



Orlando College of Osteopathic Medicine

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Policy Title: Filing of Grievances and Appeals

Grievance Policy

Resolution and Grievance Procedure

OCOM recognizes the right of students to voice grievances and to seek resolution to problems, disagreements with faculty/administrators, or interpretations of institutional policy. OCOM also recognizes the responsibility of the student to express their concerns professionally and ethically. Concerns may involve course grades other than a grade reviewed by the SPPC Committee, promotion, behavioral issues, financial concerns, or issues related to external (e.g., COCA) accreditation standards and procedures. This grievance process shall not be used to appeal or review violations of the Honor Code or an appeal from the SPPC Committee, a final decision by the Dean, or a decision of the SPPC Committee.

All grievances must be filed in writing to the OCOM Office of the Student Services. All grievance material is securely maintained in the Student Services Office in a specific student file as appropriate to the grievance.

Unless otherwise noted, each step of the Resolution and Grievance Procedure generally takes fourteen (14) calendar days to complete. Extensions or waivers to this timeframe may be granted on a case-by-case basis. Notice of a student's request for



an extension must be submitted in writing to the Office of Student Services within ten (10) calendar days before the deadline.

Decisions regarding the request for an extension shall be communicated to the student via letter within two (2) business days of receipt of the request for an extension.

Likewise, if OCOM needs to extend a deadline, the Office of Student Services shall provide said notice ten (10) calendar days before the due date.

If a student has filed a formal appeal or grievance to the Office of the Dean, the student may remain in coursework until a final decision is made. Once a final determination has been made, if the student is to be suspended or dismissed, the student is administratively removed from current courses/rotations effective immediately.

Grievance for Academic Resolutions, Course Procedures, Grading Policies, and OCOM Policies and Procedures

Academic Issues

An individual concern of an academic nature should be first discussed with the immediate instructor or preceptor and must be done in a professional manner. This concern generally includes those which arise from personal conflicts or actions taken against a student individually. For individual concerns, if a resolution cannot be reached, the student may, within fourteen (14) calendar days of the failed resolution, appeal, in writing, to the appropriate Associate Dean for the academic year involved.

Suppose a resolution cannot be reached from the prior appeals. In that case, the student may appeal in writing to the Dean, whose decision will constitute the final resolution, within fourteen (14) calendar days of the failed resolution. The Dean may refuse to meet with a student if the appeal has not been presented in writing in advance of the meeting.

A concern over general course procedures or grading policies should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Pre-Clinical Education or the Associate Dean for Clinical Education. Suppose a resolution cannot be reached from the prior appeals. In that case, the student may appeal in writing to the Dean, whose decision will constitute the final resolution, within fourteen (14) calendar days of the failed resolution. The Dean

may refuse to meet with the student if the appeal has not been presented in writing in advance of the meeting.

Reminder: Course Assessment policies and test question challenges are not covered under student grievances. See course-specific syllabi for information regarding these issues or OCOM Final Course Grade Appeal Process

OCOM Policies and Procedures

A concern over OCOM policies and procedures should be addressed through the designated Class President and the Associate Dean for Student Services. If, through the normal processes for an acceptable and reasonable request, a resolution cannot be reached, the designated Class President may, within fourteen (14) calendar days of the failed resolution, appeal in writing to the President of the Student Government Association (SGA) whose decision will constitute the final resolution. The President of SGA and the Associate Dean for Student Services will meet with the Class President and render a final resolution regarding the concern.

If the concern is financial or related to other areas of OCOM, the student should follow the appropriate chain of command defined by the OCOM Organizational Chart.

Grievance Concerning Approval to Operate or Accreditation

Students who have concerns regarding OCOM's capability to meet the standards of accreditation or comply with policies and procedures OCOM Accreditation bodies should refer to the Accreditation Standard Complaint Process and Procedures

Grievance Procedure for Harassment or Discrimination

Students who feel they are being discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, age or disabilities have the right to exercise the grievance through the OCOM Non-discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Non-Retaliation Policy; Title IX Investigation and Hearing Procedures Notice of Non-Discrimination; Complaints Concerning Discrimination, Hostile Environment, and Sexual Harassment under Title IX

Retaliation against any individual who files a grievance or participates in the grievance process is strictly prohibited. If a student or anyone who participated in the grievance



process believes they have been subjected to retaliation, that individual may use the *Harassment Grievance* procedures listed below.

Records relating to the grievance procedure for harassment and discrimination investigation, including all supporting documentation and a report of the findings shall be filed with the Title IX Coordinator

The Grievance Procedure

Step One: The Resolution Process

Students who meet the *Technical Standards* for admission to OCOM, as described in the *Student Catalog*, and feel they have a Grievance shall first meet with the Associate Dean for Student Services to explain the student's grievance.

The student must schedule a meeting with the Associate Dean for Student Services within fourteen (14) calendar days from the date of the action being grieved or the date the student should have known about the action to initiate this discussion. The Grievance complaint must be made in writing and signed by the person filing it. The Associate Dean for Student Services shall investigate the Grievance within seven (7) calendar days. If the discrimination is in any way threatening, the Associate Dean for Student Services shall investigate the complaint and bring it to the attention of the Dean immediately for intervention.

