

SCHOOLS OF PHARMACY CODE OF CONDUCT

You are preparing to enter a profession which carries certain expectations and requirements. Membership of a healthcare profession requires the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct. During your education and training you are also obliged to abide by a set of standards. The Code of Conduct (“the Code”) outlines the defined standards and the principles by which you must abide in the academic, clinical and professional environment. You must formally agree to abide by the Code. Every student is personally responsible under the code for his/her own acts or omissions. Compliance with these standards is considered as evidence of fitness to practise.

The Code is based on six core principles:

1. Your primary concern must be to maintain and improve the health, wellbeing, care and safety of patients.
2. Develop your professional competence, skills and standing so as to bring health gain and value to the community and society.
3. Be honest and trustworthy and show respect for others.
4. Conduct yourself in a manner which enhances the service provided to society and which will maintain the good name of your profession.
5. Maintain your professional knowledge and competence.
6. Be aware of your obligations under the Code of Conduct and do not do anything which constitutes a breach of the Code.

The Higher Education Institution with which you are registered as a student (referred to in this Code as “College”) takes seriously any breach of the Code. If your behaviour fails to meet the standards outlined in the Code, the matter may be referred in accordance with the Higher Education Institution’s relevant policies and regulations. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis and will be judged by reference to the principles set out in the Code.

The following information is to direct you on the proper use of the Code in terms of your relationships and interactions with staff, fellow students, placement tutors, patients, carers, and other individuals with whom you come into contact.

Principle 1

- **Your primary concern must be to maintain and improve the health, wellbeing, care and safety of patients.**

Throughout your education and training you are required to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values intrinsic to your practise as a competent healthcare professional. As part of your course you will engage with patients and gain knowledge and experience in the clinical and professional setting. Even when you are not in direct contact with patients, you must make the health, well-being and safety of patients your main concern. All other principles must be read in light of this first principle.

As a student you must:

- 1.1 Always bear in mind your future role as a healthcare professional when studying. This applies equally to all aspects of your education and training.
 - 1.1.1 Take responsibility for your work, studies and behaviour.
 - 1.2.1 Apply your learning for the maximum benefit of patients.
 - 1.2.2 Behave in a trustworthy and professional manner.

- 1.2 Ensure that your beliefs and actions do not compromise patient care.
 - 1.2.1 Recognise and respect the rights of patients.
 - 1.2.2 Never discriminate on the basis of gender, religion, age, civil status and family status, disability, sexual orientation, race ethnicity, or membership of the Travelling community.
 - 1.2.3 Be prepared to undertake physical examination of patients if appropriate.
 - 1.2.4 Adhere to the dress codes of the College, clinical and professional environment (clinical and professional placements).

- 1.3 Never knowingly allow your judgment to be influenced by personal interests.
 - 1.3.1 Do not abuse the trust of a patient and maintain proper professional boundaries, especially with children and vulnerable adults.
 - 1.3.2 Do not make decisions for personal interest or gain that in any way may adversely affect the health and welfare of patients and the public.

- 1.4 Never knowingly mislead others.
 - 1.4.1 You should introduce yourself by name to patients and always make it clear to patients and the public that you are a student and not a qualified healthcare professional.
 - 1.4.2 You must never recommend a medical treatment or course of action to anyone unsupervised.
 - 1.4.3 You should never misrepresent data or information that could adversely affect the health and welfare of patients and the public.

- 1.5 Never compromise patient care.
 - 1.5.1 Raise concerns as soon as possible with an appropriate member of staff if you believe that patient safety or care could be compromised.
 - 1.5.2 Be prepared to challenge the judgement of others if you have reason to believe that their decisions could compromise safety of care.

