The primary purpose of this document is to provide college-wide expectations regarding student behavior in the classroom, clinical practice and the college environment. More specific expectations are articulated in school/department/program handbooks, many of which require student signature that confirms the student has reviewed and will comply with articulated expectations.

In addition to the articulation of expectations, this document specifies the process by which alleged violations of professional standards and responsibilities will be addressed.

All students enrolled in courses/activities of the College of Health and Human Services are expected to abide by the University Code of Student Conduct. The Code of Student Conduct covers a wide variety of behaviors expected of all students enrolled at Western Michigan University. It is incumbent on students to review and understand the Code of Student Conduct. Should a student be suspected of having violated the Code of Student Conduct, they will be referred to the WMU Office of Student Conduct, which will conduct an investigation based on approved policy.

This document focuses on conduct specific to professional standards and responsibilities and elaborates for students, faculty, office staff and clinical supervisory staff in the College of Health and Human Services professional standards, which all students must comply with and upon which all students enrolled in courses/activities in the College will be assessed.

For students enrolled in the professional disciplines of the college (which includes all majors, minors, certificate and graduate programs), the accumulation of knowledge must be accompanied by the acquisition of skills and professional attitudes and behavior. In all phases of professional education the student’s ability to utilize her/his intellectual ability and maintain emotional stability, particularly when under stress and within time limitations inherent in the professional setting, is vital for the successful completion of the program.

Failure to abide by professional standards may impact a student’s class grade, result in a remediation plan for the student, or lead to dismissal from a degree program.

**Definition of Professional Standards**

As a professional in health or human services, students must possess more than knowledge and professional skills of their discipline. They must possess and exhibit beliefs, values and attitudes that are necessary to work effectively and interact with other students, faculty, staff, clinical supervisory staff, other professionals, clients, patients and members of the community. These standards will be assessed throughout the professional program. The exhibition of these standards is mandatory for the successful completion of and graduation from an academic program in the College of Health and Human Services.

Within specific professional programs, students are expected to familiarize themselves with and adhere to the standards and codes of ethics articulated by their own discipline. This document articulates
college-wide expectations regarding the behavior of students in the College of Health and Human Services.

These standards include:

- Consistent punctuality
- Consistent dependability
- Honesty and respect for other students in the program, faculty, staff, patients, clients and clinical supervisory staff
- Appropriate, courteous, professional and respectful use of email and social media
- Appropriate, courteous, professional and respectful written and verbal communication
- Demonstrated responsibility for all learned material
- Fairness
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity and tolerance of diverse views
- Professional appearance (this should be articulated for clinical work and department/school wide expectations; when the latter are absent, classroom specific requirements are up to the individual instructor)
- Personal judgment
- Personal initiative
- High expectations for performance
- Commitment to professional growth
- Willingness to work in a partnership/group
- Demonstrated social and moral responsibility
- Demonstrated effective interpersonal relationships with others

**Assessment of Professional Standards**

Students will be assessed on the following:

1. An ability and willingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one’s repertoire of professional behavior;
2. An ability to acquire professional skills in order to reach an acceptable level of professional competency; and/or
3. An ability to control personal stress and strong emotions which could interfere with professional functioning

Assessment of a student may lead to a referral for action, should one or more of the following occur:

1. A student does not acknowledge, understand or address a problem when it is identified;
2. A problem is not merely a reflection of a skill deficit which can be rectified by academic or didactic training;
3. The quality of services delivered by the student is sufficiently negative;
4. A problem is not restricted to one area of professional functioning;
5. A student’s behavior does not change as a function of feedback, remediation efforts and/or time.

Any concerns expressed over adherence to professional standards or any assessment identifying a failure to adhere to professional standards may be addressed through the process articulated below. In
cases of egregious or severe violations of professional standards, sanctions consistent with the applicable policies, procedures and rules may be implemented without the opportunity for remediation.

**Process for Addressing Alleged Violations of Professional Standards**

**College General Guidelines**

Equal protection and due process ensure that decisions about students are not arbitrary or personally biased. It ensures that evaluative procedures are applied equitably to all students. Due process allows for appropriate appeal procedures to the student. All steps need to be appropriately documented and implemented. General due process guidelines include:

A. As part of the department/school orientation process, students are presented in writing the department/school expectations regarding professional standards. This should also occur in each class at the beginning of the semester and should be included in each course syllabus.

B. Students are provided a written procedure, which describes how the student may appeal the department/school’s action. Such procedures are included in the student handbook. The student handbook is provided to students and reviewed during orientation.

C. Departments/schools are to require students to sign for receipt and confirmation they had the opportunity to ask questions about professional standards. The appropriate academic advisor will give a copy of the professional standards to students in pre-professional programs and require that the students sign for receipt and confirmation they had the opportunity to ask questions about professional standards.

D. Documentation of all actions taken shall be made in writing and shared with all relevant parties.

**Specific Process of Addressing Alleged Violations of Professional Standards**

It is important to have meaningful ways to address concerns regarding a student’s inability to exhibit professional standards. The respective faculty member may address concerns in the form of usual classroom/clinical feedback (including grades on assignments) and/or verbal warnings. Beyond usual feedback or verbal warnings, the concern shall be brought to the chair/director of the respective department/school. In addressing such concerns, the chair/director must be mindful and balance the needs of the student, other students in the program, faculty, the clients/patients involved and the clinical supervisory staff.

In appropriate circumstances, the chair/director may implement a variety of corrective measures, to include the following.

A. A verbal warning to the student that emphasizes the need to discontinue the inappropriate behavior under discussion. Record of this warning is appropriately documented in the student’s file, as are any stipulations for behavior going forward (e.g., timeframe for improvement in behavior).

B. If the student’s performance has not sufficiently improved after a reasonable and pre-determined time has elapsed since the verbal warning, a written warning to the student will be issued and shall include:
a. A description of the student’s unsatisfactory performance/behavior, and recognition that the student had been previously afforded a verbal warning;
b. Actions required of the student to correct the unsatisfactory performance/behavior;
c. The timeline for correcting the problem (depending on the student, schedule modification may be time-limited); and
d. What action will be taken if the problem is not corrected

C. A professional review within the school/department may be conducted to discuss behavior/activities. The outcome of this review may include failure in a course/clinical rotation, a suspension of direct services activities (i.e. internship placement, rotation, etc.), a department/school approved leave from the program or dismissal from the program.

D. Should a student disagree with the outcomes of the school/department review, she/he may appeal to the College of Health and Human Services Professional Standards Committee. The committee as a whole will be comprised of faculty members elected from each of the departments/schools. Members of the committee will serve staggered two-year terms, so that approximately half the committee is up for election each year. Members will be elected by their department/school prior to April 30 of each relevant year. Terms will run from September 1 through August 31 of each year. Training will be conducted during the September meeting.

**Student Appeal Process**

1. A student aggrieved by an action taken within one of the department/schools in the College of Health and Human Services has the right to appeal such action by filing an appeal form in the Dean’s Office within 14 days of the decision of the department/school.

2. Within 14 working days, the appeal will be reviewed by the College of Health and Human Services Professional Standards Committee.

3. Within two (2) working days of the completion of the review, the Professional Standards Committee will submit a written report to the chair/director, including any recommendations for further action. Recommendations made by the Committee will be made by majority vote.

4. Recommendations by the committee are not subject to further appeal within the College of Health and Human Services.