

University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry
Code of Professionalism for
Students, Residents, Post-Doctoral and other Trainees

Preamble¹

We at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry call upon students, faculty, administration, and staff to demonstrate the highest of ethical standards, the primary goal of which is the benefit of the patient and education of the student. Our entire oral health care community commits to possessing not only appropriate knowledge, skill and technical competence, but also those traits of character that foster adherence to all ethical principles. Qualities of compassion, kindness, integrity, fairness, respect, charity, and service are fundamental to the ethical practice of dentistry and essential in defining true professionalism. We, as students, pledge to abide by the following core values:

Core Values

As professionals-in-training, we strive to uphold each of these values, which guide our behavior. We recognize that none of these values stand alone, but are collectively balanced in guiding our behavior, as adjuncts to the American Dental Association and American College of Dentists ethical standards for patient care.

Autonomy (Respect individual rights and academic freedom of others) Autonomy is the personal and professional responsibility and right to individual freedom. We have the goal of respecting individual freedom in others as well as ourselves. Those freedoms include freedom of speech, thought, beliefs, and behaviors. We acknowledge and accept that these freedoms are constrained by the responsibilities to maintain the highest of standards both personally and professionally in all we do and say. Individual autonomy is never at the expense of respect for others.

Beneficence (Maximize benefits and minimize harms) Education, service, leadership, and research should be for the benefit of classmates, patients, staff, faculty, college, university, community, and profession. As professionals in-training, we strive to maximize benefits to these groups and minimize harms.

Compassion (Commitment to caring, kindness, and empathy) As professionals-in-training, we are caring, kind, and empathetic. We identify and understand the importance of the overall well-being of our classmates, patients, staff, faculty, college, university, community, and profession. We have a responsibility to model behavior for others and to promote a positive environment of learning, working, and self-assessment for growth.

¹Adapted from the American Dental Association (2012) [Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct](http://www.ada.org), www.ada.org.

²Adapted from the American College of Dentists (2004) [Ethics Handbook For Dentists](http://www.facd.org/acdethics.htm#EthicsHandbook), Gaithersburg, MD: American College of Dentists. <http://www.facd.org/acdethics.htm#EthicsHandbook>.

Competence (Commitment to recognize, operate within, and improve one’s abilities, and to critically evaluate the evidence basis for treatment) Competence requires a commitment to lifelong learning. As professionals-in-training we stay current with course work, scientific literature and advances in dentistry. We recognize our limitations. While functioning within those limits, we recognize them as opportunities for growth and for promoting the highest standards in classroom and laboratory learning, patient care, research, and community service.

Integrity (Behave with honor and decency) As professionals-in-training, we behave with honor and decency. We uphold the principles set forth in the UIC Student Disciplinary Policy,⁴ the UIC COD Subcommittee on Student Promotions,⁵ this UIC COD Code of Professionalism for Students, the professional codes espoused by the American Dental Association the American College of Dentists⁶ and other policies of the University of Illinois at Chicago and UIC College of Dentistry that govern student behavior. We affirm these core values in words, deeds, and intentions. We recognize potential and actual conflicts between values, and engage in resolutions that promote the highest personal, academic, leadership, and professional standards.

Justice (Exhibit fairness and equitable distribution of benefits and burdens) As professionals-in-training, we exhibit fairness in learning, the treatment of patients, and interactions with classmates, patients, staff and faculty. In learning, we treat all classmates, patients, staff, and faculty equitably. We balance the distribution of benefits and the educational burdens of being a student. In leadership, our student leaders treat those for whom they are responsible equitably, and balance the distribution of benefits and burdens under our control equitably.

Professionalism (Self-govern and function in the best interest of others) As professionals-in-training, we learn, lead, and provide service for the best interest of classmates, patients, staff, faculty, college, university, community, and the profession, and we work together for their best interests. Professionalism includes student self-governance and the concomitant rights and responsibilities that self-governance mandates. We work for the support and promotion of the college, university, and profession. We promote health for all within the college and community.

Service-Mindedness As professionals-in-training we will be aware and mindful of the patient and public we serve and approach those served with compassion.

³Adapted from the University of Illinois at Chicago Student Disciplinary Policy of the Senate Committee on Student Discipline. (2011) dos.uic.edu/studenconductprocess.shtml

⁴Adapted from the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry Subcommittee on Student Promotions (2002–2003) – currently being updated.

⁵Adapted from the American Dental Association (2014) [Code of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct](http://www.ada.org). www.ada.org.

⁶Adapted from the American College of Dentists [Ethics Handbook](http://www.acd.org/ethicshandbook.htm) (2013). www.acd.org/ethicshandbook.htm.

