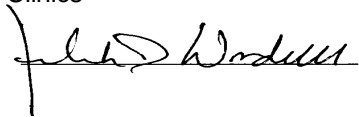


The University Hospitals and Clinics The University of Mississippi Medical Center Jackson, Mississippi	HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL	MANUAL CODE: HADM/P-13
SUBJECT: PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS		
Effective Date: 3/99	Review/Revision Date: 3/99, 4/02, 5/05	PAGE <u>1</u> OF <u>8</u>
PREPARED BY: Hospital Administrative Policy and Procedure Review Committee		APPROVED BY: Frederick D. Woodrell Associate Vice Chancellor for Integrated Health Systems and Chief Executive Officer of the University Hospitals and Clinics 

I. Purpose:

To establish guidelines for professional behaviors that promote consistency and excellence in customer service by The University Hospitals and Clinics (UHC) employees and non-UHC personnel who interact with and/or provide services through UHC departments.

II. Policy:

This policy delineates customer service behaviors that are basic to human interactions with internal and external customers. These common behaviors strengthen the manner in which department-specific, occupation-specific and/or profession-specific standards are performed. The customer service behaviors apply to all employees of UHC departments and to non-UHC personnel who provide services within the UHC facilities.

A. Rationale:

As a condition of employment, each employee is expected to demonstrate competence of these standards of conduct, which are behavior-based and observable. Each individual is responsible for his or her behaviors while on duty and on the UHC campus. The supervisor of the employee is responsible for ensuring a work environment that promotes excellence in customer service.

B. Definition of Terms

See Appendix A for definitions of terms used in this policy.

C. General Guidelines

All employees are provided an Employee Handbook of the University Hospitals and Clinics at the time of employment and are expected to perform in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the current handbook.

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II. Policy:

D. Specific Guidelines for Excellence in Customer Service

In addition to the General Guidelines referenced above (II.C.), the following standards are guidelines for interactions with internal and external customers.

1. **Reliability:** Reliability is the ability to perform a promised service dependably and accurately. Examples of these behaviors include:

- a. setting realistic but challenging standards for work and then doing the work
- b. performing tasks correctly the first time
- c. assuming responsibility for assigned tasks
- d. following through with tasks or transactions until customers are satisfied
- e. being accountable for promises made

2. **Empathy:** Empathy is providing caring, individualized attention to internal and external customers. It is the ability to share with another person's experience without losing the intent to help. Dimensions pertaining to empathy include understanding the customer and communicating with the customer.

a. **Understanding the customer:** Understanding the customer is making the effort to know the customers and their needs. Examples of behaviors that lead to understanding and enhance the customer's feeling of being understood include:

- 1) anticipating the needs of patients and customers and then offering assistance and/or obtaining help
- 2) focusing attention on each person's particular need or request
- 3) making a point to actively listen to the customer's concern
- 4) treating each person as an individual with unique problems

b. **Communication:** Communication is a mutual exchange of information through many effective means. Communication occurs by using language that customers can understand and by listening to them. Examples refer to personal interactions, posted mail, and telecommunications. Examples of these behaviors include:

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- 1) greeting people warmly
- 2) maintaining a positive, pleasant facial expression and speaking voice
- 3) responding to requests for information by using language that customers can understand
- 4) pronouncing words clearly and making messages concise and correct
- 5) using precise terms or names until customers are familiar with technical terms, abbreviations, or acronyms
- 6) addressing or introducing staff, patients, family members, and other customers by name, using the formal over familiar (that is, Mrs., Mr., Miss, Ms., Doctor, or other title) until permission for use of familiar name has been granted
- 7) speaking distinctly and clearly when communicating on the telephone
- 8) answering the telephone in a personal work area with a minimum of two pieces of information: (1) name of department or unit and (2) one's own name
- 9) answering a published number to a department, unit, or service with a greeting such as "Good morning (afternoon, or evening)," the name of department, one's own name, and an invitation such as "May I help you?"
- 10) answering the telephone in a patient care area with (1) name or location of unit, (2) one's own name, and (3) title
- 11) providing the number to which a caller is being transferred before making the transfer
- 12) listening attentively; however, if the message or request is not understood, politely asking the speaker to repeat the message again
- 13) verifying what is understood by repeating the information back to the speaker

