

# Definitions of Professionalism: A Survey of Pharmacists and Pharmacy Learners



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## Background

- Professionalism is fundamental to the practice of pharmacy, and socialization to professional norms is key in pharmacy education.
- Definitions of professionalism in literature and from professional organizations emphasize a variety of different core attributes.
- Different understandings of professionalism have been described between students and faculty in other health disciplines, but no data was identified for pharmacy learners.
- The primary goal of the study was to characterise self-reported definitions of professionalism by pharmacists and pharmacy learners and to identify differences in their definitions.

## Methods

- An anonymous electronic survey was created and distributed to hospital pharmacists, pharmacy residents and pharmacy students in Canada.
- Respondents were asked for demographic data, to define "professionalism" in an open-ended question, and several related questions drawn from validated professionalism assessment tools or definitions of professionalism from professional bodies.
- Open-ended responses were analysed thematically by a single investigator blinded to demographic data. The proportion of pharmacists and learners who described each theme were then compared. Multiple choice and ranked-order questions were analysed descriptively.

	Pharmacist (N = 118)	Resident (N = 12)	Student (N = 26)
<b>Location</b>			
B.C.	67 (56.8%)	8 (66.7%)	0
Prairies	23 (19.5%)	2 (16.7%)	2 (7.7%)
Ontario	16 (13.6%)	0	17 (65.4%)
Quebec	1 (0.8%)	1 (8.3%)	7 (26.9%)
Atlantic	10 (8.5%)	1 (8.3%)	0
<b>Years of practice</b>			
< 10	42 (35.6%)		
10-20	41 (34.7%)		
20-30	19 (16.1%)		
> 30	16 (13.6%)		
<b>Year of school</b>			
First	6 (23.1%)		
Second	4 (15.4%)		
Third	7 (26.9%)		
Fourth	9 (34.6%)		

