



## UIC COD Humanistic Environment Policy

### **Preamble**

*We at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry are committed to providing and maintaining a safe, effective and humanistic learning environment in which students, residents, post-doctoral and other trainees, faculty, and healthcare and administrative staff, work together collaboratively. As an institution that trains the leaders of tomorrow, we expect members of our community to uphold an academic environment that encourages mutually respectful relationships, is conducive to learning, and is free of mistreatment, unlawful discrimination and harassment, or threats of retaliation.*

### **I. Rationale**

It is important for all members of the community to provide and maintain a safe, effective and humanistic learning environment. It is therefore unacceptable for a teacher (e.g., faculty member, resident, or others acting in a teaching role) to engage in discrimination or harassment, and/or mistreatment of students. In addition, anyone in a teaching role must adhere to applicable college, campus, extramural and university-wide policies, procedures, and guidelines that establish standards for professionalism and conduct, as well as those principles of professionalism and ethics generally accepted within the dental profession and academic environment. Similarly, it is unacceptable for students or residents to treat faculty, program directors, staff, colleagues or administration with disrespect, or in any other manner that violates the UIC COD Code of Professionalism for Students, UIC Student Disciplinary Policy or other applicable University Policy. Finally, staff must treat others and be treated with respect.

All members of the UIC COD education community have a shared responsibility to protect the integrity of the learning environment, have a right to work and learn free of unlawful discrimination, harassment and mistreatment, and have a responsibility to report any incident in which that positive learning environment has been compromised.

### **II. Applicability**

This policy is applicable to all students and residents enrolled in academic programs, all faculty, staff and administrators employed by, and all other faculty teachers holding appointments, with the UIC College of Dentistry, as well as any other affiliated members of the COD community. This Policy shall supplement prior UIC COD statements, policies, procedures, guidelines and compacts relating to the UIC COD learning environment and, to the extent there is conflict, this Policy shall govern.

### **III. Characteristics of a Humanistic Learning Environment**

In accordance with standards set by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), the learning environment of the dental education program should be "humanistic" and carry a pedagogy that inculcates respect, tolerance, understanding, and concern for others, and is fostered by mentoring, advising and small group interaction. A dental school environment characterized by respectful professional relationships between and among faculty, students and staff establishes a context for the development of interpersonal skills necessary for learning, for patient care, and for making meaningful

contributions to the profession.<sup>1</sup>

#### **IV. COD Interpersonal Relationships:**

Responsibilities of all COD community members. Faculty, students, residents and staff have a responsibility in creating and maintaining a positive learning environment by:

1. Complying with all applicable policies, procedures, and guidelines establishing expectations for professionalism and other standards of conduct
2. Attending, being prepared and on time for, and participating in all work, academic and clinical activities and learning experiences consistent with the expectations of the, department, College, and/or experiential site
3. Respecting all individuals, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, order of protection status, genetic information, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or unfavorable discharge from the military or status as a protected veteran
4. Seeking out, accepting and learning from feedback, in a respectful and receptive manner
5. Seeking clarification on what does and does not constitute mistreatment
6. Demonstrating/modeling the professional virtues of compassion, integrity, courage, temperance and altruism
7. Maintaining high professional standards in all interactions
8. Complying with the policies, procedures and guidelines related to claims of unlawful discrimination, harassment, mistreatment and retaliation, and understanding how those claims may be reported
9. Reporting and encouraging the reporting of mistreatment by those who witness or experience it.

#### **V. Additional Responsibilities of Faculty:**

The role of the faculty is to create an environment that facilitates learning by ensuring responsibility and accountability; demonstrating respect for students as individuals and adhering to their proper roles as intellectual and practice guides and counselors; making every reasonable effort to foster honest academic/professional conduct; ensuring that their evaluations of students accurately reflect each student's abilities; respecting the boundaries of the relationship between faculty and student; and avoiding any exploitation, harassment, discrimination and/or mistreatment of the student. As such, teachers, in addition to the above expectations, must:

1. Ensure the quality of all components of the students' education programs
2. Nurture students' intellectual, professional and personal development and achievement of academic excellence
3. Support students' wellbeing
4. Refuse to tolerate abuse or exploitation of students
5. Refuse to engage in or tolerate reprisals or retaliation of any kind as a result of a good faith report of mistreatment
6. Take responsibility for students assigned to one's course or rotation, and ensure a safe, fair, supportive, unbiased learning environment that respects each student's physical and social boundaries and encourages their development as health care professionals
7. Assign tasks to students based on their knowledge, skills, and experience
8. Provide supervision and appropriate remediation when students are not adequately prepared
9. Provide feedback to students in a timely, constructive, respectful, personalized and unambiguous manner.

## **VI. Academic Discourse:**

Vigorous academic discourse and the conflict of ideas are integral to an academic environment of openness, so long as they are conducted in a civil and respectful way. Asking and answering questions as a means to stimulate critical thinking and draw out ideas and underlying assumptions is also critical to the academic environment, but can and should be done in a respectful manner. In addition, constructive feedback about performance is crucial to the educational process and professional development. Some feedback may be critical, harsh, or even discouraging. It is not uncommon to at times feel embarrassed or uncomfortable when mistakes are made, questions are answered incorrectly, or one is not adequately prepared for a required activity. However, not every behavior or action to which a person responds with stress or emotional discomfort is considered mistreatment. Each individual should reflect on each such situation and consider not just his/her personal reaction or response, but also the actions of others in light of any legitimate concerns for patient safety, circumstances surrounding the situation, and the possible learning objectives of the experience. In general, actions taken in good faith and done in a respectful and constructive manner to assess or develop knowledge/skill, and/or to correct unacceptable performance/behavior are not considered mistreatment.

Mistreatment arises when behavior denigrates the dignity of others and unreasonably interferes with the learning process/environment, whether that behavior is experienced or observed. Publicly humiliating, physically harming, exploiting and/or subjecting an individual to unwanted sexual advances are all examples of mistreatment.

## **VII. Reporting Mistreatment & Other Learning Environment Concerns:**

Anyone who experiences or witnesses an incident of mistreatment is encouraged to make a report utilizing the online [Report Form](#), or any other method described in the Reporting Process schematic found below. The reporting can be submitted anonymously. Any retribution for good faith reporting of mistreatment is strictly forbidden by this policy.

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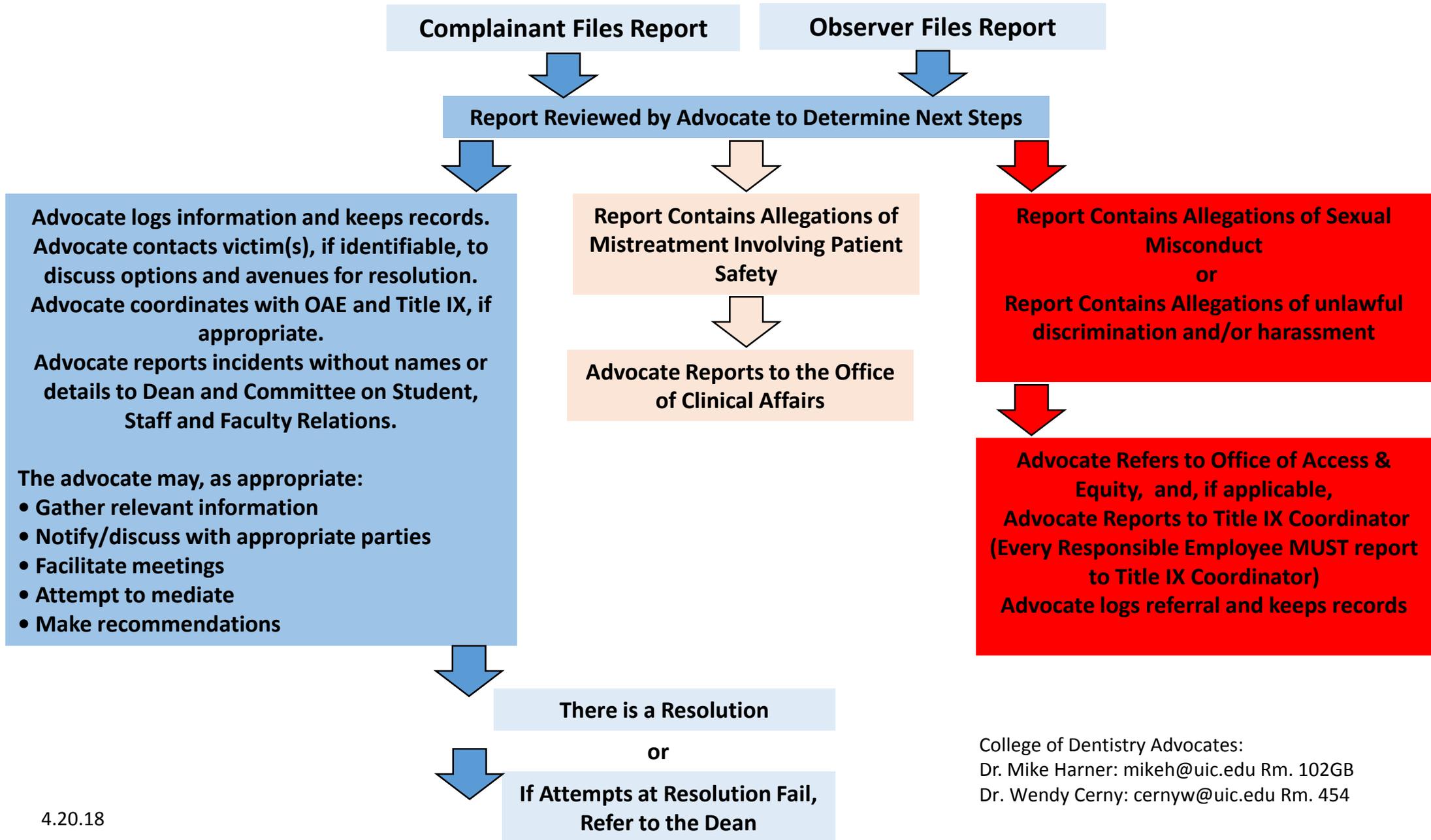
Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) Accreditation Standards for Predoctoral Dental Education Programs, Educational Environment p. 13, <http://www.ada.org/~media/CODA/Files/pde.pdf?la=en>

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# Mistreatment Reporting Process



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