



# CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

We, the faculty, staff, and students of the Texas A&M School of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (VMBS), are committed to fostering a safe and respectful educational and working community. We recognize that promoting a positive, welcoming, and collegial atmosphere for our community is central to the freedom of expression and exchange of ideas necessary to achieve excellence in teaching, learning, research and discovery, scholarship, patient care, and academic service. To this end, a written code of professional conduct serves to articulate our guiding principles and hold us accountable to one another in this shared responsibility.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

1. Treat everyone (including, but not limited to, staff, students, faculty, preceptors, support personnel, guests, and administrators) with respect, civility, and fairness.
2. Treat everyone without bias or discrimination based on dimensions of diversity (for example, age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, health condition, marital status, parental status, genetic information, professional status, personal connections, or the holding of values, attitudes, and opinions differing from one's own). Accept responsibility for one's own actions, and avoid blaming others for them.
3. Teach, conduct research and administrative business, and engage with professional and lay communities with competence, honesty, and the highest ethical and professional standards.
4. Work in a spirit of cooperation toward common goals of seeking and providing quality education, exceptional clinical care, and a climate suited for research.
5. Listen with the intent to understand differing perspectives. Resolve conflicts and counsel colleagues and subordinates in a non-threatening, constructive, and private manner whenever possible unless in conflict with other Texas A&M University policies.
6. In supervisory roles, provide clear direction, timely feedback, constructive suggestions, and opportunities for improvement or remediation regarding professional conduct and behavior.
7. Follow Texas A&M University policies and procedures pertaining to students, staff, and faculty (including, but not limited to, student rules, committee expectations and responsibilities, and reporting guidelines), and promptly address any known or potential violations of institutional policies by reporting them and by cooperating with investigations and audits as called upon.
8. Maintain all licenses, certifications, and training as needed.
9. Use university facilities and resources, including telecommunication and information technology resources, responsibly and for legitimate university business. Care for facilities by using them responsibly, cleaning them after use, and leaving vacated space ready for the next occupant.
10. Act as a good steward of all resources, and adhere to rules and regulations of use.
11. Respect the privacy of VMBS community members and the stated personal boundaries between their work and personal lives. We recognize that these boundaries may regard hours of availability or may be physical, emotional, intellectual, or material and that they may differ among individuals.
12. Respect the privacy of individuals and confidentiality of information.

# EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOR FROM WHICH FACULTY, ADMINISTRATORS, STAFF, AND STUDENTS MUST REFRAIN INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:

1. Disrespectful and inappropriate behavior toward VMBS members and guests and the broader university community, including but not limited to staff, students, building personnel, faculty, preceptors, visitors, and administrators *vs. kind and respectful verbal and nonverbal signals to all individuals in the workplace.*
2. Loss of civility that interferes with the working and learning environment (for example, shouting, making personal attacks, delivering insults face-to-face or through others, throwing objects, slamming doors, or making other adverse physical displays of temper) *vs. approaching a difference of opinion by having a private conversation that seeks perspective of all involved.*
3. Unprofessional interpersonal interactions, including asking staff, students, or professional colleagues to perform personal favors or do things that violate policy or compliance standards *vs. having a clear understanding of personal and professional boundaries as highlighted in college professional expectations, as well as university policies.*
4. Unwanted physical contact with others or threats of such contact *vs. no conduct that could be seen as macro- or microaggressions.*
5. Sexual harassment, as outlined by Texas A&M University, or other harassment, including that based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other dimensions of diversity *vs. working each day to help build an inclusive and welcoming climate and culture and having the cultural humility to recognize that true programmatic excellence is dependent upon recognizing and embracing diverse attributes.*
6. Mistreatment of staff, students, faculty, preceptors, guests, support personnel, administrators, or professional or lay community members, including, but not limited to, the following: making remarks (face-to-face or in online venues such as social media) with the intent to offend, publicly embarrass, or humiliate; denying reasonable opportunities for training or advancement; or giving lower evaluations than earned *vs. delivering equitable treatment to all and ensuring that each individual has the opportunity to succeed.*
7. Retaliation based on formal or informal measures to address concerns about professional conduct or retaliation based on professional disagreements *vs. having high expectations and holding others, and ourselves, accountable for behaviors in a fair and equitable manner.*
8. Littering or defacing of facilities *vs. showing pride in the work and learning environment and helping to ensure its cleanliness and functionality.*
9. Withholding of information needed to perform job duties or required for professional or educational advancement *vs. supporting an open, collaborative environment where each member's success is seen as a success of the team.*

The faculty, staff, and students of the school take grievances seriously and will seek to resolve them in a timely manner. We understand that at times someone may feel uncomfortable addressing such concerns directly. In these instances, the aggrieved are encouraged to bring their concern to the attention of the appropriate personnel. If a member of the school—staff, student, or faculty—has a concern, they should contact a supervisor, the department head, or a member of the VMBS executive committee. For those who would be more comfortable contacting an outside person, appropriate offices are included in the online version of this document at [tx.ag/VMBScode](https://www.tamuvetmed.edu/vmbscode).

The university has specific and detailed policies on relevant matters, including sexual and racial harassment and other forms of discrimination. The VMBS ascribes to these policies. These discrimination policies, links to them, and names of the officials who monitor and implement them are included in the online version of this document at [tx.ag/VMBScode](https://www.tamuvetmed.edu/vmbscode).