UBC Dentistry Code of Ethics for Students and Faculty

PREAMBLE

The public grants a health care profession the privilege of self-regulation. Implicit in the concept of self-regulation is the obligation of the profession to have and abide by a written code of conduct that provides guidance to its members and future members. The attached document is intended for the academic environment and was created to help ensure that our graduates are ethically and professionally competent.

This Code of Ethics represents a set of principles of professional conduct, rules and responsibilities by which students must aspire to fulfill their duties to their patients, the public, the professions, their faculty, the staff and their fellow students. The Code identifies the basic moral commitments and will serve as a source of education and reflection. The Code of Ethics outlines specific behaviours expected of students in all clinical, educational and public settings.

This Code was adapted from documents of the Canadian and American Dental Associations, Canadian Dental Hygienists Association, College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia (now known as BC College of Oral Health Professionals), College of Dental Hygienists of British Columbia and from the dental schools at Boston University, Columbia University, Indiana University, North Carolina University, Ohio State University, the University of Texas Health Sciences Center at Houston and Baylor School of Dentistry (Texas A&M University System). It has been modified for the needs of the dental institution rather than for practicing dentists and dental hygienists.

BROAD PRINCIPLES

• Be honest and impartial when serving patients, the public, the institution, and the professions.
• Strive to increase personal competence and the esteem in which the professions are held.
• Use knowledge and skill to improve the health and well-being of patients and the public.
• Respect the dignity, professional status of, and professional relationships with their fellow students, faculty, staff and other health care providers.

Responsibilities

1. Responsibility to Patient

A. SERVICE

• Life, Health and Well-Being: The primary concern is the life, general health and well-being of the patient. It is the responsibility of the student to provide patients with the highest quality of care in a timely manner, acknowledging the constraints presented by the patient and the resources of the faculty.

• Appropriate and Pain-free Oral Function: It is the responsibility of the student to plan treatments that deal with the specific nature of dental health for each individual patient with regards to variables such as the patient’s age, general health, underlying anatomy, and compliance with oral hygiene. This responsibility is dependent on the patient’s cooperation, interest and commitment to the receipt of treatment.

• Patient Autonomy: The patient has the right to choose, on the basis of adequate information, from alternative treatment plans that meet professional standards of care. The treatment plan may or may not be the preference of the student or the supervising faculty. The student’s role is to provide information in an effort to help the patient choose a treatment plan.
• **Dignity:** Students value and advocate the dignity and self-respect of patients. Students relate to all patients receiving care, as persons worthy of respect and endeavor in all their actions to preserve and demonstrate respect for each individual.

• **Fairness:** A student shall not exclude, as patients, members of society on the basis of discrimination with respect to factors such as race, ethnicity, culture, spiritual beliefs, social or marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, health status, lifestyle or the physical attributes of the patient.

• **Accountability:** Students conduct themselves with honesty and integrity. Students practice within their own level of competence. They seek additional information or knowledge; seek the help, and/or supervision and help, of an instructor when aspects of the care required are beyond their level of competence.

**B. COMPETENCY**

• Students must keep their knowledge current and strive for new knowledge.

**C. CONFIDENTIALITY**

• Patient information acquired in the practice of dentistry shall be kept in strict confidence, except as required by law.

**D. TREATMENT ACCORDING TO AN APPROVED AND ACCEPTED PLAN**

• Provision of treatment as discussed and agreed upon by student, clinic instructor and patient.

**E. PROVISION OF INFORMATION**

• A student is obligated to provide to patients an honest comment and opinion of their oral health.

**F. PROPER MANAGEMENT OF RECORDS**

• A student must maintain accurate and comprehensive records of medical and dental histories, clinical findings, diagnoses, treatment plans, and treatments of each patient. Such records or reports of clinical information must be released to the patient, or to whomever the patient directs, when requested by the patient.

• When there is a transfer of patient care to another student, dentist or dental hygienist, the original student practitioner must ensure that a copy of the patient's record is readily available to the new practitioner.

• The student must not falsify written or electronic documents including student or patient records in any manner such as changing previous entries, making false entries, or forging signatures, with the intent to defraud, injure or deceive another.

• The student must not misuse written or electronic documents, including patient records, by unauthorized removal of such documents from their location of instruction or storage, or unauthorized use or dissemination of personal or private information in such documents.

2. Responsibility to Public

**A. POLICY ON REPRESENTATION**

• Students shall not represent their education, qualifications or competence in any way that would be false or misleading.

**B. COMMUNITY AND UNIVERSITY ACTIVITIES**

• Students are encouraged to support and participate in community and university affairs, particularly when these activities promote the health and well-being of the public.

• Students are encouraged to educate the public in the promotion of oral health.

**C. POLICY ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE (INCL. ALCOHOL, PRESCRIPTION & NON-PRESCRIPTION/ STREET DRUGS)**

• Drug addiction is a primary, chronic disease with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. The disease is often progressive and fatal. It is characterized by continuous or periodic impaired control over the substance, preoccupation with the substance, use of the substance despite adverse consequences, and distortions in thinking, most notably denial.
• Students who wish to include alcohol as part of their social activities will do so responsibly and lawfully.
• Students have the responsibility to recognize and address any problematic issues concerning substance abuse.
• Persons planning events on campus should be mindful of the complexities introduced into planning an event with the potential of substance abuse. Event management issues – the presentation of entertainment, provision of refreshments, management of the participants or audience, security and other factors require serious attention for any event and more so for an event at which alcohol is served or other substances might be used. Event organizers must fully understand the university alcohol policy and applicable laws, and manage their events accordingly. Event organizers are expected to keep the safety and well-being of participants at the forefront of their planning and management of events.

D. POLICY ON ILLEGAL DRUGS
• The unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol by any student or employee on university property or as part of or in connection with any university activity is prohibited.

3. Responsibility to the Professions and the UBC Faculty of Dentistry

A. INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT
• Students are expected to conduct themselves with impeccable integrity and are obligated to address the violations of professional conduct first to the individual and then to the school if the problem persists.
• Theft from or willful damage to the premises or property of the Faculty of Dentistry, an affiliated institution or the property of a faculty member, employee, student, or patient of the Faculty of Dentistry is unacceptable conduct. Such property includes, but is not limited to, equipment, instruments, and the work of others.

B. PROFESSIONAL EQUALITY
• The professions should be viewed as a partnership of equals. All students are colleagues with equal moral status and obligation in the decision making process of the activities of the professions and the school.

4. Responsibility to Fellow Students

A. JUDGMENTS IN PEER RELATIONS
• A student should not make disparaging comments about fellow students or their work, to a patient or the public.
• When students suspect unethical conduct or incompetent or unsafe care and have reasonable grounds for concern about the behaviour of colleagues in this regard, or about the safety of conditions in the clinic, they should address the issue with the offending student. If this fails to resolve the problem, the student is obligated to report the issue to the faculty.

B. JUDGEMENTS IN RELATIONS WITH FACULTY
• To be discussed and developed by Faculty and Students

C. COMPETITION AND CHEATING
• Students must not compete for patients or professional services by methods that would adversely affect the honour, dignity or prestige of the dental profession.
• Students must not obtain, receive, or use assistance during an examination or other formal exercise from any source, which is not authorized by faculty. This shall include, but not be limited to, the copying of answers from another student, communicating with another student in order to obtain such information, and using unauthorized notes or devices. Students must not submit a technical or written assignment that is not the work of the assignee.

D. COMPETENCE
• Students must not compare their professional competence to that of other students.