



**Policy Title:**  
Student Grievances Policy and Procedure

**Policy Identifier:**  
A3.14g

<b>Prepared by:</b> PA Program Faculty	Creation Date: 01/01/2026
<b>Reviewed by:</b> PA Program Executive Committee	Review Date: 01/01/2026
<b>Approved by:</b> PA Program Executive Committee	Effective Date: 01/01/2026
<b>Category:</b> Student Rights and Conduct Policies	

**ARC-PA Standards**

A3.14g

**Scope**

This policy applies to all students enrolled in the University of South Carolina School of Medicine Columbia (USC SOMC) Physician Assistant (PA) Program and pertains to both academic and non-academic grievances, including concerns involving faculty, staff, peers, or program operations.

**Policy Statement**

The primary objective of the grievance procedure is to ensure that student concerns are addressed promptly, equitably, and with respect for all parties involved. Each student shall have the opportunity to bring academic and non-academic complaints to the attention of the university administration with the assurance that every concern will receive fair and impartial consideration.

The USC SOMC PA Program is committed to maintaining a professional and supportive environment where students feel empowered to voice their concerns, seek guidance, and pursue fair resolution of conflicts or grievances.

**Reason for Policy**

To ensure compliance with ARC-PA Standard A3.14g by establishing formal procedures for resolving student grievances in a fair, consistent, and timely manner. This policy promotes professionalism, transparency, and due process in handling student concerns.

**Definitions**

- **Grievance:** A formal or informal complaint raised by a student regarding academic, professional, or administrative issues that the student believes are unfair, discriminatory, or otherwise improper.
- **Informal Resolution:** A process for resolving concerns directly and amicably before filing a formal grievance.



- **Formal Grievance:** A written complaint submitted to higher-level administration for investigation and resolution.
- **Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC):** The program committee that may review academic or professionalism-related grievances as referred by the Program Director.

## Procedures

### 1. Faculty Advisor Role

- Each student is assigned a faculty advisor who serves as their primary point of contact for academic, professional, and personal guidance.
- Faculty advisors assist students in addressing concerns related to coursework, clinical experiences, or interpersonal conflicts.
- Advisors provide mentorship, guidance, and may serve as mediators when conflicts arise.
- If issues remain unresolved, advisors refer the student to the Program Director or appropriate committee for further review.
- Students must meet with their faculty advisor at least once per semester and are encouraged to request additional meetings as needed.

### 2. Conflict Resolution and Grievance Procedures

#### A. Informal Resolution (Program Level)

Students are encouraged to pursue informal resolution whenever possible.

Informal resolution may occur at any of the following levels:

**a. Direct Resolution:**

The student should first attempt to resolve the issue directly with the individual(s) involved through professional communication.

**b. Faculty Advisor Involvement:**

If direct resolution is unsuccessful or uncomfortable, the student should contact their faculty advisor for assistance. The advisor may facilitate discussion, mediate, or provide guidance.

**c. Program Director Resolution:**

If the issue persists or involves the faculty advisor, the student should present the concern to the Program Director.

**d. Committee Review:**

When appropriate, the Program Director or advisor may refer the matter to the SPPC or another relevant committee for review and recommendation.

Informal resolution is considered complete when all reasonable efforts have been made to resolve the concern or when a written record (such as an email summary) documents the outcome.

#### B. Formal Resolution

If informal methods fail or the student believes the issue requires higher-level review:

- The student must submit a written grievance to either the Assistant Dean for Clinical Graduate Programs or the Office of Student Advocacy.
- The written grievance should include:



- Student’s full name and USC ID number
- Description of the concern and relevant facts
- Steps taken to resolve the issue informally
- Desired resolution or outcome

Full university grievance procedures are available in the [USC Student Grievance Policy and Procedures](#).

### **Professionalism and Confidentiality**

- All grievances are handled with professionalism, fairness, and confidentiality.
- Retaliation against any student for filing a grievance or participating in the process is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.
- The program and university are committed to protecting students from bias, discrimination, or adverse treatment as a result of submitting a grievance.

### **Enforcement and Accountability**

The Program Director and Assistant Dean for Clinical Graduate Programs are responsible for ensuring that student grievances are addressed promptly and documented appropriately. All formal grievances are retained in accordance with institutional recordkeeping policies.

### **Contacts**

Program Director  
USC School of Medicine Columbia  
Physician Assistant Program

### **History**

<b>Date of Change</b>	<b>Change</b>
01/01/2026	Policy drafted into new template.