

## **NMSU PROGRAM IN COMMUNICATION DISORDERS GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINT PROCEDURES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

While you are a student at New Mexico State University, you may wish to make a formal complaint in the event that you believe that you have been unjustly treated. The best method of settling misunderstandings is to talk to the individual involved. While we all like to think of ourselves as reasonable, reasonable people can disagree. You can find these grievance procedures in the New Mexico State University Graduate Catalog and the Clinical Program Manual. The information below outlines procedures you should follow when filing a complaint and are directly quoted from the Graduate Catalog. For access to the Graduate Catalog, type into your web browser: <http://catalog.nmsu.edu/graduate/>

### **CONCERNS WITH A FACULTY/INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF MEMBER**

The following are procedural guidelines to follow when filing a complaint (see section in Graduate Catalog on Disciplinary Issues for Graduate Students Graduate Student Appeals Board).

“Each academic year a standing committee, consisting of three members of the graduate faculty and two graduate students, is appointed by the dean of Graduate School to handle grievance complaints including grade appeals. Any graduate who believes that he or she has been unjustly treated within the academic process may proceed as far as necessary in the following steps to resolve his or her grievance. In general, there are three levels at which a grievance can be addressed: a course instructor or advisor, a department head, or the dean of the Graduate School. If the initial grievance is with an instructor or advisor, the process begins at Step 1. If the initial grievance is with a departmental committee, the process begins at Step 3. In all instances, the process must begin at the lowest possible level.

1. Under normal circumstances, the student should discuss the issue with the instructor/advisor.
2. If the student is unable to resolve the issue through consultation with the faculty member, the student must submit a written memorandum detailing the grievance to the course instructor or advisor within 10 calendar days of the beginning of the following full (i.e., fall or spring) semester. The person to whom the memorandum is addressed must respond in writing within 10 calendar days to the student.
3. If the student is not satisfied with the response from Steps 1-2, he or she must submit a written appeal to the department head within ten working days of the initial decision. If the student is initiating the appeal at the departmental level, he or she must do so, in writing, within 10 calendar days of the beginning of the following full (i.e., fall or spring) semester. The department head must respond in writing within ten working days to the student, the instructor or advisor (if one is involved), and the dean of Graduate School.
4. If the student is not satisfied with the response from Steps 1-3, they must submit a written grade appeal letter to the academic dean's office of the college where the course is taught. If it is a grievance against a faculty member, then the academic dean's office where the course is taught would be that of the faculty member's college. The student has 10 calendar days after receiving the decision of the department head. The associate dean of the given college has 10 days to collect the necessary documents to make a decision on the student's appeal or grievance. Please note that additional days may be required to collect information from the faculty and/or student involved in the case. The academic dean's office where the course is taught may convene an ad hoc committee to investigate the case.
5. If after the fourth step the student or any of the other parties involved is still not satisfied with the response, he or she must present to the dean of the Graduate School within ten working days a formal letter that provides specific details regarding the nature of the grievance. Copies of all documents including course materials and grades must accompany the letter. In the letter, the student can request that their case be presented to the Graduate Student Appeals Board. After receiving a letter complaint (not an email), the dean or associate dean of the Graduate School will determine whether the complaint has merit. He or she will do so after reviewing the letters from the faculty member, the department head and the office of the academic dean as well as the materials from the student and all those involved in the case. If the graduate dean determines that the appeal does not have merit, he or she will inform the appellant and other parties, in writing, within ten working days of receiving the appeal. Please note that additional days may be required to collect information from the faculty and/or student involved in the case. If the graduate dean decides that the appeal does have merit, he or she will convene the Graduate Student Appeals Board, normally within three weeks. The Graduate Student Appeals Board will conduct, within 60 days of their convening, whatever investigations and deliberations are necessary, and will forward to the dean of the Graduate School a recommendation to resolve the grievance.

6. After reviewing the recommendation of the Graduate Student Appeals Board, the dean of Graduate School will, within ten working days, inform all parties involved of his or her decision in writing.
7. The dean of the Graduate School may waive the normal time frame for grievances when either party presents compelling evidence justifying such a delay, but grievances must be launched within one year. Grade appeals involving charges of plagiarism must follow the process established on academic misconduct in the Student Code of Conduct. The web site is <http://www.nmsu.edu/~vpsa/SCOC/index.html> Graduate School strongly encourages students to study and use the Plagiarism web site of the Library to learn of ways to avoid plagiarism: <http://lib.nmsu.edu/plagiarism>

### **COMPLAINT WITH AN EXTERNAL PRACTICUM SITE SUPERVISOR**

A complaint with an Off-Campus Clinical Supervisor should begin with that person. It is always important to begin with the “offending” person so that he or she can have the opportunity to rectify the situation or to provide an explanation or rationale. If you do not feel that the supervisor has listened to your complaint, given it due consideration, or rectified or explained the situation, you should go to the next higher level within the CD Program administrative structure. This structure is as follows:

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- 1) NMSU Speech & Hearing Center Coordinator of Clinical Services
- 2) Communication Disorders Program Director
- 3) Special Education/Communication Disorders Department Head
- 4) Dean of the Graduate School

### **COMPLAINTS TO THE COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION**

On occasion, students may feel that it is necessary to contact the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The CAA is contacted with the most serious of offenses. CAA is concerned with the ASHA standards for programs that train students to become speech-language pathologists and audiologists. Grievances to this body should concern violations of these standards. ASHA standards for CAA accreditation are located at:

[http://www.asha.org/academic/accreditation/CAA\\_overview.htm](http://www.asha.org/academic/accreditation/CAA_overview.htm)

### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Procedures for complaints against Graduate Education Programs may be obtained at:

<http://www.asha.org/academic/accreditation/accredmanual/section8.htm>

As stated on this link, “A complaint about any accredited program or program in candidacy status may be submitted by any student, instructional staff member, speech-language pathologist, audiologist, and/or member of the public.” There is a criteria for complaints that are listed on the link, but in summary your complaint must be against an accredited, graduate CD program, it must relate to accreditation standards, describe the specific nature of the conduct that was in violation of the standard, be made within 5 years of the offence and clearly outlined with evidence. The complaint must be signed and submitted in writing via and will not be accepted by e-mail or facsimile U.S. mail, overnight courier, or hand delivery to the following address:

Chair, Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology  
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association  
2200 Research Boulevard, #310  
Rockville, MD 20850

To view the Code of Ethics, visit the ASHA website at

<http://www.asha.org/policy/ET2010-00309/> or view the copy of the ASHA Code of Ethics provided in this Graduate Advising Manual. .