



Approved by Rector's Order N157 of 2017

Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy

Code of Conduct

Tbilisi

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Preamble

Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy (hereinafter referred to as TMA and/or Academy) is a higher education institution staffed with highly qualified personnel and carries out its activities in accordance with the current legislation of Georgia and regulatory documents of TMA.

TMA is committed to uphold the highest standard of professional conduct defined by this Code of Conduct (hereinafter referred to as the Code) in all types of activities related to both internal and external relationships. This Code of Conduct is a professional guide for students and staff in the institutional culture of the Academy. The Code of Conduct represents one of the most important documents combining institutional principles and ethical standards of TMA.

The Code of Conduct, along with the aspects of professional ethics of TMA, describes the principles of conduct and academic values. These values cover all key components of the Academy's activities, including professional and interpersonal relations, both within and outside of the Academy, zero tolerance towards unethical behavior and many more. Hence, the Code is very clear, consistent and tailored to each member of the Academy. TMA staff, students, all structural units related to the Academy, be it permanent or temporary associations, shall uphold the standards defined by this Code, regardless of their position status.

Importantly, the Code of Conduct was developed based on the world best practices and a Guide to Professional Conduct for TMA students, which fully corresponds to the goals and values of the Academy.

This Code of Conduct is not only a set of aspects related to general principles of conduct and a list of sanctions for violation of these principles. This document helps TMA students, future doctors, to establish as professionals, which includes but is not limited to the following:

- Develop and maintain professional skills and knowledge;
- Provide a high standard of patient care with own knowledge and experience;
- Familiarize with and strictly follow all regulations related to medical practice;
- Realize the limits of own competence;
- Ensure the patient safety and the observance of their dignity;
- Take preventive measures in a clinical setting to protect the patient from any contagious disease (including HAIs) and deterioration of the patient health condition caused by the illness of the doctor/student;
- Ensure the patient confidentiality and not disclose information about the patient health without their permission;
- Carefully listen to the patient and ensure trust building.

If any conduct is not specifically covered in this Code of Ethics, it does not imply that it is necessarily ethical and/or unethical.

Chapter I. General Provisions

Article 1. Scope of the Code of Conduct

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct applies to the Academy staff (academic/invited/administrative/auxiliary), students, persons who carry out scientific research, research component and/or internship or taking a certificate course, act on behalf of or provide services to the Academy.
- 1.2 The norms of conduct provided for by this Code shall be mandatory for any person performing activities in the Academy. Disciplinary liability defined by this Code shall be applied to the TMA students.
- 1.3 Disciplinary liability of the Administrative/auxiliary/academic and/or invited staff shall be regulated by the terms of the Internal Labor Regulations of Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy.

Article 2. Goals of the Code of Conduct

- 2.1 This Code is based on and facilitates the promotion and strengthening of the following values among those involved in the activities of the Academy:
 - Integrity;
 - Justice;
 - Trust;
 - Mutual respect;
 - Responsibility;
 - Accountability;
 - Professional development;
 - Collegiality;
- 2.2 Upholding these values is mandatory for all persons involved in the activities of the Academy, regardless of the position status or type of activity, be it teaching process, evaluation, scientific or other activities. These values are also obligations, incomplete and/or unfair performance of which is defined as inappropriate action or misconduct and are subject to the sanctions provided for by this Code and internal regulations.
- 2.3 For the purposes of the Code of Conduct, the Academy recognizes the importance of regulating the aspects

related to academic misconduct and the need to manage them in a timely manner through an impartial and comprehensive inquiry in case of specific facts. Through the inquiry process, the Committee on Professional Behavior will consider each case individually, the arguments will be heard, and the decision made in accordance with this Code of Conduct;

2.4 This Code of Conduct shall ensure the prevention of the following disciplinary misconduct:

- Unwillingness to engage in group work to perform a joint task;
- Bullying/insulting the students or administrative and/or academic staff;
- Copying assignments from other students and plagiarism;
- Indifference to the educational process and related activities;
- Failure to accept advice related to the educational process and ignoring feedback;
- Misbehaving with peers, colleagues, Academy employees and other persons;
- Disrupting of the educational process;
- Violating confidentiality;
- Misbehaving during the exam and manipulating in any form own and/or others exam results;
- Sexual, racial or other harassment or bullying;
- Discrimination;
- Theft;
- Inappropriate and unsuitable behavior for the student.

