

# **CODA Policy**

## **Policy on Complaints Directed at CODA**

Students, faculty, constituent dental societies, state boards of dentistry, and other interested parties may submit an appropriate, signed complaint to the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) regarding any CDA-accredited dental, allied dental or advanced dental education program, or a program which has an application for initial accreditation pending. The Commission is interested in the continued improvement and sustained quality of dental and dental-related education programs but does not intervene on behalf of individuals or act as a court of appeal for individuals in matters of admission, appointment, promotion or dismissal of faculty, staff or students.

In accord with its responsibilities to determine compliance with accreditation standards and required policies, the Commission does not intervene in complaints as a mediator but maintains, at all times, an investigative role. This investigative approach to complaints does not require that the complainant be identified to the program.

The Commission, upon request, will take every reasonable precaution to prevent the identity of the complainant from being revealed to the program; however, the Commission cannot guarantee the confidentiality of the complainant.

Only written, signed complaints will be considered by the Commission; oral and unsigned complaints will not be considered. The Commission strongly encourages attempts at informal or formal resolution through the program's or sponsoring institution's internal processes prior to initiating a formal complaint with the Commission. The following procedures have been established to manage complaints:

### ***Inquiries:***

When an inquiry about filing a complaint is received by the Commission office, the inquirer is provided a copy of the Commission's Evaluation Policies and Procedures (EPP) manual (includes the Complaint Policy) and the appropriate Accreditation Standards document.

The initial screening is usually completed within thirty (30) days and is intended to ascertain that the potential complaint relates to a required accreditation procedure (i.e., one contained in Evaluation Policies and Procedures [EPP]) or to one or more accreditation standard(s) or portion of a standard which have been or can be specifically identified by the complainant.)

Written correspondence clearly outlines the options available to the individual. It is noted that the burden rests on the complainant to keep his/her identity confidential. If the complainant does not wish to reveal his/her identity to the accredited program, he/she must develop the complaint in such a manner as to prevent the identity from being evident. The complaint must be based on the accreditation standards or required accreditation procedures. Submission of documentation which supports the non-compliance is strongly encouraged.

### ***Written Complaints:***

When a complainant submits a written, signed statement describing the program's non-compliance with specifically identified procedure(s) or standard(s), along with the appropriate documentation, the following procedure is followed:

1. The materials submitted are logged in and reviewed by staff.
2. Legal counsel, the chair of the appropriate review committee, and the applicable review committee members may be consulted to assist in determining whether there is sufficient information to proceed.
  - a. If the complaint provides sufficient evidence of probable cause of non-compliance with the standards or required accreditation procedures, the complainant is so advised and the complaint is investigated using the procedures in the following section "formal complaints."
  - b. If the complaint does not provide sufficient evidence of probable cause of non-compliance with the standards or required accreditation procedures, the complainant is so advised. The complainant may elect:
    - (1) to revise and submit sufficient information to pursue a formal complaint.
    - (2) not to pursue the complaint. In that event, the decision will be so noted and no further action will be taken.
  - c. Initial investigation of a complaint may reveal that the Commission is already aware of the program's non-compliance and is monitoring the program's progress to demonstrate compliance. In this case, the complainant is notified that the Commission is currently addressing the non-compliance issues noted in

#### 4.19 **Medical Center and Dental Service Policy**

The General Practice Resident is responsible to adhering to all Medical Center and Dental Service Policies. Not all of these policies were reviewed within this Residency Manual. These policies will be provided to the resident for their review during the Orientation.