

School of Dentistry Postdoctoral Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedures

Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedures are available to School of Dentistry Postdoctoral Fellows and Senior Postdoctoral Fellows (Fellows) who have a dispute or disagreement with faculty or staff members about the equity and fairness of decisions or procedures that affect their ability to do research. Dispute resolution is a means for resolving disputes and achieving a workable outcome for all parties, within the policies of the University. Informal resolutions are not imposed, but result from agreement of all parties.

School of Dentistry Postdoctoral Resolution Officer and Rackham Graduate Student Affairs Officer and Resolution Officer

Each School and College has an appointed Postdoctoral Resolution Officer who will remain impartial in the resolution process. The Postdoctoral Resolution Officer will recuse him/herself for a conflict of interest. A student with concerns about the impartiality of a resolution process within his or her school or college should seek advice from the Rackham Graduate Student Affairs Officer and Resolution Officer.

The Postdoctoral Resolution Officer for the School of Dentistry is the Associate Dean for Research, Dr. Charlotte Mistretta. Dr. Mistretta is responsible for managing this policy and may be reached at chmist@umich.edu. A Fellow may meet informally to discuss an issue with the Postdoctoral Resolution Officer. While these discussions will remain confidential to the extent permitted by law, confidentiality will not be maintained if the Postdoctoral Resolution Officer believes that disclosure is necessary to avoid an imminent risk of serious harm or is required by law.

The Rackham Graduate Student Affairs Officer and Resolution Officer serves in an advisory role only and does not render decisions in the dispute process. The Fellow may discuss issues and concerns with the Graduate Student Affairs Officer and Resolution Officer without committing to further disclosure or resolution. Information concerning any visit will not be disclosed without the visitor's permission, absent compelling reasons (e.g., a court order or a potential threat to safety). You can contact the Rackham Graduate Student Affairs Officer and Resolution Officer, Darlene Ray-Johnson, by email (rayj@umich.edu) or by phone (734) 936-1647.

Scope of the Policy

This policy is for disputes about fairness in basic, day-to-day research procedures. Other University policies and procedures apply to allegations of faculty and staff misconduct; such matters will be governed by appropriate policies administered under other University units. Consult the Postdoctoral Resolution Officer or Rackham Graduate Student Affairs Officer and Resolution Officer to consider the best resource for your particular situation.

- Complaints that a member of the faculty or staff has engaged in research misconduct will be handled by the Office of the Vice President for Research.
- Complaints that a member of the faculty or staff has violated the University's non-discrimination and harassment policies will be investigated by the University's Office of Institutional Equity. Faculty and staff who are also students, or a student who also has a staff appointment, may be subject to procedures described in the "Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities."
- Claims that a member of the faculty or staff has violated Postdoctoral employment contracts will be investigated by Academic Human Resources.

Resolution Procedure

In many cases, disputes can be quickly and effectively resolved when addressed informally. Misunderstandings, miscommunications and disagreements often can be resolved through such conversations. Timely address to disputes is important for successful resolution. Ordinarily the process to resolve a dispute should go forward within 30 days of occurrence.

Fellows who wish to file a complaint of any action or inaction, within the jurisdiction or control of the School of Dentistry, which the Fellow alleges to be in violation of law or University policy or to be unfair, arbitrary, or capricious should use the following procedures:

1. The Fellow shall seek first to resolve the matter by informal means by contacting any of the following resources:
 - A. **Mentor or supervisor**
 - B. **Postdoctoral Resolution Officer.** Consultation with the Postdoctoral Resolution Officer may help clarify which avenue is best for a specific circumstance, and what University resources are appropriate. (See Scope of Policy)
 - C. **Rackham** Graduate Student Affairs Officer and Resolution Officer. Prior to instituting a complaint through formal channels, Fellows have the option to consult with the Rackham Graduate Student Affairs Officer and Resolution Officer, Darlene Ray-Johnson, to assist with informal resolution of complaints.
2. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the Fellow shall then seek resolution by informal means through the mentor/supervisor's Department chair or Associate Dean/Associate Director.
3. If the matter is still not satisfactorily resolved, the Fellow may request formal resolution by the Dean. The Fellow shall file a written statement with the Dean stating the alleged wrong, the facts that the Fellow believes support the allegations, and the disposition of the matter at prior informal steps. A Fellow may not anonymously request a formal dispute resolution process.
4. The Dean shall seek to resolve the matter promptly and may seek advice from an appropriate standing or ad hoc committee.
 - The Dean also will consult with the Office of Academic Human Resources or the Office of the General Counsel to assure correct and consistent interpretation of University policy and/or the law. Ordinarily a decision will be rendered within two weeks of reporting to the Dean.
5. When the Dean decides the matter, the Dean will convey to the Fellow in writing the decision and rationale.

The School of Dentistry will maintain and make public dispute resolution procedures to Fellows, students, faculty and administrators. The Postdoctoral Resolution Officer is available to speak with a Fellow about the purpose and principles of these procedures.