



College of Veterinary Medicine Policies and Procedures

Subject: Code of Professional Conduct

Section: Student Policy & Procedures

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CVM Code of Professional Conduct

Students in the College of Veterinary Medicine are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the Mississippi State University Honor Code, the Mississippi State University Code of Student Conduct, and the College of Veterinary Medicine Code of Academic and Professional Conduct listed in the Academic Affairs - DVM Student Policies and Procedures of Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine (MSU-CVM). Mississippi State University (MSU) and the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) recognize students are adults who are expected to obey the law and the rules and regulations of the university and the CVM, to take personal responsibility for their conduct, to respect the rights of others, and to have regard for the preservation of state and university property, as well as the private property of others.

Behavior for veterinarians, as defined by Veterinary Medical Ethics of the American Veterinary Medical Association includes that:

"Veterinarians should obey all laws of the jurisdictions in which they reside and practice veterinary medicine. Veterinarians should be honest and fair in their relations with others, and they should not engage in fraud, misrepresentation, or deceit."

CVM students are expected to adhere to this behavioral standard. CVM students engaging in professional misconduct may be subject to disciplinary review. Sanctions may include disciplinary probation or dismissal from the professional program. Students are also referred to the Mississippi State University OP 91.100: Code of Student Conduct. In the event a CVM student professional misconduct allegation also violates the MSU Code of Student Conduct, OP 91.100 is controlling and takes precedent over this policy.

Examples of professional misconduct by CVM students include but are not limited to:

- Discussing patient care or client records with persons other than the client, CVM faculty, staff, or students assigned to the case. Similarly, students not assigned to the case should not discuss patient care with anyone other than CVM faculty, staff, or students.
- Making derogatory remarks about referring DVMs regarding case management.
- **Taking photographs of patients, laboratory animals, or clients. Faculty members and house officers must take any photographs needed for student presentations or publications and provide these to the student.**
- Convincing an owner to relinquish an animal to the student for personal gain or gratification.
- Taking photographs of client animals on externships or CVM-sanctioned external experiences without written permission of the supervising veterinarian.
- Using profanity or vulgar language while participating in a CVM class, program, event or other CVM activity.
- Acting in an insubordinate manner towards CVM faculty, staff or other students

- Failure to observe requirements of the Guidelines for Professional Image as stated in the Academic Affairs Student Policies and Procedures
- Falsifying class attendance or aiding in the falsification of class attendance

Violations of the CVM Code of Professional Conduct

MSU-CVM College Hearing Panel

CVM has a nine-member Student Professionalism Council and a four-member faculty Academic Standards and Professional Ethics committee. The student Professionalism Council consists of two students elected from each of the four classes plus a chairperson. The faculty Academic Standards and Professional Ethics committee is made up of one person from each of the three academic departments plus one at-large member.

When necessary, a College Hearing Panel will be selected on an ad-hoc basis by the chair from three students from the Student Professionalism Council and three faculty members from the Academic Standards and Professional Ethics committee. The chair of the Student Professionalism Council will serve as the chair of the College Hearing Panel and will vote only in cases of a tie.

Reporting Procedure

First time violations of MSU-CVM's Code of Professional Conduct will be reported to and handled by the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs of the CVM. Initiating formal procedures is a necessary and obligatory remedy when other methods are inappropriate or have failed. Any report will initiate some action by the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs and can potentially lead to review by the MSU-CVM College Hearing Panel.

Any person in MSU-CVM academic community (students, faculty, staff, and administration) should report alleged violations of the MSU-CVM Professional Conduct Policy that come to their knowledge. Reports of alleged incidents of professional misconduct may be reported to the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs, to the instructor of the course, or any appropriate faculty member. Reports may be filed initially verbally, electronically, or in writing. Upon receipt of such a report, any member of the CVM community is obligated to refer that report to the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs. The Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs will contact the person reporting the alleged incident to learn additional details in order to pursue the case in accordance with applicable policies and procedures.

The Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs will be the central manager for maintaining records and providing assistance with cases. Any member of the CVM community should call the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs' office for clarification and assistance with alleged violation of the MSU-CVM Student Policies and Procedures.

Handling of allegations of professional misconduct by the Assistant Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs

- 1) A report filed with the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs results in the beginning of a case file and notification of the parties involved.

