Policy on Student Mistreatment

The medical learning environment is expected to facilitate students’ acquisition of the professional and collegial attitudes necessary for effective and compassionate health care. The development of these attitudes is based on the presence of mutual respect between teacher and learner.

The Albert Einstein College of Medicine is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive academic environment that is free of all mistreatment, including intimidation, disrespect, belittlement, humiliation and abuse. The College has therefore adopted a policy of zero tolerance with respect to student mistreatment. The policy is intended to protect students and discipline and/or take other appropriate action against those responsible.

Definition

In general, student mistreatment is defined as any instance in which a student is treated badly or abused in any way. This includes the perpetrator’s abuse of power by asking the student to do things beyond the scope of the medical student’s role.

Examples of abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Public belittling or humiliation (feeling dehumanized, disrespected or undignified, being shouted at, cursed or ridiculed)
- Threat of harm or being physically abused
- Being asked to perform services unrelated to education or patient care (shopping, etc.)
- Sexual mistreatment (sexual advances, sexist remarks)
- Offensive remarks based on one’s gender, racial, ethnic, religious identity or sexual orientation
- Having grades lowered solely on the basis of gender, racial, ethnic, religious identity or sexual orientation
- Threat of grading and other forms of assessment as a reward or punishment for inappropriate requests

Complaint Reporting Procedures and Guidelines

Any student who believes he or she has been mistreated in any of the above or similar ways shall complete a web-based complaint form available as a link on the “Information for Students” webpage. The student will meet with two members of the Ombuds panel (one Co-Chair and one student) to discuss the incident; the student submitting the complaint is welcome to bring a companion to this meeting, if desired. If after this meeting the student wishes to pursue the complaint, these two members of the Ombuds panel will investigate the allegations by speaking with other students, course or clerkship directors, residency directors, and possibly other sources as appropriate, but generally the committee will not directly approach the alleged perpetrator. The student will have the option of delaying this step in case the student fears repercussions in their final course evaluation. The Ombuds Co-Chair will then speak with either the Chairperson of the relevant department (for incidents in the pre-clinical years) or the Assistant Dean at the relevant affiliate site (for incidents in the clinical years). In cases when the alleged perpetrator is the Chairperson, the Ombuds Co-Chair will speak with the Executive Dean. Within two weeks of being approached by the Ombuds Co-Chair, the Chairperson or Assistant Dean will address the issue with the alleged perpetrator or his/her supervisor, and will feed back information to the Ombuds panel who will update the
student and report to the Executive Dean, and, if the perpetrator is a house officer, to the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education. If the alleged perpetrator is another student, the panel will report to the Office of Student Affairs, as well. To ensure that the process is comfortable and without fear of repercussion for the student, this procedure can be modified in accordance with the student’s preferences through discussion with the Ombuds panel. The Ombuds panel will submit an annual report to the Office of Student Affairs, Office of Medical Education and the Office of the Executive Dean summarizing the previous year’s cases; these data will be aggregated and de-identified to ensure the anonymity of students submitting a complaint.
• Preventative Education of Attendings and Residents
  o Online Einstein short course for all faculty
  o Live short course at hospital sites as part of resident orientation, part of the MedStar program
  o Presentation about the Ombuds procedures during introduction to clerkship PDC day and all subsequent clerkship orientations
  o OSA website will describe anti-harassment policy.
• Reporting of Mistreatment
  o Web based submission of Complaint
    ▪ Students must provide his/her own name, but has the option of naming the alleged perpetrator.
• Investigating complaint
  o Ombuds panel of two Co-Chairs and two students receive complaints.
  o A committee of at least one Co-Chair and one student will investigate, as appropriate.
  o Co-Chair of panel will speak with appropriate Chairperson at Einstein (for issues in pre-clinical years) or Assistant Dean at affiliate site (for clinical) who will address issue with alleged perpetrator
• Responding to Complaint
  o Chairperson or Assistant Dean will speak with local Chair, faculty, program director or administrator as appropriate.
    ▪ That person will deal with alleged perpetrator and feed back to Assistant Dean.
    ▪ Assistant Dean will feed back to Ombuds panel.
  o Ombuds Co-Chair to complete report detailing all issues including resolution, interventions and feedback to complaining student
    ▪ Encounter form will go to Executive Dean, and to GME office if perpetrator is house staff or OSA if the perpetrator is a student.
Student Mistreatment Web Reporting Form

1. I have read the definition of harassment posted on the “Information For Students” website (http://XXX).
   - Yes
   - Not aware of definition

2. Having read the definition of student mistreatment, I believe that I suffered mistreatment as a student that was outside the bounds of acceptable behavior.
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not certain that it was out of bounds
   Please describe the behavior or incident________________________________________________________________________

3. Please choose the best descriptor of the inappropriate behavior (choose all that apply).
   - Publicly belittled or humiliated me
   - Asked to perform services (shopping, etc.)
   - Sexual mistreatment (sexual advances)
   - Sexist remarks
   - Gender mistreatment
   - Racial/ethnic/religious mistreatment (offensive remarks)
   - Racial/ethnic/religious mistreatment (lower grades)
   - Sexual orientation mistreatment (offensive remarks)
   - Other, please specify________________________________________

4. The individual I hold responsible for this behavior is
   - Attending/Faculty
   - Resident/Fellow
   - Preceptor
   - Allied Health Care Worker (Nurse, P.A., Social Worker, Clerk)
   - Site leader
   - Course Director
   - Student
   - Other ______________________

5. The name of the individual you are complaining about is:__________________________ (optional)

6. Rotation or elective ________________________(optional)

7. Rotation or elective site_________________________ (optional)

8. Pre-clinical Course____________________________________ (optional)

9. Your name __________________________

10. Your e-mail or other contact information ______________________
Submitting this form will send an e-mail to the Co-Chairs of the Ombuds panel only. No action or investigation will take place until you meet with the Ombuds panel and decides to pursue the complaint. If after meeting with the Ombuds panel, you choose to pursue the complaint, investigation can be delayed until grades are submitted or another date of your choosing.