



OMECO

Graduate Medical Education Policy

Approved by the GMEC (Graduate Medical Education Committee) on August 26, 2025

Effective Date: August 26, 2025

Review Date: August 26, 2025

Next Review Date: August 2030

Policy Title: Trainee Mistreatment Policy

Purpose: To set forth the process to identify and resolve grievances related to Trainee mistreatment

Policy Type: Sponsoring Institution Policy

Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences (“**OSU-CHS**”) and Osteopathic Medical Education Consortium of Oklahoma (“**OMECO**”), as Sponsoring Institutions, have established a policy for Graduate Medical Education (“**GME**”) Programs to follow for a resident or fellow (collectively referred to as a “**Trainee**”) to initiate review of and resolve grievances related to Trainee mistreatment.¹ Mistreatment encompasses actions that involve behaviors or actions, concerning the Program, Program Director, or other faculty member of the Member Institution (“**Mistreatment**”). Examples of Mistreatment include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Requiring a Trainee to perform personal services, such as running errands, babysitting, or other non-educational tasks.
- Exploiting a Trainee’s time and energy, for example working excessive work hours that violate ACGME standards or assigning duties that are not a part of their educational curriculum.
- Arbitrary or punitive uses of evaluation, for example using evaluations as a tool for punishment rather than objective assessment based on academic or non-academic performance.
- Singling a Trainee out for arbitrary or punitive treatment, such as unfairly excluding Trainees from learning opportunities without valid reasoning.

Each Member Institution under OSU-CHS/OMECO sponsorship must have a policy for each of its programs that outlines the procedures for Trainees to submit and for the Program to process Trainee grievances related to Mistreatment at the Program level. The policy must meet the minimum requirements of the

¹ **Note:** This Policy does not pertain to disputes or complaints arising from academic grievances of Trainees as those are governed by the OSU-CHS/OMECO GME Academic and Non-Academic Grievances, Academic Disciplinary Actions and Due Process Policy.

Sponsoring Institution Policy. Trainees are encouraged to bring issues or concerns forward to the GME Committee and their respective Program leadership directly, or through another mechanism that the Trainee is comfortable with.

Trainees may raise and resolve issues without fear of intimidation. The Member Institution, the Program, and the Sponsoring Institution are prohibited from retaliating against a Trainee for reporting a grievance. The DIO maintains an open-door policy for Trainee to address concerns regarding grievances and alleged retaliation.

Mechanisms available to Trainees for communicating and resolving issues related to Mistreatment include the following:

- Grievances related to the work environment or issues concerning the Program or faculty that are not related to disciplinary or academic adverse actions can be addressed by discussing problems with a chief resident, Program Director, departmental chair GME Administration (GME Assistant Director, Executive Director of OMECO/OSU-CHS, DIO and/or Chair of Graduate Medical Education).
- Trainees may submit comments, concerns or grievances anonymously using the GME Anonymous Resident/Fellow Comment Form on the GME website.
- Trainees may report concerns or grievances to any resident or fellow member of the GMEC, who serves as a representative of the Sponsoring Institution.
- Trainees are encouraged to contact members of the Resident Council to express concerns or to provide input regarding educational issues, the work environment, or other areas of concern. A report from Resident Council resident/fellow representatives to the GMEC is a standing item on the GMEC agenda.
- Individual Programs may have additional grievance policies and procedures and will make them available to all residents and faculty.

I. Filing a Complaint

If a Trainee is unable to resolve a grievance informally with their Program, Program Director, or other faculty member or through one of the mechanisms identified above, they may file a complaint in accordance with the provisions described herein. Eligibility to file a complaint is limited to Trainees currently participating in an OSU-CHS/OMECO sponsored Program pursuant to a valid, signed, and active GME agreement.

