



The Medical College of Georgia Office of Academic Affairs

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Category: Learner Interactions

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Student Mistreatment Policy

Policy Statement

The medical learning environment is expected to facilitate students' acquisition of the professional and collegial attitudes necessary for effective and compassionate health care. All students deserve a learning environment that promotes their acquisition of knowledge and skills without experiencing or fearing mistreatment. The development of these attitudes is based on the presence of mutual respect between teacher and learner and represents the AAMC Teacher-Learner Compact.

The Medical College of Georgia (MCG or the College) is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive academic environment at all teaching/clinical sites that is free of all mistreatment, including intimidation, disrespect, belittlement, humiliation, and abuse. The College has a policy of zero tolerance with respect to student mistreatment. The policy is intended to protect students and delineate how mistreatment is reported and addressed at MCG. It is expected that all faculty, residents, and staff will treat students in a collegial, respectful, and professional manner. It is also expected that students will treat each other in a collegial, respectful, and professional manner.

What is Abuse?

In general, student mistreatment is defined as any instance in which a student is abused in any way. This includes abuse of power by asking the student to do things beyond the scope of the medical student's role.

Examples of abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Threat of harm or being physically abused. Aggressive behavior (e.g., yelling, throwing objects, cursing, and threatening physical harm) that creates a hostile learning environment.
- Treating students in an injurious or offensive way. Attacking in words, speaking insultingly, harshly, or unjustly to or about a student.
- Public belittling or humiliation (feeling dehumanized, disrespected, or undignified, being shouted at, cursed, or ridiculed).
- Being asked to perform services unrelated to education or patient care (shopping, running errands, etc.). Assigning tasks or denying educational opportunities with the intent of punishment.
- Threat of grading and other forms of assessment as a reward or punishment for inappropriate requests.
- Offensive remarks based on one's gender, racial, ethnic, religious identity, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Having grades lowered based solely on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, or disability.



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- Telling inappropriate stories or jokes (e.g., ethnic, sexist, racist).
- Taking credit for a student's work.
- Intentional neglect/ignoring of a student.
- Sexual harassment, including but not limited to offensive comments to or about the student; unwanted attention or unwelcome verbal advances; unwanted persistent invitations; unwelcome explicit propositions; offensive displays; offensive body language; unwanted physical advances; and/or sexual bribery.
 - This form of abuse should be reported under the procedures contained within Augusta University's Sexual Misconduct Policy (<https://www.augusta.edu/services/legal/policyinfo/policy/sexual-misconduct-policy-students-employees.pdf>), the Title IX Office (<https://www.augusta.edu/prevention/>), and the Board of Regents Sexual Misconduct Policy (<https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section6/C2655>).

Behaviors That Do Not Constitute Mistreatment

While it is important to recognize and prevent true abuse, routine educational practices should not be mistaken for mistreatment. Some examples, though not limited to, include:

- Pointing out that a student has not adequately prepared for his/her assignments during rounds.
- Asking students questions on rounds.
- Providing feedback about these behaviors is not abuse or mistreatment unless done in an abusive manner or if such correction is disproportionately directed at specific individuals based on their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, or disability.

Positive Learning Environment

The medical learning environment is expected to facilitate students' acquisition of the professional and collegial attitudes necessary for effective and compassionate health care.

Examples of appropriate behaviors that contribute to a positive learning environment include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting all interactions in a manner free of bias or prejudice of any kind.
- Providing a clear description of expectations by all participants at the beginning of all educational endeavors, rotations, and assignments.
- Encouraging an atmosphere of openness in which students will feel welcome to raise questions, ask for help, make suggestions, and respectfully disagree.
- Providing timely and specific feedback in a constructive manner, appropriate to the level of experience/training, and in an appropriate setting, with the intent of guiding students towards a higher level of knowledge and skill.
- Focusing such feedback on observed behaviors and desired outcomes, with suggestions for improvement.
- Encouraging an awareness of faculty responsibilities towards all individual learners in a group setting.
- Providing an educational experience of the highest quality, along with the time, preparation, and research necessary to achieve that goal.
- Basing rewards and grades on merit, not favoritism.



