

American Osteopathic Association's Code of Ethics

The American Osteopathic Association has formulated this Code to guide its member physicians in their professional lives. The standards presented are designed to address the osteopathic physician's ethical and professional responsibilities to patients, to society, to the AOA, to others involved in healthcare and to self.

Further, the American Osteopathic Association has adopted the position that physicians should play a major role in the development and instruction of medical ethics. The AOA Code of Ethics has been adopted for all physicians, fellows, residents, and medical students when acting in the student physician role.

As an osteopathic facility, VCOM requires that all physician faculty, regardless of whether their medical degree is a D.O. or M.D., read, sign, and follow the following code of ethics. In addition, all VCOM students are required to read, sign, and follow the following Code of Ethics.

All physician faculty are required to follow the code of ethics as adopted by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), and as listed below.

Section 1

The medical student and physician shall keep in confidence whatever she/he may learn about a patient in the discharge of professional duties. Information shall be divulged by the physician when required by law or when authorized by the patient.

Section 2

The medical student and physician shall give a candid account of the patient's condition to the patient or to those responsible for the patient's care.

Section 3

A medical student and physician's relationship with the patient must be founded on mutual trust, cooperation, and respect. The patient, therefore, must have complete freedom to choose her/his physician. The physician must have complete freedom to choose patients whom she/he will serve. However, the physician should not refuse to accept patients for reasons of discrimination, including, but not limited to, the patient's race, creed, color, sex, national origin sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. In emergencies, a physician should make her/his services available. A patient has the right to accept or deny a student's involvement in their care.

Section 4

A medical student or physician is never justified in abandoning a patient. The medical student and physician shall give due notice to a patient or to those responsible for the patient's care when she/he withdraws from the case so that another student and/or physician may be engaged.

Section 5

A medical student or physician should make a reasonable effort to partner with patients to promote their health and shall practice in accordance with the body of systematized and scientific knowledge related to

the healing arts. A medical student or physician shall maintain competence in such systematized and scientific knowledge through study and clinical applications.

Section 6

The osteopathic medical profession has an obligation to society to maintain its high standards and, therefore, to continuously regulate itself. A substantial part of such regulation is due to the efforts and influence of the recognized local, state, and national associations representing the osteopathic medical profession. A medical student or physician should maintain membership in and actively support such associations and abide by their rules and regulations.

Section 7

Under the law a physician may advertise, but no medical student or physician shall advertise or solicit patients directly or indirectly through the use of matters or activities which are false or misleading.

Section 8

A medical student or physician shall not hold forth or indicate possession of any degree recognized as the basis for licensure to practice the healing arts unless he is actually licensed on the basis of that degree in the state or other jurisdiction in which she/he practices. A medical student or physician shall designate her/his osteopathic or allopathic credentials in all professional uses of her/his name. Indications of specialty practice, membership in professional societies, and related matters shall be governed by rules promulgated by the American Osteopathic Association.

Section 9

A medical student or physician should not hesitate to seek consultation whenever she/he believes it is in the best interest of the patient.

Section 10

In any dispute between or among physicians involving ethical or organizational matters, the matter in controversy should first be referred to the appropriate arbitrating bodies of the profession.

Section 11

In any dispute between or among the student and the physician or any physicians regarding the diagnosis and treatment of a patient, the attending physician has the responsibility for final decisions, consistent with any applicable hospital rules or regulations.

Section 12

Any fee charged by a physician shall compensate the physician for services actually rendered. There shall be no division of professional fees for referrals of patients. There shall be no fees for care by students.

Section 13

A physician shall respect the law. When necessary, a physician shall attempt to help to formulate the law by all proper means in order to improve patient care and public health.

Section 14

In addition to adhering to the foregoing ethical standards, a medical student or physician shall recognize a responsibility to participate in community activities and services.

Section 15

It is considered sexual misconduct for a medical student or physician to have sexual contact with any patient with whom a physician-patient relationship currently exists.

Section 16

Sexual harassment by a medical student or physician is considered unethical. Sexual harassment is defined as physical or verbal intimation of a sexual nature involving a colleague or subordinate in the workplace or academic setting, when such conduct creates an unreasonable, intimidating, hostile or offensive workplace or academic setting.

Section 17

From time to time, industry may provide some AOA members with gifts as an inducement to use their products or services. Medical students and physicians who use these products and services as a result of these gifts, rather than simply for the betterment of their patients and the improvement of the care rendered in their practices, shall be considered to have acted in an unethical manner.

Section 18

A medical student or physician shall not intentionally misrepresent himself/herself or his/her research work in any way.

Section 19

When participating in research, a medical student or physician shall follow the current laws, regulations, and standards of the United States or, if the research is conducted outside the United States, the laws, regulations, and standards applicable to research in the nation where the research is conducted. This standard shall apply for medical student and physician involvement in research at any level and degree of responsibility, including, but not limited to, research, design, funding, participation either as examining and/or treating medical student or provider, supervision of other staff in their research, analysis of data, and publication of results in any form for any purpose.

With this signature I, as VCOM faculty, indicate that I have read the above Code of Ethics and the section in the *VCOM Faculty Handbook* pertaining to faculty responsibilities, professional expectations, and misconduct and disciplinary procedures. I agree to adhere to this Code of Ethics and to avoid any and all misconduct as detailed in the *VCOM Faculty Handbook*.

Faculty Printed Name

Faculty Signature

Date