



Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs

600 Appeals and Complaints

602 Complaints Regarding Accredited Programs

CAAHEP and its CoAs follow due process procedures when written and signed complaints are received by the Commission or a CoA alleging that they or an accredited program are not following established Commission policies or accreditation Standards. CAAHEP and its CoAs maintain indefinitely a record of all complaints received.

Procedure

- A. To receive formal consideration, all complaints shall be submitted in writing and signed. The complaint should demonstrate that reasonable efforts have been made to resolve the complaint, or alternatively that such efforts would be unavailing.
- B. When received by CAAHEP, complaints are transmitted within five working days to the chairperson and staff of the appropriate CoA for consideration. When received by the chair or staff of a CoA, a copy is forwarded to the CAAHEP office within five working days.
- C. Following consultation among staff of the CoA and CAAHEP, the chairperson of the CoA determines whether the complaint relates to the manner in which the program complies with the Standards or follows established accreditation policies.
 1. If the complaint does not relate to the Standards or to established policies, the person initiating the complaint shall be notified accordingly within twenty working days following receipt of the complaint by the CoA. A copy of this correspondence shall be shared with CAAHEP.
 2. If the complaint does relate to the Standards or to established policies, the chair or representative of the CoA shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within twenty working days and share with the filing party a description of the process and policies which pertain to handling such complaints.
 - a) The chair or representative of the CoA shall notify the program director and the chief executive officer of the program sponsor of the substance of the complaint and shall request a preliminary investigation and report on the findings within 30 days of the program sponsor's receipt of the letter of

notice.

- b) The chair or representative of the CoA may request further information or material relative to the complaint from the complaining party, the institution, or other relevant sources.
 - c) The CAAHEP office should receive copies of this correspondence.
 - d) The identity of the complaining party shall be kept confidential, unless the complainant authorizes disclosure of his/her identity, or unless such disclosure is required by legal process in a subsequent proceeding.
- D. On receipt of the responses referred to above, the CoA shall consider the complaint and all relevant information obtained in the course of investigation and formulate an appropriate action according to the following guidelines:
1. If the complaint is determined to be unsubstantiated or unrelated to the Standards or established accreditation policies, the complaining party, officials of the program in question, and the appropriate official of the program sponsor, will be so notified within ten days of the completion of the investigation.
 2. If the investigation reveals the program may not be or may not have been in compliance with the Standards or may not have been following the established accreditation policies, one of two approaches shall be taken.
 - a) The program may submit a report and documentation within thirty days following the investigation demonstrating the manner in which the substantiated complaint has been corrected. Should the CoA be satisfied with the response, the program, program sponsor, and the party filing the complaint should be notified of the CoA's satisfaction with the resolution of the matter and notice that the program's accreditation status remains unaffected by the complaint.
 - b) Should the CoA judge the program or program sponsor's response to the complaint inadequate and lacking in evidence of the program's continuing compliance with the Standards or adherence to accreditation policies, the CoA may request and arrange for a return site visit of the program as soon as reasonably feasible, but not more than thirty days following the investigation. The purpose of the return site visit shall be limited to an investigation of the complaint and the manner in which it affects compliance with the Standards or with accreditation policies. The cost of the return site visit shall be borne by the said CoA.
 - i. Should the CoA, on evidence received through the return site evaluation, consider the program to remain in compliance with the Standards and in adherence with accreditation policies, the program, program sponsor, and the complaining party shall be notified of this assessment and the fact that the program's current accreditation status remains unaffected by the complaint.
 - ii. Should the CoA consider the evidence of the site visit to indicate the

complaint is valid and the program is not in compliance with the Standards or with accreditation policies, the said committee shall recommend a change in accreditation status to CAAHEP.

- E. Should D(2)(b)(ii) pertain, all information regarding the complaint, a full report of its investigation, and the CoA's recommendation shall be transmitted to CAAHEP for consideration and action.
- F. CAAHEP emphasizes that it will not intervene on behalf of individuals or act as a court of appeal for faculty members or students in matters of admission, appointment, promotion or dismissal. It will act only when it believes practices or conditions indicate the program may not be in compliance with the Standards or with established accreditation policies.

603 Complaints Regarding CAAHEP or its Committees on Accreditation

CAAHEP follows due process procedures when written and signed complaints are received by the Commission alleging that CAAHEP or one of its Committees on Accreditation have not followed established policies or accreditation Standards.

Procedure

- A. Any individual may file a signed complaint about CAAHEP or one of its Committees on Accreditation. Complaints can refer to Standards, policies, or the actions of staff or volunteers, but must involve issues other than concern about a specific program.
- B. The complaint must state the specific nature of what is being complained about. It must include supporting evidence.
- C. The CAAHEP Office will acknowledge the complaint within two weeks of its receipt. Processing of a complaint will not result in the suspension of any accreditation recommendations or actions that may be in process unless there is credible evidence of serious and ongoing illegal conduct.
- D. If a complaint is against a Committee on Accreditation, its staff or volunteers, it will be reviewed by the CAAHEP Office to determine if it falls within the jurisdiction of CAAHEP. If the subject matter of the complaint is not within the jurisdiction of CAAHEP, the complainant will be notified immediately.
- E. If additional information is needed it will be requested of the complainant, the CoA, and other parties. The CoA will be permitted to submit evidence rebutting the allegations in the complaint. Once all materials have been received the complaint

will be referred to the CAAHEP Governance Committee.

1. Once referred to the Governance Committee, a meeting of the Committee will be convened within 60 days to consider the complaint.
 2. The Governance Committee will review all the materials and will determine whether the allegations of the complaint are substantiated by a preponderance of the evidence. They will make a recommendation to the CAAHEP Board of Directors either to render a determination that the complaint is valid and that appropriate measures (remedial or otherwise) are to be taken, or to dismiss the complaint.
 3. The final determination by the Board of Directors will be communicated to the Committee on Accreditation and the complainant within 3 months of receipt of the complaint.
- F. If a complaint is against CAAHEP, its staff or volunteers, the CAAHEP Office or the CAAHEP Governance Committee will determine if it falls within the jurisdiction of CAAHEP. If the subject matter of the complaint is not within the jurisdiction of CAAHEP, the complainant will be notified immediately. If additional information is needed it will be requested of the complainant and other parties. Once all the materials have been received, a special panel of three Commissioners will be appointed by the CAAHEP Governance Committee within 30 days to review the complaint.
1. Once referred to this panel, a meeting will be convened within 60 days to consider the complaint.
 2. The Special Panel of Commissioners will review all the materials and will determine whether the allegations of the complaint are substantiated by a preponderance of the evidence. If the complaint is determined to be valid, the Special Panel will determine what appropriate measures (remedial or otherwise) are to be taken.
 3. The Special Panel's determination will be final and will be communicated to the CAAHEP Board of Directors and the complainant within four (4) months of receipt of the complaint.