Principle 2

- **Develop your professional competence, skills and standing so as to bring health gain and value to the community and society.**
 It is your responsibility to acquire all necessary knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours to become a competent practitioner and not impede other students in acquiring the same knowledge and skills. This should guide you in your academic education, training and during clinical and professional placements

As a student you must:

- 2.1 Take responsibility for your learning.
 - 2.1.1 Use every opportunity to learn. Attend classes. Be punctual. Be contactable. Plan and use your time effectively.
 - 2.1.2 Reflect on feedback about your performance and respond constructively.
 - 2.1.3 Make informed decisions.
- 2.2 Engage constructively in assessment.
 - 2.2.1 Complete and submit your course work on time.
 - 2.2.2 Appropriately reference the academic work of others.
 - 2.2.3 Never misrepresent data, coursework or information that could result in the awarding of a grade not reflective of your competence.
- 2.3 Recognise and stay within the limits of your competence.
 - 2.3.1 Recognise your limitations and ask for help, where and when appropriate.

Principle 3

- **Be honest and trustworthy and show respect for others.** Demonstrating respect for the dignity, views and rights of others is fundamental in forming and maintaining appropriate relationships with academic staff, fellow students, placement tutors, patients, carers, and other individuals with whom you come into contact. All health professionals must be guided by their primary responsibility to act in the best interests of their patient without influence of any personal consideration. The patient-health professional relationship is a privileged one and is based on trust and professionalism which are enshrined in the ethical principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy and justice.

As a student you must:

- 3.1 Act in the best interest of the patient and contribute to the safety of patients.
- 3.2 Accept and agree to be bound by the ethical principle of autonomy.
 - 3.2.1 Obtain consent from the patient before you interview or examine him or her. The patient should be offered a chaperone as appropriate. In the case of a minor patient, obtain the consent of the parent or legal guardian before you interview or examine the minor patient.
 - 3.2.2 Respect the patient's right to refuse health care or to take part in teaching.
- 3.3 Preserve the confidentiality of the patient at all times. This includes personal data that is in their clinical records as well as information they disclose to you during a consultation.
 - 3.3.1 Do not share medical information with anyone except those health care professionals involved in the care of the patient.
 - 3.3.2 Make sure that patients, or anyone close to them, cannot be identified outside the clinical setting or protected virtual learning environment. This includes conversations and discussions on social networking sites, texts or e-mails, recordings of interviews or assignments on e.g. smart-phones and/or YouTube, and pictorial records, e.g., photographs and/or video clips.
 - 3.3.4 Recognise the circumstances when confidential information may be disclosed without consent.

- 3.4 Accept and agree to be bound by the ethical principle of justice.
 - 3.4.1 Recognise and respect the rights of the patient to fair treatment and care.

- 3.5 Be honest and trustworthy.
 - 3.5.1 Identify yourself truthfully.
 - 3.5.2 Represent your qualifications, position and abilities honestly on all applications.
 - 3.5.3 Do not knowingly mislead others
 - 3.5.4 Be truthful in verbal and written communications
 - 3.5.5 Use research and laboratory data honestly and ethically, seeking permission to use data as required.
 - 3.5.6 Ensure any funds you are responsible for are used for the purpose they are intended.
 - 3.5.7 Decline gifts from the pharmaceutical, medical device or biotechnology industries.
 - 3.5.8 Do not plagiarise.
 - 3.5.9 Be truthful in all your interactions with staff in both the College and in professional placements.

Principle 4

- **Conduct yourself in a manner which enhances the service provided to society and which will maintain the good name of your College and profession.**

The public trusts healthcare professionals. As a student, and throughout your career, you must justify that trust by acting with integrity and professionalism. You should be aware of the importance of looking after your own health and how it impacts on you and your professional responsibilities. You need to develop skills to work on a multidisciplinary team to deliver a high standard of care and ensure patient safety. You need to be able to work effectively with patients, staff, colleagues and healthcare professionals.

As a student you must:

- 4.1 Recognise the importance of self-care and take responsibility for your own health, especially if it may impact negatively on other people.
 - 4.1.1 Seek prompt and appropriate professional advice about your general wellbeing, i.e. your physical or mental health, or substance use or other issues which may impact on your ability to complete your studies or interact with patients, staff or colleagues.
 - 4.1.2 Inform appropriate staff if there is anything that could impair your ability to study or to practise as a professional.
 - 4.1.3 Inform appropriate staff if you are being affected by a major life event e.g. bereavement that may impair your ability to practise as a professional
 - 4.1.4 Inform appropriate staff if you have, to your knowledge, any disability or medical condition that might affect your ability or role as a future healthcare professional, or that might put patients at risk.
 - 4.1.5 Inform appropriate staff if you take medicines that may impair your judgment and impact on the safety of others.
 - 4.1.6 Respect the confidentiality of your colleagues but appropriately disclose information of concern to include information regarding 4.1.1 above as relevant to your colleagues.

