

## **University of Michigan School of Information (UMSI) Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedures for Postdoctoral Research Fellows**

### **Introduction and Scope of Policy**

This policy is intended to provide an opportunity for the resolution of disputes involving postdoctoral fellows in a fair and equitable manner. The procedures listed below establish a formal mechanism for postdoctoral fellows to request review and resolution of disputes arising out of their academic relationships with mentors, departments, or the school (e.g., issues regarding fair and equal treatment, access to resources, attribution in publications or other issues concerning the perceived equity and fairness of treatment in their employment). The formal procedures described in this policy are for use only when matters cannot be resolved informally.

Records and information related to dispute resolution proceedings will be kept confidential to the degree permitted by law. Parties to the grievance, their counsel, and other relevant administrators and faculty (including witnesses, presiding officers, and panel members) shall respect the confidentiality of information and records and the privacy of all parties whose interests are affected by a grievance. The School of Information official for dispute resolutions involving postdoctoral research fellows is Douglas Van Houweling, Associate Dean for Research, and may be reached at [dvh@umich.edu](mailto:dvh@umich.edu) or 734-647-3576.

Other university policies and procedures may apply to other allegations of faculty and staff misconduct. Such matters will be governed by appropriate policies administered by other University units:

- The Office of the Vice President for Research will handle complaints that a member of the faculty or staff has engaged in research misconduct.  
(<http://research.umich.edu/policies/integrity---policy/>)
- The University's Office of Institutional Equity will investigate complaints that a member of the faculty or staff has violated the University's non-discrimination and harassment policies.  
(<http://www.hr.umich.edu/oie/>)
- Academic Human Resources will investigate claims that a member of the faculty or staff has violated employment contracts.  
(<http://hr.umich.edu/acadhr/>)

### **Dispute Resolution Process and Procedures**

The following procedures are for postdoctoral fellows who wish to complain of any action or inaction, which the fellow alleges to be in violation of University policy or to be unfair, arbitrary, or capricious.

- A. The fellow should seek to resolve the matter by informal means through his/her mentor/supervisor. Fellows are encouraged to discuss concerns and/or complaints with their mentors to attempt resolution at an early stage.
- B. If the matter is still not satisfactorily resolved, the fellow may request resolution by the Associate Dean for Research (ADR) in the School of Information. The fellow shall file a written statement stating the alleged wrong, the facts that the fellow believes support the allegations, and the disposition of the matter at prior informal steps.
  - 1) The Associate Dean for Research shall seek to resolve the matter promptly. The ADR may seek advice from the Dean, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Dean's Advisory Committee or may establish an ad hoc committee for advice on the matter.
  - 2) Before the ADR decides a case, he or she should 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.

When the Associate Dean for Research decides the matter, he or his designee will convey to the fellow in writing the decision and the reasons for it. No adverse action may be taken against a Fellow for use of these procedures.

If the postdoctoral fellow does not believe the procedures used to decide the matter were fairly administered, he or she may request a resolution by the Dean of Rackham Graduate School. The fellow shall file a written statement with the Dean at Rackham stating the alleged wrong, the facts that the fellow believes support the allegations, and the disposition of the matter at prior steps.

When the Dean of Rackham decides the matter, the Dean or his or her designee will convey the decision and the reasons for it to the fellow and the Associate Dean for Research in the School of Information in writing.

#### **Consultation with Rackham Resolution Officer**

A postdoctoral fellow may request the Rackham Resolution Officer to assist with informally resolving complaints prior to instituting a complaint through formal channels. The Rackham Resolution Officer provides confidential and informal assistance in resolving these conflicts and promotes fair and equitable treatment within the University. They are also available to coach the postdoctoral fellow on how to manage conflict and discuss options for mediation. The postdoctoral fellow may discuss issues and concerns with the Rackham Resolution Officer without committing to further disclosure or any formal resolution. Information concerning any visit will not be disclosed without the fellow's permission, absent compelling reasons (e.g., a court order or a potential threat to safety). You can contact the Rackham Resolution Officer by email at [rayj@umich.edu](mailto:rayj@umich.edu) or by phone (734) 936-1647. Please remember email is not recommended for confidential discussions.

