

What to do if you have issues or concerns - FSHS program

If the issues are academic or related to a course (e.g. you're struggling to understand an assignment, or have challenges grasping the content), **please reach out to your instructor first**. All CYFS/HS instructors are committed to meeting with students in their courses. They want you to succeed, so don't be afraid to ask questions or seek clarification.

If there is an overall issue with managing homework and deadlines or adjusting to the academic expectations, please consider getting connected to one of the student support resources available to you:

- The [Writing Center](#) is available to help review papers and provide feedback and support on writing
- [Academic Coaching](#) is a great program at no additional cost that is 100% about helping students succeed in their academic goals. You can refer to yourself easily, so why not check out these student services and what they offer.

All PSU students, by virtue of accepting one's enrollment in the university, opt in to abide by the [PSU Code of Student Conduct and Responsibility](#). This is an extremely valuable resource/reference.

Sometimes people have concerns with a course, instructor, fellow student or some other part of their undergraduate program that isn't related to the content of a course. If that happens, we want to make sure you know there are processes to follow and people to talk with. The SSW is committed to hearing student voices and feedback, and does not want to create a culture where students merely complain. That isn't effective in addressing concerns, and it can become frustrating and harmful. We strive to teach and practice the processes of how to advocate effectively for having one's viewpoint heard and addressed, *and* to work **together** in resolving issues.

So if you have a concern regarding a course, instructor, fellow student or some other part of CYFS, **the best place to start is always your student handbook**. You probably read through it before starting your program, but it's a good idea to refer to it anytime a question, concern or issue arises. It's there for a reason. In your handbook you will find the policies that outline how to advocate for your concerns. You will also find suggestions on professional behavior expectations and how to handle conflict.

It is important to become familiar with the guiding policies and student grievance procedure in your academic program. We've listed some important ones below and encourage you to become familiar with them.

CYFS/HS [Handbook](#)

- Ground Rules for Respectful Dialogue and Professional Behavior Page 28
- Student Grievance Procedure Pages 44-45
- Policy on Academic Performance and Professional Behavior Pages 29-37
- Policy on Academic Honesty and Integrity Pages 38-43

Here are steps to consider and take if you have a concern: [FSHS [Graph](#)]



Before engaging in the the steps outlined below, we encourage you to:

- Clearly identify and define your concern
- Identify what you are hoping for as an outcome
- Determine what a meaningful change or address to your concern might be.

This will help us understand where you are coming from as well as help you be clear about what your issue or concern is.

Escalate your concerns appropriately. Start at the first step. It's the best way to get your problems addressed. Skipping steps and jumping to the end will actually take longer to be heard and could be frustrating.

- Example, from University of Ottawa, [here](#), or from Purdue University, [here](#).

First Step - Whenever possible, talk to the instructor, student, or staff member. You'd be surprised how often miscommunications or misunderstandings can occur and simply talking directly to the person often clears things up. We know it might feel a little nerve wracking to approach a SSW instructor, but they want you to succeed and are here to try and support you.

Second Step - If the first step is not possible or if you are truly uncomfortable doing this, then please reach out to the program director. Program directors support both students and faculty, so they are often the best person to discuss your concerns with. They can help look at possible options and discuss the procedures available in the SSW for students who have concerns.

The **CYFS Program Director is Jana Pursley** (jpursley@pdx.edu). Please reach out via email to make an appointment.

Third Step - If the program director is not able to address the situation or if you wish to speak to someone else in the SSW, then you can contact the **** Executive Director of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management ****. They can listen to your concerns and help you understand the processes available to you in the SSW.

Through Global Diversity & Inclusion, [Equity and Compliance](#), a strategic plan initiates how to address the roots of inequities, provide proactive resources, support a safe and stimulating campus climate, and also promote equitable opportunities. They can evaluate and investigate complaints of prohibited discrimination and harassment.

Lastly - Refer to the Student Grievance Procedure found in your program's student handbook. That procedure includes the above steps, and it also provides next steps for unresolved issues. At this point, the student grievance moves from an informal process (Step 1 of the procedure) to a more formal grievance process (Steps 3-5 of the procedure).

For **student to student grievance**, [check section IX](#). Procedures for complaints against individuals in the PSU Code of Student Conduct and Responsibility. Any person may submit a written complaint to the [Dean of Student Life Office](#) alleging that a Student(s) or Recognized Student Organization or group has engaged in conduct proscribed by this Code.

For **student grievances about grades** [check section XI](#). “Course Instructors have the primary responsibility and purview for responding to and reporting academic misconduct by students enrolled in their respective courses. Course Instructors may issue a zero or a failing grade for the assignment for which the misconduct was found. Course Instructors may not issue a failing grade for the course unless a failing grade on the assignment in question results in a failing grade for the course, per the syllabus. Instructors may not administratively remove a student from a course... [\[read more\]](#)

Your voice is important. We hope this guidance is useful should you encounter an issue or have a concern you want to share.

Our team structure is evolving. Some staff roles and responsibilities may change throughout the academic year

REV: 6/20/25, Marilyn Shawe