

Standard No. 20: Student Complaints Policy: The college or school must produce and make available to students a complaints policy that includes procedures to be followed in the event of a written complaint related to one of the accreditation standards, student rights to due process, and appeal mechanisms. Students must receive information on how they can submit a complaint to ACPE for unresolved issues on a complaint related to the accreditation standards.¹

1) **Documentation and Data:**

Use a check ☒ to indicate the information provided by the college or school and used to self-assess this standard:

Required Documentation and Data (Uploads):

☒ Copy of policy and procedures for handling complaints related to ACPE Standards Appendix 20A

Required Documentation for On-Site Review:

☒ The Student Complaints File

Data Views and Standardized Tables:

☒ AACP Standardized Survey: Student – Question 61 Appendix 20B

Optional Documentation and Data (Uploads):

☐ Other documentation or data that provides supporting evidence of compliance with the standard

2) **College or School's Self-Assessment:** Use the checklist below to self-assess the program on the requirements of the standard and accompanying guidelines:

	S	N.I.	U
The college or school produces and makes available to students a complaints policy that includes procedures to be followed in the event of a written complaint related to one of the accreditation standards, student rights to due process, and appeal mechanisms.	●	○	○
Students receive information on how they can submit a complaint to ACPE for unresolved issues on a complaint related to the accreditation standards. ²	●	○	○
The college or school includes information about the complaint policy during student orientation.	●	○	○
The college or school maintains a chronological record of student complaints related to matters covered by the accreditation standards and allows inspection of the records during on-site evaluation visits by ACPE.	●	○	○
The college or school informs ACPE during an on-site evaluation if any of the student complaints related to the accreditation standards have led to legal proceedings, and the outcomes of such proceedings.	●	○	○

3) **College or School's Comments on the Standard:** The college or school's descriptive text and supporting evidence should specifically address the following. Use a check ☒ to indicate that the topic has been adequately addressed. Use the text box provided to describe: areas of the program that are noteworthy, innovative, or exceed the expectation of the standard; the college or school's self-assessment of its issues and its plans for addressing them, with relevant timelines; findings that highlight areas of concern along with actions or recommendations to address them; and additional actions or strategies to further advance the quality of the program. For plans that have already been initiated to address an issue, the college or school should provide evidence that the plan is working. Wherever possible and applicable, survey data should be broken down by demographic and/or branch/campus/pathway groupings, and comments provided on any notable findings.

☒ How the complaint policy is communicated to students

☒ The number of complaints since the last accreditation visit and the nature of their resolution

☒ How the college or school is applying the guidelines for this standard in order to comply with the intent and expectation of the standard

¹ Refer also to ACPE Complaints Policy at <http://www.acpe-accredit.org/complaints/default.asp>

² Refer also to ACPE Complaints Policy at <http://www.acpe-accredit.org/complaints/default.asp>

- ☒ Any other notable achievements, innovations or quality improvements
- ☒ Interpretation of the data from the applicable AACP standardized survey questions, especially notable differences from national or peer group norms

Student Complaint Policies and Procedures

Information regarding student complaint processes relative to accreditation standards is included in the College Pharmacy Handbook and the Policy Manual. In 2010, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs & Faculty Development (ADSA&FD) drafted a formal Student Complaint Policy 3.28, which was approved by the faculty in 2011 (Appendix 20A). This policy not only identifies the grounds for student complaints, but also provides rules and timelines regarding the submission and resolution of the complaint, including due process on the part of the student. Students are typically informed about this policy and all College policies during orientation each year.

In addition to contacting ACPE, students with complaints also have the ability to take those complaints directly to the ADSA&FD, or indirectly to said individual through the student's representatives (organizational and/or class representative) to the Dean's Liaison Committee (DLC). The ADSA&FD, where appropriately acting as the student's advocate, takes steps to address the complaint. A part (but not the entirety) of such remediation necessarily involves actively educating the student about the Complaint Policy and the student's rights and responsibilities under such policy. If a complaint is about the Student Affairs office, then the matter is referred directly to the dean of the College, who performs similar activities to address the complaint.

