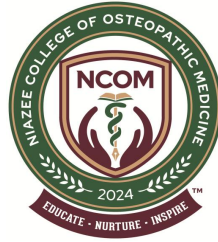


Niazee College of Osteopathic Medicine (NCOM)

STUDENT PROFESSIONALISM AND CODE OF CONDUCT CONTRACT

Effective April 2026

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PROFESSIONALISM CONTRACT

Welcome to the Niazee College of Osteopathic Medicine (NCOM) Family.

On behalf of NCOM, we are pleased that you have chosen and been accepted to be part of the NCOM Community. Given the respect and expectations, we have for each other and our school, we have designed this contract to function as a guide during your time at NCOM, in both the pre-clinical and clinical years.

The goal of this contract is to establish a clear understanding of what professionalism is and to set your foundation of professional conduct beginning immediately with your acceptance into NCOM, which you will continue throughout your professional career. We realize that this process requires continual growth, and we must each strive to learn from every experience. Understanding the importance of these lessons can best be achieved through open prompt communication and feedback about professionalism amongst ourselves, the NCOM family, and larger community. It is our goal to recognize that there are diverse perspectives at the beginning of osteopathic medical school, and we hope that through this document, students will be better equipped to understand and to grow in your professional identity and visibility. The guidance in this document will provide you with productive tools as you learn how to navigate professionalism in various settings and to do so successfully in both the preclinical and clinical environments.

Professionalism lies in our attitudes, behavior, self-presentation, and respect for our colleagues, community members, and patients. Your individual conduct as witnessed by faculty, administration, staff, patients, fellow students, as well as anyone with whom you interact, must reflect the NCOM professional expectations. It is important to remember that in addition to students, staff, faculty, and standardized patients, there are often guests present on campus. As such, it is prudent to always be aware of your actions and behavior both on and off campus. Professionalism includes accepting feedback, constructive criticism, and gracefully accepting these as learning opportunities which is part of the integral journey to osteopathic professional development. Your college's faculty, staff, administration, and fellow students are your professional colleagues.

We all must hold ourselves, as well as others within this community, to a high professional standard. As part of this family, any dishonest, disruptive, or disrespectful behavior in/out of the classroom or on/off campus is unacceptable. At no point may academic integrity or professional behavior be sacrificed for personal gain. All local, state, and federal laws must be followed. It is only through the cooperation of all members of the NCOM community that we will succeed in meeting these high professional standards.

Professionalism outside of NCOM is representative of what lies within these walls. We each represent ourselves as individuals, NCOM, and the osteopathic profession with every interaction we have in our community, recognizing that our actions have both relative and absolute consequences. While in this community, you are responsible for the lives and well-being of others, and therefore, must always keep a professional demeanor in all forms of communication and action.

Professionalism is also an American Osteopathic Association (AOA) core competency for which all clinical students are evaluated continuously in preclinical course work, during each rotation, and later during residency.

The understanding of professionalism begins before you enter the classroom and continues beyond your time at NCOM.

NCOM – Diversity Statements:

Diversity, inclusion, cultural sensitivity, religious tolerance, and social justice are themes that run throughout NCOM, and we expect all members of our community to aspire to and reach the vision of NCOM and to embrace and dedicate themselves to the acceptance and appreciation of the diverse world in which we live, learn, and practice.

Likewise, we believe that the only way we can achieve the NCOM vision is to create a culture and environment that is fully inclusive and representative of a diverse group of students, staff, faculty, and leaders.

To establish meaningful solutions, encourage important innovation, and thoroughly address the needs of a broadly diverse society, we must ensure that we are fostering inclusion, educating about disparity and social determinants of health, gaining cultural competency, and examining solutions that include the full spectrum of perspectives, experiences, and opinions. Our approach to achieving our vision of diversity is twofold.

- First, in developing our programs we actively seek those from all levels of society who are the best and brightest while embracing our values of social justice, intellectual pursuit, and service to humanity.
- Second, our educational focus is to prepare students for the practice of osteopathic medicine not only for today, but for decades to come. To do this requires an understanding that diversity extends beyond race, gender, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and encompasses other qualities that embody all that we as a global society represent.

Specifically, we have developed robust programs in primary and preventive care and inter-professionalism all based on a hands-on osteopathic approach that emphasizes empathy, mindfulness, cultural and structural competency, and the need to effectively communicate with all individuals. Utilizing this approach, we hope to close the loop from recruitment to practice, such that we will attract a diverse group of professionals who want to learn how to DO what we DO to benefit and aid our diverse constituency. This is what we call the D.O. difference in diversity.

