

PROFESSIONAL STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Professional Student Grievance Procedure

Purpose

To establish a process for resolution of College of Public Health (COPH) professional student grievances against faculty for violations of the UNMC Code of Conduct or other relevant policies, and grievances related to conditions that adversely impact students' ability to successfully complete the professional program. COPH professional programs are defined as DrPH, MPH, MHA and Certificates.

Scope

Examples of the types of grievances covered by this procedure include, but are not limited to: inappropriate conduct in the workplace (e.g. verbal abuse, threatening behavior, or favoritism); policy interpretation of time-off and excessive work hours; inappropriate delay of student progression toward degree attainment due to student's career interests and choices, reductions in funding or awards, and supervisory/laboratory personnel changes (e.g. departure of supervising faculty). This procedure deals exclusively with College of Public Health professional student grievances against UNMC faculty.

If you are unsure if a grievance falls within the scope of this procedure you can receive additional information and guidance from any of the persons listed below:

Jessica Tschirren , Assistant Dean for Student Affairs College of Public Health

Dr. Phil Covington, Chief Student Affairs Officer

Dr. David Carver, Student Ombudsman

If the student requests confidentiality or asks that the complaint not be pursued, the COPH will take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the request for confidentiality or request not to pursue an investigation. If a student insists that his or her name or other identifiable information not be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator, the COPH Assistant Dean for Student Affairs should inform the student that the college's ability to respond may be limited.

Grievances by professional students that may fall outside the scope of this procedure can be handled through other avenues, some of which are listed below:

Academic Decisions

Academic decisions such as awarding of grades, suspension, or dismissal are to be managed through the processes found in the COPH Student Handbook. Students may contact the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs for more information and assistance.

Sexual Harassment

All allegations of sexual harassment for which the student wishes the University to officially acknowledge and investigate, including sexual violence are to be reported to the Title IX Coordinator, Carmen Sirizzotti, or the Chief Student Affairs Officer, Dr. Phil Covington. Any Student with

an issue that falls under Sexual Harassment or Title IX should contact the Title IX coordinator, even if he/she wishes to remain anonymous.

Grievances against Staff

Grievances against UNMC or TNMC staff are managed through the relevant policy/procedures by the UNMC Division Director, Employee Relations, Linda M. Cunningham.

Research Integrity

Issues regarding research integrity and research misconduct are managed through the relevant policy/procedures by the Research Integrity Officer, Dr. Bruce Gordon.

Violations of Law

Violations of federal, state, or local laws may be managed through the relevant policies and procedures by the Office of Compliance and/or departments having oversight over the applicable law/regulation. UNMC Interim Chief Compliance Officer: Sarah Gloden Carlson.

See: <http://www.unmc.edu/academicaffairs/compliance.htm>

Campus Security and Safety

Campus security and safety issues are managed by the UNMC Campus Security or the Omaha Police Department.

Students may at any time contact the Student Counseling Center for confidential counseling by licensed mental health care providers for any of the aforementioned cases.

Context and Principles

Students have the right to file a grievance against faculty for violations of the UNMC Code of Conduct or other relevant policies, and grievances related to conditions that adversely impact the student's ability to successfully complete the professional program. Resolutions in situations where the grievance has been upheld may include student reinstatement, student reassignment to another class or lab, or other corrective action(s) for the benefit of the student.

Corrective action against COPH faculty is under the purview of the Dean of the College of Public Health in coordination with the chair (or the Dean's designee in a case where the chair is the involved faculty) of the involved faculty member's primary department.

COPH faculty are defined as all faculty who hold an appointment of more than 50% FTE in the COPH and part-time faculty whose entire academic appointment is in the COPH. If the faculty involved holds 50% or less FTE in the COPH and their primary appointment is in another department, the COPH dean in collaboration with the Dean of the college of the faculty's primary appointment will determine the process. This procedure does not supersede the policies contained in the UNMC Faculty Handbook, and any corrective action will be consistent with those policies. Appropriate corrective action will be taken where the grievance has been upheld by a preponderance of evidence. COPH professional students have the right to file a written complaint to the UNMC Faculty Senate Professional Conduct Committee chair if they are not satisfied with the grievance panel resolution.

Retaliation against student complainants or others involved in the grievance process is strictly prohibited. Incidents of retaliation by faculty

members will be referred to the Faculty Senate Professional Conduct Committee for further investigation and disciplinary action.

