



The College of  
Physicians and Surgeons  
of Newfoundland and Labrador

## Standard of Practice: Professional Responsibilities in Medical Education

A **standard** is the minimum standard of professional behaviour and ethical conduct on a specific issue expected by the College.

# Professional Responsibilities in Medical Education

## Preamble

Education and training occurs in a variety of environments. A team-based approach to care which is collaborative and allows for optimal health care for patients and a respectful learning environment is required. An understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Educational Registrants and their supervisors is essential for ensuring a safe and effective delivery of health care to patients.

## Standard of Practice

### Definitions

“Undergraduate Student” means an undergraduate medical student registered on the College’s Education Register.

“Postgraduate Resident” means a postgraduate resident registered on the College’s Education Register.

“Educational Registrant” means an Undergraduate Student, a Postgraduate Resident, or any other individual who is registered on the College’s Education Register.

“Supervisor” means a medical practitioner who acts in a supervisory role to an Educational Registrant, and can include, but is not limited to, preceptors, mentors, attending staff, supervisors, and Postgraduate Students.

“Professional” means a commitment to the health and well-being of individual patients and society through ethical practice, high personal standards of behaviour, accountability to the profession and society, physician-led regulation, and the maintenance of personal health.<sup>1</sup>

## **Professional Responsibilities of Supervisors and Educational Registrants**

Supervisors and Educational Registrants must demonstrate professional behavior in all interactions with each other as well as with patients and their families, colleagues, and staff. Displaying appropriate behavior is particularly important for the Supervisor, as Educational Registrants gain knowledge and develop attitudes about professionalism through role modeling.

Supervisors must be mindful of the power differential in their relationships with Educational Registrants. They must not allow any personal relationship to interfere with their supervision, training and evaluation of the Educational Registrants.

Supervisors and Educational Registrants must avoid behaviours that interfere with quality health-care delivery or quality medical education. This includes the use of inappropriate words, actions, or inactions that interfere with the ability of the Supervisor and Educational Registrant to work well with each other. The College expects physicians to display professional behavior at all times.

### **Responsibilities of Supervisors**

Supervisors must provide appropriate supervision of Educational Registrants, including:

- Modeling professional, ethical, and appropriate care;
- Ensuring the best quality of care for the patient;
- Maintaining a professional relationship with the Educational Registrant in all interactions;
- Making the patient aware of the identity of the Educational Registrant as well as his/her degree of involvement in the patient's care;
- Providing appropriate supervision of the Educational Registrant based on his/her level of training and ability, as judged by ongoing timely evaluation of his/her clinical, technical, and management skills as well as his/her professional judgment;
- Communicating regularly with the Educational Registrant to discuss and review the care provided by the Educational Registrant to patients; and
- Abiding by the training standards of the College of Family Physicians of Canada/Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University.

In addition to the above:

Supervisors of Postgraduate Residents must:

- Make the patient aware of the identity of the most responsible physician and that this physician is ultimately responsible for the patient's care; and
- Be willing and available to see patients when required and when requested.

Supervisors of Undergraduate Students must:

- Obtain consent from the patient to allow the Student to observe or be a part of the patient's care; and
- Determine the Student's willingness and competency to participate in the clinical care of patients as a learning experience.

### **Responsibilities of Postgraduate Residents**

A Postgraduate Resident is not an independent practitioner. A Postgraduate Resident is pursuing a course to independent practice under the supervision of his/her attending staff, while following the guidelines of the program to which they are enrolled. A Postgraduate Resident must:

- Participate in the care of patients as appropriate to his/her competencies and specific circumstances;
- Ensure that his/her Supervisor is aware of his/her level of training and experience with clinical and technical procedures to ensure adequate supervision;
- Make the patient aware of his/her name, role and degree of involvement in the patient's care;
- Make the patient aware of the name and role of the most responsible physician and that this physician is ultimately responsible for the patient's care;
- Communicate effectively with the Supervisor in regards to clinical findings and management plans;
- Discuss all significant changes in the status of the patient with the Supervisor;
- Document appropriate findings and treatment plans;
- Maintain a professional relationship with his/her Supervisor, patients and their families, colleagues, and staff; and
- Abide by the standards of the College of Family Physicians of Canada/Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the curricular expectations, guidelines and codes of the Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University.

### **Responsibilities of Undergraduate Students**

An Undergraduate Student is not an independent practitioner. An Undergraduate Student is completing his/her undergraduate curriculum and as such, requires supervision in the performance of his/her clinical duties. An Undergraduate Student must:

- Participate in the care of patients as appropriate to his/her competencies and specific circumstances;
- Ensure that his/her Supervisor is aware of his/her level of training and experience with clinical and technical procedures to ensure adequate supervision;
- Make the patient aware of his/her name and role as a Student;
- Communicate effectively with the Supervisor;
- Maintain a professional relationship with his/her Supervisor, patients and their families, colleagues, and staff; and

- Abide by the curricular expectations, guidelines and codes of the Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University.

## Acknowledgements/References

<sup>1</sup> Frank, J., Snell, L., Sherbino, J. (2015) Royal College Publications. *CanMEDs 2015 Physician Competency Framework*. Ottawa: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (2003).

## Document History

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