Our education programs prepare educators to meet the needs of all students and train them for the future of education. Our Mission is to promote social justice by serving the community and larger society and to prepare and continuously support professional educators to meet the needs of a constantly changing and diverse student population.

By signing below, you are indicating that you understand that there is an expectation of accountability for your actions as they relate to NCOM, our professionalism expectations, our diversity and social justice philosophy, our clinical sites/partners, our greater Chicagoland community/communities surrounding our clinical sites, the entire house of medicine, and in public. You willfully engage in the ongoing process of practicing honor, integrity, and respect in our profession.

We are pleased that you have chosen to be a part of our community and welcome you with an open mind and open heart.

By typing my name, I the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is needed:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

**PROFESSIONALISM STANDARDS FOR
Verbal/Interpersonal Communication**

We are highlighting tangible examples below to illustrate common scenarios around professionalism standards. It is important to recognize the need for situational flexibility- professionalism definitions may vary based on geographic location, cultural context, and diversity of patient population.

Awareness to uphold the highest professional standard is what we are seeking for our future physicians.

| Element | Optimal | Suboptimal |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| VERBAL/NONVERBAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uses clear and accurate communication, taking into consideration appropriate level grammar, tone, and word choice. -Communicates correct information to others in a professional and courteous manner. -Demonstrates proper nonverbal communication skills (eye contact, good posture, avoids use of electronic devices unless urgent). -Seeks clarity when uncertain about acceptable standards -Demonstrates good listening skills and takes notes as necessary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communicates ineffectively via inappropriate language levels, poor language skills such as slang, poor grammar, undefined concepts, or inaccurate vocabulary. -Communicates inaccurate information that is based on hearsay or false information -Uses poor nonverbal communication (poor eye contact, poor posture, texting in meetings) -Jumps to conclusions -Exhibits poor listening skills |
| HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Demonstrates integrity, honesty, and is accountable to the highest professional standard as a medical professional -Refrains from “school politics” -- gossip -Respects cultural and ethnic differences -Accepts and responds to constructive feedback with productive growth mindset -Maintains positive relationships -Responds to changing school demands and helping others as needed. -Treats all individuals as equals and without bias. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Exhibits behavior that is untrustworthy and irresponsible -Dishonest -Does not accept responsibility, blames, or criticizes others -Engages in “school/hospital politics”/ gossip -Disrespectful of culture, ethnic, and religious differences -Rude, Condescending -Unresponsive to changing environmental demands -Does not treat all individuals as equals, shows bias towards others. |
| ATTITUDE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Displays a willingness to cooperate -Accepts constructive feedback with productive growth mindset response -Sets realistic expectations and goals -Demonstrates respect for ones’ school - displays authenticity -Displays and communicates empathy towards faculty, staff, fellow students, and patients -Motivates himself/herself and others -Projects self-confidence and sincerity consistent with the honor of being a health professional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uncooperative -Combative, defensive, and unwilling to accept criticism -Unrealistic expectations and goals -Disrespectful to school and team members -Displays lack of motivation -Negative, immature, or inappropriate outlook -Lacks self-awareness |

| | | |
|-----------------|--|--|
| TEAMWORK | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ability to learn about, with, and from others -Encourages and exhibits cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity -Fosters commitment and team spirit -Works with teams to satisfy expectations -Displays sensitivity to professional hierarchy -Displays flexibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unwilling to learn about, with and from others -Discourages cooperation, pride, or trust -Disruptive to team environment -Does not work well with others -Does not follow professional hierarchy when communicating with the institution -Inflexible, rigid behavior or resistance to take part as asked |
|-----------------|--|--|

| Element | Optimal | Suboptimal |
|--|--|---|
| PROBLEM SOLVING/DECISION MAKING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identifies problems and takes proper action -Seeks help when needed -Professionally suggests or requests improvement to workplace systems or processes -Manages stress in proper ways | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Exhibits passive aggressive behavior -Addresses concerns in external platforms as opposed to bringing it to the proper NCOM parties -Projects an incapacity to manage stress or a changing environment |
| COOPERATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conveys collegiality and willingness to aid others &/or follow directives -Works collaboratively to resolve conflicts and to identify solutions in which all parties benefit -Demonstrates concern for treating faculty, staff, fellow students, or patients fairly and equitably -Follows the chain of command to resolve conflicts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Unwilling to follow directives &/or help others -Does not work collaboratively to resolve conflicts. Only concerned about achieving personal goal(s). -Treats faculty, staff, fellow students, or patients unfairly -Demonstrates a lack of respect for the chain of command as it pertains to resolving conflict |

**PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR
Written Communication**

| Element | Optimal Format/Content | Suboptimal Format/Content |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| MODE/USAGE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sends emails from NCOM student email account for business pertaining to medical education -Adheres to the school’s Acceptable Use Policy for computers -Responds to email(s) within two business days -Adhere to the school’s social media policy-link/reference policy? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sends emails from personal email account -Violates school’s acceptable use policy -Does not respond to emails within two business days -Violates school’s social media policy |
| SUBJECT LINE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relevant to purpose -Factual tone (unemotional) -Provides some detail (e.g., prepping for a course quiz) -Appropriate to content and response timeline. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Irrelevant to purpose -Emotional (e.g., HELLLLLPPP!!) -Vague (e.g., HW) -Inappropriate content and response timeline (e.g., Urgent when not) |
| INTRODUCTION/GREETING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Includes greeting (e.g., “Dear” or “Good Afternoon”) -Addresses the receiver by their proper salutation (e.g., Dr., Dean or Mr./Ms.) -Includes typical social pleasantries (e.g., “How are you?” “Hope you had a nice weekend”) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uses informal greeting (e.g., “Hey” or “Yo”) -Addresses the recipient by their first name -Jumps right into question or demand |
| BODY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Brief and focused -Has enough background info/context to make sense -Polite and respectful -Does not demand | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Long-winded or unclear -Offers no background or specific content to make request/question clear -Emotional or panicked (e.g., “My professor is going to fail me”) -Demanding (e.g., “You have to let me” “Give me” “Get me”) |
| CLOSING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Acknowledges time spent (e.g., “Thank you” or “I appreciate your help”) -Respectful and friendly (“Have a great weekend!” or “Sincerely”) -Includes sender’s full name, level of training (e.g., OMS II), Class year, school name, phone and NCOM student email address | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No closing -Informal (e.g., “See you or “C-Ya”) -Does not include information about the sender |
| STYLE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conventions of standard English followed (punctuation, capitalization, grammar, etc.) -Proper tone (semi-formal/friendly, respectful) -Greeting, body, and closing are separate lines/paragraphs for visual ease) -Professional business font (ex : times new roman, Calibri, etc.). -Standard written language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uses non-standard English (texting language, slang, informal style) -Rude, demanding, or histrionic attitude. -a single paragraph all run together -Unprofessional fonts that are too large or illegible, using all CAPS -Excessive use of emojis |

**PROFESSIONALISM STANDARDS FOR
Video/Digital Communications**

| Element | Optimal Format/Content | Suboptimal Format/Content |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Virtual Meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uses full first and last name -At minimum: Arrives on time per standards set by course syllabus, the student handbook, and the CRM and optimally to be prepared to actively participate. -Keeps video on for duration of meeting, showing engagement by turning on video -Turns microphone on only when asking or answering questions. -Uses Chat feature exclusively for content of the lecture -Uses professional, polite language in Chat -Is engaged -Stays in Zoom meeting for duration of the session -Uses an approved NCOM background, or blur background -Is dressed in business casual attire or business attire for professional meetings. See dress code standards, course syllabus, student handbook, and CRM for clarification on dress for respective settings in more detail. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uses a phone number or ghost name -Arrives late, which may result in being ineligible to participate -Turns video off or uses photo -Keeps mic on during session. -Uses Chat for personal conversations -Uses profanity or derogatory comments -Is distracted and uses other electronic devices. -Leaves meetings or walks away from seat during Zoom for extended periods of time, -Uses unprofessional or inappropriate background or (zoom) filters/avatars which are unprofessional and distracting -Wears pajamas, swimwear etc. in meeting |

DRESS CODE STANDARDS

A. Dress Code

(1) **Professional Appearance.** All students are NCOM representatives and should dress appropriately to a professional work environment. “Dress for your day” is intended to be business relaxed when students have a school day that does not involve meetings with administration, patients (including standardized patients), simulation experiences, OSCEs, Practical Exams, or the like. Still, the expectation is that students will wear clothing that is appropriate for the type of work they perform. Students are expected to keep their professional appearance whether they are onsite or interfacing with faculty, staff, or patients in a remote environment. It is our collective responsibility to project a professional, businesslike image to our community, visitors, and the public.

