

# The Professionalism Log: A Means for Providing Formative Feedback

Christopher Reznich, PhD and Janet Osuch, MD  
College of Human Medicine, Michigan State University

## INTRODUCTION

We have embraced professionalism as a key programmatic outcome for our preclinical students. The challenge of providing our medical students with formative feedback on their professional conduct provoked the need for a method to track when students are acting consonant with professional expectations and when they fall

## METHODS

- AY 2008-2009: professionalism log developed for providing feedback and for recording professionalism lapses and praise.
- Student expectations codified in a set of “lapses and consequences” in their clinical skills sequence, specifying reasonable expectations with respect to basic tasks such as timely submission of required assignments.
- We sought to mirror the professional environment with respect to expectations and consequences - for example, being cited for not submitting chart notes on time.

## RESULTS

Of 286 preclinical students 181 incidents were reported:

- 124 students received at least one professionalism lapse citation.
- 41 received praise entries.
- The majority of students cited had one lapse, while three students had five.
- All students were provided with written feedback.
- Those having four or more (n = 5) had meetings with College administrators; all were referred for counseling because of personal circumstances.
- The most common entry was for late assignment submission.

## DISCUSSION

Professionalism lapses during the clinical skills curriculum were not frequent. The project now includes all courses for academic year 2009-2010.

Tracking the personal conduct of students in the preclinical curriculum and providing formative feedback may be a means of reinforcing expected behavior.

The “professionalism log” is our attempt to provide systematic and continuous feedback to students on their developing professional comportment.

**Professionalism Lapse and Associated Consequences for Each Course or Domain and Their Reflection in Physician Professional Expectations**

Arriving more than 15 minutes late for required small group – first occurrence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Make-up assignment</li> <li>•Documentation in the Office of Academic Programs professionalism log</li> </ul>	Physicians are expected to respect their patients' and colleagues' time and be punctual.
Unanticipated absence from required instructional experiences, without notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Meet with Course Director</li> <li>•Documentation in the Office of Academic Programs professionalism log</li> <li>•Make-up assignment</li> </ul>	Physicians are expected to notify their staff when an unanticipated absence occurs.
Plagiarism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•“N” grade for the course</li> <li>•Meet with Course Director and Assistant Dean for the Preclinical Curriculum or designee</li> <li>•Document in a letter to the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and placed in the students file</li> <li>•Reflective essay on why this is a major act of misconduct</li> </ul>	Physicians are expected to be honest.