



UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES  
**School of Medicine**



**STUDENTS' CHARTER**  
**JUNE 2020**

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## **FORWARD**

At the University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS), School of Medicine (SOM), students are seen as partners in development. It is on this premise that the School together with the Medical Students' Association, UHAS, have put together the University of Health and Allied Sciences School of Medicine Charter. The Charter is a reference point for our students, faculty and staff, setting out our expectations, rights and responsibilities as members of the university community.

We wish to acknowledge the School Officer, Mrs. Victoria Quartson for the fundamental work in putting this document together. We are also grateful to Mrs. Maria Gwira, Director of Public Affairs who proofread the document and worked on the layout.

It is our hope that the expectations communicated in this charter or later revisions bring clarity to our roles and help achieve the vision of the School of Medicine, UHAS.

**Professor Harry Tagbor**

Dean, School of Medicine, UHAS

2019

## **INTRODUCTION**

Over the years, the School of Medicine (SoM) has developed a good relationship with our students and it is in furtherance of this relationship that, together with the Medical Students Association of UHAS, SoM has produced this Students' Charter. We believe that both the school and the students will work to fulfil the provisions in this charter, and any future revisions as may be found necessary.

The Students' Charter consists of two parts. Part 1 contains the responsibilities of the School of Medicine and Part 2 contains the responsibilities of the student. Both parts have been accepted by the Medical Students Association and the Medical School Board.

This charter is not a substitute for other policies and codes. In addition to the responsibilities in Part 2, the students will need to comply with all other relevant University and Medical School regulations, requirements and policies, which are contained in the UHAS Students' Handbook, the UHAS School of Medicine Student Handbook, the UHAS School of Medicine Dress Code for Medical and Physician Assistantship Students, Fitness to Practise by the Medical and Dental Council (MDC), and the Code of Ethics of the Ghana Medical Association.

## **1 THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

As we accept to train you to become doctors, the School of Medicine, or the University, is expected to comply with the responsibilities detailed in this part of the Students' Charter.

These responsibilities are in line with the standards of the Medical and Dental Council (MDC) and the National Accreditation Board (NAB); and these have taken into consideration the requirement that medical schools should produce students who, when they qualify, can practise medicine properly.

### **1.1 Education**

The Medical School shall:

1. Provide you with high-quality teaching and training in clinical and non-clinical settings. The School of Medicine is obliged to comply with the Medical and Dental Council (MDC) and the National Accreditation Board (NAB) requirements as well as international standards, such as the World Health Organization standards in your training.
2. Provide challenging and stimulating learning experiences that empower students to reach their full potential.
3. Ensure that the training is done by qualified staff.
4. Ensure that staff with responsibilities to students are made aware of the Students' Charter. The Charter should be advertised to students and staff alike, with all parties aiming to meet the content of this Charter.
5. Ensure that staff gain consent from patients prior to examination by students.
6. Provide students with clear and accessible information relating to their studies, such as academic timetable and details of what to expect in their training and modules.
7. Information about placements at external teaching sites and Community Health District Rotations will be provided before the commencement of the placement.
8. Ensure that assessments and examinations are based on the required learning outcomes and syllabi of the various departments.

9. Ahead of time, provide information about assessments and submission dates. The preferred or required format of assessments/submissions shall also be given.
10. Ensure that students have access to sample questions and other relevant examination resources.
11. Give reliable feedback and update on individual student's progress and performance. This will include explanations for failure (A failing student will be given feedback and support).
12. Provide students with the opportunity to give the School of Medicine or the University feedback on the usefulness, significance and effectiveness of all aspects of the course including teaching.
13. Consider circumstances that affect academic and clinical progress and student performance, and give the necessary support.
14. When the time is due, students will be given the opportunity for medical electives in Ghana and abroad as part of their medical training.
15. Accord the necessary intellectual property rights to the student. Work done by the student remains the property of the student. It shall not be passed off as someone else's work.
16. Inform the student of any changes to the curriculum, within a reasonable period of time.
17. Enhance the employability and personal development of the students by providing opportunities, activities, support and resources.
18. The regulatory authority of the MDC must be made known to the students so as to make them comply with regulations.

## **1.2 Privacy and Equal Opportunity**

The University of Health and Allied Sciences is committed to equal opportunity as outlined in the mission statement. This means that all individuals working and studying at the university are treated fairly and equally, regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, colour, creed or religion.