Chapter II. Rules of Conduct

Article 3. Violation of ethical norms and inappropriate behavior by students

3.1 TMA student's inappropriate behavior and violation of generally accepted ethical norms on the territory of the University or outside (if the misbehavior is taking place at an academic or other type of gathering organized by the university or students and/or in the clinical facility) expressed in the following actions:

3.1.1 Interfering with the educational process;

3.1.2 Smoking of tobacco/e-cigarettes on the territory of TMA/indoors and/or outside the permitted spots;

3.1.3 Indecent, unethical or other immoral action on the territory of the Academy and/or at an event

organized by the Academy that hinders the proper conduct of the process, including the use of alcohol or narcotic substances or presence at the academy under the influence, bringing in alcohol/narcotic substances, their distribution and/or consumption.

- 3.1.4 Violation of the norms defined by the Law of Georgia on Firearms, which includes but is not limited to bringing in, use and/or transfer to other persons of firearms and/or cold weapons;
- 3.1.5 Intimidation of the Academy students and staff, by means of false information, threats or any other kind of pressure and thereby causing harm to the reputation of the Academy.
- 3.1.6 Any type of verbal and/or physical abuse, mockery, discrimination, contempt at TMA and/or clinical facility.
- 3.1.7 Relationship of any kind of sexual nature in the territory of the Academy and/or clinical facility;
- 3.1.8 Bringing in, using, distributing or transferring to others in the Academy building and/or clinical facility of explosive, flammable items and/or substances causing a fire and/or explosion hazard;
- 3.1.9 Any infringement, destruction, damage, theft and/or other restriction of the property of Academy, clinical facility and/or other persons;
- 3.1.10 Littering in the Academy and/or clinical facility;
- 3.1.11 Psychological pressure, violence, threats and/or intimidation.

Article 4. Disciplinary violations related to the educational process

- 4.1 This article defines violations related to academic integrity by students and academic staff:
 - 4.1.1 Any action that opposes and hinders a fair assessment of students' academic performance by the Academy and gives the student an undeserved academic advantage or benefit;
 - 4.1.2 An action that opposes the regulatory documents of the Academy, hinders the progress of the educational process and/or is directed at damaging the material-technical property or equipment of the Academy;
 - 4.1.3 Misappropriation and/or submission of other person's work, regardless of content in the form of a verbal, visual or creative idea, including the material searched online, and presenting it as their own, without proper reference;
 - 4.1.4 Misappropriation of contributions, aid, changes made by another person, without proper reference;
 - 4.1.5 Submitting a paper product of a group work individually and independently;

