

Standards of Professionalism

Research and Academic Responsibilities

Adopted May 12, 2006

AAOS Standards of Professionalism (SOPs) establish the minimum standards of acceptable conduct for orthopaedic surgeons. Violations of any SOP may result in professional compliance actions against an AAOS Fellow or Member found in violation. Not prepared using a systematic review, SOPs are developed through a consensus process and are ultimately adopted as official AAOS statements by the two-thirds vote of the AAOS Fellowship casting ballots.

The orthopaedic profession exists for the primary purpose of caring for the patient. As a member of this profession, an orthopaedic surgeon may often conduct or participate in research and academic endeavors that may lead to improvements in musculoskeletal services provided to patients.

Under the AAOS Professional Compliance Program as adopted in April 2005, the Fellowship votes on all Standards of Professionalism. A Standard of Professionalism establishes the minimum standard of acceptable conduct for orthopaedic surgeons in a particular area. A Standard of Professionalism is mandatory and applies to all Fellows and Members of the AAOS.

The Standards of Professionalism draw from the aspirational *Code of Medical Ethics and Professionalism for Orthopaedic Surgeons* that appears in bold italics. The statements that follow the aspirational Code establish the baseline standard of acceptable conduct for orthopaedic surgeons who engage in research or who author or present information to other orthopaedic surgeons or the public. Violations of these standards may serve as grounds for a formal complaint to and action by the AAOS as outlined in the Article VIII of the Bylaws of the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

These Standards of Professionalism apply to all AAOS Fellows and Members in their capacity as researchers or authors and presenters valued for their knowledge and expertise. Only an AAOS Fellow or Member may file complaints of an alleged violation of these Standards of Professionalism regarding another AAOS Fellow or Member.

Aspirational: AAOS Code of Medical Ethics and Professionalism for Orthopaedic Surgeons, VIII. A.:

All research and academic activities must be conducted under conditions of full compliance with ethical, institutional, and government guidelines. Patients participating in research programs must have given full informed consent and retain the right to withdraw from the research protocol at any time.

Mandatory Standards:

1. An orthopaedic surgeon shall, while caring for and treating a patient participating in research program or protocol, regard his or her responsibility to the patient as paramount.
2. An orthopaedic surgeon, or his or her qualified designee, shall present pertinent information to and obtain informed consent from the patient participating in research program or protocol, or from the person responsible for the patient.
3. An orthopaedic surgeon shall honor a request from the patient, or from the person responsible for the patient, to withdraw from a research program or protocol.
4. An orthopaedic surgeon shall, while conducting research and academic activities, seek appropriate peer review and comply with appropriate institutional and governmental regulations.
5. An orthopaedic surgeon shall, while conducting research and academic activities, be truthful and honest with patients and colleagues. An orthopaedic surgeon shall communicate in a manner that enhances the profession.
6. An orthopaedic surgeon shall report those who engage in fraudulent or deceptive research to the appropriate authorities.

Aspirational: AAOS Code of Medical Ethics and Professionalism for Orthopaedic Surgeons, VIII. B.:

Orthopaedic surgeons should not claim as their own intellectual property that which is not theirs. Plagiarism or the use of others' work without attribution is unethical.

Mandatory Standards:

7. An orthopaedic surgeon shall claim as his or her own intellectual property only research and academic articles for which he or she made substantial contributions to the design, collection of and interpretation of data, and final version of the report.
8. An orthopaedic surgeon shall not present ideas, language, data, graphics, or scientific protocols created by another person without giving appropriate credit to that person.
9. An orthopaedic surgeon shall, while conducting research or academic activities, maintain the integrity of the profession by exposing through the appropriate review process those physicians who engage in fraud or deception.

Aspirational: AAOS Code of Medical Ethics and Professionalism for Orthopaedic Surgeons, VIII. C.:

The principal investigator of a scientific research project or clinical research project is responsible for all aspects of the research, including reporting. The principal investigator may delegate portions of the work to other individuals, but this does not relieve the principal investigator of the responsibility for work conducted by the other individuals.

Mandatory Standards:

10. An orthopaedic surgeon shall warrant that he or she has made significant contributions to the conception and design or analysis and interpretation of the data, drafting the manuscript or revising it critically for important intellectual content, and approving the version of the manuscript to be published.
11. An orthopaedic surgeon shall disclose the existence of duplicate articles, manuscripts, or other materials that report his or her scientific or clinical research.

Aspirational: AAOS Code of Medical Ethics and Professionalism for Orthopaedic Surgeons, VIII. D.:

The principal investigator or senior author of a scientific report is responsible for ensuring that appropriate credit is given for contributions to the research described.

Mandatory Standards:

12. An orthopaedic surgeon shall credit with authorship or acknowledge and not exclude those individuals who substantially contributed to the proposed research, the analysis and interpretation of the data, and the drafting and revising of the final article or report.
13. An orthopaedic surgeon shall, in reporting on research, publicly acknowledge the source of all relevant funding or consulting arrangements.