

BUSM Policy on the Appropriate Treatment in Medicine (ATM)

Approved by: BUSM Executive Committee

Approved: Nov. 29, 2017

Introduction

Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) is committed to providing a supportive and respectful learning environment that fosters mutual trust among all community members. Such an educational environment engenders optimal teaching, learning and professional development.

All BUSM community members are expected to:

- Contribute to a welcoming and respectful academic atmosphere;
- Promote BUSM's educational goals through example, education and support;
- Treat others in a respectful manner grounded in civility and honesty;
- Maintain an inclusive learning environment that encourages open inquiry and expression among community members while recognizing and respecting diversity of background, values, and views.

This Appropriate Treatment in Medicine (ATM) Policy:

- Was developed to support an environment conducive to learning by investigating and responding to reports of student mistreatment.
- Provides a process for prompt, non-adversarial and respectful responses to complaints of medical student mistreatment by conducting any investigations thoroughly, promptly, and impartially.

This ATM Policy includes:

1. expectations for professional conduct for all BUSM members;
2. the structure, charge, and function of the ATM Committee;
3. actions to be taken if a student experiences mistreatment.

ATM Policy

1. Expectations for professional conduct for all BUSM members:

Conduct that is prohibited by the ATM Policy includes but is not limited to:

- Humiliation or intimidation of students;
- Verbal attacks;
- Deliberate and repeated exclusion from reasonable learning opportunities;
- Requests or expectations to perform personal services (e.g. errands);
- Assignment of tasks or chores to punish or belittle students;
- Disregard for student safety.

The ATM Policy does *not* apply to complaints relating to:

- *sexual misconduct, violence, or discrimination*, which are addressed by other University policies including the Equal Opportunity policy and Sexual Misconduct/Title IX policy, and investigated by other University offices. For links to other University policies and reporting mechanisms, please see [policies on student life](#).
- *grading*, which are addressed in the BUSM Evaluation, Grading, and Promotion Policy.

2. Structure, charge, and function of the ATM Committee

Structure: Please refer to Article 5, Section G4 of the [BUSM Bylaws](#). The ATM Committee chair will orient new members of the Committee to ATM policies and procedures.

The Charge of the ATM Committee:

- Communicate to students the mechanisms for reporting and procedures used to address alleged mistreatment;
- Respond to, investigate, document, and act upon reported complaints of mistreatment;
- Review all complaints and investigation outcomes on a quarterly basis to identify any patterns of student mistreatment and report any identified trends to responsible persons (e.g. residency program director, director of nursing, department chair) for appropriate action; and
- Provide regular reports to the BUSM dean, BUSM Executive Committee, and Medical Education Committee to guide appropriate targeted and school-wide interventions to address learning climate concerns.

3. Actions to be taken if a student experiences mistreatment:

A student who feels mistreated or witnesses mistreatment should submit a report to the ATM Committee:

1. through an [online form](#) on the ATM website.
2. by contacting the ATM chair or any member of the ATM Committee:
 - a. Via email or via a signed statement: Only emails sent from the student's BU email account can be accepted without a personal signature. The subject line should state "ATM complaint" to ensure a timely response.
 - b. In person: After the meeting, submit a written statement or report through the ATM website.

BUSM is committed to insuring that students can report mistreatment without fear of retaliation. We will protect the identity of the student who initiated the complaint to the extent allowed by law.

Procedures for the Investigation of a Complaint of Student Mistreatment:

The ATM chair or designee will acknowledge the receipt of complaints of mistreatment by an identified or identifiable person within one business day and begin planning or conducting an investigation.

If the alleged mistreatment occurred in a course or during a clerkship, the investigation generally will not begin until the student's final grade is submitted and finalized by the BUSM Registrar. In a situation that might result in harm, the investigation would begin immediately after discussion with the reporting student.

The ATM chair or designee (member of the ATM Committee) will:

1. provide the person accused of mistreatment with a written description of the allegations that protects the anonymity of the reporting student to the extent possible.
2. meet with the person accused of mistreatment who may be accompanied by a faculty advisor of their choice (but not an attorney) to discuss the allegations and to hear evidence in their defense.
3. conduct the investigation to the extent possible based on the information provided. Incidents reported anonymously that cannot be fully investigated will be included in the trends analysis.

4. monitor the progress of the complaint.
5. provide a written summary of the complaint and findings of the initial investigation to the person accused of mistreatment and to the reporting student for their written comments which must be submitted to the ATM committee within seven (7) calendar days of receiving the summary.

The ATM Committee will meet, deliberate and then determine their recommendations.

The ATM chair or administrator will draft the ATM Committee's written report of findings and recommendations (and remediation plan, if appropriate) and convey the report to the BUSM Dean by email within seven (7) calendar days of the ATM meeting.

The BUSM dean may accept, modify, or reject the report, or request that the ATM Committee conduct additional investigations.

The ATM chair will notify the reporting student how their allegations have been addressed and the outcome if appropriate. Disciplinary actions are not communicated to the reporting student.

A reporting student who is not satisfied with the outcome of the ATM Committee's investigation should contact the University Ombuds for assistance. The [Office of the Ombuds](#) is an independent, impartial, informal problem-solving resource serving faculty, staff, and students on the Charles River and Medical Campuses. The Ombuds maintains strict confidentiality, and provides a safe place for students to have off-the-record conversations on issues related to life, work, or study at Boston University. Talking to the Ombuds can be a good first step if students have a concern and don't know where to turn for help. The contact information for the two office locations are as follows:

- Charles River West Campus: 930 Commonwealth Ave; (617) 358-5960
- Medical Campus: Solomon Carter Fuller building, Suite 818; (617) 638-7645

Managing Records of Complaints and Committee Meetings:

The ATM chair and associate dean of Student Affairs will retain a file of supporting documents from formal investigations and meeting minutes in a password protected electronic file for seven (7) years from the graduation date or last day of attendance of the reporting student.