The DLC meets monthly, and time is allocated to hearing complaints and discussing the resolution of past complaints. Approximately one minor non-ACPE accreditation complaint is brought forward per month to the DLC. Generally, these complaints are small in magnitude and are resolved with minor effort/modification. A file for complaints related to ACPE accreditation has been created, is continuously maintained, and is available to the accreditation team, according to the standards and stipulations identified above. To date, no such complaints have been filed. Thus, there are no legal proceedings or other such information to report.

AACP Student Survey Questions

Prior to the formal complaint policy, students were merely referred to the ACPE website and there were no explicit set of procedures governing dates, deadlines and due process. This is probably the genesis of the 2008 AACP Student Survey responses to questions 58 and 59 (questions 60

and 61 in the later editions of the Survey), which were slightly below peer schools and national averages (Appendix 20B). The process of creating Student Complaint Policy 3.28 (both leading up to and after its drafting) may account for increases in student responses to these questions (relative to peers and national averages) in 2011.

- 4) **College or School's Final Self-Evaluation: Self-assess** how well the program is in compliance with the standard by putting a check in the appropriate box ☒:

Compliant	Compliant with Monitoring	Partially Compliant	Non Compliant
No factors exist that compromise current compliance; no factors exist that, if not addressed, may compromise future compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No factors exist that compromise current compliance; factors exist that, if not addressed, may compromise future compliance /or Factors exist that compromise current compliance; an appropriate plan exists to address the factors that compromise compliance; the plan has been fully implemented; sufficient evidence already exists that the plan is addressing the factors and will bring the program into full compliance. 	Factors exist that compromise current compliance; an appropriate plan exists to address the factors that compromise compliance and it has been initiated; the plan has not been fully implemented and/or there is not yet sufficient evidence that the plan is addressing the factors and will bring the program into compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factors exist that compromise current compliance; an appropriate plan to address the factors that compromise compliance does not exist or has not yet been initiated /or Adequate information was not provided to assess compliance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compliant	<input type="checkbox"/> Compliant with Monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Compliant	<input type="checkbox"/> Non Compliant

- 5) **Recommended Monitoring: If applicable, briefly describe issues or elements of the standard that may require further monitoring.**

NA

Appendices

Appendix 20A: Student Complaint Policy 3.28

Appendix 20B: AACP Survey Data

STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), at the behest of the U.S. Secretary of Education, requires all accredited pharmacy programs to establish, implement and assess a formal complaint policy for students. More specifically, all accredited colleges or schools of pharmacy must establish a comprehensive policy with a simple set of procedures whereby all students enrolled in the College (and the pharmacy program in particular) can submit and resolve a complaint about the educational process. While such procedures do not always produce an outcome that meets the student's preferences, they do ensure that students have access to an equitable and efficient means to remediate their complaints. The complete set of ACPE standards regarding student complaint policies can be found on pages 32-33 (Standard 20) of the following website

http://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/ACPE_Revised_PharmD_Standards_Adopted_Jan152006.pdf

The NDSU College of Pharmacy, Nursing and Allied Sciences takes student complaints very seriously. Our goal is to ensure that students have access to transparent, due process in a manner that leads to an appropriate resolution of the complaint. To that end, a copy of the NDSU College of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Allied Sciences policy relating to this issue is available on its website at www.ndsu.edu/pharmacy. Students who have difficulty accessing this webpage may also obtain a copy of the complaint policy in the Dean's Office (Sudro Hall 123). A discussion of this policy shall take place annually during the orientation process for first professional year students.

Each student complaint will be appropriately documented and investigated. A chronological record of each complaint, including the nature of the complaint, written records of the complaint procedure and the final outcomes of the resolution process shall be maintained in the Office of the Dean, and shall be available for review by ACPE or its representatives upon written request or in the process of an on-site evaluation visit.

Student complaints generally fall within two major categories: complaints about unfair grading and all other, non-grade-related complaints. Student complaints about grades are generally handled at the level of the University, since grades are usually administered through the NDSU Office of Registration and Records. Other student complaints remain under the purview of the individual colleges within NDSU.

Student Complaints Regarding Grades

University Grade Appeal Policy

NDSU has an established policy regarding complaints about grading, otherwise known as "grade appeals". The full grade appeal policy (section 337), which includes hearing procedures, is available at www.ndsu.edu/policy/337.htm. While students actively considering a grade appeal are referred to the aforementioned website for the specific details of the policy, a summary of the policy is outlined below.

