

Postgraduate medical education in the United Arab Emirates: Guidelines on a code of ethics and professional conduct for trainees

Authors:	Tahra AlMahmoud, Ali AlFazari, Frank J Branicki
Institutions:	United Arab Emirates University, Faculty of Medicine and Health Science, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates
Keywords:	Ethics, professionalism

The concept of structured postgraduate medical education (PGME) residency training programs is gaining widespread support from health authorities and is becoming a high national priority in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

In the cosmopolitan UAE, trainees (residents) are tutored and supervised (“informal” curriculum) by trainers from diverse cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. The roles and responsibilities of trainees are defined, thereby ensuring the safety and appropriate care of patients in situations where trainees are involved. The aim of this project was to set guidelines for a code of ethics that will govern the conduct and activities of postgraduate trainees in various medical specialties, there being 14 programs now established in various disciplines. Various elements from international organizations with recognized high ethical standards and opinions of scholars who are experts in this field were reviewed and adapted, with preservation of core Islamic values.

This document focuses on professional responsibilities in the following aspects: professional practice standards; professional community standards; research standards; professional relationships with colleagues; physician duties toward society; physician duties toward the workplace establishment; the relationship between physician trainees, postgraduate training programs and industry; reporting responsibilities; comments or behaviors considered unacceptable; and a summary of general principles for the trainee.

A formal document is now available to all postgraduate trainees (residents) to emphasize the importance and relevance of ethical considerations in PGME with a strong sense of obligation to patients’ best interests.