

Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for trainee Medical Scientists

School of Biological, Health and Sports Sciences

Technological University Dublin

Introduction

All students who successfully graduate from the BSc Medical Science and the Higher Diploma in Medical Science programmes will be eligible to register with the Medical Scientists Registration Board of CORU. Successful completion of the programme means that you have demonstrated the required Standards of Proficiency to be registered as a Medical Scientist, including conforming to the Medical Scientists code of professional conduct and ethics. As a trainee, acceptance of the code and putting it into practice demonstrates your commitment to its core principles of protecting the public by fostering high standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

During your studies on this programme, you will develop the skills and knowledge which are required to become a Medical Scientist, while protecting the safety of patients and the public. As a trainee on a professional education programme, you are required to maintain high standards of conduct and ethics. To participate in this education programme, you must read, sign, and comply with the standards set out in the code below.

The Code of Conduct covers three areas: **conduct, performance, and ethics**. Once you have read and understood the Code, you must sign the declaration below stating that you have read, understood and agree to act in accordance with the code at all times during your education and training.

Terminology

In this document the following terms have specific meanings:

- **Trainee** refers to anyone studying to become a Medical Scientist
- **You must** is used as an overriding principle of duty.
- **You must not** is used as an absolute prohibition.
- **You should** is used to describe the course of action that is generally best practice, but acknowledges that another approach may be appropriate in particular circumstances, or that there may be factors outside your control that affect your ability to comply.
- Service user is the term used to describe a person who uses, requests or is affected by the services of registrants. This includes patients, clients and anyone else who use or are impacted by the service.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If a trainee's behaviour threatens the well-being and safety of any staff, students (peers), service user or trainees, a Student Disciplinary Panel may be required. The severity of a single transgression, or a pattern of repeated and apparently intractable transgressions of a less serious but still significant nature, will be taken into account before proceeding to a Disciplinary Panel. Examples of situations which may lead to the initiation of this process include (note that this is not an exhaustive list):

1. Criminality (caution/conviction)
 - Sexual offences (incl. child pornography offences), threatened/actual physical violence, dangerous driving, robbery/theft/burglary, fraud/deception, criminal damage, public order offences, road traffic offences, controlled drug offences.
2. Behaviour deficits in attitudes towards TU Dublin staff, hospital staff or service user.
 - Breach of appropriate boundaries in staff or patient interaction, poor communication including rudeness or lack of respect, breaching patient confidentiality, deception regarding one's student status
3. Abuse, Aggression, Threat of Violence, Use of Violence
 - Verbal abuse, intimidation, bullying, persistent harassment (including sexual harassment), assault, incitement to violence.
4. Poor Interaction and Communication
 - Persistent poor communications without improvement, persistent rudeness/lack of respect/swearing, disruption of teaching and learning, persistent failure to work as a member of a team, unfair or unlawful discrimination on the grounds of gender or race or other factors.
5. Academic Deficit
 - Persistent poor attendance/absence, cheating in exams/logbooks/portfolios or other assignments, passing off others work as their own, forging any person's signature, falsifying information.
6. Dishonesty or Fraud
 - Financial fraud, producing fraudulent documents, misrepresentation of qualifications/student status, altering records of any kind without permission.
7. Alcohol or Substance abuse
 - Misuse of controlled substances/drugs (cultivation, manufacture, possession for sale or supply, possession or misuse), consumption of alcohol/drugs impacting the health of patients/student/those working in the clinical environment, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
8. Information Technology
 - Use of information technology and social media to support potentially unprofessional activity including criminal activity, substance abuse, threatening/abusive/rude or lewd behaviour, falsification and dishonesty, breaches of patient confidentiality or dignity.
9. Management of one's own health
 - Not declaring health issues that could potentially cause harm or impact on fitness to practice or fitness to study, lack of insight into health concerns and their potential impact, failure to seek necessary treatment or support, refusal to follow medical advice or care plan in relation to maintaining/regaining fitness to proceed.

Minor Breaches

Following receipt of notification of a complaint that an alleged minor breach has occurred, the Year Tutor/Placement Education Lead will consult with the Programme Chair. The Year Tutor/Placement Education Lead, the Programme Chair, the complainant and the trainee in question will attempt to resolve the issue informally. Depending on the gravity of the issue the Year Tutor/Placement Education Lead in conjunction with the Programme Chair may decide to refer the case directly to the Head of Medical Science or Head of School, if this is considered the more appropriate way to deal with the case.

Serious Breaches

In cases where a serious breach is reported or suspected, the Head of School will refer the matter to a Disciplinary Panel in accordance with the [Student Disciplinary Procedures \(TU Dublin\)](#).

