



ACGC Policy on Complaints, Requests for Reconsideration and Appeals

Complaints

Any person (including student, general public, faculty, government agency, and any other organization) concerned about the quality of a Genetic Counseling Program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC) may contact the ACGC Executive Office.

Jurisdiction

ACGC will consider and investigate only those complaints containing allegations which, if substantiated, may indicate noncompliance with the ACGC Standards for Accreditation.

ACGC is not a mediator of disputes and, generally, will not interpose itself in a manner that limits the discretion of a program in the normal operation of its personnel or academic policies and procedures, unless a violation of the ACGC Standards is specifically alleged. Such matters include: admission, appointment, promotion, or dismissal of faculty or students.

ACGC will not seek any type of compensation, re-admission, or other redress on behalf of an individual.

ACGC will not respond to or take action upon any complaint that is defamatory, hostile, or profane. In addition, ACGC will not involve itself in collective bargaining disputes.

ACGC will not intervene on behalf of individuals in cases where the situation giving rise to the complaint occurred so far in the past that ascertaining the facts might prove to be difficult or impossible.

ACGC typically will not take any action based on an anonymous complaint.

Filing a Complaint

The steps to follow in filing a complaint with the ACGC are as follows:

The complainant shall attempt to resolve an issue through the program's own published grievance policy/procedures (if applicable) before submitting a complaint to the ACGC.

A complaint must be made using the ACGC Complaint Form. The form must either be emailed or mailed to the provided address. A complaint must be specific as to the accreditation standard that allegedly is being violated.

Processing a Complaint

Within 10 days after receipt of the complaint, the ACGC Executive Director will send a letter or email to the complainant acknowledging receipt of the complaint and explaining the general process ACGC will follow in investigating the complaint.

If a complaint indicates circumstances which, if substantiated, may indicate noncompliance with accreditation Standards, the ACGC staff may request that written corroboration be provided within 30 days from the date of the complaint. Such corroboration might include letters or other documentation not previously provided to the ACGC by the complainant.

Although the complaint will be treated with discretion, the ACGC does not guarantee the confidentiality of the complainant. Specifically:

Any information about a program or school may be released to the Program Official, Dean, Department Head, or Administrative Supervisor (hereinafter, each is referred to as a "Program Official"), members and staff of the ACGC, their respective attorneys, and other persons authorized by the Program Official, required by law, or necessary, in the discretion of the ACGC, to fully investigate the complaint.

The complainant and any corroborators will be required to sign an authorization to release the written complaint and corroborating materials to the Program Official, members and staff of the ACGC, their respective attorneys, and appropriate outside parties.

The ACGC Executive Committee will determine whether a complaint raises issues relating to compliance with accreditation Standards. If the ACGC Executive Committee determines that the complaint does not raise such issues, the ACGC Executive Director will notify the complainant in a timely manner that the complaint is outside the jurisdiction of the ACGC.

The ACGC Executive Committee determines that the complaint raises issues relating to compliance with accreditation Standards, the ACGC Executive Director will investigate the complaint in accordance with the procedure set forth below.

Investigating a Complaint

The Executive Director will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 10 days. If the ACGC Executive Committee determines that there is insufficient evidence that a program is not in compliance with accreditation Standards, the Executive Director will notify the complainant that the complaint will not be investigated and close the matter. Otherwise, the Executive Director will notify the complainant that the ACGC has initiated an investigation.

The Executive Director will notify the Program Official of the complaint in writing within 30 days and require a response to allegations which may include answers to specific questions or documentation, or materials. The Executive Director will set a deadline for response not to exceed 60 days.

If after receiving the program's response, the Executive Committee determines that there is evidence that the program is not in compliance with accreditation standards, the complaint will be referred to the ACGC Grievance Committee. Otherwise, the Executive Director will close the complaint. In all instances, the complainant will receive notice of the status of the complaint.

Grievance Committee Review

The Grievance Committee is appointed by the President of the Board and must include at least one public member, one practicing genetic counselor and one academic representative. No more than one member of the Grievance Committee shall be a current program director. All members of the Grievance Committee are subject to the ACGC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policies.

After reviewing the complaint and the program’s response, the Grievance Committee may request additional information or a progress report, schedule a limited survey or site visit, or take any other appropriate action to further investigate the matter. The Program Official will be notified in a timely manner of the Grievance Committee’s recommendation.

In the event the Grievance Committee determines that sufficient evidence exists that the program may not be in compliance with accreditation Standards, the Grievance Committee shall recommend to the Board one of the following accreditation actions:

-) Probation
-) Revocation
-) Accreditation with Contingencies.

The Chair of the Grievance Committee shall be responsible for notifying the President of the Board in writing of its recommendation together with the justification for this recommendation within 30 calendar days.

Board of Directors Hearing and Review

The Board shall review the Grievance Committee Record on this matter and its recommendation.

If the President of the Board determines that a hearing on the recommendation may be useful, a hearing shall be scheduled for the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. Not less than 30 calendar days prior to the scheduled date of the hearing, the Executive Director shall notify the primary program contact on file in writing of the date, time, and place of the hearing.

Action

Based upon its review of the Grievance Committee Record and its recommendation, and the outcome of any hearing held on the matter, the Board shall determine whether to ratify, reverse, or modify the Grievance Committee’s recommendation.

The Executive Director shall notify the primary program contact on file in writing of the Board’s decision, including the reasons for this decision, within 30 days. This decision shall be sent to the Program Official by Federal Express or other overnight/traceable carrier (or electronically). This decision by the Board shall constitute the final decision of the ACGC on the matter. A decision to revoke accreditation will be appealable pursuant to the ACGC Rules.

Expenses

If the complaint is found to have merit, all expenses incurred by the ACGC in investigating and resolving the complaint will be reimbursed by the program.