

TUFTS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROFESSIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMS:

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES: Policy and Procedure

Statement of Philosophy

The Office of Public Health and Professional Degree Programs (PHPD) is committed to fostering an environment that promotes academic and professional success in students, teachers and administrators at all levels. The achievement of such success is dependent on an environment free of behaviors which can undermine the mission of our institution where an atmosphere of mutual respect, collegiality, fairness, and trust is essential to that mission. Although teachers, students and administrators bear significant responsibility in creating and maintaining this atmosphere, teachers also bear particular responsibility with respect to their evaluative roles relative to student work and with respect to modeling appropriate professional behaviors. Teachers must be ever mindful of this responsibility to conduct themselves professionally in their interactions with their colleagues and those whose education has been entrusted to them. Abusive behavior or mistreatment of anyone in the learning environment is unacceptable. Any student who feels mistreated is entitled to file an informal complaint or a formal grievance to address unacceptable behavior.

Responsibilities in the Teacher-Student Relationship

Responsibilities of Teachers:

- Treat all students with respect and fairness.
- Treat all students equally regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.
- Provide current materials in an effective format for learning.
- Be on time for class.
- Provide timely feedback with constructive suggestions and opportunities for improvement/remediation when needed.
- Assign grades that fairly reflect student performance.

Responsibilities of Students:

- Treat all fellow students and teachers with respect and fairness.
- Treat all fellow students and teachers equally regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Commit the time and energy to studies necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of each course.
- Be on time for class.
- Communicate concerns/suggestions about the curriculum, didactic methods, teachers, or the learning environment in a respectful, professional manner.

Responsibilities of Administrators:

- Treat all teachers and students with respect and fairness.
- Treat all teachers and students equally regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.
- Address all administrative matters in a fair and timely manner.

Behaviors Inappropriate to the Teacher-Student Relationship

Inappropriate behaviors are those that demonstrate disrespect for others or lack of professionalism in interpersonal conduct. Although there is inevitably a subjective element in the witnessing or experiencing of such behaviors, certain actions are clearly inappropriate and will not be tolerated at Tufts University. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Loss of personal civility including shouting, arguing, personal insults or attacks, displays of temper (such as throwing objects);
- Requests for others to perform inappropriate personal services unrelated to the didactic situation at hand;
- Any activities resulting in monetary exchange or profit;
- Grading/evaluation on factors unrelated to performance, effort, attendance, level of achievement or professionalism;
- Unwanted physical contact (e.g. hitting, slapping, kicking, pushing) or the threat of the same;
- Sexual harassment or harassment based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression (see <http://oeo.tufts.edu/policies-procedures/sexual-misconduct-student/> for university policy and procedures);
- Consensual romantic relationships between teachers and students in which the teacher has a role in determining the student's academic progress;
- Discrimination of any form in teaching and/or assessment based upon age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation or sexual identity or expression.

Resources for Advice and Conflict Resolution

In the interest of having all members of the PHPD community perform their duties and obligations in a harmonious and effective manner, PHPD recognizes the importance of prompt and equitable disposition of any complaint or grievance at the lowest possible organizational level utilizing procedures with maximum informality and flexibility. It is strongly encouraged that problem solving and conflict resolution be accomplished, if it can, without requiring that a formal written Grievance be filed in a manner as outlined below. In that spirit, any concerns, problems, and complaints may be discussed without fear of retaliation with various individuals in PHPD including the Course Director, the Program Director or designate the student's Academic Advisor, Associate Dean of PHPD or any member of the PHPD Grievance Committee. Every

effort will be made to resolve the matter informally. Students are also entitled to file a formal Grievance using the procedure set forth below.

Procedures for Handling Allegations of Inappropriate Behavior in the Teacher/Student Context or Other Formal Grievances

If a student is unable to resolve a conflict informally and chooses to file a formal Grievance, this must be done in writing through the Chair of the PHPD Grievance Committee. If at any time during the grievance process it appears that an informal resolution is indicated, it still may be achieved in that manner. Otherwise, the Chair will investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve the matter by working with the appropriate individuals within PHPD. If the complaint cannot be resolved in this manner, the student will be offered the opportunity to put the Grievance in writing. The Chair will forward it to the Associate Dean for PHPD and together they will assign a third (ad hoc) member of the Grievance Committee (appropriate to the Grievance). If any member of the Grievance Committee is named in the Grievance, that person will be excused from service on the Committee and the Dean shall name an alternate. The Grievance Committee will conduct an investigation of its own and make a decision or take appropriate action which will be communicated to the student. If the student is not satisfied, he or she may appeal the decision/action of the Grievance Committee to the Dean of PHPD. The decision of the Dean of PHPD may be further appealed to the Dean of Tufts University School of Medicine, whose decision will be final.

The formal Grievance Process is thus as follows:

- 1) The student fills out the Grievance Form attached here to with adequate clarity and detail to describe the nature of the grievance;
- 2) The student delivers the Grievance Form to the Chair of the PHPD Grievance Committee via mail, email or in person;
- 3) The PHPD Grievance Committee Chair will forward a copy to the Associate Dean of PHPD;
- 4) The Associate Dean of PHPD in collaboration with the chair of the Grievance Committee will select a third (ad hoc) member to join the Grievance Committee;
- 5) The Grievance Committee will conduct an investigation, meet with whomever it deems appropriate to the situation and issue a decision in writing;
- 6) The Chair of the Grievance Committee will deliver the decision to the Student and advise the student of his/her right to appeal to the Dean of PHPD.
- 7) The student will be told that he/she may further appeal the decision to the Dean of TUSM, whose decision will be final.

PHPD Grievance Committee

Chair of Grievance Committee

Second Standing Member

3rd person to be assigned ad hoc by the Associate Dean of PHPD as appropriate to the Grievance

Initial Committee Composition

Chair of Grievance Committee: Amy Lischko, Ph.D.

Second Standing Member, Margie Skeer, Sc.D., M.P.H., M.S.W.

Third member assigned ad hoc by Associate Dean of PHPD