(2) **Inappropriate Attire/Appearance. (In any clinical or Administrative/Formal Business activity)** Reasonable professional judgment should be used when selecting clothes for the clinical and administrative/formal business aspects of school. Unacceptable attire in these situations includes, but is not limited to, jeans, tee-shirts, flip flops, “Vivo” like toe shoes, slides, short shorts, poor fitting or unclean attire, clothing that exposes one’s upper torso or midsection, see-through clothing, sweat suits, gym clothing, hats/caps that are not religious in nature, and clothing displaying vulgar language or logos. You should always remain well-groomed and freshly showered, with clean apparel when on campus and in any school-related setting.

(3) **Clinical labs on campus (where you will be performing/learning physical exam or Osteopathic assessment/techniques)** With the exception of religious accommodation, persons identifying as male will wear loose fitting shorts (along the lines of basketball shorts) and will have their shirts removed when acting as the patient. Persons identifying as female will wear loose fitting shorts and a sports bra which leaves the spine exposed (i.e., no “T” strap). Religious accommodation can be obtained through the office of Academic Affairs.

Professionalism Report Form

This precedes the AIVR to the Academic Integrity, Conduct, and Professionalism Committee (ACPC) for Referral

Directions: Aligned with the college's Professionalism policy, any member of the NCOM Community may report an infraction by completing this form and sending it to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for preclinical years and to the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs for the clinical years. Please complete all fields. This report will be visible to the students. *Three or more report submissions for violation of professional standards will be added to a student's academic file and reported to the Academic Integrity, Conduct, and Professionalism Committee for a hearing.*

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Class Year in School: _____ Class/Activity/Clerkship: _____

Name & Title of Individual Completing Form: _____

Which of the following unprofessional behaviors has the student shown? Check all that applies.

Professional Ethic

- Exhibits dishonest behavior – Directly to AIVR
- Uses illicit substances OR alcohol, non-prescription or prescription drugs in a manner that compromised ability to contribute to patient care or a safe learning environment. – Directly to AVIR
- Misrepresents self, others, or member of the team to others.
- Breaches patient (HIPAA) or student colleagues (FERPA; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) confidentiality
- Acts in disregard for patient welfare (e.g., reports incomplete or inaccurate patient information whether intentional or unintentionally)
- Demonstrates lack of compassion, integrity, and respect for others
- Demonstrates bias towards others.
- Misuses cadavers, other scientific specimens, and/or lab or medical equipment
- Shows disregard for school property.
- Other: _____

Reliability & Responsibility

- Consistently arrives late to required (mandatory) scheduled events or is disruptive when arriving late to school sponsored events.
- Does not attend, or inconsistently attend required events, such as classes, exams, labs, work/clinical shifts.
- Does not respond to communications (emails, pages, phone calls, etc.) in a prompt or professional manner, as shown in the COM (College of Osteopathic Medicine) Handbook
- Fails to complete required tasks (academic and administrative tasks) independently.
- Has inappropriate demeanor (raises voice, disrespectful, rude, condescending, etc.) or appearance (dirty white coat, wrinkled or inappropriate clothes, poor hygiene leading to inability to function in a professional setting, etc.) in the classroom, remote or clinical setting.
- Does not accept constructive feedback or deliver feedback constructively and does not incorporate feedback to change behavior.
- Does not accept responsibility or accountability for actions.
- Late or incomplete submission of required documents (such as vaccines, physical exams) or course assignments or quizzes
- Noncompliance with College Code of Conduct or Academic Integrity, Conduct, and Professionalism Policy

Professional Relationships

- Fails to accept responsibility for own errors.
- Acts disrespectfully towards others.
- Engages in disruptive behavior in class, meetings, or with health care team.
- Treats standardized patients or staff on campus or in clinical environments disrespectfully.

- Does not keep proper boundaries in work and learning situations.
 - Fails to show respect and/or responsiveness to diverse patient populations.
 - Does not follow the chain of command.
 - Other: _____
-

Please supply the following added details

Description of incident that prompted completion of this form:

Action Plan & Follow-up Timeline: This should include student plan as well as documentation of notification of Faculty Mentor, and date the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs or Clinical Affairs were notified.

Referral to ACP Committee _____

Reporter: Faculty/Staff/Preceptor signature: _____

Date: _____

Comments: _____