After the investigation period of seven (7) calendar days, the student filing the Grievance and the person against whom the Grievance is filed shall meet with the Associate Dean for Student Services to discuss an informal resolution. This meeting shall be scheduled within fourteen (14) calendar days of the initial filing of the Grievance

A letter confirming the mutual decisions of the resolution shall be distributed within ten (10) calendar days of the meeting to all persons involved, and kept within the permanent student record for possible future issues with the resolution.

If the Associate Dean for Student Services determines there is insufficient evidence to support the allegations, the Associate Dean for Student Services may close the

Grievance and shall notify the student within fourteen (14) calendar days of findings and inform the student of the right to request a *Grievance Hearing*.

The Associate Dean for Student Services shall keep a record of the grievance investigation, including all supporting documentation and a report of the findings. All material shall be filed as previously stated in this policy.

Step Two: Grievance Hearing Process

Suppose the student feels the informal resolution has not been successful or disagrees with the informal resolution. In that case, the student may request that the Associate Dean for Student Services and the Dean call a *Grievance Hearing*. The student has thirty (30) calendar days after receiving written notice of denial of the Grievance to request such a hearing. The request must be in writing, signed by the student, and include the following information:

- A clear and precise statement of the Grievance;

- A statement explaining how the action is discriminatory or the decision unreasonable if it is a denial of a requested accommodation;

- The name of the respondent parties (the person(s)) against whom the Grievance is filed;

- An explanation of each respondent responsible for the action or decision, The requested remedy, and

- Any request to bring a non-participating observer to the hearing.

The request for an appeal shall not be based upon any evidence that the grievant had or was aware of at the time of the meeting with the Associate Dean for Student Services.

This information must be sent by certified mail or delivered with a signature of receipt to both the Office of the Associate Dean for Student Services and the Office of the Dean. Upon receipt of the request for a Grievance Hearing, the following processes shall be followed:



The Dean shall designate an OCOM official to review the case within seven (7) calendar days to see if a peaceful and prompt resolution can be made between the parties. In cases where this cannot be accomplished, the Dean shall appoint a Grievance Hearing Board, including naming a Chair, by the end of the seven (7) calendar days.

The Dean shall appoint the Grievance Hearing Board, who shall notify the Grievance Hearing Board in writing of their appointment and inform them of the date of the hearing. The hearing date shall be within fourteen (14) calendar days of the notice. The Dean shall ensure that those participating on the Grievance Hearing Board are not a part of the alleged discrimination or the denial of accommodations. The Grievance Hearing Board shall consist of a Chair, two Associate Deans, two faculty members, one staff member, and one student.

The person(s) against whom the Grievance is alleged shall receive a written copy at least seven (7) calendar days before the hearing.

The Grievance Hearing Board shall hear the Grievance by the student. The person filing the Grievance and the person against whom the Grievance is alleged shall, at this time, bring all witnesses and/or evidence to the hearing for the Grievance Hearing Board to consider. The Grievance Hearing Board shall also review documentation, including the final report from the Associate Dean for Student Services relating to the Grievance, and, as necessary, shall interview the Associate Dean for Student Services as a witness. Neither party shall be entitled to have an attorney represent them at the hearing. Only the Chair shall be entitled to question any witness and decide upon the relevancy of any evidence presented.

Before convening the Grievance hearing meeting, the Grievance Hearing Board shall be trained on the specific Grievance hearing procedures relating to the individual Grievance. The Hearing Board will be provided with additional educational material as appropriate.

Following this initial hearing and presentation, if additional information is needed to render a decision, the Grievance Hearing Board may recess for a period of not greater than fourteen (14) calendar days. The Grievance Hearing Board, or the Associate Dean for Student Services, at the request of the Grievance Hearing Board, shall



conduct further investigation of the alleged Grievances. The Grievance Hearing Board may meet with OCOM's legal counsel.

The second meeting of the Grievance Hearing Board, which shall occur within fourteen (14) calendar days shall be used to further discuss Grievance, the investigation, the educational materials provided, and the advice of legal counsel. The Grievance Hearing Board may require second interviews with the person filing the Grievance or with those against whom the Grievance is filed. The Grievance Hearing Board shall make a final ruling at this meeting. Minutes will be taken of all Grievance Hearing Board meetings. A letter shall be sent to the student within fourteen (14) calendar days of the final determination by the Grievance Hearing Board.

Step Three: Final Appeal Procedure

The parties have the right to appeal the decision of the Grievance Hearing Board to the Dean. After receiving the Grievance Hearing Board decision letter, the student has thirty (30) calendar days to file for an appeal. All such requests must be in writing, signed by the student, and be sent via certified mail directly to the Office of the Dean. The Dean shall have a period of not greater than fourteen (14) calendar days to respond to the appeal. The Dean shall have the final determination as to the outcome.

This policy shall be posted at ocom.org/policies