- 4.2 Learn how to work in partnership with others in College, on professional placement, and with patients and their carers in the management of their treatment and care.
 - 4.2.1 Recognise the expertise of healthcare professionals.
 - 4.2.2 Respect the knowledge and skills of those involved in your education.
 - 4.2.3 Be aware of the limitations of your knowledge and skills.

- 4.3 Treat others politely with consideration and respect.
 - 4.3.1 Recognise diversity and respect the cultural differences, values and beliefs of others.
 - 4.3.2 Refrain from behaviour that includes intimidation, foul language, threats of violence or retaliation.
 - 4.3.3 Listen to, and respect, the opinions of others and be non-judgemental in your attitudes toward them.

- 4.4 Learn how to communicate effectively.
 - 4.4.1 Ensure you have adequate English Language skills.
 - 4.4.2 Learn how to listen to patients and their carers and communicate effectively with them in a way they can understand.
 - 4.4.3 Learn how to communicate effectively with others including academic staff, placement tutors and other healthcare professionals.

Principle 5

- **Maintain your professional knowledge and competence**

At all stages of your professional journey you must take responsibility for ensuring your knowledge and skills are up-to-date and that you maintain your competence. You have engaged in a career of lifelong learning and teaching.

As a student you must:

- 5.1 Commit to developing, and continuously improving, your professional knowledge and competence.
- 5.2 Learn from experience and grow from the knowledge gained from errors to avoid repeating them.
- 5.3 Ensure that you are aware of continuing professional development requirements.

Principle 6

- **Be aware of your obligations under the Code of Conduct and do not do anything which constitutes a breach of the Code.**

It is the responsibility of all students to make every reasonable effort to ensure that everything they do conforms with the principles laid down in the Code of Conduct.

As a student you must:

- 6.1 Ensure you are aware, apply and adhere to the principles of the Code of Conduct.
 - 6.1.1 Promote and support the principles of the Code of Conduct by example.

- 6.1.2 Refrain from any activity that would negatively affect the reputation of the College, or your intended profession.
- 6.1.3 Report breaches of the Code of Conduct to the appropriate person (e.g. Head of School, member of staff in College or on placements).
- 6.2 Obey the law.
 - 6.2.1. Inform an appropriate member of staff immediately if you are the subject of any criminal legal proceedings.
- 6.3 Comply with College Policies, Rules and Regulations, and those of other organisations linked to your studies.
 - 6.3.1 Respect all College, and clinical and professional placement policies, procedures and property. Never willingly cause damage to such property, remove property from the premises in which it is located, or make use of property for personal reasons.
 - 6.3.2 Ensure that you are contactable.
 - 6.3.3 Supply accurate information in response to lawful requests and update that information as necessary.
 - 6.3.4 Cooperate with honesty and openness in formal investigations about you or others.
- 6.4 Comply with health and safety requirements.
 - 6.4.1 Comply with the College's health requirements and health policies.
 - 6.4.2 Comply with the College's, clinical and professional placements' safety requirements, including dress code and other safety requirements.

This code was guided by the following professional standards:

Code of Conduct for Pharmacists from the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (2009) The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland

Code of Conduct for Pharmacy Students (2010) General Pharmaceutical Council Great Britain

Guidelines for Medical School on Ethical Standards and Behaviour appropriate for Medical Students (2011) Irish Medical Council

Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners (2009) Irish Medical Council

Rules of Professional Conduct Incorporating Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Behaviour (2010) Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists.

We acknowledge the prior permission of Mr Damian Day of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) to reproduce extracts from the Code of Conduct for Pharmacy Students, written by the RPSGB and adopted by the General Pharmaceutical Council of Great Britain.