

Graduate Medical Education Committee

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Updated June 2020

PURPOSE:

To establish fair policies and procedures for the adjudication of resident grievances.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all residents and fellows participating in ACGME accredited Spokane Teaching Health Center sponsored graduate medical education programs. In this policy “resident” means both residents and fellows.

DEFINITION:

The grievance structure is intended to be informal: to resolve disagreements internally. It is not an adversarial forum. At each stop, residents and Program Directors are encouraged to resolve differences through discussion and negotiation. However, this policy provides a structure for those instances in which outside assistance in resolving conflict is needed.

1. For purposes of this policy, a grievance is defined as an allegation that there has been a violation, a misinterpretation, or an arbitrary or discriminatory application of a rule, procedure or policy of the residency program. This could be related personally to the learner – to the privileges, responsibilities, work environment, or terms and conditions of the residency program.
2. A grievance procedure shall not be used to question a rule, procedure or policy, rather it shall be used as a process to address or resolve a concern by a learner who believes that a rule, procedure or policy has not been followed or has been applied in an improper manner.
3. For concerns related to disciplinary actions, including any concern that the due process policy has not been followed, the appeals process outlined in the Policy titled, “Academic & Professional Conduct Policy & Procedure”, rather than this policy, shall apply.
4. For concerns related to perceived harassment, discrimination or retaliation, or any other matter related to employment or human resources, separate Providence Health Care policies apply, rather than this policy. Providence Health Care policies can be found at <https://phs-ewpmsg.policystat.com/>. Additionally, the integrity hotline number is 888-294-8555 or they may report online at <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/39016/index.html>

Alternatively, the GME office can provide the appropriate human resources local contact to arrange a face to face meeting.

PROCEDURE

1. A learner who has a grievance shall initiate action by filing a signed, written account of the grievance with the Program Director within 30 calendar days of the event out of which the grievance has arisen.
2. The Program Director has the discretion to discuss the grievance with the resident and other involved parties in an effort to resolve the grievance. If the grievance is resolved, the resolution will be put in writing and signed by the Program Director and learner.
3. If the grievance is not resolved in the above manner, the Program Director shall (1) notify the Designate Institutional Officer (DIO) of the grievance, and (2) respond to the grievance on behalf of the program in writing to the learner within 14 calendar days of receipt of the written grievance.
4. If the learner is dissatisfied with the response of the Program Director, he/she may, within 10 calendar days of receipt of such a response, submit the grievance to the DIO with a statement of non-concurrence.
5. If, at any time, the learner is uncomfortable in approaching his/her Program Director, the learner is encouraged to discuss the issue with the DIO. A learner may also directly approach human resources for any reason. However, if human resources elects to address the learner's concern, the same issue may not be re-presented for adjudication under this policy.
6. The DIO will review the learner's written grievance and make an initial determination whether the grievance policy applies or whether to refer the grievance to human resources. This is typically done if the concern is more appropriately handled through human resources channels. If the DIO refers the matter to human resources, the matter will not also be adjudicated pursuant to this policy.
7. If an alternate review process is not selected, the DIO will form an ad hoc Grievance Panel to consider the grievance. The grievance panel, termed the Regional GME Grievance Panel ("RGGP"), is an ad hoc panel consisting of the DIO, two (2) voting faculty members and two (2) voting resident members of GMEC. Faculty and residents appointed to the RGGP may not be a part of the program involved in the grievance. The DIO will moderate the grievance process. Further, the DIO will ensure that RGGP members do not have conflicts of interest with the learner or Program Director. If the DIO has a potential conflict of interest, the RGGP Chair reverts to the GMEC Chair.
8. The RGGP may gather evidence, interview individuals and request further information from the involved parties. No formal hearing will be held. Within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the appeal, the RGGP will provide a written copy of its decision to the learner and the program. Each of the RGGP members has one vote on the Committee's decision, however, the Chair of the Committee may vote only to break a tie. This time period may be extended by the DIO for good reason. The panel's decision is final and non-appealable.
9. The grievance appeals process is an internal process to resolve disputes. Attorneys may not attend any panel interviews or actively participate in the deliberations of the panel.