Right to Appeal Disciplinary Panel Findings

Appeals against the decisions of a Student Disciplinary Panel are as outlined in the Student Disciplinary Procedures (TU Dublin).

Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Trainee Medical Scientists

1. CONDUCT

1.1 Act in the best interests of service users (defined above)

You have a duty to act in the best interests of service users.

You must:

- a. Treat service users as individuals, respecting their dignity, privacy and autonomy
 - b. Respect diversity, different cultures and values
 - c. Respect and, where appropriate, advocate on behalf of service users
 - d. Support the service user's right to take part in all aspects of the service provided and to make informed choices about the service they receive
 - e. Do everything, insofar as within your control, to enhance the health, safety or welfare of a service user
 - f. When working in a team, be responsible for:
 - Your own professional conduct,
 - Any service or professional advice you give,
 - Your own failure to act,
 - Any tasks you delegate, and
 - Any delegated tasks performed by you.
 - g. Insofar as possible, protect service users if you believe they are or may be at risk from another professional's conduct, performance or health
 - h. If you become aware of any situation that puts a service user at risk, bring this to the attention of a responsible person or authority
 - i. Put the safety of service users ahead of personal and professional loyalty.
- 1.1.1 You must not exploit or abuse your relationships with service users.
 - 1.1.2 You must always show, through your practice and conduct, respect for the rights and dignity of all individuals regardless of their: gender, family status, civil status, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, or membership of minority groups.
 - 1.1.3 You must respect service users' vulnerability, diversity, cultures, economic status and values.
 - 1.1.4 You must not do anything that you think will put someone in danger.

- 1.1.5 If you are worried about a situation which might put someone at risk, you must speak to a member of the placement team or your education provider.
- 1.2 Respect the confidentiality and privacy of the service users.
You must:
- a. Keep service user information securely and, subject to other provisions of this Code, treat it confidentially, including guarding it against accidental disclosure
 - b. Share service user information with others only where and to the extent necessary to give safe and effective care or where disclosure is mandated by law
 - c. If you are engaging directly with service users, inform service users of the limits of confidentiality and the circumstances in which their information may be shared with others
 - d. If you are engaging directly with service users, obtain the consent of a service user before discussing confidential information with their family, carers, friends or other professionals involved in his/her care
 - e. Always follow employer guidelines and relevant legislation when handling service user information
 - f. Always follow best practice in relation to the use of service user information in clinical audit, quality assurance, education, training and research.
- You should:**
- a. Continue to treat service user information as confidential even after the death of the service user
 - b. Be aware of the following circumstances in which disclosure of confidential information in the absence of consent may be appropriate, justifiable and/or required by law: to prevent harm to the service user or a third party to prevent harm to the public at large to comply with a legal requirement.
 - c. If you are engaging directly with a service user, inform the service user of the disclosure unless this would cause them serious harm or put the health, safety or welfare of a third party at risk
 - d. Where you decide that disclosure is justified, you should ensure that the disclosure is made to an appropriate person or organisation, and that the extent of the disclosure is minimized to relevant information.
- 1.2.1 You should keep information about service users confidential and only use it for the purpose for which it was given, unless the information raises concerns about a situation where someone may be at risk.
- 1.2.2 You must not knowingly give any personal or confidential information to anyone who is not entitled to access it.
- 1.2.3 You must remove anything that could be used to identify a service user from confidential information which you use in your assessment.
- 1.2.4 You must follow local policies or guidelines on confidentiality produced by your education provider or placement provider.
- 1.2.5 You must be conscious not to use social media and social networking in a way that identifies practice placement sites or the service user.
- 1.2.6 Where service user information needs to be shared with colleagues internal/external to the organisation to give safe and effective care, you must make sure that they know that the information must be kept confidential and transfer of information should be undertaken in a secure and confidential manner.
- 1.3 Maintaining high standards of personal conduct and behaviour.
You must:
- a. respect the rights and dignity of all individuals.
 - b. conduct yourself in a manner that enhances public confidence in you and your profession.

c. respect the roles and expertise of other health and social care professionals and work in partnership with them.

You must not:

- a. harm, abuse or neglect service users
- b. use your professional position to form a relationship of a sexual, inappropriate emotional or exploitative nature with any person
- c. exploit or discriminate against service users, colleagues or staff in the workplace or education setting, or condone discrimination by others
- d. behave in a way that would call into question your suitability to work as a Medical Scientist.
- e. work while under the influence of any substance which may impair your fitness to practice.