- 4.1.6 Submission of the same paper as part of two or more educational course assignments to receive points for the activity.
- 4.1.7 Slightly paraphrasing others work, by modifying a part of wording, without properly referencing the original paper and its author;
- 4.1.8 Unauthorized use of various devices, including wireless communication devices and computers without prior permission, during a testing exam, quiz or any other evaluation process;
- 4.1.9 Copying the answers from others testing questionnaire, exam, quiz, laboratory report, practical work or any other paper;
- 4.1.10 Copying the answers for an individual assignment, regardless of its type, from other students;
- 4.1.11 During the exam process, consultation with others outside the exam area or review of the material;
- 4.1.12 Making changes to the exam paper after the exam has ended, without written permission of the Examination Center Commission;
- 4.1.13 Re-submission of the modified examination paper, after prior assessment;
- 4.1.14 Submission of altered, forged or falsified research data;
- 4.1.15 Dishonest obtaining of testing exam questionnaires, tickets or any other confidential information through extortion, theft, bribery, threat or any other means;
- 4.1.16 Performance of and contribution to the individual work of other students;
- 4.1.17 Submission of purchased or stolen work for a scientific research and other activities, including scientific papers and presentations;
- 4.1.18 Impersonating others or using impostors impersonating self, personally or in written or electronic form; (both the impostor impersonating a person and a person being impersonated by the impostor shall be subject to administrative penalty);
- 4.1.19 Altering/misinterpreting personal information and/or academic performance of for self or others;
- 4.1.20 Altering and/or hiding information reflecting academic performance, including enrollment documents, academic transcripts, certificates and letters issued by the Academy, etc.;
- 4.1.21 Submission of altered, forged or fraudulent documents for the purpose of obtaining academic advantage, including health certificate, travel ticket, financial documents, etc.;
- 4.1.22 Submission of altered or falsified educational documents for enrollment in the Academy or recognition of credits;

- 4.1.23 Falsification of any document in any form issued by the Academy, including academic transcript, letter, notice, recommendation, etc.;
- 4.1.24 Submission of false, modified or forged letters of recommendation;
- 4.1.25 Offering to and sharing by students of various written papers, including essays, examination or test questions and answers, test questionnaires or any other assignment;
- 4.1.26 Mutual exchange or selling and sharing in any other way of various papers;
- 4.1.27 Attempts to receive from and/or provide assistance to other students or academic staff, specifically, copying and facilitating academic fraud in the performance of any type of assignments established by the examination process;
- 4.1.28 Altering/damaging other student's academic paper to obtain academic advantage;
- 4.1.29 Improper use, altering, concealment or restriction of others' access to the property of the Academy in order to interfere with other student's activities;
- 4.1.30 Unauthorized obtaining of any material related to the educational process and courses, including tables, syllabi, handouts, etc. by means of deception, extortion or theft, their modification for further use;
- 4.1.31 Unauthorized access, damage and any kind of modification, as well as hiding or destruction of the library property, including books, printed materials, as well as electronic resources, including journals, articles, equipment, etc.;
- 4.1.32 Destruction or damage of and writing on the announcements posted in the Academy;
- 4.1.33 Dissemination, sale or use of any kind for profit of intellectual property (material, academic and other type) without the author's permission. This applies to any information resources available at the Academy, including slides, presentations, essays and research papers used by the staff;
- 4.1.34 Use and presenting as own of the information available on the Internet or in any other outside source without proper reference.
- 4.1.35 Use of other's intellectual property for commercial purposes.
- 4.1.36 Violation of the regulations of the Examination Center, attempt to disrupt and hinder the examination process to gain academic advantage or discredit another student;
- 4.1.37 Violation of requirements, instructions and regulations of educational courses and departments, including laboratory and clinical disciplines, both in TMA and in contracted clinics;
- 4.1.38 Incomplete performance of professional obligations in Academy's contractor clinics, demonstration of

professional negligence and irresponsibility, as well as disregarding the internal regulations and guidelines of the clinic.

- 4.1.39 Provoking students, organizing and taking part in gambling activities, hindering the Academy staff, etc.;
- 4.1.40 Filing a complaint containing wrong/falsified information against an educator, student or administrative staff;
- 4.1.41 Mentioning Academy staff in an unacceptable form and/or encouraging others to engage in similar activity;

Article 5. Obligations related to the rules of conduct of administrative/academic/support staff and invited lecturers:

5.1 Administrative/academic/support and invited staff:

- 5.1.1 Ensure compliance with the principle of integrity and impartiality in the fulfillment of professional duties;
- 5.1.2 Refrain from making a statement inappropriate to the lecturer's status through the media broadcasting, during the public speech and/or on social networks, which may directly or indirectly damage the reputation of TMA or affect the honor and dignity of students;
- 5.1.3 Shall not use for personal benefit the physical and intellectual product/achievement of a student or other person employed at the university;
- 5.1.4 Shall not establish a relationship of non-topical, sexual and/or romantic nature with the student;
- 5.1.5 Ensure, together with TMA administrative staff, students' education in an environment free from discrimination regardless of race, skin color, gender, religion, political or social features of other kind, national, ethnic and social belonging, origin, property and title status, or place of residence.
- 5.1.6 Ensure that each student receives a quality education regardless of the student's special educational needs or other disabilities;
- 5.1.7 Promote the development of principles of fairness, mutual respect and respect of human rights among students;
- 5.1.8 Ensure safe operation of TMA property and use it only for its intended purpose;
- 5.1.9 Ensure professional development for themselves and students.

Article 6. Forms of disciplinary misconduct

6.1 Misconduct forms stipulated by this Code are divided into two forms:

- 6.1.1 Severe misconduct - a violation that seriously contradicts the values of the Academy, and/or damages the Academy operations, is classified as a severe violation.
- 6.1.2 Mild misconduct - a primary violation, which does not impact directly the educational outcomes and does not damage the reputation of TMA.

Chapter III. Committee on Professional Behavior

Article 7. Decision-making body

- 7.1 The severity, type and degree of misconduct, as well as the relevant sanctions are determined by a majority vote of the TMA Committee on Professional Behavior.
- 7.2 The nature and severity of the violation will be determined individually, considering the specifics and circumstances of the case.

Article 8. Inquiry of disciplinary misconduct

- 8.1 If there is a reasonable suspicion of misconduct by a student, academic and/or administrative staff, the applicant addresses the Legal Service in a written form. The representative of the Legal Service confidentially considers the case. As a result of analyzing the content of the statement, the Legal Service, in agreement with the Rector, makes a decision on the setting a meeting of the Committee on Professional Behavior. The Committee on Professional Behavior meeting is set and the members of the Committee are determined by the Rector's Order.
- 8.2 With respect to disciplinary misconduct, it is prohibited to violate the principle of confidentiality and discredit the parties. If there is risk of interest of conflict and/or bias, a member of the Committee on Professional Behavior shall request the recusal from Committee meetings.

Article 9. Disciplinary measures and stages

9.1 Informal stage

- 9.1.1 Mild and minor misconduct, especially if they are primary violations, are considered informally. At such

times, for the purposes of improving professional conduct, recommendations are developed in accordance with the standards of conduct.

9.1.2 In case if false accusation and applicant's incorrect information is determined, written recommendations are issued to the applicant, based on the Code of Conduct.

9.1.3 The informal meeting is not part of disciplinary measures and is only of a recommendatory nature to raise standards of professional conduct. However, if, after an informal meeting, the student/staff member does not demonstrate their willingness to genuinely follow the recommendations and improve their professional conduct, the case hearing may be resumed to take an appropriate action.

9.1.4 In the event that the conduct of the student/staff member remain unsatisfactory, the Committee on Professional Behavior shall be entitled to subordinate the violator to additional consultations and if the violator refuses to accept this decision, the hearing of the case will be resumed to take disciplinary measures.

9.2 Formal stage

9.2.1 When disciplinary liability is a necessary move, the Committee on Professional Behavior shall comprehensively and objectively collect and review the case materials. The Committee on Professional Behavior, if necessary, appoints a meeting with the violator and/or person submitting a statement on disciplinary violation.

9.2.2 If a violator does not appear at a meeting set by the Committee on Professional Behavior 2 times in a row, the Committee shall be entitled to review the current issue and make a decision without the respondent being present. The violator shall be notified about the decision via e-mail.