Students who make any intentionally false accusations and/or misleading complaints against University faculty will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action by the Copenhague Dean in consultation with the chair of the faculty member's primary department.

The College of Public Health student and faculty names, identifying information, statements, and comments as well as any deliberations, advice, or evidence given in the course of the informal procedure and formal Copenhague Professional Student Grievance Panel deliberations are confidential. All individuals involved, including members of the Panel, are expected to abide by this duty to maintain confidentiality. Any unauthorized release or carelessness in the handling of this confidential information is considered a breach of this duty to maintain confidentiality and is strictly prohibited.

Procedure

Informal Resolution

At any stage in the informal process the Student Ombudsperson (Dr. David Carver, 402-559-7276, dcarver@unmc.edu) can be consulted as an independent, neutral, informal and confidential consultant. The Ombudsperson can provide additional information and clarification on University policies and proceedings, assistance in facilitating difficult conversations, and guidance in prioritizing options for dealing with the problem. The Ombudsperson will also report ongoing trends in student grievances, while maintaining students' confidentiality, to campus administrators including the Dean of the College of Public Health and the UNMC Chancellor.

In most cases an initial attempt should be made to address the issue through an informal resolution process.

Course of Action

1. It is recommended that the first course of action is a discussion between the student and the involved faculty member to resolve the issue.
2. If discussion with the involved faculty member is not possible or effective, the student should discuss the issue with the chair of the faculty member's primary department.
3. If discussion with the department chair is not possible or effective: the student should discuss the issue with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.

Without Proceeding to Formal Complaint

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, and the student wants to summarize the incident without proceeding to a formal complaint, this may be done through one of two mechanisms. However, the Copenhague Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will inform the student that the recourse will be limited without filing a formal complaint.

1. Unwritten Summary
Student vocalizes a summary of the issue with the Student Ombudsperson. (Dr. David Carver, dcarver@unmc.edu, 402-559-7276)
2. Written Documentation
Student sends written summary to the Copenhague Assistant Dean for Student Affairs who will keep this documentation in a confidential and secure file.

Proceeding to Formal Complaint

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, and the student wants to proceed with an investigation of the incident(s), then the complaint may move to the formal procedure as follows. If the grievance is ongoing or involves a particularly sensitive matter, the grievant is encouraged by the Copenhague Assistant Dean for Student Affairs to submit their complaint as soon as possible.

Formal Resolution Procedure

Filing a Complaint

The complaint must be submitted electronically to the Copenhague Dean and the Copenhague Assistant Dean for Student Affairs within 60 class days* after the incident occurred or 60 class days after informal resolution procedures have failed. The complaint should attempt to identify the following: the student grievant; the respondent faculty member or administrator; any other person involved; the incident, including approximate date and time, and whether the incident is ongoing; the policy claimed to have been violated or the limitation imposed on the student's ability to complete his/her degree; and a brief statement of the remedy sought.

¹ "Class days" are defined as days when the Copenhague is open for classes, examinations, or administrative office activities. All references to "days" in this document are considered "class days."

Every complaint will be acknowledged by email correspondence from the Copenhague Office of the Dean within 5 class days of the receipt of the complaint. At this stage, the faculty member involved will be notified by the Senior Associate Dean that a grievance has been filed against them, and the nature of the grievance.

The Copenhague Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will be responsible for keeping all documentation pertinent to the formal complaint in a secure and confidential place.

Preliminary Resolution Procedure

Within 10 class days of acknowledging the complaint, the Copenhague Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will meet with the student and the involved faculty separately to determine first whether a preliminary resolution can be reached. If a preliminary resolution cannot be achieved, the Copenhague Assistant Dean for Student Affairs shall notify both parties that the grievance will be referred to the Copenhague Professional Student Grievance Panel. Copenhague Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will inform the faculty member that they may prepare a statement in response to the allegations for review by the grievance panel, due within 10 class days. The Copenhague Assistant Dean for Student Affairs may adjust this timeline if there are compelling reasons for delay.

Copenhague Professional Student Grievance Panel

The Copenhague Professional Student Grievance Panel consists of six members (three faculty and three students). The Copenhague Dean will select three members of the Copenhague Leadership Council who have no conflicts in the case. The Copenhague Student Association President will select three Student Association Executive Board members who have no conflicts in the case. The panel will be reconstituted for each formal grievance brought forward.