3. **Assurance:** Assurance is the ability to convey trust and confidence. The dimensions pertaining to reassurance include courtesy, credibility, and security. Examples of behaviors related to each of these dimensions include:

a. **Courtesy:** Courtesy is showing respect for and consideration of people. Examples of courteous behaviors include:

- 1) exhibiting friendly, positive behaviors toward internal and external customers

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II. Policy: (cont'd)

- 2) establishing appropriate eye contact
- 3) greeting persons by name if name is known
- 4) speaking polite responses
- 5) promoting a quiet healthcare environment by speaking at a minimum level volume and at an appropriate distance

b. **Credibility:** Credibility is established by being trustworthy, believable, and honest. Examples of behaviors that establish credibility include:

- 1) refraining from speaking in public areas about situations related to work
- 2) maintaining confidentiality
- 3) using supplies and resources effectively and efficiently
- 4) answering questions clearly and to the best of one's ability
- 5) providing services consistent with one's capabilities and with promises made

c. **Security:** Security is freedom from danger, risk, or doubt. Security behaviors are those actions and responses that create a secure feeling for internal and external customers. Examples of behaviors that promote security include:

- 1) wearing UHC identification badge at all times when on duty on UHC-operated facilities and placing the badge close to face with name and photo visible
- 2) avoiding words and actions that are profane, threatening, or harassing to others
- 3) introducing oneself, using both name and title, to customers until recognition has been established
- 4) entering a patient's room or customer's work area by knocking and then pleasantly introducing oneself, using name and title until recognition has been established
- 5) assisting customers who appear to be lost by walking them to their destination, providing maps or written directions, asking a co-worker to assist them, or securing an escort
- 6) offering to assist a co-worker who is having a difficult time handling a situation with a customer
- 7) offering to provide assistance or secure assistance from supervisor or Campus Police, when suspicious or unidentified persons are in the work place

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4. **Responsiveness:** Responsiveness is a willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Examples of behaviors that relate to timeliness, helpfulness, and accessibility include:
 - a. keeping public areas, waiting rooms, doorways, stairways, and corridors accessible to customers
 - b. allowing patients and caregivers to enter and use elevators first; and when necessary, waiting for another elevator
 - c. answering the telephone promptly
 - d. having the telephone system programmed for voice mail and/or transfer to designated person
 - e. acknowledging people promptly
 - f. responding in a pleasant voice and timely manner when a request for assistance is made
 - g. describing the process that will be taken to assist the customer when further help must be sought
 - h. seeking to resolve the issues for dissatisfied customers and/or providing information as to when and what process will be taken to resolve the matter
 - i. sending and responding to posted mail, email, fax, and voice mail within a reasonable length of time and with a reasonable quantity of information

5. **Tangibles:** Tangibles which influence the customer's perceptions of quality include: the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials. Examples of behaviors related to tangibles include:
 - a. adhering to the established UHC administrative and departmental professional appearance (dress code) policies
 - b. maintaining an attractive and clean environment in departments, offices, and units
 - c. removing litter or seeking assistance from housekeeping/cleaning services or Physical Facilities if litter in public areas requires special procedures such as use of personal protective equipment
 - d. maintaining equipment and making recommendations for updating equipment
 - e. preparing and maintaining supplies of maps, letterhead, memos, flyers, and other communication materials that are current, attractive, and in accordance with administrative, departmental and UHC Public Affairs requirements

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III. Procedure:

A. Department Orientation of New Employees:

1. During department orientation, each new employee will read and receive instruction on this UHC Hospital Administrative Policy and Procedure (HADM/P-13).
2. New employees will be validated on customer service behaviors as specified in their competency-based orientation.

B. Protocol for Handling Customer Service Complaints:

Good communication is essential to the resolution of any conflict of expectations. Prompt and courteous responses to customer service complaints, portrayed in a manner that expresses compassion, dignity and respect, are the expectation of all staff at UHC. To the extent possible, all customer service complaints should be addressed and resolved in a manner acceptable to the complainant and institution. The process includes the following steps.

