

BUCOM: Accreditation Complaint Policy and Procedure for Commission of Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA)

Policy Information			
Policy# :	COMBOD.1019	Reviewed Date(s):	9/28/2022
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Responsible College Administrator:	Provost	President Council Approved Date:	9/29/2022

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide contact information for the Commission of Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA).
- 1.2. To establish that Baptist University College of Osteopathic Medicine (BUCOM) allows individuals to file confidential complaints regarding any issues of non-compliance with any accreditation standard(s) and the process by which a complaint can be filed. Complaints will be resolved through a fair adjudication process, will be treated confidentially, and without any retaliation to the complainant. All records shall be maintained for a period of seven years.

2. Policy

- 2.1. The Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) recognizes the value of information provided by students, employees, and others in determining whether a college of medicine's (COM) performance is consistent with COCA standards for obtaining or maintaining accreditation.
- 2.2. COCA is committed to ensuring that member institutions maintain appropriate grievance procedures and standards of procedural fairness and that these are applied appropriately and consistently.
- 2.3. A COM must publish policies and procedures that include a confidential accreditation standard complaint resolution process.
 - 2.3.1.1. These must include a description of how complaints can be filed, how complaints are investigated and resolved using a standardized adjudication process, how retaliation is not tolerated, and how records are retained.
 - 2.3.1.2. The established accreditation standard complaint filing process must include a system for filing confidential complaints with the COCA and provide contact information for the COCA.
 - 2.3.1.3. Complaints will be resolved through a fair adjudication process, will be treated confidentially, and without any retaliation to the complainant. All records shall be maintained for a period of seven years.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. None.

4. Procedure

- 4.1. The procedures set forth below apply only to complaints directly involving BUCOM educational program(s) and non-compliance with relevant accreditation standards.
 - 4.1.1.1. It neither address nor precludes complaints under other Baptist Health Sciences University policies or procedures (e.g., the Honor Code, the Code of Conduct, the Sexual Assault Policy, the Policy against Sexual Harassment and Discrimination, etc.).
 - 4.1.1.2. The Dean may consult with legal counsel as needed based on the nature of the complaint.
 - 4.1.1.3. Complaints not directly implicating non-compliance with accreditation standard(s) or not governed by other policies listed above should be addressed to:
 - 4.1.1.3.1. The Director of Student Affairs if the complaint involves student behavior;
 - 4.1.1.3.2. The department chair, director, senior associate dean or dean if the complaint involves a faculty member; or
 - 4.1.1.3.3. The appropriate supervisor if the complaint involves behavior of a staff member.
- 4.2. For students wishing to file a complaint, the Director of Admissions and Student Affairs is available to provide counsel and direction. For employees wishing to file a complaint, the HR department is available to help.
 - 4.2.1.1. If an individual has an accreditation-related concern and wishes to file a formal complaint regarding non-compliance of the COM's educational program, the individual should submit the complaint in writing to the dean. If the complaint directly involves the dean, the complaint may be submitted to Baptist Health Sciences University (BHSU) Provost. The written complaint may be submitted to the appropriate office in person, sent by registered U.S. mail, or e-mailed from the employee or student's official BHSU account.
 - 4.2.1.2. Employees and students also have the option to file a complaint regarding a COCA accreditation standard directly to the COCA (See Section 4.5.1.3).
 - 4.2.1.3. The written complaint should name the specific accrediting agency and list the specific accreditation standard(s) which is in suspected non-compliance. It should describe in detail the circumstances of the matter and explain how BUCOM is not adhering to the accreditation standard(s).
 - 4.2.1.4. The complainant must provide their name and official email address to allow further communication about the complaint. If the complaint is sent by registered U.S. mail, it must also include the student or employee's local mailing address.
 - 4.2.1.5. All written complaints must be dated and signed. A complaint submitted by e-mail is deemed to be signed by the employee from whose e-mail account the complaint is submitted.
 - 4.2.1.6. BUCOM will protect the integrity and validity of the accreditation complaint review process by maintaining appropriate confidentiality and approaching the investigation from a context of impartial discovery.
- 4.3. Process of Adjudication and Resolution
 - 4.3.1.1. The dean to whom the complaint is submitted will acknowledge receipt within five (5) business days of receipt of the written complaint. That acknowledgement will be made via email sent to the complainant's official BHSU account.
 - 4.3.1.2. The dean may delegate responsibility for investigating the complaint, responding to the complaint, or resolving the matter to a designated administrator, faculty, or staff member.

- 4.3.1.3. Once the initial complaint has been formally acknowledged by email, the dean or their designee will respond to the complainant no later than ten (10) business days after acknowledged receipt of the complaint. The written response involve a substantive response to the complaint, information about what steps are being taken to address the complaint, or planned further investigation of the complaint.
- 4.3.1.4. If further investigation is needed, the complainant will be informed of the steps being taken. Upon completion of the investigation, a written response will be provided to the complainant within ten (10) business days through their BHSU official email.
- 4.4. Appeal Process
 - 4.4.1.1. The individual filing the complaint may appeal the decision of the dean within ten (10) business days of when the response is issued. The appeal shall be to the Provost of BHSU. The appeal must be in writing, directly addressed to the Provost, signed by the individual, and thoroughly explain the basis for the appeal. All evidentiary documents must be provided.
 - 4.4.1.2. The Provost or designee will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within five (5) business days via email.
 - 4.4.1.3. The Provost will adjudicate the appeal and send a response by email within fifteen (15) business days after acknowledged receipt of the appeal. The Provost may request additional information and/or an interview which must be conducted within five (5) business days.
 - 4.4.1.4. The decision of the BHSU Provost shall be final.
 - 4.4.1.5. Retention of Records
 - 4.4.1.5.1. A record of each complaint and its resolution, including any decision on appeal, shall be retained by the office of the BHSU President for a period of seven years.
 - 4.4.1.6. Non-Retaliation
 - 4.4.1.6.1. BHSU/BUCOM adheres to a non-retaliation policy that protects any individual making a complaint. BHSU/BUCOM will not permit any employee or student to retaliate in any manner. Any form of retaliation or retribution by a student or employee towards a complainant or other involved party is strictly prohibited.
- 4.5. Filing a Complaint to the Accrediting Agency
 - 4.5.1.1. If the complaint resolution process is not handled appropriately by BUCOM, or if the outcome of the complaint(s) is not satisfactory, the complainant has the option to file a confidential complaint directly to the accrediting agency.
 - 4.5.1.2. Complaints should: (1) be against an accredited educational program or program in candidacy status; (2) relate to a specific accreditation standard(s); (3) include documentation showing that the institutional complaint process was completed; and (4) provide explicit reasons why the institutional complaint process was unsatisfactory.
 - 4.5.1.3. All complaints must be submitted in writing and sent to the appropriate accrediting agency listed below. The complainant's name and contact information must be included. [COCA-Complaint-Form.pdf \(osteopathic.org\)](#)



**BAPTIST HEALTH
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5. Related Information

- 5.1. Standard 2 - Element 2.4 - Accreditation Complaint Policy and Procedures
- 5.2. [COCA Complaint Review Procedures](#)