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- Focusing constructive criticism on performance rather than personal characteristics of the student.

Expectations of Students

- Student acknowledgement of course or rotation expectations and the responsibility for fulfilling those requirements to the best of one's ability.
- Asking for feedback from professors, interns, residents, nurses, and attending physicians as appropriate.
- The acceptance of feedback provided by faculty in an objective manner and the incorporation of such feedback into future efforts to achieve the desired educational outcome.
- An understanding that feedback is given with the intention of helping to further the student's progress in meeting course and/or rotation expectations.
- Promptly and properly addressing, through appropriate administrative avenues, of any incidents and circumstances that fall outside the tenets set forth here.
- An honest and earnest effort to provide constructive criticism-written, verbal or otherwise to peers and supervisors, when such feedback is likely to enhance their colleague's skill as a physician.

Process and procedures:

A student who believes they have experienced mistreatment is encouraged, but not required, to consult with their campus leadership, if comfortable, to assist in determining whether an identified or anonymous report should be made.

Reporting Mistreatment

If you or someone you know is in an emergency situation that requires or could require medical, psychological or police services, please call 911, or the MCG Police at 706-721-2911 on the Augusta campus, the UGA police at (706) 542-2200 on the AU/UGA Medical Partnership campus, or the Georgia Southern Armstrong Campus police at (912) 478-5234 on the Savannah campus.

Mechanisms to Report Mistreatment

1. **MCG Mistreatment Online Reporting Form:** This form can be found using the "Report Mistreatment" button on both the Office of Academic Affairs and Office of Student Affairs websites; the reporting form can also be accessed on D2L. The direct link is: <http://www.augusta.edu/mcg/students/studentmistreatment.php>. This form and process provide MCG students, faculty, staff, and house staff with a web form for reporting acts of student mistreatment and abuse that may occur at MCG, either named or anonymously.
2. **Augusta University Ethics Reporting Hotline:** Phone at (800) 576-6623 or online <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/76590/index.html>
3. **End-of-Module or end-of-Clerkship:** Evaluations in one45.
4. **Augusta University Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Reporting Form**
5. **In person:** Students can report mistreatment to their campus leadership, specifically deans for student affairs or campus associate deans, course/clerkship/module directors and/or the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs who will then forward the complaint for resolution (see next section).



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Resolution of Mistreatment Reports

Mistreatment Response Team (MRT)

All reports from all sources and mechanisms of reporting are required to come to the MRT for inquiry and resolution. The MRT committee assigned to investigate and resolve complaints, is comprised of the following administrative positions:

- Associate Dean for Student Affairs, or Student Affairs Administrative Designee (Chair)
- Associate Dean for Curriculum, or Curriculum Office Administrative Designee
- Associate Dean for Faculty Development, or Faculty Development Administrative Designee
- Administrative Designee from the Office of Faculty Affairs
- Administrative Designee from Athens Medical Partnership Campus
- Administrative Designee from Savannah Medical Partnership Campus
- Regional Campus Associate Dean or Administrative Designee from each Regional Campus
- Administrative Designee from the Office of Graduate Medical Education with GME involvement in the Complaint