Tolerance (Exhibit sensitivity to diversity and its impact) As professionals-in-training, we will abide by the University of Illinois Nondiscrimination Policy,⁷ to wit: UIC strictly prohibits discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharge from the military or status as a protected veteran, arrest records, genetic information, citizenship status and/or order of portion status, and will comply with all federal and state nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, orders, and regulations.

Veracity (Exhibit honesty and truthfulness) As professionals-in-training, we are honest and truthful in all we do. Trust is the bedrock of the relationship between students, faculty, leaders, patients, and all others. Trust occurs only in an environment of respect, open communication, and integrity, which comes from the valuing of others as highly as we should be able to value ourselves, and would like to be valued by others.

⁷Adapted from the University of Illinois at Chicago, Office of Access and Equity.
<http://oae/uic/edu/UnlawfulDiscrimination>

Ethical Expectations

The following are the expectations of every student and trainee at the College of Dentistry.

1. Clinic performance

- a. I will avoid doing harm to any patient, and I will optimize the patient's oral and general health through my actions. I will perform to the best of my ability while in clinic.
- b. I will complete patient care only with guidance/ consultation appropriate to my training. I will not perform dentistry without supervision by a licensed person.
- c. I will perform in the clinic only when I am physically, emotionally, and cognitively competent to do so. I will not provide patient care while impaired, such as under the influence of drugs or alcohol or medications that affect my cognition or motor skills.
- d. I will abide by the clinic manual and other regulatory provisions.

2. Relationships with patients

- a. I will treat patients with respect, protect their privacy, and strive to form a good working relationship with them.
- b. I will respect the patient's cultural or other differences, and will do my best to understand what the patient expects from treatment.
- c. The patient's oral health takes precedence over my convenience. I will make evaluations, and explain and recommend treatment options, based on the patient's needs first, before my own.

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- d. I will educate the patient about the evidence based treatment alternatives available, understand the patient's preferences, and work with the patient to determine a treatment plan that will address the patient's preferences while maintaining standards of care. I will assure, to the best of my ability, that the patient is aware of treatment options, the benefits and risks of each treatment option including no treatment, his or her oral health conditions, how to maintain good oral health, and clinic policy. I will encourage and respond to all patient questions.
- e. I will maintain appropriate role boundaries with patients and avoid forming unprofessional relationships with them while under my care. It is acceptable to treat patients with whom I have a prior relationship as long as the oral health treatment is done with professionalism, and as long as good relationships are maintained with the patient.
- f. I recognize that giving and receiving gifts in a professional situation may cause an actual or perceived conflict of interest and/or commitment. I will give and receive gifts only in situations that maintain my professional integrity, and where my actions will not cause a real or perceived conflict.

3. Relationships with the College Community

- a. I will treat all members of the dental college community with respect and fairness. In recognition of my duty to maintain appropriate role boundaries, I will behave in a manner appropriate to my formal role in the College, when interacting with fellow students, faculty, administration, staff, and patients.

- b. I will strive to be aware of unethical behavior in myself and others, and I will address ethical issues in others as well as myself. When I become aware of unethical behavior, I will first discuss it with the person concerned. If I am unable to do that, or unsuccessful, I will bring it to the attention of the appropriate faculty, administrative officer, or my class officers.
- c. I will respond to communications from faculty or administration in a timely manner, within one business day. I will use my UIC email account for all professional correspondence. It is my responsibility to make sure my UIC email account is functioning.

4. Veracity, academic integrity and academic preparedness

- a. I will be honest in my dealings with members of the dental college community and with the public.
- b. I will honestly represent records, data, insurance claims, fees, and all other information.
- c. I will work independently when expected to do so on exams, projects, papers, and all other assignments. I will avoid plagiarism or cheating.
- d. I will not attempt to access confidential examination material.
- e. I will appropriately acknowledge the contribution of others to my work.
- f. I will perform in class and clinic with diligence and as competently as possible
- g. I will punctually attend and be prepared for all required school-sanctioned events.

5. Professionalism and integrity in all areas

- a. I will conduct myself at all times in ways that reflect my role as a professional-in-training, and represent the College, University and the profession of dentistry so as to be worthy of the public's respect and confidence.
- b. I will abide by the College's policy on use of social media. If dentistry is discussed, my posts will be evidence-based, will reflect well upon the profession, will protect patients, and will clearly state that I do not speak on behalf of the College of Dentistry. My posts will abide by the advertising and veracity requirements of the ethical documents of dentistry.
- c. I will uphold the American Dental Association Code of Professional Conduct.