



# Professional Identity Formation

## PNWU Clinical Education Department

Professionalism is the embodiment of the conduct, aims, and qualities that characterize the profession of being a physician across cultures and political systems, encompassing relationships with colleagues, patients, and society.

The process of professional identity development begins with admission to medical school and recitation of the osteopathic oath, continues through the white coat ceremony, and is modeled to osteopathic medical students by faculty, preceptors, and administrators as students socialize into the profession. Without explicit modeling and exposure to the competency of professional behavior, students cannot enter the Community of Practice, having had no opportunity to participate in it, reflect on it, and invite personal growth.

The traits and characteristics we seek to instill are built on the core pillars of

### HUMANISM AND ALTRUISM

*Beneficence*

*Respect*

*Truthfulness*

*Placing others' needs above our own*

### EXCELLENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

*High quality patient care*

*Lifelong learning*

*Responsibility*

*Professional duty*

The AOA further denotes the professionalism competency subcategories of:

- Demonstrating professional conduct and accountability
- Demonstrating humanism and cultural proficiency
- Maintaining emotional, physical, and mental health and pursuing continual personal and professional growth

These professional values serve as guides during times of stress and ambiguity, calibrating the internal compass trusted by patients and colleagues alike. This compass to entrustability is multidirectional, pointing towards clinical knowledge and skills, recognition of limits, conscientiousness, and honesty.

Failure to develop a physician's professional values leads to failure to adequately incorporate into the Community of Practice. Studies have demonstrated that physicians who were disciplined by state medical boards were three times more likely than controls to have displayed unprofessional behavior in medical school, with the strongest associations including "irresponsible" and having a diminished capacity to improve behavior. The enemies of professionalism include stress, anxiety, depression, and exhaustion, so when lapses occur, consider these sources as you discuss a student's behavior, performance, attitude or accountability.

Common lapses to watch for:

Behavior	AND	Unmet professional responsibility
Performance		Lack of effort toward self-improvement and adaptability
Attitude		Lapses in upholding the Medical Student Statement of Principles
Accountability		Diminished relationships with administrators, faculty, staff, colleagues, patients and families

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT [rotations@pnwu.edu](mailto:rotations@pnwu.edu)**