COMPLAINTS REGARDING COCA ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

ACCREDITATION COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURE[1]

Complaint Policy

Faculty, staff, students, and members of the general public have an opportunity to file complaints regarding any issues of non-compliance regarding any accreditation standard(s) directly with LUCOM or its accreditation body, the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA). The complainant will provide evidence that an effort has been made to resolve the problem through the recommended route with the COM administration and will include information about all other actions initiated to resolve the problems.

Complaints filed directly with LUCOM's Office of the Dean are permanently retained, and shall be maintained for a period of seven years by the Provost. Complaints will be resolved through a fair adjudication process, will be treated confidentially, to the extent possible, and without any retaliation to the complainant.

For individuals filing an accreditation complaint directly with LUCOM, please refer to the procedure outlined below. For individuals filing an accreditation complaint directly with the COCA, please refer to the procedures outlined in the following link: COCA Complaint Procedures. Individuals can also access a public COCA complaint form.

Complaint Procedure

When filing a complaint directly with LUCOM, the procedures set forth below apply only to complaints that directly implicate LUCOM's educational program(s) and its non-compliance with relevant accreditation standards. All complaints will be addressed confidentially by the COM's executive leadership and applicable stakeholders as directed by the Dean, guided by the sensitivities of the complaint.

1. If an individual has an accreditation-related concern and wishes to file a formal complaint regarding non-compliance of accreditation standards of LUCOM's educational program the individual should submit the complaint in writing to the Dean of the program. If the complaint directly involves the Dean, then the complaint may be submitted to the Provost of Liberty University. The written complaint may be submitted in person to the appropriate office, submitted by U.S. mail, or e-mailed from the student's or employee's LU e-mail account, or by the individuals' email account if they are the general public.
2. The written complaint should indicate the specific accrediting agency and the specific accreditation standard(s) that is in non-compliance. It should describe in detail the circumstances of the matter and explain how the matter directly implicates the LUCOM program to the accreditation standard(s). The complaint should explicitly state which accreditation standard(s) is being implicated.
3. The complainant must provide their name and email address to allow further communication about the complaint. Official LU email address must be used if an employee or student. If the complaint is submitted by U.S. mail, it must also provide the individual's mailing address. To the extent possible, LUCOM will redact name and address to maintain confidentiality.
4. The written complaint must be dated and signed. A complaint submitted by e-mail is deemed to be signed by the student or employee from whose e-mail account the complaint is submitted. A complaint submitted by email by the general public is deemed to be signed by the individual if they include their full name.

Process of Adjudication and Resolution

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.
2. The Dean to whom the complaint is submitted may delegate responsibility for investigating the complaint, responding to the complaint, or resolving the matter to another administrator, faculty member, or staff member. All complaints will be addressed confidentially, guided by the sensitivities of the complaint.
3. Once the complaint has been acknowledged, the Dean or designee will respond to the complainant no later than ten (10) business days after acknowledged receipt of the complaint. The written response will either be a substantive response to the complaint or information about what steps are being taken to address the complaint or to further investigate the complaint.
4. If further investigation is needed, the complainant will be informed of the steps being taken. Upon completion of the investigation, a response will be provided to the complainant within ten (10) business days.

Appeal Process

1. The individual filing the complaint may appeal the decision of the Dean within ten (10) business days of issuance of the response. The appeal shall be to the Provost of Liberty University. The appeal must be in writing addressed to the Provost, signed by the individual, and it must thoroughly explain the basis for the appeal. All evidentiary documents should be provided.
2. The Provost or designee will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within five (5) business days via email.
3. The Provost will adjudicate the appeal and send a response within fifteen (15) business days after acknowledged receipt of the appeal. The Provost may request additional information and/or interview which must be provided within five (5) business days.
4. The decision of the Provost shall be final.

Retention of Records

A record of each complaint and its resolution, including any decision on appeal, shall be retained confidentially by the office of the Provost for a period of seven years and permanently by LUCOM's Office of the Dean.

Non-Retaliation

LUCOM maintains a non-retaliation policy that protects any individual making a complaint. LUCOM will not permit any employee or student to retaliate in any manner.

Filing a Complaint to the Accrediting Agency

If the complaint resolution process was not handled appropriately by LUCOM, or if the outcome of the complaint(s) was not satisfactory, the complainant has the option to file a confidential complaint directly to the accrediting agency as described below.

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 that demonstrates that the institutional complaint process was completed, and (4) provide explicit reasons why the institutional complaint process was unsatisfactory.

All complaints must be submitted in writing and sent to the appropriate accrediting agency listed below. Your name and contact information must be included.

Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA)
142 E. Ontario St. Chicago, IL 60611-2864
PH: (312) 202-8174
predoc@osteopathic.org
For further information, please refer to COCA's Complaint Procedures.

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[1] 1.4 Governance & Program Policies, 2.4 Accreditation Standard Complaint Policies and Procedures