

# Mistreatment Issues in Residency



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Grievance Officer



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# Educational Objectives

- Define Mistreatment and Harassment
- Present guidance to residents for avoiding complaints of mistreatment
- Identify mistreatment reporting pathways for residents



# Mistreatment Definition

Quillen Definition: “Improper use or handling of an individual”

Results (as described in Quillen policy):

- Cynicism (ie burnout)
- Interference with learning process
- Leaving medical training
- Atmosphere of accepted and perpetuated abuse



# Examples of Mistreatment

- Harmful, injurious, or offensive conduct
- Verbal attacks
- Insults, humiliation, belittling
- Unjustifiably harsh language, cursing
- Threats of physical harm (or actual harm)
- Physical attacks: hitting, slapping, shoving, or kicking a person
- Intimidating, blocking egress from room



# Examples of Mistreatment

- Requiring personal services (making coffee, etc)
- Threatening with lower grade/poor evaluation for reasons other than academic and work performance
- Discrimination based on race, skin color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion or creed, ethnic or national origin, age, physical disability, or status as a veteran



# Examples of Mistreatment

- Taking credit for another individual's work (research, clinical documentation)
- Disregard for safety of trainee or others
- Any behavior that creates a poor learning environment and undermines trust on the team



# Harassment Definition

Definition: Unnecessarily harmful, injurious or offensive treatment inflicted by one person upon another (aka an “Adverse Experience”)

- Humiliation and verbal abuse
- Public belittling, undermining and discrediting
- Bullying and intimidation
- Sexual harassment
- Threats of harm
- Racial discrimination

Wilkinson TJ, et al. The impact on students of adverse experiences during medical school. *Medical Teacher*. 2006; 28(2): 129-135.



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# Residents and Students!

- Residents can experience harassment or mistreatment from:
  - Attendings
  - Other residents
  - Other Staff or Health Professionals
  - Students
- Residents can also be inflictors of harassment and mistreatment



# To Avoid Student Mistreatment Complaints:

- Use professional language
- Rather than make assumptions about a student's behavior, consider this process: "I noticed...I'm concerned that...Can you tell me what was going on with you at the time?"
- If you find yourself feeling angry or frustrated with a student, take a deep breath and self-assess: What are you feeling? What is the clinical situation?
- Don't depersonalize patients: addict, train wreck, bum, etc.



# To Avoid Student Mistreatment Complaints:

- Don't talk about personal issues, yours or theirs
- Don't ask them out or go to their house
- Only call them at home for a medical emergency
- If you take students to lunch or dinner, always take more than one
- Don't single one student out, no matter how well you get along
- Don't demonstrate physical exam on a student or have them demonstrate on you
- Best time to develop a friendship: when you are no longer supervising that student



# Consensual Relationships

- **Consensual relationships between an employee in a supervisory role and their supervisee are prohibited by ETSU policy!**

Avoid developing an intimate relationship with anyone supervising you or whom you supervise (eg med students, other trainees)! **Against ETSU policy!**



# Consensual Relationship Risks

- Power differential: Student may feel “forced” into relationship, afraid of consequences of turning down unwanted advances.
- Third party (other students) complaints of “hostile environment”
  - Ignored due to dynamic of the “couple” so fewer opportunities for training
  - Sexualized comments/behavior may create “hostile environment”



# Issues with Patients & Staff

- Unethical to date a patient or their family members
  - Licensure risk
  - Vulnerable, power differential
  - If you think the patient is attracted to you, take someone else into the room
- Staff – Best not to become involved (e. relationship/flirtation) with someone you work with directly.
  - Power differential, age differential
  - Advances may be unwelcome but they may be afraid to resist
- ***Please review the supplemental information page provided with this PowerPoint***