Former Trainees are not permitted to initiate a complaint pursuant to this Policy. Upon the conclusion of a Trainee's participation in the relevant Program, whether by expiration of the agreement period or other means, the right to initiate or continue a complaint ceases immediately, regardless of the status of any ongoing complaint or other grievance process. If the Trainee's participation in the Program ends while the alleged mistreatment is under consideration, such consideration shall terminate at once, and the decision rendered by the immediately preceding decision-maker shall constitute the final and non-appealable resolution.

II. Procedure for Resolution

A Trainee alleging Mistreatment must submit a written notice to their Program Director detailing the alleged Mistreatment. If the Program Director is the subject of the complaint, the written notice should be addressed to the Chair of the Department or equivalent. Should the Chair of the Department be the subject of the allegation, the Trainee shall submit the complaint to the designated individual(s) of the Member Institution as identified in any Member Institution policies. In the absence of such a designation, the Trainee shall submit the complaint to the DIO. If the DIO is the subject of the complaint, the Trainee must submit the complaint to the chair of the GME Committee or their designee.

All written allegations must be comprehensive and contain all pertinent information as well as supporting evidence regarding the alleged Mistreatment. The Trainee and the Program Director or the applicable individual receiving the complaint as set forth above (the “**Designated Individual**”) shall arrange a mutually convenient meeting to discuss the allegation and pursue an informal resolution. Additional meetings may be convened as required to facilitate a resolution.

Following such meetings and any necessary investigation, the Designated Individual shall communicate their decision to the Trainee via the Trainee’s email within five (5) business days of the final meeting. This decision shall include a determination regarding the occurrence of Mistreatment and any remedial actions to be implemented. Copies of the decision shall be distributed to the Program Director (if not the Designated Individual) and the DIO, who shall present the matter for review at the subsequent quarterly GMEC meeting.

III. Request for Review

Should the Trainee disagree with the decision, they may, within fifteen (15) business days of receipt, submit a written request for review to the DIO, accompanied by all relevant information and supporting evidence. If the DIO is implicated in the complaint or has served as the designated recipient, the request should be submitted to the Chair of the GME Committee. Failure to submit a request for review within fifteen (15) business days results in forfeiture of the right to pursue further action pursuant to this Policy, rendering the initial decision final.

Upon timely receipt of a request for review, the DIO or their designee shall arrange a meeting with the Trainee to discuss the allegations and shall undertake a thorough review of the submitted materials. The DIO or designee may also conduct additional investigation as deemed appropriate. A written determination shall be provided to the Trainee’s email within ten (10) business days following the meeting or the completion of the investigation. This determination shall specify whether mistreatment occurred and detail any remedial measures to be taken.

IV. Appeal Procedure

If the Trainee remains dissatisfied with the determination of the DIO, they may initiate an appeal by submitting a written appeal request, together with all materials pertinent to the complaint, to the DIO within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the DIO’s determination. Failure to submit the appeal within fifteen (15) business days will result in waiver of the right to appeal, and the DIO’s determination shall be deemed final.

Upon receipt of a timely appeal, an Ad Hoc Grievance Subcommittee shall be constituted by the DIO or designee. The Ad Hoc Grievance Subcommittee shall comprise three members of the GME Committee: two Program Directors from other specialty programs and one Trainee representative who is not affiliated with the same Program as the complainant. The Ad Hoc Grievance Subcommittee shall review all relevant

documentation, may request an interview with the Trainee or other individuals involved, and shall complete its review and any meetings within twenty (20) business days of receipt of the appeal.

Following deliberation and investigation, the Ad Hoc Grievance Subcommittee shall render its determination within fifteen (15) business days of the meeting, and shall notify the Trainee, Program Director, and DIO via email. The determination will include a finding regarding the occurrence of Mistreatment and any corresponding remedial actions to be taken. The determination of the Ad Hoc Grievance Subcommittee shall be final.

References

4.3.a.5. grievance and due process; (Core)

4.5. Grievances The Sponsoring Institution must have a policy that outlines the procedures for submitting and processing resident/fellow grievances at the program and institutional level and that minimizes conflicts of interest. (Core)