

ROYAL COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE

PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

The Code of conduct is intended to provide a clear set of expectations as to how Members, Fellows and Affiliates of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM) conduct themselves in accordance with the Core Values of an Emergency Clinician as defined in the RCEM position statement (Annex A). All Members, Fellows and Affiliates have an obligation to uphold the aims, objectives and values of the College and should not act in any manner likely to damage the reputation of the College. The Code of conduct is intended to be used as an adjunct to guidance provided by the GMC and other Professional bodies and does not diminish an individual's duty to act in accordance with their employing organisation's requirements and their contract of employment.

General Principles

Members, Fellows and Affiliates must:

1. Act in accordance with the aims and objectives of the College, its governing documents, guidance and published policies.
2. Conduct themselves in such a way as to uphold the reputation and good standing of the College.
3. Make the College aware of any regulatory sanctions imposed by their regulatory body.
4. Avoid acts or omissions likely to damage the professional reputation of the College or another member of the College (this excludes disclosures to any statutory, regulatory, supervisory or professional body in accordance with their professional and ethical obligations or required to be made by law, any Court or professional codes of conduct or which may be a protected disclosure for the purposes of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998). Examples of such acts or omissions include, but are not limited to, plagiarism or reproduction of College educational material or use of College branding without written permission, falsification of professional qualifications or experience, posting remarks on social media or other outlets that may bring the College, members of the College or College staff into disrepute.

5. Not claim to represent the views or opinions of the College without permission or endorsement. Although members of the College may legitimately disagree with the College leadership, policy and decision making, any comments about such matters should be made in a way which makes it clear it is the member's personal view and must not be made in such a way as to bring the reputation of the College into disrepute
6. Treat members of the College, College staff and the public with respect and not behave in a manner which might reasonably be interpreted as constituting discrimination, bullying or harassment, intimidation or sexual harassment.
7. Comply with the law and best practice regarding equality and diversity and promote compliance by others with whom they are working on College business or in the practice of Emergency Medicine. This includes, but is not limited to, the relevant legislation and College statements and policies on equality and diversity. Members may not discriminate on grounds of race, disability, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, age, body size or appearance or any other characteristic.
8. Behave with integrity, honesty, kindness and patience and be a role model for professional behaviours.
9. Demonstrate the professional behaviours outlined in this Code of Conduct when attending College social or educational events and avoid excessive use of alcohol or use of any recreational drugs that may negatively impact on professional behaviour or judgement at a College event.
10. Hold themselves and others with whom they are working on College business or in the practice of Emergency Medicine accountable for professional and personal behaviours and be prepared to submit themselves to scrutiny for any role that is held on behalf of the College or as a member of the College.
11. Take responsibility for the stewardship of their position of authority, and be mindful of their impact on others.

Conduct when working for or representing the Royal College of Emergency Medicine

Membership of the Board of Trustees, Council, and other committees and bodies of the College, is a privilege which carries with it the twin responsibilities of protecting patients and guiding Fellows, Members and

Trainees. In order that all these may have confidence in the effectiveness and impartiality of the College, members of the College undertake:

12. To make themselves available for service in the College bodies to which they may be elected or appointed.
13. (When serving on a College body) to take decisions in the interests of the aims and objectives of the College without favour to any individual body, corporate or other association, whether medical or lay.
14. To avoid placing themselves under obligation to any individual or organisation which might affect their ability to act impartially and objectively when serving on a College body or performing a College role.
15. To declare in the College's Register of Interests any interests in accordance with College and NHS guidance on this matter.
16. To declare relevant interests or prior knowledge in the course of them undertaking any College business, and/or to take steps to avoid such interests or knowledge giving rise to a conflict of interest, including complying with the College's Conflict of Interest Policy.
17. To promote the principles set out in relevant professional guidance.
18. To serve the College without seeking personal gain or preferment.
19. To avoid bias on grounds of race, disability, lifestyle, culture, religion or beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, body size or appearance or any other characteristic.
20. To be open about the decisions and actions they take on behalf of the College, restricting information only when the principle of confidentiality demands it.
21. To observe the confidentiality of information identified as confidential which they receive arising from their College service.
22. To distinguish clearly, when speaking or writing, between personal views and those of the College.
23. To support the above principles by leadership and example.

Guidance and Interpretation

24. Questions about the interpretation of this Code, or concerns about the conduct of a member of the College, should be referred initially to the Chief Executive or their delegated lead.