The Medical School will:

1. Respect the fundamental human rights of the students and ensure that the students do not infringe on the rights and freedoms of others whom the Medical School has a duty to care for, including patients and the general public.
2. Ensure that learning, both at the medical school and on clinical placements, is done in environments that are physically safe and secure. In the event of an outbreak of a contagious or highly transmissible infectious disease, students may be asked to stay away from the wards.
3. Not condone an environment of bullying, discrimination, victimisation, intimidation or harassment (including sexual harassment) and any form of hindrance to effective academic work. Any report of such behaviour will be met with the appropriate disciplinary action as stated in the Student Handbook.
4. Encourage students to make complaints. Complaints will always remain confidential. The complainant shall be protected from any form of victimisation. Whistle-blowers will also be encouraged and protected. However, malicious complainants or whistle-blowers will face the school's disciplinary procedures.

### **1.3 Administration and Support**

The Medical School will ensure that:

1. Students are provided with the needed support as they settle into the School of Medicine and the wider UHAS community, ensuring a positive experience during their time at the University.
2. As far as resources allow, students will have access to modern facilities and services to enable them succeed in their studies and profession.
3. Provide assistance to students who might require accommodation whilst on external placements.
4. Provide academic and pastoral support by assigning students to academic advisors who oversee the students' education and general welfare. Where there is a conflict of interest, the academic advisor may be changed. Issues disclosed to the academic advisor will remain confidential.

5. Make arrangements for the provision of information about internal and external support mechanisms (including those available through local government and health service providers).
6. Ensure that all students have easy access to medical school regulations and policies.
7. Provide students with information in areas such as career, health and wellbeing, and accommodation.

#### **1.4 Student Representation**

We anticipate that our students will have an outstanding experience while at UHAS School of Medicine; however, in the rare event that issues of concern should come up, SoM and MSA have outlined the following procedures to enable students raise those concerns:

The School of Medicine shall ensure that:

1. There is a clear and equitable procedure for formal complaints when students have concerns.
2. The students can file complaints if they feel that they have been treated incorrectly. The procedure will be transparent and fair, without victimization, and students shall also have access to internal appeal mechanisms.
3. A fair representation of students exists on key decision-making bodies that affect them directly, such as the School Board.
4. Students are able to participate in all activities of the School of Medicine, university students' unions and external bodies related to education, including trade unions and professional bodies.

## 2 THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEDICAL STUDENT

In accepting a place at SOM, you are expected to comply with certain responsibilities, which are outlined in this part of the Medical School Charter.

Medical students undertake a degree in Medicine with the aim of becoming medical practitioners. Whilst students do not yet have the full duties and responsibilities that go with being registered medical practitioners, they are already in a privileged position with regards to patients and those close to them. In recognition of this, students must maintain a good standard of behaviour and show respect for others. By awarding a medical degree, University of Health and Allied Sciences is confirming that the graduate is fit to practise to high standards.

### 2.1 Respect and Ethics

The student will treat every patient with politeness and consideration. As a student, you must:

1. Treat each university staff, hospital staff and patient with respect
2. Dress in an appropriate professional manner that shows respect to your teachers and peers and enables good communication with your patients as spelt out in the "Dress Code for Medical and Physician Assistantship Students."
3. Acknowledge that patients have the right to expect that all health care workers and students appear and behave professionally.

#### *Explanatory note*

During your training, you will come into contact with many patients from a variety of backgrounds. Usually, your contact with patients will be for your benefit and not theirs. It is important that you approach each patient with respect. As a minimum, this means that you should make sure that patients understand that you are a student and that they have agreed to your presence and interaction with them. Be

sensitive to their reactions and do not continue your interaction with them if they indicate that they have had enough.

Students, as well as doctors, must be prepared to respond to a patient's individual needs and take steps to anticipate and overcome any barriers to communication. In some situations, this may require you to set aside your personal and cultural preferences in order to provide effective patient care.

Consideration for your patients affects how you choose to appear. Your dress and appearance should not interfere with your ability to communicate with your patients and their supporters. Fashion changes, but patients have the right to expect that all health care workers and students appear professional. Fashion extremes of dressing that is too informal may offend certain patients.

Dress code for clinical students:

1. Male students must appear on the wards decently dressed in a decent shirt, tie and trousers with a long-sleeved white coat and nametag. Decent Friday wear is permitted.
2. Female students should be decently dressed in clothes that are non-revealing, with a long-sleeved white coat. Students should generally, in their choice of clothing, hairstyles and adornments, adhere to basic principles of decency, professionalism, and infection prevention and control. Good personal hygiene and grooming are essential.

