

TR 022 MCCC Professional Behaviour Policy

1. Purpose

Murray City Country Coast General Practice Training (MCCC) is committed to quality general practice training and to providing patients and their communities with high quality general practitioners (GPs) who consistently demonstrate appropriate professional behaviours.

The purpose of this policy is to support and promote these behaviours for all persons involved in MCCC.

2. Scope

This policy applies equally to all persons who are involved in general practice training being GP supervisors (GPS), practice managers (PMO), medical educators (ME), program management staff and to the recipients of training GP registrars (GPR).

3. Rationale

Inappropriate professional behaviour can have a significant impact on the efficiency, effectiveness and functioning of a training program, education event, general practice or other workplace.

The MCCC Professional Behaviour Policy:

- Identifies the expected professional behaviours considered necessary for an effective training program and within the general practice training setting;
- Outlines the processes and steps required to develop a culture of ongoing professionalism within the organization commencing at the time of induction of registrars (GPR) new staff and new training practices into the program;
- Commits adequate resources to the early identification of, and response to, professional behaviour problems;
- Provides appropriate support mechanisms for those identified with problems.

4. Background

General practitioners*"have a unique societal role as professionals who are dedicated to the health and caring of others. Their work requires the mastery of a complex body of knowledge and skills, as well as the art of medicine. As such, the professional role is guided by codes of ethics and a commitment to clinical competence, the embracing of appropriate attitudes and behaviours, integrity, altruism, personal wellbeing and to the promotion of public good within their domain. These commitments form the basis of a social contract between a physician and society."* (1)

Whilst this definition was developed for family physicians from the specialist competencies of CanMEDS 2000, it embodies the principles of professional behaviour promoted in this policy. Such a philosophy implies that being a professional is more than simply doing the job. There is evidence that practitioners subject to disciplinary action by a medical board often have been identified with prior unprofessional behaviour in medical school (2). The importance placed on professional behaviour by regulatory and educational bodies in Australia can be seen by examining their websites, including:

- Australian Health Professional Registration Agency Health Professions accreditation guidelines provide a definition and the competencies required for each health discipline (3)
- Australian Medical Council Code of Conduct (4)
- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners curriculum – Professional and Ethical Role (5)

Whilst many people involved in MCCC are medical practitioners, there are various other staff and professions that are also involved. These other groups and professions also have codes or conduct or the like, for example the Australian Association of Practice Managers has a Code of Ethical Conduct (6)). This policy relies on numerous frameworks that guide conduct and behaviours that foster the professional development of our GP Registrars.

5. Definitions

Please refer to MCCC TO 004 MCCC Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Definitions Resource Document for a list of acronyms, abbreviations, and definitions used throughout this document.

6. Policy

6.1 Professional behaviour means:

- Respect for others
- Responsibility and integrity
- A commitment to quality
- A commitment to continuing self –improvement
- Absence of deceptive or criminal behaviours (7)

6.2 Attributes of professional behaviour

For all MCCC staff and contractors, however engaged (program management staff, MEs, GPRs, and GPSs and other contractors):

- Insight and reflective abilities: insight into one’s own behaviour and how it impacts on others
- Openness to ideas and change and feedback
- Respect for others
- Competence in one’s allocated duties
- Commitment to one’s work with exercise of a strong work ethic (appearance and dress, attendance, punctuality, preparation, adherence to timelines)
- Confidentiality with respect to personal and sensitive information
- Trustworthiness and reliability
- Integrity and honesty
- Morality and ethics: adherence to regulations, ethical and legal guidelines; not engaging in criminal or deceptive behaviour.
- Accountability for one’s actions
- Responsibility: to one’s colleagues and the organization. This encompasses adherence to MCCC practice policies (the latter is with respect to clinical rotations) and all manner of communications (verbal, non-verbal, written, electronic, social media and networking)
- Ability to work co-operatively with colleagues and other staff

6.3 For health professionals (in addition to the above):

- Care and compassion for patients
- Duty of care to patients, the community and society in general
- Presence and undivided attention to the patient
- Responsibility to the profession and professional colleagues
- Exercise of appropriate professional boundaries
- Compliance with legal obligations of a health professional

7. Processes

Processes have been developed in parallel with this policy:

- To foster a culture of professionalism within the organisation
- To ensure MCCC staff, GPRs and MCCC training practices are informed about and understand the rationale and contents of this policy
- To monitor and address problematic situations and clear breaches of policy.

8. References

1. Frank, JR. (Ed) 2005. The CanMEDS 2005 Physician Competency Framework. Better Standards. Better physicians. Better care. Ottawa: The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Page 23, viewed 8 September 2014.
2. Papadakis et al, NEJM 2005:353:2673-82
3. Available at: <https://www.ahpra.gov.au/Education/Accreditation-standards.aspx>
4. Available at: <http://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Policies.aspx>
5. Available at: <http://curriculum.racgp.org.au/>
6. Available at: <http://www.aapm.org.au/About-AAPM/Code-of-Ethical-Conduct>
7. Faculty Development as an Instrument of Change: A Case Study on Teaching Professionalism. Steinert, Yvonne PhD; Cruess, Richard L. MD; Cruess, Sylvia R. MD; Boudreau, J Donald MD; Fuks, Abraham MD. Academic Medicine: November 2007 - Volume 82 - Issue 11 - p 1057-1064

8. Related policies and documents

- [Good Medical Practice: A Code of Conduct for Doctors in Australia](#)
- HR 021 MCCC Code of Conduct Policy (available at Practice)
- [Handbook- A Guide for MCCC Training Practices](#)
- [Fair Work Australia Act \(2009\)](#)
- [ACCRM Policies](#)

Individual Practice Policy and Procedure Manuals (available at practice)