

**University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry
Code of Professionalism for Students**

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, www.ada.org.

²Adapted from the American College of Dentists (2004) Ethics Handbook For Dentists, Gaithersburg, MD: American College of Dentists. <http://www.facd.org/acdetethics.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 Policy³, the UIC COD Subcommittee on Student Promotions⁴, this UIC COD Code of Professionalism for Students, the professional codes espoused by the American Dental Association⁵ the American College of Dentists⁶ and other University of Illinois at Chicago and UIC College of Dentistry that governs 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.

Tolerance (Exhibit sensitivity to diversity and its impact) As professionals-in-training, we will abide by the University of Illinois Nondiscrimination Policy⁷, 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Ethical Responsibilities and Aspirations

Building on the previous descriptions of our core values, the following describe how we aspire to implement those values. We believe that by striving to meet these aspirations we will contribute to the well-being of ourselves, our patients, our college, our community and to the profession of dentistry. Each of us as a professional-in-training agrees to the following aspirations.

1. I will ensure that I and others treat all members of the dental college community with respect and fairness. I will perform to the best of my ability, I will avoid doing harm to any patient, and I will optimize the patient's oral and general health through my actions.
 - a. I will acquire the necessary skills before I apply them to patient care, or I will complete patient care only with guidance/ consultation appropriate to my training.
 - b. I will perform in the clinic and classroom only when I am physically, emotionally, and cognitively competent to do so.
 - 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.
 - d. I will maintain appropriate role boundaries with patients and avoid forming unprofessional relationships with them while under my care. When treating family members, as with any other patients, professionalism must be maintained. It is acceptable to treat patients with whom you have a prior relationship as long as the oral health treatment is done with professionalism and good relationships are maintained with the patient. It is acceptable to initiate romantic, dating or sexual relationships with former, but not current patients.
 - e. 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 that of others, and where my actions will not cause such a conflict.

2. I will educate the patient about the treatment alternatives available for his or her oral health considering evidence-based explanations, understand the patient's preferences, and work with the patient to determine a treatment plan that will address the patient's preferences while maintaining standard of care.
 - a. I will respect the patient's cultural or other differences, and will do my best to understand what the patient expects from treatment.
 - b. I will assure to the best of my ability that the patient understands his or her oral health, how to maintain good oral health, treatment options, the benefits and risks of each treatment option including no treatment, and clinic policy.
 - c. I will treat the patient with respect and strive to form a good working relationship with him or her.

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3. I will be honest in my dealings with members of the dental college community and with the public.
 - a. I will work independently when expected to do so on exams, projects, papers, and all other assignments.
 - b. I will appropriately acknowledge the contribution of others to my work.
 - c. I will honestly represent records, data, insurance claims, fees, and all other information.

 4. I will promote respect for the dental professions by providing a good example, and I will encourage my fellow colleagues to do the same.
 - a. I will perform in class and clinic with diligence and as competently as possible
 - b. I will continue to improve my skills and understanding of health care issues throughout my career.
 - c. I will punctually attend and be prepared for classes and clinic, recognizing that to not do so may compromise my education, and ultimately the care of my patients.
 - d. 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.
 - e. I will conduct myself at all times in ways that reflect my role as a professional-in-training, that reflect well on the College, University and the profession of dentistry, and are worthy of the public's respect and confidence. My use of social media will reflect my professionalism. If dentistry is discussed, my posts will be evidence-based, will reflect well upon the profession, and will protect patients. My posts will abide by the advertising and veracity requirements of the ethical documents of dentistry.

 5. I will strive to be aware of unethical behavior in myself and others, and I will recognize my duty to 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, I will bring it to the attention of the appropriate faculty, administrative officer, or my class officers.

 6. I will strive to improve oral health in the community at large.

Examples of Violations

We strive to reach the highest ethical standards. This section describes examples of behaviors that do not meet minimum ethical standards. This should not be considered an exhaustive list, but it should be used as a guide to understand how to distinguish between ethical aspirations and ethical requirements.

1. Violations of standard of veracity:
 - a. Stealing confidential testing material;
 - b. Cheating on exams;
 - c. Giving and receiving help from others on work that was supposed to be done independently;
 - d. Attributing work performed by others to myself;
 - e. Plagiarism, inappropriate citations, and excessive paraphrasing;
 - f. Any other act of academic dishonesty as defined by the University;
 - g. Providing false or misleading information to patients, faculty or staff.

2. Violations of standard of competence:
 - a. Performing patient care while impaired;
 - b. Performing patient care without supervision (practicing dentistry without a license);
 - c. Violating standard precautions, failure to comply with infection control guidelines or regulatory compliance standards;
 - d. Attending class or lab while under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol, or other substances that impair ability, or performing patient care under the influence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol.

3. Violations of standards of beneficence and autonomy:
 - a. Compromising patient treatment in any way;
 - b. Falsifying clinic records and documents;
 - c. Falsifying faculty signatures;
 - d. Misrepresenting patient charges, fees, or payment;
 - e. Not complying with clinic policy;
 - f. Not securing proper informed consent;
 - g. Beginning a romantic and/or sexual relationship with a patient while the patient is under treatment;
 - h. Violating patient confidentiality;
 - i. Disrespecting a patient;
 - j. Abandonment of patients or delay or neglect of patient treatment

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4. Violations of standards of justice, tolerance and compassion:
 - a. Discrimination or refusal to treat an assigned patient due to demographic characteristics or health status (HIV or other condition)
 - b. Behaving disrespectfully to members of the College of Dentistry and its affiliates, including but not limited to: harassment, belittling or mocking others, intimidation, or threats;
 - c. Encouragement of others to behave disrespectfully.
 - d. Verbally or physically threatening behavior towards others

 5. Violations of standard of professionalism:
 - a. Any conduct which violates commonly recognized or generally accepted professional standards of behavior for dental professionals including unacceptable conduct in clinical, practicum, or off-campus training is a violation. The commonly recognized standards of behavior are described in ADA Code of Professional Ethics and the Ethics Handbook of the American College of Dentists and other relevant documents.
 - b. Not reporting unequivocal or repeated violations of this code, which should be done according to established protocol.
 - c. Failure to observe guidelines as stated in the clinic manual for professional appearance.

 6. Violations of standard of integrity:
 - a. Providing false or intentionally misleading information to patients and/or to the community;
 - b. Damage or theft property or services of the College or University or affiliates of the College or University, or damage or theft of personal property of others
 - c. Violating University policies, procedures, statutes, civil codes, or state or federal laws, including but not limited to the Illinois State Dental Practice Act, the College of Dentistry Compliance Plan, the College of Dentistry Clinic Manual, the College of Dentistry Infection Control Manual, the College of Dentistry Clinical Course Syllabi/Manuals, the College of Dentistry Standards of Patient Care, the College of Dentistry Policy and Procedures: Billing and Collections, or the UIC Policy on Sexual Harassment.

With these statements of values, aspirations and violations, our purpose is to promote the highest standards of professionalism and patient care among professionals-in-training, and thereby contribute to the well-being of ourselves, our patients, our college, our community, and the dental professions.