- 2) If there is no previous record and the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs decides to handle the case individually, he/she will then meet with the accused student. In this meeting, the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs shall inform the student of the allegation and give the student the opportunity to be heard. If a previous record of professional misconduct exists, the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs may handle the case or refer it to the MSU-CVM College Hearing Panel.
- 3) At request of the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs, a member of the MSU-CVM Student Affairs Office will gather information from the reporting faculty member or student. The Assistant Dean and/or a member of the Office of Student Affairs staff meets with the accused student to gather information. The student is given the incident report during this meeting. The Assistant Dean and/or a member of the Office of Student Affairs may also meet with other persons who have information about the above case. The accused student may give the Assistant Dean and/or a member of the Student Affairs office names of persons who may have clarifying information about the case. Interviews are conducted.
- 4) After the meeting with the accused student, or if necessary after additional investigation, the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs will determine if professional misconduct has occurred. If no misconduct is found by the Assistant Dean, the case will be dropped and no action against the student is taken. If the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs determines that there has been professional misconduct, the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs will meet with the student to notify him/her of the decision, sanction(s), and of the appeals process. Each student is required to check one of the student response options on the MSU-CVM Student Disciplinary Option Form and sign the form.
- 5) If the student accepts responsibility for the professional misconduct and accepts the sanction assigned by the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs, the MSU-CVM Student Disciplinary Option Form is included in the case file and the case is completed.
- 6) If the student indicates on the MSU-CVM Student Disciplinary Option Form that they do not agree with the sanction or deny that misconduct occurred, the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs will then convene the MSU-CVM College Hearing Panel and submit the MSU-CVM Student Disciplinary Option Form and all applicable documentation to the CVM Hearing Panel as soon as practicable. .

Handling of allegations of professional misconduct by the College Hearing Panel

- 1) In the event the College Hearing Panel is convened, the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs will submit a report to the College Hearing Panel chair summarizing all information collected and all interviews conducted. Both the reporting faculty member or student and the accused student have the opportunity to review the report before the hearing.
- 2) A hearing date and time are set and all parties are notified. The chair and members of the College Hearing Panel receive an advance copy of the case file in preparation for the hearing.
- 3) The report including findings, decision, and recommendation for possible sanction(s) is submitted to the Dean of the CVM.

MSU-CVM College Hearing Panel Process:

Notification Process:

The accused student shall be notified in writing or e-mail by the chair of the College Hearing Panel of the specific charges, the time and place of the hearing, and the names of witnesses who are expected to testify or give statements. A letter or e-mail of notification will inform the student of the following in regards to the hearing:

- a) that he/she may bring any witness to the hearing to present information on his/her behalf.
- b) that he/she may be accompanied by an adviser of his/her choosing during any time that he/she may appear before the panel; however if the advisor is an attorney, the MSU Dean of Student Affairs office and the CVM's Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs must be notified 48 hours prior to the hearing.

- c) that the student, not the advisor, is responsible for presenting his/her case; therefore, the advisor may not address members of the College Hearing Panel or witnesses or speak during the proceedings.
- d) that he/she shall be permitted to question witnesses or information presented at the hearing.
- e) that the hearing shall be conducted in accordance with policy set forth in the College Hearing Panel procedures as stated below.
- f) that a record of the hearing and all documents related to the hearing will be made and kept with the Assistant Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs office.

College Hearing Panel Procedures:

College Hearing Panel hearings at MSU-CVM are hearings to arrive at decisions regarding student misconduct. Such procedures will give full cognizance to the test of fairness and justice, and the requirements of due process. In this primary hearing, technical rules/evidence applicable to civil and criminal cases shall not apply. Rules and procedures for conducting disciplinary hearings related to violations of the CVM Code of Student Conduct are as follows:

- a) College Hearing Panel hearings are of a private, confidential nature. They are closed to the public, but may be opened by agreement of both the charged party and the College Hearing Panel chair.
- b) The hearing is presided over by a chair of the College Hearing Panel.
- c) The format of a hearing will follow this sequence:
 - 1) The presiding officer will read the charges.
 - 2) A call is made for the plea of the accused to the charges. The accused may plead responsible, not responsible, or no plea.
 - 3) Information will be presented against the accused which may include testimony of witnesses and supporting information on the charges. He/ she may ask questions of the witnesses or question the information presented.
 - 4) The accused may present a response which may include testimony of witnesses and supporting information.
 - 5) All witnesses will be called separately and may not hear each other's testimony.
 - 6) Examination and questioning by members of the College Hearing Panel may follow any witness statement or information presented.
 - 7) The College Hearing Panel will go into closed session to decide whether the accused is responsible for violations of the CVM Code of Student Conduct. Those deliberations will be closed to all but the members of the panel and non-voting representation from the office of the Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs.
 - 8) The accused will be called back into the room and the decision of whether the accused is responsible for violation of the Code of Student Conduct is announced to all present at the hearing. If the accused is found to be responsible, the accused may make a statement in his/her behalf regarding the decision.
 - 9) The hearing panel will go back into closed session to consider the sanctions. These deliberations will be closed to all but members of the College Hearing Panel and representation from the office of the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs.
 - 10) The hearing panel will present a written finding and recommend sanctions, if any, to the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine who will in turn will inform the accused in writing as soon as possible. This recommendation will be used by the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine in the final determination of sanctions.

Sanctions:

Any student found responsible for violating this policy may receive a sanction ranging from a warning to dismissal from the professional program, depending on the circumstances and severity of the incident and taking into account any previous student conduct code or professional conduct violations.

Appeals:

