



**Policy Title:**  
Student Mistreatment

**Policy Identifier:**  
USCSOMC – STA – 1.02

<b>Prepared by:</b> Office of Student Affairs and Career Advising	Creation Date: January 2024
<b>Reviewed by:</b> MD Program Policy and Procedures Committee	Review Date: 5-23-25
<b>Approved by:</b> Executive Committee	Effective Date: 7-9-24
<b>Category:</b> Student Affairs	

**LCME Standards**

3.6 – Student Mistreatment

**Scope**

University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Columbia MD students, faculty, and staff.

**Policy Statement**

The University of South Carolina is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, and related retaliation. The educational program in the School of Medicine Columbia has been developed to support and encourage the collegiality and professionalism essential to an effective learning environment. The primary objective of this mistreatment policy is to ensure that students who believe that they have been punitively assessed or mistreated because of religion, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, or other factors have their concerns addressed in a fair and just manner.

**Reason for Policy**

To provide MD students, faculty, residents, and staff clarity on the student mistreatment policy and reporting procedures.

**Definitions**

Mistreatment can be defined in the following domains:

- Unwanted physical contact (e.g. hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing) or the threat of the same
- Sexual harassment (including romantic relationships between teachers and learners in which the teacher has authority over the learner’s academic progress)
- Discrimination or harassment based on age, ancestry, citizenship status, color, disability, ethnicity, familial status, gender (including transgender), gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, childbirth, recovery therefrom or related medical conditions, breastfeeding), race, religion (including religious dress and grooming practices), sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other bases under federal, state, local law, or regulations is prohibited.
- Loss of personal civility including shouting, personal attacks or insults, displays of temper (such



- as throwing objects), use of culturally insensitive language
- Requests for others to perform inappropriate personal errands unrelated to the didactic, investigational, or clinical situation at hand
  - Grading/evaluation on factors unrelated to performance, effort, or level of achievement
  - *This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of mistreatment definitions, and other definitions may apply.*

## **Procedures**

Students who feel they have been mistreated by students, faculty, residents, or staff are encouraged to report the incident. Mistreatment can be reported through several methods.

**SAFE (Supporting A Fair Environment) Form** – An online mistreatment report form. Forms may be submitted confidentially or anonymously. If filed anonymously, students are advised the Associate Dean for Student Affairs will not be able to contact them about further details and it may limit how the university is able to investigate the complaint. The form is received and reviewed by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and the M3/M4 Ombudsperson for the Columbia campus. If filed confidentially, contact is made within 24 hours of filing the report. Students have the option to meet by phone, video or in person to discuss the alleged mistreatment. The Associate Dean of Student Affairs and the M3/M4 Ombudsperson for Columbia discuss the case and develop a plan of action. To mitigate a fear of retaliation, the student is given the option of postponement of the investigation until completion of the course, clinical rotation, or longer if desired. If the report was filed anonymously, no notification of the outcome is possible.

**Ombudspersons** – Students may contact the assigned ombudsperson via telephone or email, located on the USC School of Medicine Columbia website. **Offices and Contacts - My School of Medicine Columbia | University of South Carolina** The ombudspersons are empowered to receive and investigate reports of mistreatment, to mediate between the parties involved, and, in the event mediation is not successful, to make recommendations directly to the dean of the School of Medicine regarding appropriate resolution of any complaints.

**Formal Report to the University’s Student Grievance Committee** – Made through the University’s Student Grievance Committee through the procedure outlined in the Carolina Community. (<http://www.sc.edu/policies/staf627.pdf>)

**Office of Civil Rights & Title IX**- If you or someone you know has been the victim/survivor of discrimination or harassment at the University of South Carolina you can contact an intake coordinator in the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX at 803-777-3854 or [civilrights@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:civilrights@mailbox.sc.edu). While the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX is not a confidential resource, information is kept private and shared on a need-to-know basis.

**Partner Health System** – Students may confidentially report concerns regarding the clinical learning environment through the partner health system portal. For the report to be addressed by the USC School of Medicine Columbia, self-identification is encouraged so the reported incident can be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for investigation.



**Peer Advocate Liaison (PALs)** – Students may contact the assigned elected PAL via telephone, text or email, located on the USC School of Medicine Columbia website, for resources if an incident of mistreatment occurs.

### **Non-retaliation**

The School of Medicine will not tolerate any form of retaliatory behavior toward learners who make allegations in good faith.

### **Contacts**

- Associate Dean for Student Affairs
- Office of Academic Affairs
- Office of Undergraduate Medical Education
- Office of Student Affairs
- Ombudspersons
- Peer Advocate Liaison (PALs)

The School of Medicine Columbia follows the University of South Carolina policies but has in several cases adopted a subset of policies applicable to our school's specific program. This policy is intended to be consistent with the [University of South Carolina Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment & Sexual Misconduct \(CR 1.00\)](#). In the event of any of any conflict University policy shall control.

### **History**

<b>Date of Change</b>	<b>Change</b>
February 2024	Policy formalized into a standard template, LCME Self-Study process
May 2025	Reviewed by Policy and Procedures Committee—no changes.