- 1.3.1 You must be aware that your conduct during free time may affect whether you are allowed to complete your programme or register with CORU.
- 1.3.2 You must behave with dignity, integrity, empathy, honesty and politeness with service users, your colleagues, and the programme team.
- 1.3.3 You must ensure your dress is professional, appropriate for your placement setting, will not cause offense to the patient, staff or visitors and conforms to placement site guidelines on dress code.
- 1.3.4 You should respect the roles and expertise of educators and trainers and work in partnership with them.
- 1.3.5 You must follow your education provider's or placement provider's policy on attendance.
- 1.3.6 You should keep mobile phone use to a minimum, used only when absolutely necessary.
- 1.4 Provision of information about your conduct and competence to your education provider.
 - 1.4.1 You must tell your education provider if you are convicted of, or cautioned for, any offence.
 - 1.4.2 You must report to your education provider and placement provider any observed/undertaken serious breaches of behaviour or malpractice (negligence, incompetence, breach of contract), unprofessional behaviour, and unsafe practice which may have a negative effect on service users.

1.5 Use social media responsibly

You must:

- a. Use social media in a responsible way adopting the same professional standards expected in other forms of communication with service users and your lecturers.
- b. Always consider the possible impact on service users and others before publishing any material, information or comments on social media, taking care to avoid abusive, unsustainable or defamatory comments.

You must not:

- a. Use social media in a way that would breach any of your obligations under this code
- b. Discuss or comment on service users or lecturers on social media platforms.

You should:

- a. Use appropriate privacy settings in your use of social media and consider how information and images you post might be interpreted by service users and others were they to become widely available
- b. Maintain professional boundaries in the use of social media to preserve public trust and confidence in your profession.

2. PERFORMANCE

2.1 Seek to limit or cease your study if your performance or judgement is affected by your health.

- 2.1.1 You should inform your education provider (Placement Education Lead) and placement provider about any existing health conditions or changes to your health which may put your service users or yourself at risk.

- 2.1.2 You should get help from a doctor or an occupational health professional if you are worried about your health.
- 2.1.3 You should register with [TU Dublin Disability Services](#) where an ongoing health issue (physical, emotional or psychological) may impact your academic or practice placement.
- 2.1.4 You should be aware that you may put your service users or yourself at risk if your performance or judgement is affected by your health.
- 2.2 Working within the law and regulations.
 - 2.2.1 You must recognise that if there is a conflict of interest between the service user and the safeguarding of children or other vulnerable people, safeguarding takes precedence.
 - 2.2.2 You must obey the laws of the country in which you live and work in all your professional and personal practice.
 - 2.2.3 You must be aware that materials developed by individual educators are copyright protected therefore copying and dissemination of materials must only be undertaken with the authorisation of the original source.
- 2.3 Keeping your professional knowledge and skills up to date.
 - 2.3.1 You are primarily responsible for your own learning & progression in the programme.
 - 2.3.2 You should think about and respond constructively to feedback you are given.
 - 2.3.3 You should actively engage with your trainers in developing rotation specific learning outcomes in each placement setting specific to your level of competence.
- 2.4 Practicing within the limits of your knowledge and skills.
 - 2.4.1 You should only carry out an unsupervised task if you feel that you have the appropriate knowledge and skills.
 - 2.4.2 You should make sure that you are appropriately supervised for any task that you are asked to carry out.
 - 2.4.3 You should ask for help when you need it.
 - 2.4.4 You should make sure that you do not claim that you have knowledge and skills which you do not have.
 - 2.4.5 You must be able to justify any decisions you make within your scope of practice. You are always accountable for what you do, what you fail to do, and your behaviour.
- 2.5 Communicating effectively with service users, educators and placement providers.
 - 2.5.1 You must take all reasonable steps to make sure that you communicate appropriately and effectively and sensitively with service users, your lecturers, placement Education Lead and placement providers.
 - 2.5.2 You should communicate effectively and cooperate with colleagues to benefit service users.
 - 2.5.3 You should communicate effectively and cooperate with the programme team and placement team.
 - 2.5.4 Where appropriate, you should share your knowledge with colleagues to aid collaborative learning.
- 2.6 Obtaining informed consent to provide care or services.
 - 2.6.1 You should do the following (in so far as is possible).
 - 2.6.2 You should make sure that before you carry out any intervention, the service user is aware that you are a student.
 - 2.6.3 You should make sure that the service user has given their permission for the intervention to be carried out by a student.
 - 2.6.4 You should explain the assessment, intervention or treatment along with any risks, benefits and alternatives to the service user in a way the service user can understand, taking into account the service user's capacity to understand the information.