Table 1: Respondent demographics

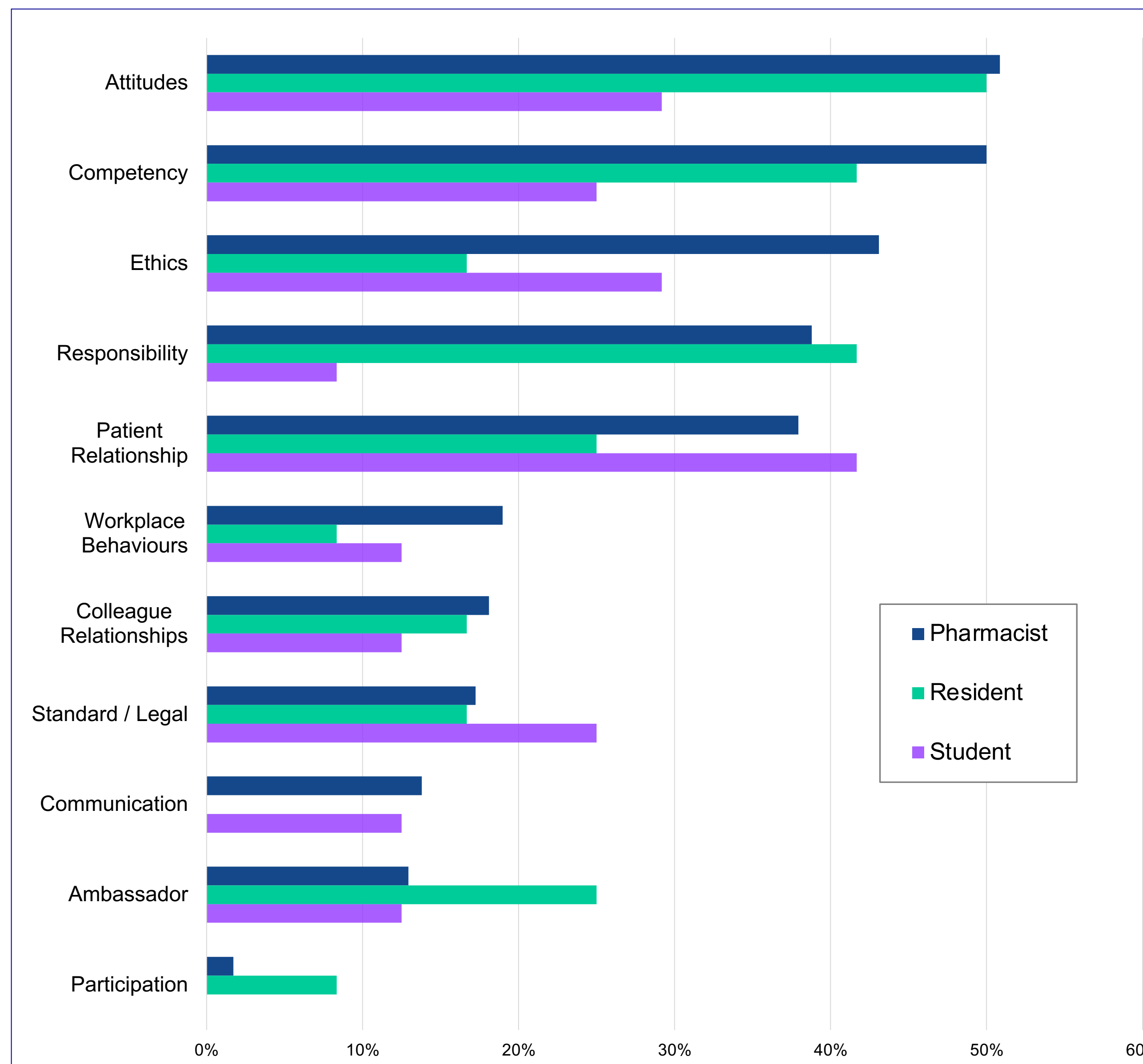


Figure 1: Define "professionalism" in the context of pharmacy practice.

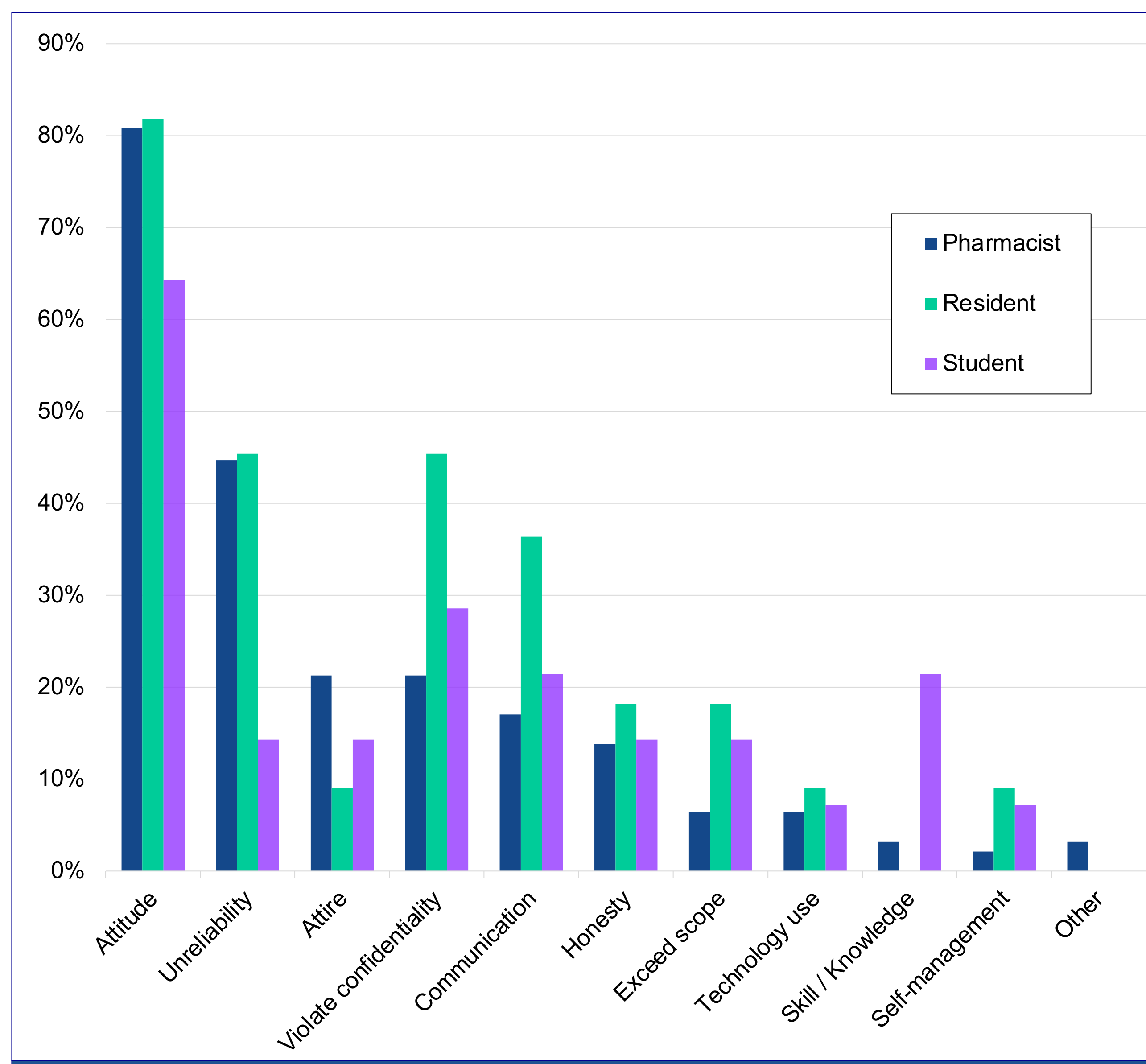


Figure 2: List three common actions by pharmacy learners that violate expectations of professionalism.