1. Complaints should be taken from complainants in a private area, away from the general population. The person taking the complaint should listen and document as much as possible in the complainant's own words.
2. The person taking the complaint should initiate the follow-up action (i.e., contact the department manager). The complainant should then be informed as to what was done. (Note: The complainant is not given information about personnel actions taken against an employee because this is confidential information.)
3. If the person taking the complaint is not sure of actions to take toward resolving the issue, he or she should follow the chain of command for assistance.
4. Anyone who feels threatened or in danger when making efforts to assist a complainant should not meet with the complainant alone. If needed, Campus Police should be requested.

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5. The UHC compliment and complaint telephone process, which is available to internal and external customers, is staffed with trained personnel. In addition, the Administrator-on-Call staff member can be paged through the UHC operator.
6. All complaints are to be documented and forwarded to the Department of Performance Improvement. Actions taken to resolve a complaint should be documented by the person taking the action.
7. When a complaint involves an employee's behavior, specific details of the complaint must be documented. Documentation may be done by the manager and/or other witnesses. If so directed by Human Resources, UHC Campus Police may be involved. All documentation concerning personnel matters is considered confidential and should not be sent to the Department of Performance Improvement.
8. A follow-up call or letter to complainants is appropriate to assure them that their complaint was acknowledged.
9. Human Resources should be consulted concerning serious violations of the Human Resources rules and regulations on employee conduct, per current Employee Handbook. UHC's Equal Employment Opportunity officer will provide guidance in personnel actions. Employee terminations must be done in accordance with Human Resources policies.
10. When a supervisor is informed that a complaint has been made against one of his or her employees, the supervisor should gather the supporting documents and set up a meeting with the employee. It is preferable that another supervisor be present. The employee has a right to review and take his or her own notes from the written complaint. The employee should discuss the issue with the supervisor and, in addition, write his or her own statement about the complaint. The manager will reinforce expectations of employee behavior and, if appropriate, establish follow-up measurements.

C. Compliance

Supervisory enforcement is essential to maintaining the basic standards of professional behaviors for excellence in customer service throughout the work environment. Pursuant to or with established policies and procedures of the University Hospitals and Clinics, enforcement for noncompliance will be as follows:

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III. Procedure: (cont'd)

Notification: To dispel any misunderstanding, the supervisor will talk privately with any employee whose customer service behaviors appears to be in noncompliance with UHC Hospital Administrative Policy and Procedure (HADM/P-13).

First violation: The supervisor will provide verbal counseling with documentation.

Second violation: The employee will receive an official reprimand in writing.

Third violation: Disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Appendix A: Definition of Terms

“Professional” is descriptive of behaviors that are exhibited when an employee is on duty, on the University Hospitals and Clinics (UHC) campus, or representing the institution in his or her UHC work role.

“Professional behaviors for excellence in customer service” are those observable actions that affect the manner in which department-specific, occupation-specific, and/or profession-specific tasks and services are provided to the customer.

“Internal customers” are UHC employees, volunteers who donate their time, persons enrolled in training programs, and persons contracted by the (UHC) to provide the services offered by departments of UHC.

“External customers” are patients, families of patients, visitors, vendors, and other persons who benefit from the services provided by departments and personnel of UHC.

“UHC employees” are those persons who are employed by UHC and provide services through UHC departments and units.

“Non-UHC personnel” refers to persons who provide service to UHC customers but who are not employed by UHC. Volunteers, persons who are enrolled in training programs, and contract employees who provide service through UHC departments to UHC customers are non-UHC personnel.

“Direct patient care” describes personnel whose tasks place them in physical contact with the patient.

“Indirect patient care” describes personnel who provide patient care services but whose tasks do not place them in physical contact with the patients.

“Non-patient care” describes personnel whose tasks support the three-fold mission of UHC (patient care, education, research) but these tasks are not administered to patients and/or their families and visitors in patient care areas.