

Reporting Graduate Student Concerns through the School of Medicine:

A graduate student with a concern that affects their training should explore resolutions with the relevant course director, advisor or program director unless there are potential conflicts of interest.

If a resolution cannot be found via discussions with (or if potential conflicts of interest exist with) the course director, advisor or program director, a student should report their concern in person or in writing to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education (ADGE) in the School of Medicine.

To clarify the situation, the ADGE may discuss student concerns with the student and – while considering potential conflicts of interest – other parties involved such as course directors, advisors, and program directors. The ADGE may also discuss student concerns with the Graduate Education Executive Committee (a committee of 4-6 faculty members with leadership or other roles in graduate education in the School of Medicine), an office within VCU or another office outside of VCU.

The ADGE will consider feedback from all parties above, render a decision regarding the concern, and communicate outcomes to the student and other parties involved within 15 working days*. Several outcomes such as the following are possible:

- The ADGE will make a student or other parties aware of, clarify, or direct individuals to follow existing VCU, Graduate School, School of Medicine, or program policies related to the concern.
- The ADGE will direct a student or faculty member to another VCU resource to help address the concern.
- The ADGE will refer the concern to another VCU or other office.

Appealing an outcome: Students may appeal an outcome in response to a reported concern by submitting to the ADGE a written notice outlining the rationale for the appeal within 10 working days* of being notified of the outcome and being provided this appeal process. Within 10 working days* of receiving an appeal, the ADGE will convene an *ad hoc* committee composed of 3 School of Medicine faculty members (one designated as the non-voting chair) and 2 graduate students. The *ad hoc* committee members will not otherwise have been directly involved with the concern and will not be in the same department or graduate program as the appealing student.

The appealing student can challenge committee membership with cause within 5 working days*. The ADGE will determine if there is sufficient cause to change committee membership and will either proceed with the original or a revised committee, accordingly.

The *ad hoc* committee will review the appeal materials submitted by the student and may discuss the concern with the student and other parties involved. The *ad hoc* committee will formally vote on the appeal (in a blinded fashion) and submit to the ADGE a written decision regarding the appeal within 30 working days*. An outcome with 3 or more supporting votes will be considered the decision of the *ad hoc* committee. If the *ad hoc* committee cannot reach a decision based on 3 or more supporting votes, the committee will provide a summary of their deliberations including votes to the Dean of the School of Medicine who will make a final decision.

The ADGE will communicate the final decision regarding the appeal to the appealing student and other parties involved within 5 working days*.

Students should consult the VCU Graduate Bulletin for additional resources.

**Exceptions to this time-line can be applied by the ADGE in extenuating circumstances.*

Approved by the School of Medicine Graduate Programs Committee: 2023.02
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