



Solving Problems in the Workplace

Scope

The procedure for solving problems in the workplace is available to all current and former employees of the Research Foundation (RF). [Fellows](#) and [independent contractors](#) are not covered by this procedure. In the case of contractors, individual contractual agreements will cover disputes.

The review process for employee complaints provides a means for an employee to clarify a situation that the employee perceives as a violation of the terms and conditions of employment. The review and resolution may be carried out informally or may, at the employee's option, involve the filing of a written complaint.

In this section, the requirements are described for an informal and formal resolution of workplace problems. When calculating working days for the purposes of this procedure, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays are excluded.

Requirements for an Informal Resolution

Resolution with the Supervisor

Each supervisor and employee is encouraged to resolve workplace problems informally and in an atmosphere of mutual respect. An employee should bring any work-related problem to the attention of his or her immediate supervisor as soon as possible so the problem may be resolved. The supervisor should discuss with the employee those concerns in an effort to resolve the problem in a timely manner.

Resolution with the Manager of the Complaint Procedure

If either wishes, the employee and/or the supervisor may seek assistance in resolving problems from the manager of the complaint procedure at the employing location.

Requirements for the Formal Review Process

The formal complaint procedure may be used at any time by an employee or former employee to request the review of a complaint. The formal process allows an employee to file a written complaint with the supervisor, provides for management review of the supervisor's decision, and provides for final review in an appeal process. Each complaint filed must be made in the name of an individual employee.

Initial Written Complaint

To initiate a formal review, the employee must notify the supervisor in writing within 40 working days of the occurrence on which the complaint is based. A copy must be forwarded to the [manager of the complaint procedure](#).

The written complaint should contain the following information:

- Name and address of complainant (home or work)
- Position
- Description in detail of the nature of the complaint
- The time and date when the basis for the complaint is alleged to have occurred
- The names and positions of all persons alleged to be involved in the complaint
- Other supporting material

- Date submitted
- Employee's signature

Within 10 working days after receiving the complaint, the employee's supervisor will confer with the employee to discuss the complaint. The supervisor may also make additional inquiry regarding the complaint.

Within 10 working days after conferring with the employee, the supervisor will render a decision in writing, furnishing a copy to the employee and to the manager of the complaint procedure. If the employee accepts the supervisor's decision in writing, the complaint is resolved. If the supervisor does not render a decision on a complaint within the prescribed time limit, the complaint is deemed denied, and the employee may ask for a review at the next supervisory level.

A copy of the employee's initial written complaint must be forwarded to the manager of the complaint procedure, who will retain the copy at the location. The employee should retain the original written complaint.

When the supervisor renders a decision in writing regarding the complaint, he or she must provide a written decision to the employee and to the manager of the complaint procedure. The supervisor will retain a copy of the decision.

Review of Supervisor's Decision

If the employee is dissatisfied with the supervisor's decision, he or she may request a review of the decision by the next supervisory level. If the immediate supervisor is the project director, Research Foundation operations manager, or an individual reporting to the campus president, the review of the supervisor's decision will be at the appeal level.

The employee must submit a signed statement to the next supervisory or appeal level within 10 working days after the employee is informed of the supervisor's decision. The statement should explain why the employee feels the supervisor's decision should be overruled or modified. The employee must forward a copy of this statement to the manager of the complaint procedure and should retain the original written statement.

The reviewer shall consider the employee's complaint and the immediate supervisor's decision, taking into account the initial formal complaint and all material submitted by the employee. The reviewer may make additional inquiry regarding the complaint.

Within 20 working days after receiving a request for a review, the reviewer shall render a decision in writing to the employee with a copy to the supervisor and to the manager of the complaint procedure. The reviewer should retain a copy of the decision.

Appeal Process

If the employee is dissatisfied with the review of the supervisor's decision, the employee must forward an appeal to the manager of the complaint procedure within 10 working days. The appeal shall be in writing and include the reason(s) for the appeal. The employee should retain the original written appeal.

The manager of the complaint procedure will notify the campus president or designee that a timely appeal has been received and will forward a copy of all complaints involving appeal reviews to the Research Foundation Central Office of Employee Relations.

The location's Research Foundation operations manager or ad hoc review committee will conduct the appeal proceeding within 15 working days and, within 20 working days after the conclusion of the proceeding, will render a final decision. The manager of the complaint procedure must notify the employee in writing of the final decision. A copy of the appeal decision will be forwarded to the Research Foundation Central Office of Employee Relations.

Note: The time limits specified in this complaint procedure will be observed and applied strictly and will not be extended without the prior written consent of the employee and the applicable level of supervision responsible for the review. If an employee fails to comply with any time limit, the complaint shall be deemed automatically withdrawn and the proceeding terminated.

Responsibilities

Research Foundation operating locations are responsible for ensuring that this procedure for solving problems in the workplace is implemented at the location. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

Operating Locations

The campus president or designee is responsible for

- implementing this procedure at the location.
- designating a person or committee to consider appeals.

The Research Foundation operations manager or designee is responsible for

- ensuring all Research Foundation employees at the location and their supervisors are fully informed of policies and procedures for solving problems in the workplace.
- designating a manager of the complaint procedure.

The employee is responsible for timely submission of complaints within the established guidelines of this complaint procedure.

The supervisor is responsible for correcting work-related problems and seeking the help of appropriate offices or persons when necessary.

The manager of the complaint procedure is responsible for

- monitoring the complaint process to ensure that the time requirements of the procedure are met by all parties.
- assisting employees in evaluating options available to resolve misunderstandings or complaints in the workplace.
- assisting supervisors in their obligations under the Research Foundation complaint procedure by providing counsel and help in solving problems in the workplace.
- advising employees of their recourse under the complaint procedure and making referrals to the affirmative action officer in complaints alleging discrimination or to the appropriate campus officer(s) in cases of misconduct in science and conflict of interest.
- ensuring all parties to the procedure are informed at each level of the procedure.

Central Office

The director of the Office of Employee Services or designee is responsible for assuring coordination of any issues of employment law and Research Foundation policies and procedures.

References

- [Discrimination Policy](#)
- [Equal Employment Opportunity Policy](#)
- [Nonharassment in the Workplace Policy](#)
- [Resolving Allegations of Discrimination](#)
- [Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
- [Solving Problems in the Workplace Policy](#)

Feedback

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