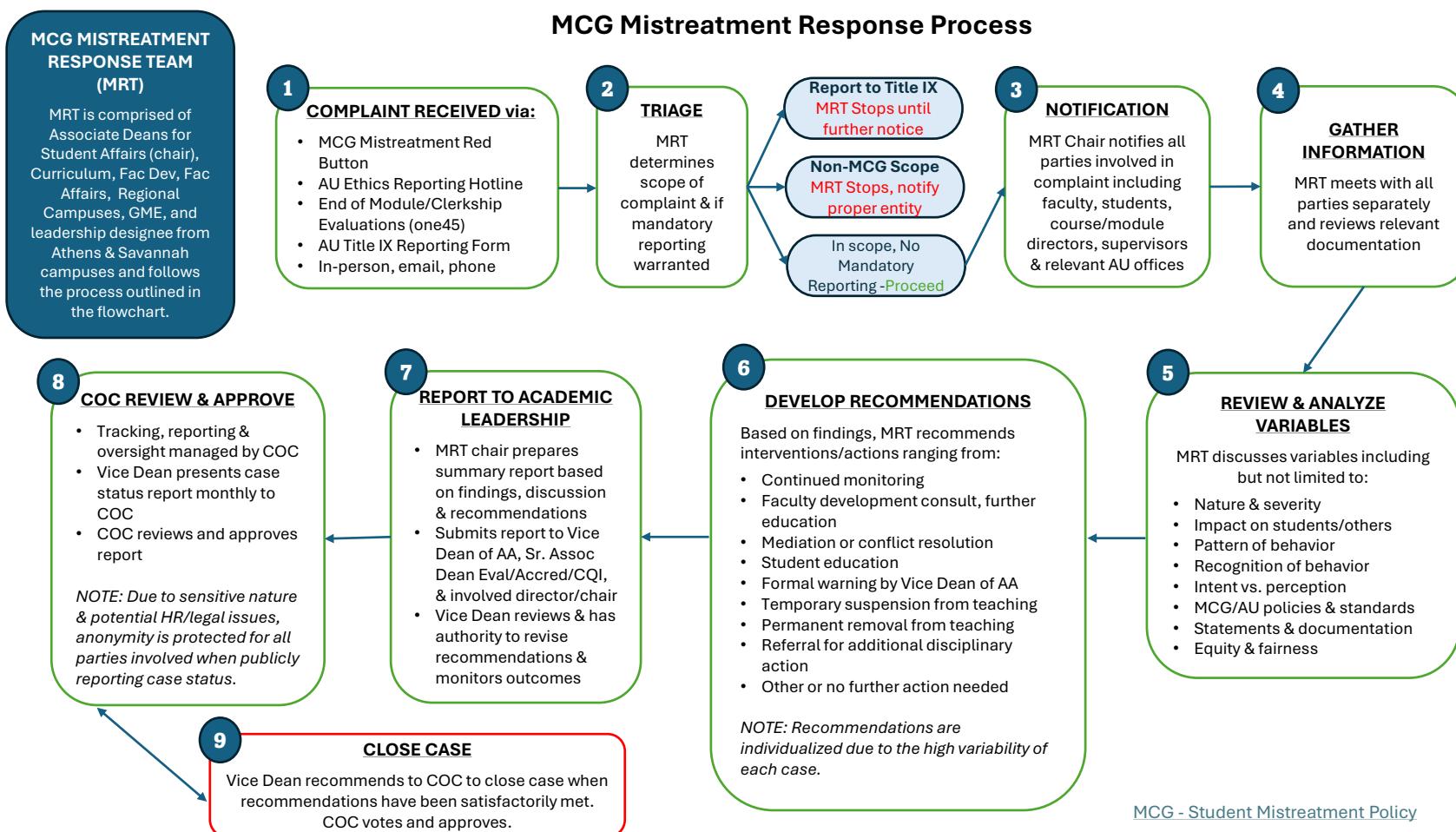
Process

1. If a complaint involves gender discrimination or sexual harassment/assault, the chair of the MRT reports it to the Title IX office for investigation.
2. For non-Title IX complaints, the MRT chair notifies all involved parties, including but not limited to faculty, students, course/module directors or supervisors, and relevant AU offices. The chair also schedules a meeting for the committee to meet with the individuals.
3. After meeting with the involved individuals, the MRT discusses all variables and develops recommendations to resolve the case.
4. The case summary and recommendations are sent to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and the Senior Associate Dean for Evaluation, Accreditation, and CQI for tracking, reporting, and oversight by the Curriculum Oversight Committee (COC).
5. The Vice Dean for Academic Affairs presents mistreatment case statuses monthly to the COC, where they undergo review and voting.
6. Cases are closed by the Vice Dean after recommendations have been satisfactorily completed.



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Appendix 1 – Response Process



*DISCLAIMER: Printed version of this document is unofficial for reference only; official version can be found online: <https://www.augusta.edu/mcg/coffice/curriculum/policies.php>