Complaints Against CAAHEP or its Committees on Accreditation (CoAs)

Any person may file a signed complaint about CAAHEP or its Committees on Accreditation (CoAs). Complaints about CAAHEP or its Committees on Accreditation, alleging violations of CAAHEP or CoA policies, procedures, and codes of conduct by board members, staff, or volunteers, will be considered by CAAHEP.

Anonymity will be honored only for good cause and at CAAHEP’s discretion in these cases. The person against whom the complaint is lodged will not participate in any review, investigation, or decision related to the complaint. The Governance Committee of CAAHEP is responsible for reviewing such complaints. It will fairly and equitably review and apply unbiased judgment to any complaint and take follow-up action, as appropriate, based on the results of its review.

CAAHEP and its CoAs follow due process procedures when written and signed complaints are received by the Commission or a CoA alleging that either organization may be in violation of CAAHEP or CoA policies.

A. **Required elements of a Complaint against CAAHEP or its CoAs**

1. submitted in writing and signed by the complainant
2. sets forth allegations related to CAAHEP or its CoAs
3. identifies volunteers or staff involved
4. includes any available information regarding efforts to resolve the complaint
5. sets forth and clearly describes the specific nature of the complaint
6. describes the latest event(s) relevant to the complaint, which must have occurred within 120 days of the date the complaint is filed
7. includes supporting documentation to support the allegations, which must be submitted independently of any other documentation submitted to CAAHEP
8. identifies the complainant, includes the complainant’s consent to participate in the CAAHEP complaint process and permits the disclosure of all information related to the complaint to CAAHEP, its representatives, CAAHEP CoAs, their representatives, and the respondent(s)

If a complaint is unsigned or if the complainant does not consent to the complaint process or disclosures outlined in this Complaint Policy, CAAHEP will review the
complaint but may, at its discretion and with notice to the complainant, elect not to process the complaint. In the case of directors, officers, and employees who report violations or suspected violations according to the CAAHEP Whistleblower policy (published in the CAAHEP Employee Handbook), violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

B. Procedure for Filing a Complaint against CAAHEP or its CoAs

1. Complaints or inquiries about filing complaints are directed to the CAAHEP Executive Director (ED) at:

   CAAHEP
   9355 – 113t St. N., #7709
   Seminole, FL 33775
   ExecutiveDirector@caahep.org

   All complaint and policy materials are available through the CAAHEP website.

2. The complaint should be submitted on the CAAHEP/CoA Complaint Form found on the CAAHEP website. If a complaint is not submitted via the Complaint Form, CAAHEP staff will contact the complainant and request this be done if possible. The complaint should include a narrative not exceeding ten (10) pages in length with documentation to substantiate the complaint allegations. Every effort should be made to avoid the submission of duplicate information.

3. The signed consent on the Complaint Form authorizes CAAHEP to forward a copy of the complaint, including the identification of the complainant, to the subject of the complaint (subject).

C. CAAHEP Procedure for Review and Action of CAAHEP or CoA Complaints

1. Once it is determined that the complaint has all the required elements, CAAHEP staff will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within ten working days. Receipt and processing of a complaint against CAAHEP or its CoAs will not result in suspending any accreditation activities that may be in progress.

2. In all cases except complaints against CAAHEP staff, the executive director will collect additional information, if necessary, and conduct an initial investigation to determine whether the complaint falls within CAAHEP policy and is sufficiently well supported to be referred to CAAHEP. The executive director will complete this initial review within forty-five (45) days of receipt of the complaint.
3. The initial review of the complaint will determine whether it sets forth information or allegations that suggest that a CAAHEP or its CoAs may not be violating policies established by CAAHEP and its CoAs. If additional information or clarification is required, CAAHEP will send a request to the complainant. If the requested information is not received from the complainant within 15 days, CAAHEP will understand that to mean that the complainant no longer intends to pursue the complaint, and it may not be investigated by CAAHEP.

4. If CAAHEP determines after the initial review of the complaint that the information or allegations do not demonstrate that CAAHEP or its CoAs are in violation of policies established by CAAHEP or its CoAs the complaint may be closed. The complainant will be notified accordingly within twenty working days after receipt of the complaint by CAAHEP.

5. If CAAHEP determines after the initial review of the complaint that the information or allegations suggest but do not provide enough information to ascertain that CAAHEP or its CoA may be violating policies established by CAAHEP or its CoAs, the subject of the complaint (CAAHEP or CoA) will receive a Notice of Complaint. The notice of complaint will summarize the allegations and notify the subject that an investigation into the matter will occur.

During the investigation, CAAHEP may request information or material relative to the complaint from the complaining party, the subject (CAAHEP or CoA), or other relevant sources.

6. If the complaint is related to a CoA, the executive director will share the investigation results with the CAAHEP Governance Committee. The Governance Committee will meet within 30 days of the conclusion of the investigation to determine if the information suggests that a CoA (including volunteers) may be in violation of CAAHEP standards or policies.

a. If the Governance Committee concludes that the allegations do not establish that there has been a violation of CAAHEP policies, the complaint will be closed, and no further action will be required. The CoA and complainant will be notified of this decision within ten (10) days of the completion of the investigation.

7. If the complaint is related to CAAHEP, the executive director will share the investigation results with a Special Panel of Commissioners appointed by the Governance Committee. The Special Panel will meet within 30 days to determine if the information suggests that CAAHEP may be in violation of its standards or policies, procedures, and codes of conduct by board members, staff, or volunteer.
a. If the Special Panel determines that the evidence substantiates the allegations of the complaint, a notice of a receipt of the complaint will be provided to the subject, summarizing the allegations, requiring CAAHEP to respond to the findings within thirty (30) days of receipt of the complaint.

b. After the response from the subject is received, the Special Panel of Commissioners will make the final determination which will be communicated to the parties within 45 days.

8. If the complaint is against the CAAHEP staff, the complaint will be referred to the Executive Director and Governance Committee for review and determination as to whether the complaint falls within the authority of CAAHEP. The Executive Director and Governance Committee will conduct an investigation of the complaint and may request additional information from the complainant and other parties. If the Executive Director is the subject of the complaint, the Executive Director will not participate in the review or investigation of the complaint, and the complaint will be submitted directly to the Governance Committee for consideration.

a. If the subject matter of the complaint is not within the authority of CAAHEP, the complainant will be notified immediately.

b. If the subject matter of the complaint is within the authority of CAAHEP, a Governance Committee meeting will be convened to consider the complaint within 60 days of receipt of the complaint and supporting documentation. The Governance Committee will determine whether the allegations of the complaint are substantiated. If the complaint is valid, a copy of the complaint will be submitted to the subject, who will be given thirty (30) days to respond.

c. After the response from the subject is received, the CAAHEP Board of Directors will make the final determination. The CAAHEP Board of Directors will determine what appropriate measures (remedial or otherwise) are to be taken. The decision of the CAAHEP Board of Directors is final and will be communicated to all parties within four (4) months of receipt of the complaint.