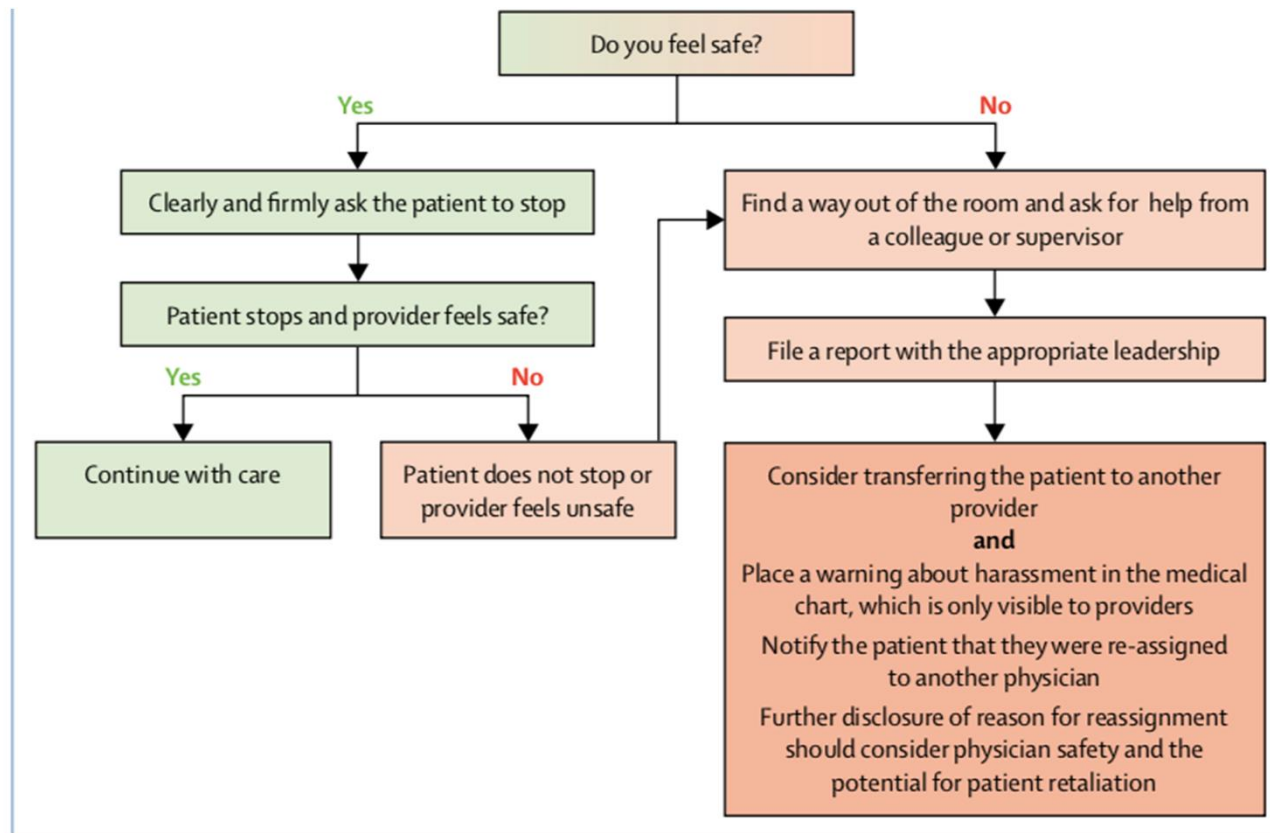


# Harassment By Patients

- Sexual or personal comments toward a resident (more common with females)
  - If it makes you uncomfortable or feel unsafe, excuse yourself from the room and tell supervisor
  - Ok to set boundaries with professionalism
- Consider clinical context: dementia, delirium, intoxication



# Sexual Harassment by Patients



**Figure:** Decision-guiding algorithm for physicians who experience patient-initiated sexual harassment and abuse

Vigilante, EM, Oliviero AL, and Meeks LM. Sexual Harassment and Abuse: When the Patient is the Perpetrator. Lancet, 2018 vol. 392. p.368-370





# Racial Harassment by Patients

- Again consider clinical context as to whether the patient is disinhibited because of medical illness
- PTSD issues in VA Hospital
- OK to set boundaries professionally and to excuse yourself if behavior is offensive
- See article posted by Dr. Ostapchuk



# What do you do if you are mistreated or observe mistreatment??



# Mistreatment Reporting Pathways

- **Assistant Dean for GME & Ombudsman**
  - Debra Shaw [shawd@etsu.edu](mailto:shawd@etsu.edu)
  - 423-439-8023
- **Quillen Grievance Officer**
  - Patricia B. Amadio, MD [amadio@etsu.edu](mailto:amadio@etsu.edu)
  - 901-497-7156