- 2.6.5 You should follow your education provider's or placement provider's policy on consent.
- 2.6.6 If or when a service user cannot give informed consent, you must make sure that any actions taken are in the service user's best interests.
- 2.6.7 You should make reasonable efforts to encourage the service user to go ahead with treatment or examination that is believed to be in their best interest. However, you must respect the service user's right to refuse treatment or examination and communicate this decision with your supervisor.
- 2.7 Keeping accurate records.
 - 2.7.1 You should make sure that any information entered into someone's record is accurate, clear and documented in line with local policies and procedures.
 - 2.7.2 You should protect information in records from being lost, damaged, or accessed by someone without permission or tampered with.
 - 2.7.3 You must ensure that all patient records are legible, identifiable as being made by you the trainee, dated and timed, co-signed by the supervising Medical Scientist, prepared as soon as practicable following assessment and/or intervention.
 - 2.7.4 You must ensure that if records are updated, the information that was there before is not erased or made difficult to read.
 - 2.7.5 You must take the lead in student-led completion of your practice placement assessment logbook, doing so in a timely, evidenced based manner which is truly reflective of your practice.
- 2.8 Health and Safety risks.
 - 2.8.1 You should ensure that you are familiar with all local health and safety policies pertinent to your education or placement sites.
 - 2.8.2 You should make sure that you take all appropriate steps to deal with all health and safety risks including infection control according to local policies.
 - 2.8.3 You should comply with your education provider or placement provider's policy on managing risks.
- 2.9 Honest Behaviour.

You must adhere to [TU Dublin's Academic Integrity Policy](#) at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

 - 2.9.1 You must not plagiarise or pass off other people's work as your own.
 - 2.9.2 You must reference other people's work appropriately.
 - 2.9.3 You must make sure that you truthfully and accurately fill in any documents.
 - 2.9.4 You must not let any improper financial reward influence the advice and services you provide, or the products you recommend to service users.
- 2.10 Advocating for the service user
 - 2.10.1 You should advocate on behalf of the service user, communicating to your placement provider supervisor any concerns you have about the service user safety and quality of care.
- 2.11 Impact of your behaviour on public confidence/impression of the profession.
 - 2.11.1 You should be aware that your behaviour (during the education programme and personally) may affect the trust that the public has in your profession.
 - 2.11.2 You should not do anything which might affect the trust that the public has in your profession.
- 2.12 Placement Eligibility and Legal Compliance
 - 2.12.1 You must comply with all mandatory placement eligibility requirements as set out by TU Dublin and placement providers, including but not limited to:

- Garda vetting
- Occupational health clearance and required immunisations
- Visa and residency permissions (where applicable)
- Any other legal or regulatory requirements for clinical placement.

2.12.2 You must provide accurate and truthful information in relation to your eligibility to undertake placement.

2.12.3 You must be aware that failure to meet placement eligibility requirements may result in delayed placement, exclusion from placement, or inability to progress or complete the programme.

3. ETHICS

3.1 All conduct and performance outlined in the code should be undertaken in accordance to a high standard of ethics.

- 3.1.1 You should demonstrate an ethical awareness, having read, understood and accepted this code.
- 3.1.2 You should be familiar with the Medical Scientists Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics.

3.2 Research.

- 3.2.1 You should collect, protect and destroy data in accordance with your education provider's policies and procedures, including GDPR regulations.
- 3.2.2 You should treat all information gathered during the research confidentially and make sure that participants cannot be identified through their data.
- 3.2.3 You should make sure that the welfare of all participants is not adversely affected.
- 3.2.4 You should obtain informed consent from service users in line with clause 11 of the MSRB Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics¹.
- 3.2.5 You must not distort or misuse clinical or research findings.
- 3.2.6 You should ensure that a service user's refusal to take part in research does not influence the delivery of service to that service user in any way.
- 3.2.7 When working in a group research project, trainees should ensure that they employ good teamwork practice. Where this breaks down you must make the education provider/supervisor aware.
- 3.2.8 You must consult with your research supervisor regarding the need to get any necessary ethical approval for research proposals if required.

References:

1. *Medical Scientists Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics, 2019*

Declaration of Acceptance of Code of Practice for BSc in Biomedical Science

By signing this document, I hereby confirm that: • I have read and understood the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Trainee Medical Scientists • I agree to comply with these requirements at all times during the programme • I understand the possible consequences of breaches of the code.		
I have read and understood the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Trainee Medical Scientists in relation to Conduct, Performance and Ethics and I agree to comply with these regulations at all times during the programme, including academic training, placement training, and in activities related to research projects		
Student Signature _____	Date _____	TU Dublin Student Number _____
I have read and understand the implications of non-compliance with the code and the sanctions that may be imposed as a consequence, as per the TU Dublin Student Disciplinary Procedures.		
Signature _____	Date _____	TU Dublin Student Number _____

A copy of this signed declaration will be held by the student for their records and the original will be retained by the School of Biological and Health Sciences until the student graduates.