With the exception of incomplete grades, a course grade is considered final unless an appropriate appeal is filed by the student. Grade changes are also considered only for those students who have not yet earned a degree for which the course in question was applied.

For a student who has reason to believe that they have been issued an incorrect or inappropriate grade, he/she must initiate a request for a change of a grade with the instructor within fifteen (15) instructional days of the first day of the semester immediately following the semester in which the grade was awarded. For Spring Semester courses, the request may be made within fifteen (15) instructional days of the start of Fall Semester, if the student is not enrolled for a Summer term in the same academic year.

A grade appeal is formally initiated when the student presents the Grade Appeal Form to the instructor. If there is an unsatisfactory decision, the student must consult the Department Head, and the Dean or a designated college committee, proceeding from one level to the next only after an unsatisfactory decision of the conflict at that level. In the event that the instructor is also the Department Head or Dean, he or she need only be consulted in the capacity of instructor. In the event of an unsatisfactory decision within the college, the student may submit a formal written appeal to the Grade Appeals Board Chair. Such

an appeal shall be made within fifteen (15) instructional days after conclusion of the college proceedings as stated above.

Non-Grade Student Complaints

Pre-professional and professional pharmacy students who have a non-grade-related complaint can seek resolution of that complaint through the following procedures. It is important to note that these procedures represent the sole avenue for student complaints regarding non-grade-related issues, including (but not limited to) ACPE standards, policies and procedures. Additionally, because the pharmacy program spans multiple departments, the non-grade complaints are handled through the Dean's Office, rather than by the departments themselves.

1. The student(s) or, in cases where student anonymity is required, their advocate (also known as the "plaintiff(s)") will file a formal written complaint (delivered through the postal service or NDSU email) to the Dean's Office in the NDSU College of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Allied Sciences.
2. The written complaint must include a description of the issue, policy, procedure or ACPE standard in question. It must also summarize the argument of the plaintiff (including the grounds for the appeal or complaint) and provide a reasonable amount of evidence supporting the claim.
3. Upon receipt of the written complaint, the complaint will be assigned to either the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (as the Chair of the College Academic Affairs Committee) if the complaint is primarily academic in nature, or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs (as the Chair of the College Academic Affairs Committee) if the complaint is primarily non-academic. The plaintiff(s) will receive email notification (via NDSU email) within forty-eight hours of the receipt of the complaint concerning the identity of the Associate Dean handling the complaint.
4. The Associate Dean for Academic (or, if a non-academic issue, Student) Affairs shall convene a meeting of College Academic (or, if a non-academic issue, Student) Affairs Committee to review the complaint. Because the procedures for both Associate Deans and Committees are similar in procedure, they will henceforth be referred to generically as "Associate Dean" and "Committee", respectively. The Committee meeting shall occur within thirty days from the time that the Associate Dean receives the written complaint.
5. Once the Committee has met, the Associate Dean shall prepare and submit a formal, written reply to the student(s) based on the recommendation of Committee. The reply shall include an evaluation of the complaint, a description of any violations, and a proposal for any necessary corrective action. The reply will be sent through official NDSU delivery methods (i.e., the postal service, campus mail and/or the NDSU email system) within fifteen business days from the time that the Committee makes a decision.
6. Decisions of the Committee that demonstrate arbitrary and capricious treatment, or that are fundamentally inappropriate in the eyes of the plaintiff(s) may be appealed to the Dean of NDSU College of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Allied Sciences. In such cases, the student(s) file an appeal using steps one through three outlined above, except the written complaint would be addressed directly to the Dean. The written complaint would also identify and provide evidence indicating that the Associate Dean and/or the Committee acted in an arbitrary, capricious or otherwise inappropriate manner.
7. If unsatisfactory resolution occurs after the appeal to the Dean, a final appeal may be made to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Once again, the student(s) must file an appeal using steps one through three outlined above, except the written complaint would be addressed directly to the Provost, rather than the Dean, and would provide evidence substantiating the claim of unfair treatment at prior procedural levels.

Approved: 4/21/2011
Source: Faculty Meeting Minutes

Appendix 20B: AACP Surveys

Graduating Student Survey

Question: 61. I was aware of the process for raising issues with the college/school administration.

