

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Student Mistreatment and Learning Environment Policy
<b>Original Approval Date:</b>	July 16, 2021
<b>Approving Officer/Committee:</b>	Medical Curriculum Committee
<b>Revision Dates and Notes:</b>	
<b>Related LCME Element(s) (if any):</b>	3.5 & 3.6

**A. Policy** – LSUHSC-S School of Medicine shall provide and maintain a safe and effective learning environment in which students, residents, fellows, faculty, and staff work together to educate and learn in a manner that promotes the highest level of patient care, and the institution shall respond to allegations that disrupt this safe and effective learning environment in a systematic way that protects the student.

**B. Purpose** - The purpose of this policy is to outline the school’s commitment to promote a positive learning environment, to define student mistreatment, and to delineate the process for reporting mistreatment.

**C. Scope** – This policy applies to all members of the university community.

**D. Procedure/Process** –

**Commitment to a Positive Learning Environment**

LSUHSC-S strives to create a learning environment that is safe for patients and welcoming to learners, where all individuals involved in the health care endeavor are treated with respect and are made to feel that they belong. A positive learning environment for medical students includes the following features:

- Treat students with respect (e.g., address the student by name, provide constructive feedback in ways that foster student effort, call attention to micro-aggressions as a bystander, etc.)
- Include students in the team (e.g., give students meaningful work, include students in clinical discussions, etc.)
- Help students learn (e.g., give real-time feedback, impart clinical knowledge, provide learning objectives at the beginning of session/rotation, etc.)

**Description of Student Mistreatment**

LSUHSC-S adopts the Association of American Medical Colleges’ definition of mistreatment which is any behavior that shows disrespect for the dignity of others and unreasonably interferes with the learning process. Mistreatment comes in many forms including, but not limited to, verbal abuse, public humiliation, physical punishment or threats, intimidation, assigning a grade for reasons other than the student’s performance, assigning tasks for punishment or non-educational purposes, requiring the performance of personal services, failing to give students

credit for work they have done, sexual harassment, and harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual preference, age, religion, or physical or learning disabilities.

The following are specific examples of types of mistreatment and are not inclusive:

- Offensive remarks/names related to sexual orientation
- Offensive sexist remarks or names
- Denial of opportunities based on sexual orientation, gender, race, or ethnicity
- Subjection to unwanted sexual advances
- Racially or ethnically offensive remarks
- Assigning a grade for reasons other than performance
- Public humiliation
- Harassment
- Request to perform personal services
- Physical harm or threat of physical harm

### **Process for Reporting Mistreatment**

LSUHSC-S does not tolerate mistreatment of its students by any individual at any of its educational or training sites. The institution responds in a systematic manner to rectify incidents of student mistreatment. Students may report and resolve incidents of mistreatment in a variety of ways. Students may choose to discuss concerns directly with any individual felt to have demonstrated mistreatment at a time and setting conducive to a candid and respectful conversation. This approach is not always a comfortable or viable option. Alternatively, students may also bring concerns about mistreatment to the Office of Student Affairs for guidance and possible resolution. Such informal consultation will be confidential, unless precluded by safety of the student or institutional policy.

In addition, all students are asked to evaluate the learning environment and report any incidences of mistreatment that they experienced or witnessed on course/clerkship evaluations. Furthermore, all clerkship directors inquire about the learning environment and potential mistreatment at the time of mid-clerkship feedback.

If a concern related to mistreatment has not been resolved, individuals may file a formal written complaint using any of the following resources:

- The online mistreatment form at <https://www.lsuhs.edu/mistreatment>
- Direct reporting to the Office of Student Affairs
- The complaint boxes in the Library and the fourth and eighth floor lecture halls

Reports may be made anonymously and will be handled confidentially whenever possible. The exception is Title IX reporting. LSUHSC-S has an obligation to maintain an environment free of Title IX offenses (including sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and retaliations); thus, faculty and staff have mandatory

reporting and response obligations and may not be able to honor a complainant's request for confidentiality in those situations.

### **Investigating and Resolving Mistreatment**

The Associate Dean for Student Affairs shall refer formal allegations of mistreatment to the appropriate committee or administrator for investigation and resolution as follows:

- Student-to-Student Mistreatment - Professionalism Committee
- Resident/Fellow-to-Student Mistreatment – Graduate Medical Education Office
- Faculty-to-Student Mistreatment - *Ad hoc* committee appointed by the Dean of the School of Medicine
- Hospital Staff-to-Student Mistreatment – Vice Chancellor for Clinical Affairs and appropriate hospital administrator

These groups and individuals ensure that reports of mistreatment are thoroughly investigated in a fair and timely fashion and recommend corrective action. Corrective measures and/or disciplinary actions imposed on those individuals who have been found to be in violation of this policy shall be commensurate with the severity and/or frequency of the conduct and shall be adequate and sufficient to prevent such conduct in the future. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs will document complaint resolution information and inform complainant of outcome within 30 days of receipt of the complaint.

### **Prohibition of Retaliation**

LSUHSC-S does not tolerate threats, other forms of intimidation, and retaliation against a student for bringing a complaint of mistreatment or for assisting another in bringing a complaint. No individual who in good faith reports or complains of mistreatment or provides information relevant to a mistreatment investigation or proceeding may be subjected to retaliation. Retaliation against those reporting mistreatment or participating in an investigation of mistreatment is regarded as a form of mistreatment. Complaints of retaliation shall be handled in accordance with the process for reporting mistreatment outlined in this policy or, if applicable, may be forwarded to the appropriate University administrator for handling.

### **Incidence Management**

- Data will be tracked to identify repeat offenders.
- Program Directors will be notified if residents or fellows are involved in mistreatment.

### **Malicious Accusations**

A complainant or witness found to have been dishonest or malicious in making allegations at any point during the investigation may be subject to disciplinary action. Colleagues who on good faith assist others in raising a complaint of mistreatment by offering advice, moral support, or giving testimony or documentary evidence in support of a complaint of mistreatment are protected.