9.2.3 In accordance with the conclusion of the Committee on Professional Behavior, disciplinary violation in the case of a student may be subject to the following sanctions:

- Written recommendation (warning)
- Financial sanction (in case of material damage)
- Suspension of student status
- Termination of student status

9.2.4 Measures of liability for the disciplinary violation by staff are determined based on the Internal Labor Regulations of TMA.

9.2.5 The Professional Behavior Committee may impose on a student a sanction of different nature in case of

violation of the duties established by this Code of Conduct, which may not be explicitly implied articulated in Paragraph 9.2.3 of this Code.

9.2.6 In case of damage to or destruction of the property of the Academy by the student and/or staff, compensation may be imposed both in an isolated manner or in combination with other sanctions.

9.2.7 If the student/staff member is issued warning, a relevant entry will be made in the personal file (removed only after the expiration of the warning period, after the standards of conduct are met). The warning duration is determined in individual cases.

9.2.8 The duration and degree of sanctions are determined depending on the type and severity of the misconduct, considering aggravating or mitigating circumstances of the case.

9.2.9 The respondent party to the statement shall be informed about the content of the statement, the progress of disciplinary proceedings and the measures of disciplinary liability.

9.2.10 Prior to making a final decision, each case should be considered individually, taking into account the available evidence, circumstances and arguments, while adhering to the principles of fairness and equality.

9.2.11 The final decision of the Committee on Professional Behavior shall be formulated in the form of a protocol.

Article 10. Appeal

10.1 The respondent party to statement (the Respondent) is entitled to appeal a formal warning and/or the measure of the sanction determined by the Committee on Professional Behavior.

10.2 For the purpose of appeal, the Respondent is obliged to address in writing to the Legal Service within 5 working days after the announcement of the decision made by the disciplinary hearing, after which the Head of the Legal Service will initiate the case and transfer it to the Committee on Professional Behavior for the review of the decision.

10.3 The letter of appeal should clearly describe the grounds for the appeal, including the justification arguments of the respondent party, mitigating circumstances and, if any, shortcomings in the disciplinary hearing case.

10.4 The appeal hearing shall be set within 10 working days after the appeal request, during which the decision being appealed remains in force.

- 10.5 The date of the appeal hearing and the list of required documents that the respondent may submit must be notified in writing, 3-5 working days before the set date.
- 10.6 The outcome of the appeal hearing, based on the arguments and evidence presented by the respondent, may be defined as follows: decision cancellation, mitigation or retaining in force. The decision of the appeal hearing is final and is no longer subject to revision in TMA.
- 10.7 The Respondent shall be notified about the decision of the appeal hearing by e-mail within 5 working days after the decision.

Chapter IV. Other Provisions

Article 11. Prevention of academic misconduct

- 11.1 Prevention of academic misconduct is part of TMA's Academic Integrity Policy and one of the objectives of this Code of Conduct.
- 11.2 To prevent academic misconduct, TMA continuously notifies the academic and administrative staff, as well as students and researchers about ethical standards and norms of the Academy.
- 11.3 TMA is entitled to assess the level of awareness of the staff member/student in ethical norms to avoid potential misconduct and if unsatisfactory results are detected, ensure their awareness raising through training and encouragement of the of highly ethical conduct.

Article 12. Procedures for cancelling academic sanction(s)

- 12.1 The term of disciplinary sanction defined by this Code of Conduct is one year, except the cases when the Committee on Professional Behavior applies the highest sanction established by this Code, termination of student status.
- 12.2 If a student has been imposed a disciplinary sanction and has not been subjected to a new disciplinary sanction within one calendar year, they shall be deemed free of disciplinary sanction.
- 12.3 Disciplinary sanction may be cancelled prior to term expiration if the person subjected to the sanction has had significant professional and/or academic achievement/success.
- 12.4 If the Dean appeals with a request to cancel the disciplinary sanction defined in Paragraph 12.3 of this Code of Conduct, a decision shall be made by the Committee on Professional Behavior.