The following are discouraged on the wards:

1. Wearing of jeans.
2. Wearing of bathroom slippers and other casual slippers. (Students should generally wear full footwear such as will allow them to move briskly and freely, should there be the need to respond to an emergency).
3. Body piercings (other than female earrings) are not permitted. Be aware that you are going to be in very close contact with patients. General appearance, facial expression and other non-verbal signals are important components of good communication everywhere in the world. Any form of dressing that interferes with this, such as wearing excessive jewellery or completely

covering your face (unless medically necessary) must be avoided. Generally, your dressing must be culturally acceptable yet professional.

## 2.2 Patients' Dignity, Privacy and Confidentiality

The student will:

1. Make sure the patient is aware that you are a student and not a qualified doctor.
2. Make sure the patient has agreed to your presence and involvement in his/her clinical care.
3. Not continue interaction if the patient indicates a wish to stop.
4. Address patients in a professional manner.
5. Endeavour to preserve the patient's dignity at all times.
6. Attempt to ensure the patient's privacy at all times.

The student will:

1. Listen to patients and respect their views and rights to privacy and confidentiality.
2. Not intentionally divulge information concerning a patient to anyone not involved in the patient's care.
3. Not discuss his/her patients in a public place, and will take other precautions to ensure that he/she does not inadvertently pass on information regarding a patient.
4. Not take or share clinical pictures or other clinical images of patients.
5. Not make audio or video recordings of patients in the clinical setting.
6. Not make photocopies of patients' medical records or other clinical documents.

### *Explanatory note*

Remember, patients are human beings and not just clinical exhibits. Always ensure that the patient's dignity is preserved in the manner in which you address him/her. Err on the side of formality rather than familiarity unless the patient gives you specific permission to be more informal.

Take care when examining patients (including children) not to embarrass them by over-exposure. The level of acceptable exposure varies from individual to individual. Be aware of the wishes of your patient in this regard.

### **2.3 Attention and Respect for Patient's Views**

It is easy to turn history taking into an interrogation, but a consultation is a two-way process. Do not allow yourself to ignore what the patient has to say.

### **2.4 The Student will Respect and Protect Confidential Information**

The student will not:

1. Divulge or share patient records and other confidential information without permission. Under special circumstances, for example, where an image or recording is to be used for a presentation, the express permission of the patient must be sought after the purpose is explained to him/her and the permission of the clinical supervisor must be sought. Even in those cases, efforts should be made not to show patients' face and when the lesion to be shown is on the face, the mouth should be covered.

#### *Explanatory note*

As a medical student, you will have access to information about patients, which they will expect to be kept confidential. Some of this you will obtain directly from patients or their relatives when you take histories. Other information will be available to you because you are given access to the patient's medical records as part of your training. This information should not be deliberately divulged to anyone not directly involved in the patient's care. You should also take care not to inadvertently pass on information about a patient. Think about who else may see your case history or hear your conversations. You should not discuss your patients in a public place.

Clinical images and recording have a real potential of ending up in places, which may embarrass the patient. They should not be taken lightly or casually and when they are taken, should be used only for the purpose for which consent was obtained. They should NEVER be shared on Social Media.

## **2.5 Students must not allow their personal beliefs to prejudice their patients' care.**

Students will care for patients irrespective of their views about patients' lifestyles, culture, religion and beliefs, race, colour, gender, sexuality, disability, age, nationality, or social or economic status.

You are entitled to hold any beliefs you wish to hold, but you must not allow these to interfere with your care of patients.

## **2.6 Students will act quickly to protect patients from risk if they have good reason to believe that they or a colleague may not be fit to practise.**

The student:

1. Will immediately report any concerns to a senior member of staff.
2. Should strive for high standards in his/her professional life and his/her conduct should reflect this.
3. Must not allow their own health or condition to put patients and others at risk.

### *Explanatory note*

You may see a health professional or a fellow student behaving in a way that is likely to lead to harm of patients. You should discuss this immediately with a senior person such as a tutor you trust, or your clinical supervisor. It is not pleasant to be a whistleblower, but it is important and is your professional duty not to ignore behaviour if you know it to be dangerous or reckless. Where necessary, you may contact a professional organisation or the MDC for advice.

