

Student Professional Development

An important aspect of any professional educational curriculum is the development of professional behaviors and role identity. Evidence shows that unprofessional behavior exhibited during training is a predictor of future problems with state regulatory boards and the need for disciplinary actions (Papadakis, Hodgson, Teherani and Kohatsu, 2004). Unprofessional behavior presents a potential danger to the provision of good patient care and relates to the credibility of the profession. Professionalism therefore shares equal importance to content knowledge and manual skills at RVU. The RVU PA Program considers violation of professional conduct a significant deficiency. Recognizing the responsibility for professional behavior, the Program sets expectations for and evaluates students on their professional conduct. Students must demonstrate acquisition of these important behaviors. Students identified as exhibiting unprofessional behavior will be provided with corrective guidance.

Student professional development is considered on an individual basis, in each course, each semester, or more frequently, as needed. Course Directors will complete a professionalism rubric in association with determining a pass or fail score for each student. The Student Assessment and Promotions Committee (SAPC) will review the rubrics from all courses at the end of each semester for unacceptable professionalism ratings. (See Appendix IV for Professional Development and Assessment Form (PDAT).) Those students who do not meet expectations in any area of professionalism will first meet with their faculty advisor and/or the course director to review expected behaviors and explore potential reasons for the behavior. If the unwanted behavior continues, the student will receive an “at risk” letter to include corrective action as outlined by the SAPC.

Students in clinical rotations will receive a copy of their preceptor evaluation forms, in which professionalism is a component. Those students who do not meet expectations in any area of professionalism will first meet with the Director of Clinical Education and/or their faculty advisor to review expected behaviors and explore potential reasons for the behavior. A PDAT will be created for clinical year students if corrective action for professionalism is identified during a clinical experience. Corrective action requirements will be determined by the SAPC.

As future health professionals, students should adhere to the highest standards of professionalism. Examples of unprofessional conduct include, but are not limited to the following:

- Misrepresentation of effort, credentials, or achievement in the academic or clinical setting;
- Any action that compromises the quality of patient care;
- Violation of patient confidentiality;
- Any conduct, both on- and off-campus, that interferes with the student’s ability to perform their professional duties or reflects poorly on the profession;
- Disruptive or disorderly conduct in a classroom or clinical setting;
- Other conduct that falls below that which befits a health professional.

Other areas of unprofessional conduct include substance abuse, inappropriate use of social media, and respect for the rights and property of others, as well as additional examples listed in the University section of the RVU Student Handbook and Catalog.