passed all other academic or technical components of the course.
Institutional professionalism refers to conduct outside the classroom or clinic across the UCSF Campus as defined in the Policies Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations and Students (PACaos) 102.00 – 102.25 and may result in the initiation of student conduct procedures. A learner may receive a PER for unprofessional behavior that occurs outside the SOD department or clinic, such as inappropriate behavior with members of other schools or departments. As such, institutional personnel may submit a PER to the Dean (or Dean’s designee). The Dean or Dean’s designee will meet with the learner to discuss the incident and define a remediation process, if appropriate.