The faculty members will include no more than one member from any one Copenhague department. The Copenhague Leadership Council will make every effort to avoid perceived or actual conflicts of interests in selecting the panel members by avoiding members that are in the same department,

laboratory, and/or have a close relationship with either the student or faculty member involved in the grievance complaint.

The student members will include no more than one member from any one department, all in good academic standing as per college regulations. If there are not qualified student members from each department, the Student Association President appoints panel members from current qualified Copenhaven professional students.

The Chair of the Faculty Senate Professional Conduct Committee (or designee) will sit on the Panel as an observer without a vote, to prevent unnecessary duplication of investigation if the grievance results in the matter being referred to the Faculty Senate Professional Conduct Committee. This person can also advise the grievance panel about recommended corrective action, if appropriate. The Copenhaven Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will also sit on the Panel as an observer without a vote.

Copenhaven Professional Student Grievance Panel Responsibilities

Reviewed Evidence

The panel members will begin their review of the evidence within 30 days of the receipt of the statements by the Copenhaven Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. They will review the statements of both parties and interview the involved parties and any named witnesses, as appropriate. They will review other provided evidence. Panel members may seek advice and evidence from other university officials as necessary to conduct the investigation.

The Panel may, at its discretion, convene a hearing to meet with the involved student and the faculty member. Each individual will be given the opportunity to respond, to provide a statement and/or counter-statement, in order to provide additional information as warranted. The meeting will not be open to the public. The involved parties may bring another individual for support but this person may not speak or participate in the hearing, unless the person is a named witness.

Deliberation

The Panel shall deliberate privately at the close of the hearing. If a majority of the Panel finds that the allegations are supported by a "preponderance of the evidence," the Panel will make confidential recommendations to the Copenhaven Dean to resolve the matter. If a majority of the Panel finds that the allegations are not supported by a "preponderance of the evidence," the panel reports that as well to the Dean.

Report

The Panel will provide a formal written report summarizing the obtained evidence, detailed proceedings, conclusions, and recommended actions to the Copenhaven Dean within 30 class days of when the Panel assembled. If the Panel identifies misconduct, the Copenhaven Dean is responsible for immediate and timely corrective action in coordination with the Department Chair of the faculty member's primary unit, taking into consideration the recommendations of the panel.

The Copenhaven Dean will distribute the conclusion and recommended action(s) by the Panel within 10 class days of receiving the full report from the Panel to the involved faculty member and the chair of the faculty member's primary department. The Copenhaven Dean will also distribute the conclusion and non-confidential recommended action(s) by the Panel as well as the non-confidential corrective action(s) as determined by the Copenhaven Dean to the student.

Outline of Formal Complaint Procedure and Timelines

Person Responsible	Action	To	Timeline
Student	Submits complaint electronically	Copenhaven Senior Associate Dean	Within 60 days after the incident occurred or within 60 days after informal resolution has failed
Copenhaven Assistant Dean for Student Affairs	Acknowledges receipt of complaint electronically	Student	Within 5 days after receiving complaint
Copenhaven Assistant Dean for Student Affairs	Meets individually with student and faculty	Student, Faculty	Within 10 days of notification of receipt
Copenhaven Assistant Dean for Student Affairs	Convenes Panel if resolution is not reached	Student, Faculty	Within 10 days of last individual meeting
Student, Faculty	Submits statements, evidence to Panel	Copenhaven Professional Student Grievance Panel	Within 10 days of last individual meeting
Copenhaven Professional Student Grievance Panel	Submits written report of complaint review	Copenhaven Dean	Within 30 days of Panel assembling to review complaint
Copenhaven Dean	Distributes Panel's conclusion and recommended actions	Involved faculty member and his/her department chair	Within 10 days of receiving Panel's full report
Copenhaven Dean	Distributes Panel's conclusion and non-confidential recommended actions and non-confidential corrective actions as determined by the Copenhaven Dean	Student	Within 10 days of receiving Panel's full report
Copenhaven Dean in coordination with faculty member's department chair	If Panel identifies misconduct: takes corrective action against the faculty member, considering the recommendations of the Panel	Faculty member	Immediate and timely

Public Health-Complaint Procedure Definitions

1. Days are class days and are defined as days when the Copenhaven is open for academic/administrative activities.

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2. Faculty is the faculty identified in the complaint
3. Student is the complainant.
4. Department Chair is the chair of the involved faculty's primary department.