



Policy: Policy for Managing Informal and Formal Student Complaints	Applicability: MMC Employees, Students
Policy Owner: Student Affairs	Approved By: Office of the President
Effective Date: July 26, 2017	Last Reviewed:
Next Review:	Contact:

PURPOSE: In keeping with the Meharry Medical College (“College”) mission, the College seeks to maintain a safe and amicable environment for students, faculty, and staff. The college understands that occasionally students will face a challenge or concern that requires assistance or intervention. To promote appropriate communication between students and departments on campus with whom they interact, this policy provides the venues where students can share feedback, and outlines procedures that are established to manage informal and formal concerns and complaints presented by students.

DEFINITIONS:

Student: This policy specifically addresses concerns and complaints lodged by students who are formally enrolled or on an approved leave of absence from the academic programs offered by the School of Medicine, Dentistry, and Graduate Studies and Research,

Informal Complaint: Concerns or complaints are presented verbally during open forums (i.e., Student Life Committee meetings, President’s Town Hall meetings, school-wide general assemblies, and student officer meetings with the Deans) or conversations with chief residents, attending physicians, course coordinators, other faculty, or staff members are considered as informal concerns/complaints. Students are encouraged to resolve informal concerns/complaints with the participation of all affected parties before filing a formal complaint.

Formal Complaint: Concerns or complaints are presented in writing to the designated administrative office/administrator in each school or the Division of Student Affairs are considered formal complaints. The written complaint must be signed and provide contact information for the signatory (e.g., phone number, address, email address). A formal, written complaint should be submitted by students to the designated administrative office when the situation is not resolved through informal mechanisms.

Academic Complaints, include the following: Academic conduct and discipline, academic standing (probation, suspension, and/or dismissal), and grade appeals are presented in writing to the Dean of the appropriate school, per policy.

Non-Academic Complaints, include but not limited to the following: Admission appeals and petitions for readmission, student complaints related to school administrator/administration actions, registrar appeals, discrimination, sexual harassment or sexual misconduct, financial aid,



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parking and traffic appeals, student housing appeals, and safety and security department appeals.

PROCEDURE:

Students have several avenues for presenting and seeking resolution to their informal and formal complaints. The designated administrative areas for handling the following concerns and complaints include:

General Concerns, Non-Academic Complaints, and Suggestions may be reported to:

- Division of Student Affairs Office of Student Life

Academic Complaints may be reported to:

- School of Dentistry: Offices of Student, Academic and Clinical Affairs
- School of Graduate Studies and Research: Office of the Dean
- School of Medicine: Offices of Student and Academic Affairs

Each School and has established specific procedures for handling informal and formal complaints from students. Students and other members of the campus community may access descriptions of the procedures for resolving concerns and complaints through the following publications:

<u>Publications</u>	<u>Students & Academic Affairs Contact Number</u>
School of Medicine Student Policies	(615) 327-6413
School of Dentistry Student Policies	(615) 327-6076
School of Graduate Studies and Research	(615) 327-6533
Student Policies	
Division of Student Affairs Student Handbook	(615) 327-6792

Sexual Misconduct Violations should be reported to the Title IX Coordinators office by calling (615) 327-6552 or (615) 327-6921. The policy is located online in the Policy Library

Non-Retaliation Clause



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Retaliation against complainants who make good faith reports regarding violations of College policies is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action and/or sanctions.

Informal Resolution

The Office of Student Life will pursue resolution of concerns and informal complaints wherever practicable. Offers by respective parties to reach informal resolution, via a campus mediator, will be accepted by the Office of Student Life and will be extended to the other party. To the extent appropriate, the Office of Student Life will assist with the resolution of concerns and informal complaints.

Formal Resolution

The process to resolve students' formal complaints begins when the written complaint is received by the designated office. The steps to resolve the issue include the following:

- A record of the complaint will be created, logged, and maintained by the designated office/administrator.
- The administrative staff will perform due diligence to investigate the complaint. A record of conversations, actions, and documents, will be kept and updated to include dates and actions taken to resolve the complaint.
- A proposal to resolve the issue will be forwarded to the complainant by the designated administrator.
- A notice of the formal resolution will be presented to the complainant by the designated administrator.
- A copy of all documents will be retained in the designated office.

Appeals of Non-Academic and Academic Decisions

Any appeal that falls under the Student Professional Code of Conduct policy, will be reviewed by the College's Student Professional Code of Conduct Committee for a final recommendation to the Office of the President or his/her designee.

Retention of Records of Student Complaints



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Logs of formal student complaints and accompanying documentation will be maintained in the areas of submission. The records will be housed in the following offices and maintained by the assigned administrators:

- School of Dentistry, Office of Student and Academic Affairs, Dean of Student and Academic Affairs
- School of Graduate Studies and Research, Office of the Dean, Associate Dean of the Graduate School
- School of Medicine, Office of Student and Academic Affairs, Executive Vice Dean
- Division of Student Affairs, Office of Student Life, Director of Student Life.

The student complaint logs are updated when complaints are received. Entries on the student complaint logs are deleted after five years. A master log shall be kept within the Division of Student Affairs.

EXHIBITS:

School of Medicine Academic Complaint Process:

<http://www.mmc.edu/education/som/policies/studentpolicies/policiesrev102815.pdf>

School of Dentistry Academic Complaint Process:

https://www.mmc.edu/patientcare/school-of-dentistry/sodclinicalaffairs/sodpolicies_2015.pdf

School of Graduate and Research Complaint Process:

<http://www.mmc.edu/education/sogsr/policymanual111714.pdf>

Division of Student Affairs Complaint Process