



## PROCEDURE FOR INSTITUTIONAL POLICY ST-16: STUDENT COMPLAINTS

### 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to administer Institutional Policy ST-16: Student Complaints.

### 2. APPLICABILITY

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine ("WVSOM") students and any student complaints falling under Institutional Policy ST-16: Student Complaints.
- 2.2 For medical student complaints, the "accrediting body" is the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation ("COCA").
- 2.3 For graduate student complaints, the "accrediting body" is the Higher Learning Commission ("HLC").
- 2.4 WVSOM reserves the right to amend this procedure at any time.

### 3. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 3.1 If the final calendar day of any deadline contained in this procedure falls on a weekend, WVSOM-recognized holiday, or other non-business day, the deadline shall extend to the next WVSOM business day.
- 3.2 If a complaint filed under this procedure is against a WVSOM administrator responsible for receiving, investigating, or making determinations concerning the complaint, the WVSOM President shall designate an alternate administrator to perform the duties set forth in this procedure in place of the administrator against whom the complaint was filed.
- 3.3 Non-Retaliation. WVSOM prohibits any act of retaliation toward any student filing a complaint.
- 3.4 Filing of False Complaints. WVSOM will not tolerate the filing of false complaints. Deliberately false and/or malicious complaints will subject the false reporter to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from WVSOM.

### 4. MEDICAL STUDENT COMPLAINTS REGARDING NON-COMPLIANCE WITH COCA ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

- 4.1 Medical students may submit a confidential complaint related to accreditation standards set by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation ("COCA"). All complaints must be in writing and signed and dated by the student and may be submitted directly to COCA. If submitting by email, the subject line should read, "Complaint Regarding COM", and sent to [predoc@osteopathic.org](mailto:predoc@osteopathic.org).
  - 4.1.1 The complaint should be based on a violation of a COCA accreditation standard. The complainant should provide a narrative of the allegation as it relates to accreditation standards and include any documentation to support the allegation. This information must be accurate and well documented.
  - 4.1.2 COCA accreditation standards can be found on the AOA website at: <https://www.osteopathic.org/accreditation/standards/>.
  - 4.1.3 The contact information for COCA in the AOA Office of Predoctoral Education is as follows:

Secretary, Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation  
Division of Predoctoral Education

142 East Ontario Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611-2864  
1-800-621-1773  
predoc@osteopathic.org

- 4.2 Graduate students may submit a confidential complaint related to accreditation standards set by HLC. All complaints must be in writing and signed and dated by the student and may be submitted directly to HLC. Alternatively, graduate student complaints can be made via online form found here: <https://www.hlcommission.org/for-students/file-a-complaint-against-an-institution/>
- 4.2.1 The complaint should be based on a violation of an HLC accreditation standard. The complainant should provide a narrative of the allegation as it relates to accreditation standards and include any documentation to support the allegation. This information must be accurate and well documented.
- 4.2.2 HLC accreditation standards can be found on the HLC website at <https://www.hlcommission.org/accreditation/policies/>.
- 4.3 The contact information for HLC is as follows:
- Higher Learning Commission  
c/o Complaints  
230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500  
Chicago, IL 60604  
<https://www.hlcommission.org/for-students/file-a-complaint-against-an-institution/>
- 4.4 Upon WVSOM's receipt of a complaint on accreditation standards from an accrediting body, the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Academic Resources ("VP of Institutional Effectiveness") and the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean ("VP/Dean") will be sent a copy of the complaint within one (1) business day.
- 4.5 The VP of Institutional Effectiveness shall review the complaint and investigate the allegations of non-compliance. The student complainant and the complaint will be kept confidential during the investigation. The VP of Institutional Effectiveness shall report the results of the investigation to the VP/Dean in writing within ten (10) business days of receiving the complaint from the accrediting body. The report shall include a determination of whether non-compliance with accreditation standards occurred and all relevant facts supporting that determination.
- 4.6 The VP/Dean shall review the VP of Institutional Effectiveness's report and may seek clarification or additional information, if necessary. Within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the initial complaint from the accrediting body, the VP/Dean shall:
- 4.6.1 Make the final decision concerning whether non-compliance with accreditation standards occurred and document that decision in writing;
- 4.6.2 Notify the accrediting body of findings in writing, including a corrective action plan if the complaint had merit.
- 4.6.3 Forward a copy of the written decision to the VP of Institutional Effectiveness and, if applicable, the appropriate WVSOM administrator(s) to address any non-compliance issues; and
- 4.6.4 Provide a written decision letter to the student who filed the complaint and, if applicable, a summary corrective action plan.
- 4.7 If the VP/Dean decides that non-compliance occurred, the appropriate WVSOM administrator(s) shall take immediate steps toward addressing the non-compliance and shall provide written updates to the VP/Dean until the non-compliance issue has been resolved. Once the non-compliance issue has

