



# Cooper Medical School of Rowan University

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**SECTION:** Student Affairs

**SUBJECT:** Mistreatment

**ISSUE DATE:** August 1, 2012

**REVISION DATE:** July 1, 2019; June 18, 2020, August 8, 2020

**INITIATED BY:** Office of Student Affairs

**APPROVED BY:**

*Annette C. Reboli, M.D.*

---

**Annette C. Reboli, M.D., Dean**

---

**POLICY:** Cooper Medical School of Rowan University (CMSRU) is committed to promoting student success in an atmosphere dependent upon mutual respect, collegiality, fairness, trust, and accountability within its respective community. The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) states, “Mistreatment, either intentional or unintentional, occurs when behavior shows disrespect for the dignity of others and unreasonably interferes with the learning process.” Student mistreatment, abuse, harassment, intimidation or bullying will not be tolerated. If a student alleges mistreatment or becomes aware of an incident of mistreatment by a member of the CMSRU community, they are encouraged to follow this policy. CMSRU adheres to the standards described in the AAMC Teacher-Learner Compact (See Teacher-Learner Interaction Policy). Students are expected to abide by the tenets of the Professional Conduct Policy.

**PURPOSE:** To establish procedural guidelines for faculty, staff and students in the event of alleged mistreatment in the course of the teacher-learner relationship or other relationships facilitated within the CMSRU community.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all CMSRU medical students and those who serve as teacher, mentor or other CMSRU community member with whom students interact throughout all years and areas of the educational experience.

**DEFINITIONS:** Inappropriate behavior or situations CMSRU deems unacceptable include:

- Unwelcome physical contact, including any physical mistreatment or assaults such as hitting, slapping, kicking, or threats of the same nature;
- Verbal abuse (to attack in words, or to publicly speak insultingly, or unjustly, of a student);
- Inappropriate or unprofessional criticism that belittles, or causes embarrassment or humiliation to a student;
- Requiring a student to perform menial tasks intended to humiliate, control, or intimidate the student;
- Unreasonable requests for a student to perform personal services;

- Retaliatory behavior such as grading or assigning tasks to punish a student rather than evaluating or assessing a student's performance;
- Sexual assault and harassment (Policy on Sexual Harassment and Misconduct); and
- Discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or disability.
- Harassment, intimidation, or bullying is defined as any written or verbal gesture or physical act and is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that occurs on school property or Cooper University Health Care (CUHC), at any CMSRU sponsored function or in a Rowan University Public Safety vehicle, and,
  - a). Will have the effect of harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his person or damage to his property; or
  - b). Will have the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in a manner which causes substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the institutional environment.

## STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

**REPORTING:** An allegation of mistreatment is considered as confidential and will be handled as such. It is strongly suggested students submit an electronic Mistreatment Report in real-time for all mistreatment related events to ensure proper follow-up and resolution. A student can confidentially report an incident by using any of the following methods of reporting:

Online/Anonymous Reporting **Student Mistreatment Reporting Form**

- Office of Student Affairs
  - Erin Pukenas, MD; Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, [pukenas@rowan.edu](mailto:pukenas@rowan.edu)
  - Marion Lombardi, EdD; Chief Student Affairs Officer, [lombardim@rowan.edu](mailto:lombardim@rowan.edu)
- Office of Diversity and Community Affairs
  - Jocelyn Mitchell-Williams, MD; Associated Dean for Diversity and Community Affairs, [williamsjo@rowan.edu](mailto:williamsjo@rowan.edu)
- CMSRU Ombuds Office
  - Debrah Meislich, MD, Ombudsperson, <http://cmsru.rowan.edu/students/ombuds/>
- Title IX Coordinator
  - Marion Lombardi, EdD; Chief Student Affairs Officer, [lombardim@rowan.edu](mailto:lombardim@rowan.edu)
- Disabilities/Accommodations
  - Marion Lombardi, EdD; Chief Student Affairs Officer, [lombardim@rowan.edu](mailto:lombardim@rowan.edu)
- Course and Clerkship Evaluations
  - Issues of mistreatment can be voiced through the course and clerkship evaluations at the end of the course
- Deans and Directors
  - To provide easier reporting, students may report an incident to any Dean or Director they feel comfortable in approaching
  - The Dean or Director will then disseminate the complaint to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs or designee

**COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION:** The Office of Student Affairs and The Office of Medical Education are responsible for the oversight of mistreatment of students. After a mistreatment report is filed, the appropriate parties will review the complaint and determine the course of action based on the severity and circumstances of the incident. If the event is reported via a course or clerkship evaluation, it will be addressed with the respective departments and faculty. In the event of an electronic mistreatment submission, the student where identified, will be contacted within three (3) business days confirming receipt of the complaint. The student, where self-identified, will participate in the investigatory process. An action plan will be formulated within fourteen (14) days from the filing.

**RETALIATION:** Threats, other forms of intimidation, and retaliation against a student for bringing a complaint of mistreatment or for assisting another in bringing a complaint are prohibited. Reporting mistreatment will have no impact on a student's performance evaluation and retaliation against those reporting mistreatment or participating in an investigation of mistreatment is regarded as a form of mistreatment. Complaints of retaliation will be handled in accordance with the complaint resolution procedures in this policy or, if applicable, may be forwarded to the appropriate CMSRU administrator for handling.

**MALICIOUS ACCUSATIONS:** A complainant or witness found to have been dishonest or malicious in making allegations at any point during the investigation process may be subject to disciplinary action.

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

1. This process does not apply to the students' personal preferences regarding the faculty/professional staff members' physical appearance, personal values, sexual orientation, or the right to academic freedom or the freedom of expression.
2. In all grievance matters, to the extent possible, the student will be responsible for documentation of their allegations.
3. To ensure the protection of the parties' privacy, the process and all documentation will be completely confidential.
4. All students, faculty, professional staff, department chairs, supervisors, deans and directors are expected to follow the steps outlined in this policy.

**ANTI-BULLYING BILL OF RIGHTS ACT**

[https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/PL10/122\\_.PDF](https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/PL10/122_.PDF)