

	Howard University College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences Department of Physician Assistant	Policy Number	PHAS - 014
	Student Grievances and Appeals Policy (A3.14g, A3.14h)	Effective Date	08/01/2022
		Last Reviewed	05/12/2026
	Approved by: Gina S. Brown, Ph.D., MSA, RN, FAAN, FNAP, FADLN Dean, College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences	Revision Date Next Review	05/12/2026 05/13/2027

Table of Contents	Page Number
I. PURPOSE	1
II. POLICY	1
III. DEFINITIONS	1
IV. PROCEDURES	1 - 3

I. PURPOSE

To establish the process for student academic grievances and the process of appeal.

II. POLICY

It is the practice and procedure of the Howard University Physician Assistant Department to provide a fair process for students to submit grievances that are consistent with University and college practices.

This policy details the program and CNAHS grievance process, which is specifically for courses within the College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences. If the course in question is within a different school or college, the student will need to follow their process; however, all school/college processes are modeled after the Student Academic Grievance procedure found on the via the following link: ([Student Academic Grievance Procedure | Howard University](#)).

III. DEFINITIONS

Grievance - A grievance is not a grade appeal. Grievance is the process for which a student who believes a teacher may not have followed published policy, a consequence of which could be (among other things) the student earning a lower grade than expected. There is not a mechanism that allows a student to petition a department, college, or the university to force a teacher to change a final grade without standing.

IV. PROCEDURES

There is an Informal Grievance Process that must be followed first before the Formal Grievance Process can be initiated. Each step in the process must be followed to completion in sequence. If it is found that the student did not fully explore one step before moving to the next, they will be referred back to the previous step.

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A. The Informal Process

1. A physician assistant student who believes that he/she has been aggrieved must first attempt to seek an informal resolution with the instructor involved in the dispute, (e.g., grade dispute with instructor). The student is to request a meeting or communicate (email or signed letter) with the instructor. This is the case regardless of the department or college the class was taken.
2. If the student is unable to reach an acceptable conclusion, the student will schedule to meet with the didactic or clinical education coordinator to further discuss the dispute.
3. If the physician assistant student is unable to resolve the dispute, then the student is advised to seek the intervention of his or her department chairperson.
4. All disputes which are not resolved at the departmental level are then brought to the Dean's Office, whereupon the Dean or Dean designee (Associate Dean for Academic Affairs) will seek to reach an informal resolution through mediation between the parties.
5. If the mediation at the Dean's level fails, then the student's grievance is now assigned to the Student Grievance Committee to address student grievances.

B. The Formal Process

1. Student grievances which are assigned to the Student Grievance Committee must be specified in writing and given to the Dean or his designee by the student.
2. A student's written statement, along with supportive evidence, constitutes a case document, which will be submitted to each member of the committee. The student grievance is submitted on the CNAHS Student Grievance/Complaint Form ([CNAHS Student Grievance Form 2022](#)).
3. The second party to the dispute is also requested to provide the Office of the Dean with his or her account of the matter in dispute which becomes a part of the case document that is forwarded to the committee.

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4. The Student Grievance Committee is then required to set a date for convening a meeting to hear the case(s) as expeditiously as possible.
5. After the date has been set, each party to the dispute is sent a certified letter which informs him or her of the charges, and date of the meeting as well as a statement requesting his or her presence.
6. During the hearing, the student presents his/her case; after, the accused party can present the other side. Each side is permitted to have witnesses.
7. Following the hearing, members of the committee after deliberation on their assessment of the case reach a decision as to how the case should be resolved. The Committee can invite the department chairperson or designee, to explain departmental policy as it may pertain to the grievance.
8. The committee's decision is sent to the Dean of the School/College in the form of a recommendation.
9. The Dean then informs the student in writing of the decision, which may be based upon the committee's recommendation or upon a modification of it.

C. Procedures for Student Non-Academic Grievances

1. Non-academic grievances are discussed with the students' faculty advisor or the department chairperson.
2. The encounter is documented on the Student Advisement Encounter Form.
3. The academic advisor and the chairperson will meet to help resolve the grievance.