

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TEACHING AND SERVICE

Rationale for a Code of Conduct. The Global Health Education Consortium (GHEC) is committed to improving the health and human rights of underserved populations worldwide and the ability of the global workforce to meet their needs through improved education and training. Historically, many member organizations of GHEC in the U.S. have had a variety of activities in other countries involving their own students, residents and faculty in learning, service-learning and teaching activities in low and middle resource countries. Increasingly, members from other countries - including low and middle resource countries - have themselves become involved in similar activities, both to have educational opportunities for their own trainees as well as to provide health care and build capacity in host countries.

Given the great interest in educational experiences in other countries, there has been a veritable explosion of training sites and activities over the past 10 years. The nature of training sites is highly variable. Activities range from multi-week clinical rotations in a hospital or clinic with a primary emphasis on the trainee's exposure to an international site up to more extensive involvement on location with a longer term commitment to service-learning activities, with or without a direct link to partnering with training institutions in the host countries. In some cases, a single large hospital may have memoranda of understanding with many external universities, but may not have had the ability to optimally coordinate the activities and to use them for internal capacity building of its own staff or improved training of in-country health professional students.

The establishment of training sites carries with it several opportunities for capacity building as well as ethical responsibilities; and the purpose of this code of conduct is to help assure that GHEC members work collaboratively with institutions in host countries, and with each other, to promote mutually beneficial experiences for faculty, trainees and patients. It is expected that mutually respectful collaboration will maximize the likelihood that such activities contribute to improving health in the host countries. The concept of a code of conduct for other academic partnerships and academic-community is embodied in statements by such groups as the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (<http://www.ccph.info/>) for educational partnerships and service-learning activities; the CDC's Prevention Research Centers Program for community-based research (<http://www.cdc.gov/prc/research-projects/community-partnership.htm>); and a number of groups and conferences have also dealt with related issues .

Note: This Code is offered as a guide for the conduct of overseas training and service activities. GHEC members are encouraged to review, adopt, and if indicated, adapt it to specific circumstances. Suggestions for further revision should be sent to James LoGerfo (LoGerfo@u.washington.edu) and Anvar Velji (anvarali.velji@kp.org), with copy to Tom Hall (thall@epi.ucsf.edu).

Policy Statement for GHEC

Whereas, The Global Health Education Consortium (GHEC) is committed to improving the health and human rights of underserved populations worldwide and the ability of the global workforce to meet their needs through improved education and training; and

Whereas, the above goal can be realized in part through well designed service learning experiences; and

Whereas, multiple GHEC members may have service learning sites in similar regions which might provide synergistic benefits if coordinated among each other and with host institutions; but

Whereas, poorly designed service learning experiences may be inappropriate for trainees, or harmful to patients, or place undue burdens on host institutions, or displace local health workers,

Therefore, be it enacted that all GHEC members pledge to formally adopt codes of conduct for individual trainees, faculty and institutions that will assure service learning opportunities are ethically sound and provide mutual benefits to trainees and host settings; and furthermore

- GHEC members pledge to share their codes of conduct with all trainees, faculty, partner institutions and, as appropriate, the general public; and furthermore....
- GHEC members pledge to make good faith efforts to coordinate activities in a synergistic manner whenever conducting programs in similar regions or with given institutions.

It is expected that the codes of conduct specifically address at least three general areas:

Part 1: Framework for partnership

Goals

- Embody concepts of mutual respect between the participating institutions, communities and other partners
- Have formalized agreements or memoranda of understanding that are periodically reviewed, evaluated, and translated as needed.

Part 2: Adopt principles related to activities of trainees

- Provide an adequate orientation to culture and setting
- Provide supervision appropriate to level of training

- Ensure that the number of trainees at any one site does not exceed its ability to provide a good learning experience or cause undue disruption to the teaching and clinical activities of the host institution.
- Limit trainees to only doing work they would be allowed to do at their home institutions. This may require (or result in) building clinical skills/capability of local staff and recognizing them as clinical faculty.
- Carry out an ongoing evaluation of site by trainees including concerns about ethics

Part 3: All GHEC members will make good faith efforts to coordinate service /learning activities with other GHEC members working in the same country or community so as to:

- Minimize the burden on the host institution;
- Share resources and training opportunities across institutions if possible. This may involve receiving some payment if students from another institution are accepted at an established member's training site where supervision and academic credit is required.
- Mutually discuss highest priority training needs of host that are not currently being met; and commit to the see if volunteers could be found to help with meeting those needs. This could be as simple as linking two basic sciences or clinical faculty by e-mail for on-site mentoring and information sharing.
- Involve trainees from in-country institutions whenever possible by pairing them appropriately with visiting students so that both gain from the pairing and/or by making opportunities for host country students to visit the sending country's institution
- Avoid policies or programs that promote loss of trained health professionals in host countries.
- Share information on a country / location specific searchable website - if made available by GHEC - that includes key information about the name and nature of the sites and contact person(s).
- Have a designated faculty/staff person who can be contacted for information about each site by other GHEC members.
- Periodically evaluate collaborative activities with in-country partners

Resources and references available for developing a code of conduct for service learning:

1. Velji and White et al and other chapter references here (pending)
2. Crump JA; Sugarman J: Ethical Considerations for Short-term Experiences by Trainees in Global Health JAMA. 2008;300(12):1456-1458
3. Philpott J: Applying Themes from Research Ethics to International Education Partnerships. American Medical Association Journal of Ethics. 2010; 12, Number 3: 171-178. (<http://virtualmentor.ama-assn.org/2010/03/toc-1003.html>)
4. Pfeiffer J, Johnson W, Fort M, Shakow A, Hagopian A, Gloyd S, Gimbel-Sherr: Strengthening health systems in poor countries. A code of conduct for nongovernmental organizations. Am J Pub Health. 2008; 98 (12):2134-2140.
5. WHO: International recruitment of health personnel: draft global code of practice. Report by the Secretariat. 2010; (http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA63/A63_8_en.pdf)