

**Policy Name: 3.05.1 Positive Learning Environment Policy****Policy:**

The University of Texas at Tyler School of Medicine (UT Tyler SOM) is committed to fostering a culture within the learning environment that is characterized by professionalism, mutual respect, collegiality, and psychological safety. This policy establishes expectations for conduct, outlines mechanisms to prevent and address mistreatment, and describes processes to monitor and improve the learning environment.

The UT Tyler SOM defines the learning environment as including all physical, virtual, and social spaces, where medical students learn. The learning environment is shaped by educational practices, interpersonal dynamics, and institutional culture that impact engagement, well-being, and professional development. Institutional culture reflects the shared values, norms, attitudes, behaviors, and practices that influence how individuals experience teaching, learning, supervision, and professional identity formation.

All members of the medical education community have

1. a shared responsibility to protect the integrity of the learning environment,
2. an individual responsibility to model, support, and reinforce behaviors that contribute to a positive institutional culture grounded in professionalism, respect, and accountability,
3. the right to work and learn free of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and mistreatment, and
4. a duty to report any incident that has compromised the positive learning environment.

**Positive Learning Environment**

The School of Medicine fosters a learning environment that is characterized by professionalism, mutual respect, collegiality, and psychological safety. Behaviors that undermine these values—particularly mistreatment—are inconsistent with the school’s mission and will be addressed promptly and appropriately.

The institution ensures that:

- Standards of professional behavior are clearly articulated
- Learners have accessible and safe avenues to raise concerns
- Concerns are reviewed in a fair, timely, and confidential manner
- Prevention methods are in place for mistreatment
- Retaliation is prohibited
- The learning environment is continuously monitored and improved via the Learning Environment Council

**Expectations that Support a Psychologically Safe Learning Environment**

All members of the medical education community are expected to:

- Demonstrate respect, integrity, and accountability in all interactions
- Contribute to a professional culture that supports learning and well-being

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- Recognize the influence of power differentials on learning and workplace culture
- Provide feedback in a constructive, educational, and respectful manner
- Model behaviors consistent with institutional values and professional standards

Faculty, residents, and supervisors have a particular responsibility to shape a positive learning culture through their teaching practices, communication, and role modeling. The Learning Environment Council raises awareness about what constitutes mistreatment and unprofessional behavior through working with appropriate offices to develop educational activities for medical students, residents, and faculty and is responsible for recommending possible educational programming and outreach that focuses on promoting a positive learning environment and prevention of behaviors that may lead to a negative learning environment.

**Reporting Mechanisms for Learning Environment Concerns**

Anyone who experiences or witnesses incidents that do not align with the expectations in this policy is encouraged to report the situation via the most appropriate avenue. Per the UT Tyler SOM Non-retaliation Policy, retaliation against reporters is not tolerated. Below is a non-exhaustive list of avenues for reporting.

- Anyone who experiences or witnesses an incident of student mistreatment is encouraged to make a report as described in the Student Mistreatment Policy.
- Anyone with general learning environment concerns may consult with the Co-chairs of the Learning Environment Council (via email or E-Lert), Associate Dean for Student Experience and/or the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education. The aforementioned individuals will collaborate with faculty/teachers, clerkship directors, and others in conducting inquiries, attempting resolution, and generally discussing learning environment concerns. Appropriate notifications will be made, and actions taken in accordance with applicable university, school, departmental and/or site policies and procedures.

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