## **2.7 The student will take all of the opportunities provided to develop his/her professional knowledge and skills.**

The student will be expected to:

1. Attend all teaching sessions.
2. Inform the medical school- as soon as possible of the reason if he/she is unable to attend a teaching session.
3. Complete and submit course work and assignments on time.

4. Be conscientious in his/her approach to self- directed learning.
5. Endeavour to contribute effectively to any learning group of which he/she is a part.
6. Desist from communicating on mobile phones, tablets and other electronic devices whilst teaching sessions are going on. Such devices should be kept on silent mode and should never be used in a way that disturbs or disrupts the teaching session. This is disrespectful of both the teacher and fellow students and may result in the device being seized. The onus is therefore on the student to learn how to use the device's features appropriately.
7. Desist from recording lecturers and other teachers without the express permission of these lecturers and teachers.
8. Respond positively to reasonable feedback on his/ her performance and achievements.
9. Immediately inform the medical school of factors that might affect his/her performance so that appropriate action can be taken.
10. Carry out physical examinations on patients of both sexes.
11. Carry out intimate examinations ONLY under the supervision of a supervising doctor.
12. Keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date.
13. Not allow personal or religious belief to interfere with the school's teachings and proceedings.

At this stage, you are acquiring knowledge and skills rather than maintaining them but the principle is the same. Learning is a professional duty. Reading up on the patients you have seen and practising your clinical skills is an essential part of your life as long as you remain within the medical profession. Failure to attend teaching sessions is a breach of professional standards.

## **2.8 The student will recognise the limits of his/her professional competence.**

1. The student will not hesitate to ask for help and advice when needed.

This may appear obvious but there is a temptation to undertake tasks or give advice beyond one's level of competence. If in doubt, ask for help.

## **2.9 The student will be honest and trustworthy in all matters.**

This applies to your clinical encounters and has wider implications. If you are not trustworthy in your academic life it will be difficult to be trustworthy in the clinical setting.

All forms of academic cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable and may result in disciplinary proceedings.

## **2.10 The student will work with colleagues in the ways that best serve patients' interests.**

Students will:

1. Acknowledge that health care is dependent on effective co-operation between all members of the team.
2. Attempt to ensure that they maintain good relationships with the other health professionals caring for the patient.
3. Treat other healthcare professionals, staff, fellow students and other members of the university with respect.

## **2.11 The student must be willing to provide feedback on the usefulness, significance and effectiveness of all aspects of the course, including teaching.**

1. The student will complete such evaluation tools as are agreed on between the medical school or the University and the student body.

The medical school makes every effort to ensure that the course you are undertaking is of the highest quality by a process of continuous quality enhancement. If this is to be effective, the medical school needs timely and honest feedback on the course, highlighting what worked well and what needs to be changed or improved.

## **2.12 The student will permit the processing of information about any Fitness to Practise procedure in which he/she is involved.**

The MDC currently looks at how best to improve student fitness to practise and is in consultation with Medical Schools on Fitness to Practise issues. The Charter will be reviewed and updated as and when necessary.



## 4 APPENDIX

### 4.1 Occupational Health

- a. All students must be taken through Basic Universal Basic Infection Prevention at or before the time they enter the Clinic.
- b. All students should be informed about the procedures available for Post Exposure Prophylaxis in the various facilities where they work.
- c. The School requires students to provide proof of immunity to Measles, Rubella, Tetanus, Hepatitis B, and Yellow fever. Date of vaccination for tetanus and Yellow Fever must be within the last 10 years.
- d. This must be available before any patient contact such as basic nursing skills after the first year and the clinical years.
- e. A student without the required immunity will be expected to update the vaccinations.
- f. Where a serious threat to life and safety occurs in a Health Teaching facility, (Such as an outbreak of Ebola fever), only staff who are ABSOLUTELY NEEDED will be expected to treat patients and this will generally not include medical students.
- g. In the unlikely event of a student acquiring a disease resulting from exposure in the clinic, the school will ensure that as far as possible and practicable, the student is provided with the necessary support.

### 4.2 Section 20 of the Disability Act of 2006

#### *Refusal of admission on account of disability*

- h. (1) A person responsible for admission into a school or other institution of learning shall not refuse to give admission to a person with disability' on account of the disability unless the person with disability has been assessed by the Ministry responsible for Education in collaboration with the Ministries responsible for Health and Social Welfare to be a person who clearly requires to be in a special school for children or persons with disability.

- i. (2) A person who contravenes Subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or to both.