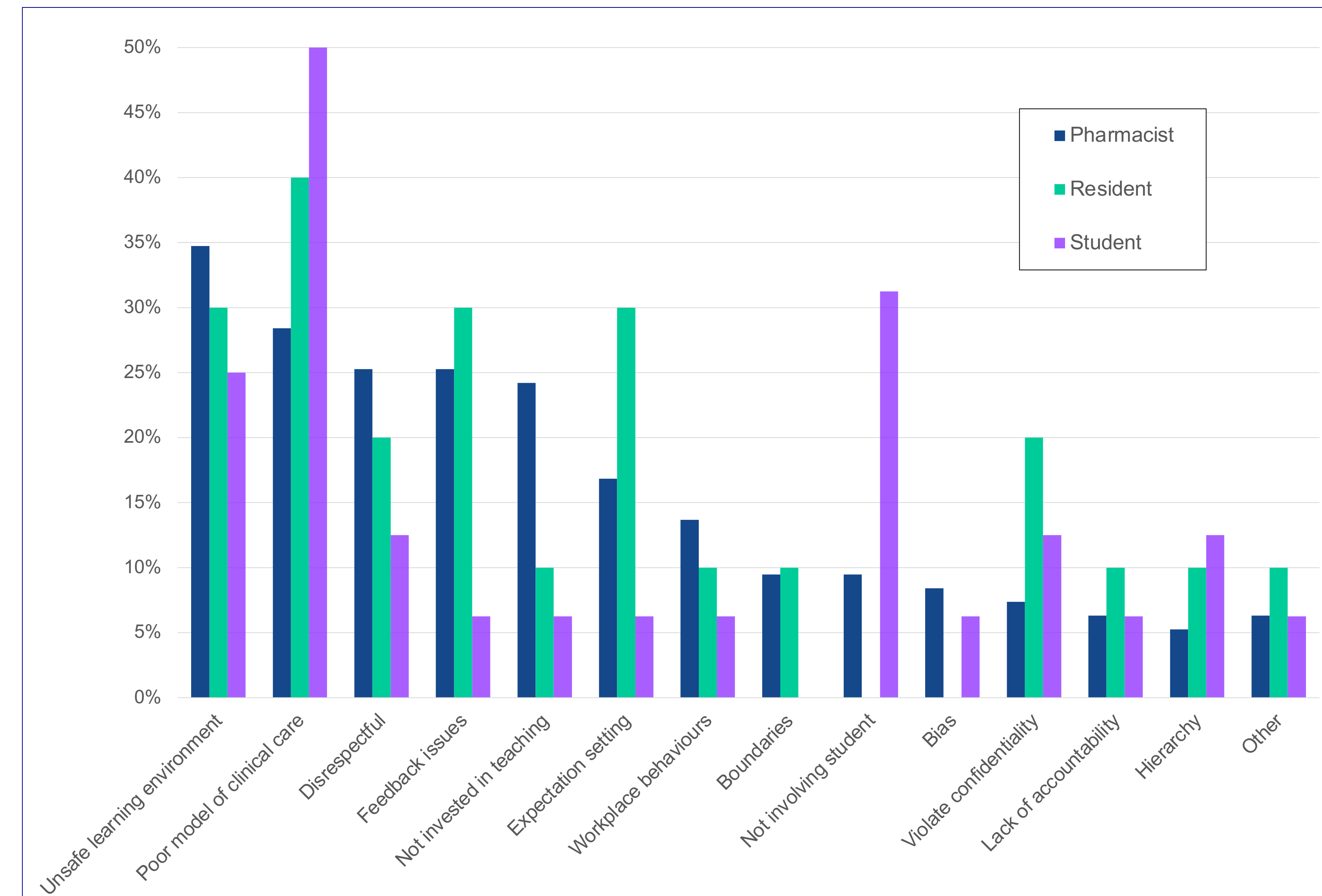


Figure 3: List three common actions by pharmacist preceptors that violate expectations of professionalism.

## Results

- When defining professionalism pharmacists and residents more often included professional attitudes, competence, and responsibility than students. Patient relationships were the most frequently noted theme by students.
- For common violations of professionalism by learners, all groups most frequently cited attitude concerns. Pharmacists and residents listed unreliability more often than students. Residents more often described patient privacy violations and communication issues than pharmacists or students. Lack of skill/knowledge was described more often by students.
- For common violations of professionalism by pharmacist preceptors, students most often described a poor model of clinical care, which was described by fewer residents and pharmacists. Students frequently noted lack of student involvement in care, which was not described by any residents and infrequently by pharmacists. Pharmacists and residents more often noted concerns about feedback and expectation setting. Pharmacists also listed a lack of interest or time for teaching more than learners.

## Conclusions

- There appear to be differences in how pharmacists, pharmacy residents, and pharmacy students define professionalism.
- Some differences may reflect the stage of learner training.
- Different understandings of professionalism may lead to conflicting behavioural expectations between pharmacists and learners.