# Mistreatment Reporting Pathways

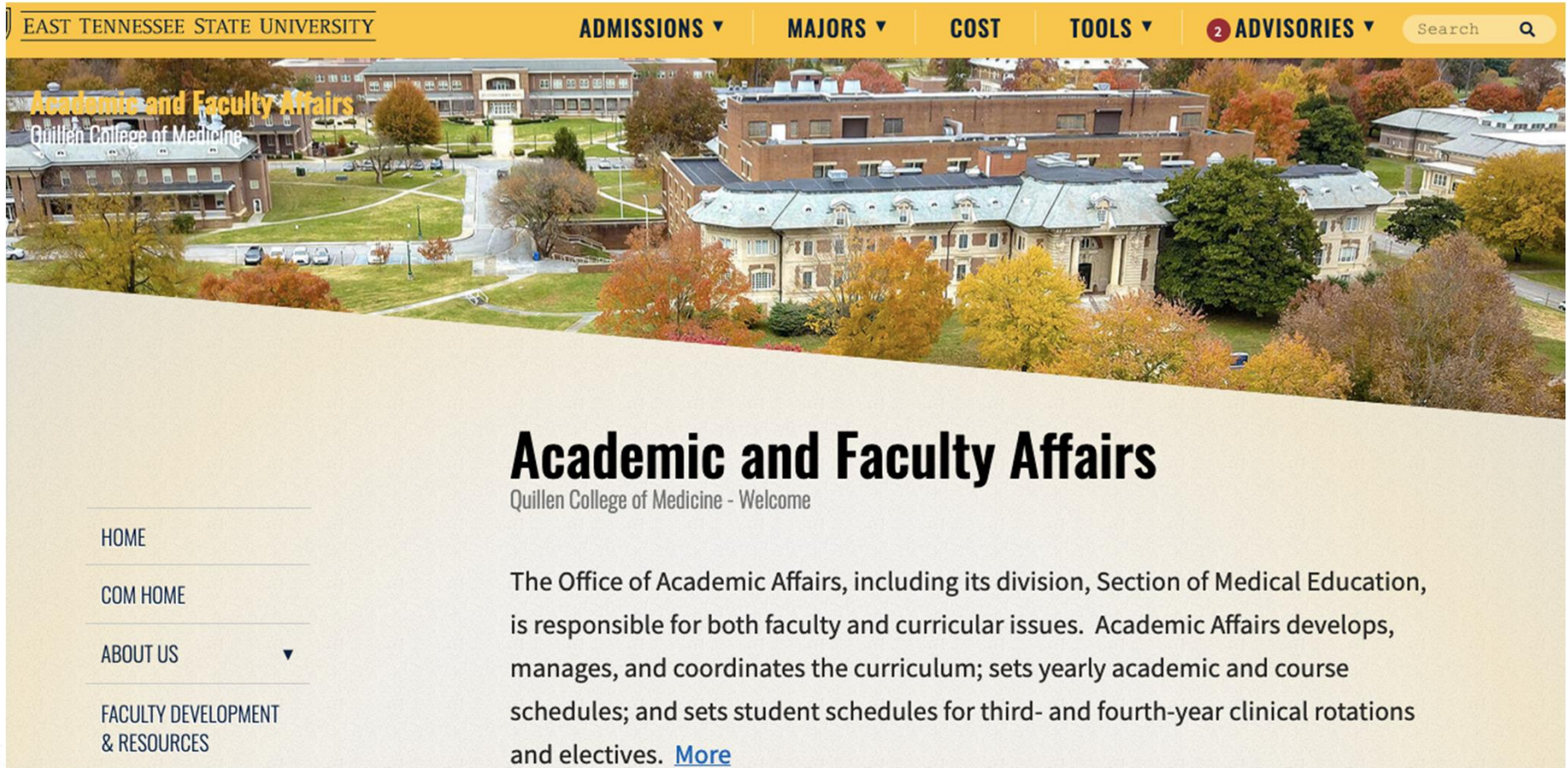
## Preferred Pathway:

- **Online Complaint Reporting:**  
**Harassment, Mistreatment:**
  - Found on Academic and Faculty Affairs & Graduate Medical Affairs home pages; *report goes directly to Quillen Grievance Officer*
  - **Fully Anonymous reporting available** (IT address can't be traced)
  - [Link to Online Grievance Report](#)



# How to Report a Grievance

## Academic Affairs Home Page



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Academic and Faculty Affairs  
Quillen College of Medicine

## Academic and Faculty Affairs

Quillen College of Medicine - Welcome

HOME

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ABOUT US ▾

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT & RESOURCES

The Office of Academic Affairs, including its division, Section of Medical Education, is responsible for both faculty and curricular issues. Academic Affairs develops, manages, and coordinates the curriculum; sets yearly academic and course schedules; and sets student schedules for third- and fourth-year clinical rotations and electives. [More](#)



# How to Report a Grievance

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**STUDENT INFORMATION**

- VISITING STUDENTS
- CENTER FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (CEL)
- RURAL PROGRAMS
- MEDICAL STUDENT EDUCATION COMMITTEE
- INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES
- REPORT A CONCERN/COMPLAINT**
- CONTACT US

**Academic and Faculty Affairs**    Our Mission    Community News, Events and Information



### Academic and Faculty Affairs


Curricular administrative support is provided through this office, including for the Medical Student Education Committee, its four subcommittees and ongoing compliance with LCME accreditation and curriculum standards. Additional support includes faculty recruitment and development, staff support for electives and interdisciplinary courses such as the Doctoring Course series, and assessment of the curriculum through analysis of student evaluation and feedback of courses and faculty. This office administers all National Board of Medical Examiners subject exams delivered at the College of Medicine; provides support for career selection guidance, the residency application process, and preparation of the Medical School Performance Evaluation.

<http://www.etsu.edu/com/acadaffairs/studentinfo/default.php>



# Walk Through Reporting Link:

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## QCOM Concerns System

Please complete the information below.

Quillen College of Medicine is committed to upholding a safe, respectful, inclusive, and effective learning environment, free of mistreatment, discrimination, humiliation or harassment. Such a learning environment is essential to learning and promotes the ability of all students, residents, fellows, faculty, and healthcare and administrative staff to work together productively and collaboratively.

This form is used to report concerns about Quillen medical student, graduate student, resident, faculty, fellow, and staff mistreatment. Reports will go to the College of Medicine Grievance Officer and will be reviewed at least weekly. You may choose to include contact information if you wish to be contacted. Otherwise, you may choose to remain anonymous.

Please click the Next Page button to continue. Once done, just hit the Submit button.

[Next Page >>](#)



# Walk Through Reporting



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## QCOM Student Concerns System

If you choose to remain anonymous, you can be assured that the complaint will receive the same attention as those who provide contact information.

If you choose to provide identifying information, we will strive to maintain your anonymity, but if your complaint violates Title IX or if it involves criminal activity, we are required by law to report it to the appropriate individuals at ETSU. In these cases, we cannot guarantee your confidentiality will be upheld.

Please choose one to continue with the process.

\* must provide value

- I choose to remain anonymous
- I choose to provide identifying information

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# Mistreatment-Related Important Contacts

## ETSU Compliance Office

- Title VI & Title IX Coordinator; Compliance Officer:
  - Garrison Burton JD (423)439-8544  
[burtong@etsu.edu](mailto:burtong@etsu.edu)
  - D. Jean Rushing, MA, MALS; Assistant Compliance Officer (423) 439-8542  
[rushingd@etsu.edu](mailto:rushingd@etsu.edu)



# Complete Policies

- QCOM Catalog Policies & Procedures:
  - Mistreatment Prevention:  
<https://catalog.etsu.edu/content.php?catoid=33&navoid=1516 - mistreatment-prevention>
  - Sexual Harassment:  
<https://catalog.etsu.edu/content.php?catoid=33&navoid=1516 - sexual-harassment>
- Relevant ETSU Policies:
  - [https://www.etsu.edu/human-resources/documents/ppps/ppp80\\_discrimination\\_and\\_harassment.pdf](https://www.etsu.edu/human-resources/documents/ppps/ppp80_discrimination_and_harassment.pdf)
  - <https://www.etsu.edu/policies/employment/consensual-romantic-relationship.php>



Good luck! Congratulations  
on beginning your residency!



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