Breaches of the Code of conduct

25. Complaints relating to a breach of this Code may not be brought by members of the public. Any complaint made by a member of the College or member of College staff, or notifications received from

either publicly accessible data or professional regulatory body regarding misconduct of a member of the College shall be dealt with under the procedures set out in Byelaws 17c. and d. of the College's Bye Laws. All members of the College are required to cooperate with any investigation into breaches of this Code.

Sanctions for breaches of the Code

26. Any alleged breach of the Code will be investigated according to the procedure detailed in Byelaws 17c. and d. of the College's Bye Laws.

27. Under Ordinance 14:

(i) one set of circumstances in which a person ceases to be a College member would be if the Council, or a committee thereof, determines, after due enquiry, in accordance with the process set out in the Byelaws that they have breached the Code of Conduct or have otherwise not acted in the interests of the College and that as a result they should be removed from College membership;

(ii) the Council or a committee thereof, having determined above that the College member has breached the Code of Conduct or otherwise not acted in the interests of the College, has the option (instead of removal from College membership) to determine for a period specified by the Council or a committee thereof that:

- (a) all or any of the rights and privileges attaching to their College membership are suspended; and/or
- (b) conditions are attached to the enjoyment of any such rights or privileges; and/or
- (c) they are not eligible for election or appointment as a Trustee or to any other specified office or membership of a committee of the College.

28. In addition to its power to terminate the membership of a member of the College, or to retain membership and invoke sanctions, under Ordinance 14, if the Council or a committee thereof, having determined above that the College member has breached the Code of Conduct or otherwise not acted in the interests of the College, the Council or a committee thereof may retain College membership and impose one or more of the following sanctions :

- i) A requirement that the offending member of College apologise for their conduct in writing and/or in public
- ii) A requirement that the offending member of the College gives an undertaking to the College to amend his or her behaviour, breach of which would amount to breach of this Code.

- iii) A requirement that the offending member of the College withdraws any material in the public domain or issues a correction in any manner directed by the Council or ceases using the College logo and branding
- iv) Referral for remediation and monitoring of the College member's future performance
- v) The imposition of conditions on the offending College member, breach of the conditions amounting to breach of the Code
- vi) Removal from Council membership or as an Officer
- vii) Suspension or removal from any other position in the College or external body held by virtue of membership of the College either permanently or for a specified period until any specified conditions have been met.
- viii) Referral to the offending member's professional regulatory body.

Disciplinary process.

29. The procedure for disciplinary proceedings shall be as prescribed by the Byelaws.

Annex A: Core Values of the Emergency Physician

Core values of the UK Emergency Physician - A position statement from the Royal College of Emergency Medicine

1. The Royal College of Emergency Medicine exists to promote excellence in Emergency Care by training, research and provision of high quality care within the Emergency care system
2. The Royal College has no party political or religious ideology and the quality of care provided is not influenced by Member's personal beliefs
3. The Royal College is proud of the "access to all" ethos of the Health Service in the UK and Ireland, and is committed to maintaining a system of service provision that disadvantages no one.
4. All care provided must be patient focussed regardless of external pressures.
5. The practice of Emergency Medicine best attends to patients' needs when it is informed by scientific method and delivered with compassion. Neither alone is sufficient and so Members are expected to participate in, and/or support, ethically sound research and adopt evidence-based practices within the context of patient autonomy and physician beneficence.
6. Patients' autonomy must be respected. All clinical decisions should be made in conjunction with the patient wherever possible. Whenever patients are unable to exercise such autonomy, all actions performed or sanctioned by their EM doctors should be proportionate and manifestly in the patients' best interests.
7. All Members should maintain respect for other members of the healthcare team and behave in a way that enables the optimal function of the team at all times.
8. All Members are expected to continually improve their own performance by participating in continuing education and development and by supporting the development of others wherever possible.
9. The College expects its Members and Fellows to act in the course of their Emergency Medicine Practice in a way that brings credit to the profession and the individual.
10. All Fellows and Members should ensure that their health (physical and mental) is properly attended to and where health problems could affect the

exercise of their medical responsibilities appropriate action and advice is taken.

11. All Fellows and Members should pursue any business interests either directly or indirectly related to patient care, in accordance with the highest standards of personal and business probity. Any conflict of interest must always be declared and where the risk is significant, arrangements must be made to avoid any such conflict.