been resolved, the appropriate administrator(s) shall provide written notification of the final resolution to the VP/Dean. The VP/Dean will work with the accrediting body and ensure that corrective action is taken and any non-compliance is resolved.

- 4.8 Records of the receipt, adjudication, and resolution of any complaints related to accreditation standards shall be forwarded to and kept on file in the Office of the VP/Dean for at least 20 years or as specified by COCA accreditation standards.

## **5. STUDENT COMPLAINTS NOT COVERED BY A SPECIFIC POLICY**

- 5.1 Minor Complaints. Students may file minor complaints concerning a matter not covered by a specific WVSOM policy directly with the appropriate department or the Office of Student Affairs for review and resolution. Such minor complaints may be handled directly by the appropriate department without following the formal complaint procedure set forth in this Section 5.

- 5.2 All Other Complaints. For those complaints not considered minor under Section 5.1 above, students may file a complaint concerning a matter not covered by a specific WVSOM policy to the Office of Student Affairs. All complaints under this Section 5.2 must be in writing and signed and dated by the student.

- 5.2.1 Upon receipt of a complaint meeting the requirements of Section 5.2, either the Associate Dean of Preclerkship Education, the Associate Dean of Clinical Education, or the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs shall, as soon as possible, forward the complaint to the appropriate administrator(s) and the VP/Dean, depending on the subject matter involved in the complaint, for review, investigation, and resolution.

- 5.2.2 The appropriate administrator(s) shall review the complaint, investigate the allegations, and, if warranted, determine any measures necessary to address or resolve the allegations in the complaint. The appropriate administrator(s) shall prepare a written report of the investigation and any determinations made to address or resolve the complaint, including, if applicable, any departmental or procedural changes that should be implemented based on the nature of the complaint. The appropriate administrator(s) shall provide a copy of the written report to the Institutional Continuous Quality Improvement ("CQI") Committee. The Institutional CQI Committee shall assess, as needed, the complaint and written report, including determinations made and any resulting departmental or procedural changes based on the complaint.

- 5.2.3 Within twenty (20) business days of receiving the complaint from either the Associate Dean of Preclerkship Education, the Associate Dean of Clinical Education, or the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs, the appropriate administrator(s) shall provide written notification to the student who filed the complaint of any determinations made to address or resolve the complaint. The appropriate administrator(s) shall forward a copy of the written notification to either the Associate Dean of Preclerkship Education or the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs.

- 5.2.4 Records of the receipt, adjudication, and resolution of a complaint received under this Section 5.2 related to academic matters shall be forwarded to and kept on file in the Office of the VP/Dean. Records of all other complaints received under this Section 5.2 shall be forwarded to and kept on file by the Associate or Assistant Dean of Preclerkship Education. These records shall be kept for seven (7) years from the date of matriculation of the student filing the complaint.

- 5.3 State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement ("SARA"). Students with SARA complaints may, after exhausting WVSOM's internal complaint procedures set forth in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 above, contact the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, which is WVSOM's Home State SARA Portal Entity, for further investigation into the complaint, at <http://www.wvhepc.edu/inside-the-commission/special-initiatives/state-authorization-reciprocity-agreement-sara/>.

Procedure Title: Procedure for Institutional Policy ST-16: Student Complaints

Effective Date: January 29, 2026 Time: 12:00 a.m.

**APPROVED BY:**

Approving Administrator – Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean/Chief Academic Officer:

Gail Swarm, D.O. Date: 2/2/2026 | 11:28 AM EST  
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General Counsel/Chief Legal Officer:

Brian Lutz Date: 2/2/2026 | 11:22 AM EST  
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