



CPE POLICY

Issue Date: 02/11/2004

Applies to: Downtown &/or Community

Values: Drive Innovation & Discovery, Respect People,
Serve our Community, Value Integrity

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Complaints and Grievances

Review Date:	Change Description:
11/25/2015	<i>Updated References</i>
Revised Date:	Change Description:
2/8/2016; 3/6/16	<i>Copy Editing</i>
08/02/16	<i>Adding time from for complaint response</i>
04/16/18	<i>Copy Editing</i>
1.7.2019	<i>Delete ACPE Eastern Region, change Supervisor title, remove Standards from Spiritual Care Library, Update Administrative report</i>
1.22.2020	<i>Updated ACPE 2020 Standards</i>
4.22.2021	<i>Copy Editing</i>
4.22.2023/ 3.25.24	<i>Updated ACPE address/ updated report administrator</i>
11.12.24	<i>Updated hyperlink to complaint policies</i>

Policy:

Upstate University Hospital and the Clinical Pastoral Education Program provide a mechanism for handling complaints and grievances by CPE students to maximize satisfaction in their learning experience.

Definitions:

- A *complaint* is defined as a grievance presented in writing and signed by the complainant about an alleged violation of the ethical, professional, and/or educational criteria established by the *ACPE Standards* and Upstate concerning this CPE program and/or CPE Supervisor. A copy of these *Standards* is available online at www.acpe.edu
- A *student* is defined as any person enrolled in any program of CPE.
- *Mediation* is a cooperative process, which provides opportunity for both parties involved in a conflict to state their needs and interests. Through discussion with a mediator, the parties work to identify options and to find mutually acceptable solutions.

Procedure:

1. The CPE program at Upstate University Hospital encourages persons to work out concerns or grievances informally, face to face, and in a spirit of collegiality and mutual respect. Procedures for complaints should be used only if informal

discussion and pastoral communication do not resolve differences, and when the complainant(s) desire to register a complaint. It is recommended that, if possible, the complaint be resolved at the level of the closest relationship to the complaint. *While ACPE recommends that complaints and grievances be addressed at the local level, a student may file a complaint directly with ACPE.*

2. To initiate a formal review, a complaint must be in writing. It should be made within six (6) months of the occasion causing the complaint, or within six (6) months of the conclusion of the educational experience in the CPE program.
3. There shall be a time limit of ten (10) years when the complaint involves sexual exploitation. Any complaint may be made within a longer period if the delay is explained by an occasion of fraud, intimidation, or other wrongful conduct that prevents the earlier surfacing of the complaint. It should include the following:
 - a. A description of the occurrence/situation precipitating the grievance, specifically including the date(s) and time(s) of all events.
 - b. The name of all the people who, in the student's opinion, are involved in the concern.
 - c. A statement that provides the student's suggested resolution of the grievance including the student's reasons for the suggestion(s). If the complaint involves the allegation of a breach of personal or professional conduct or ethics on the part of an ACPE Certified Clinical Pastoral Educator, the aggrieved must send a copy of the written complaint to the ACPE National office.
4. The complaint should be submitted in writing to the CPE Certified Clinical Pastoral Educator, with copies to their hospital administrative supervisor and the Chairperson of the CPE Professional Advisory Council. (*See listing of names and contact numbers at conclusion of this Policy*)
5. The Chair of the Professional Advisory Council or designee shall facilitate a meeting of all persons involved in the complaint within two weeks that the complaint was received and allow opportunity for dialogue and sharing of information in the spirit of collegiality and intent to resolve the complaint.
6. If the complaint does not reach satisfactory resolution, the Chair of the CPE Professional Advisory Council or designee will refer the matter to a grievance sub-group of three (3) up to five (5) PAC members to meet within ten (10) working days of the request. The Chair or designee will participate in the grievance sub-group in a consultative role and, as said consultant, they have no vote.
7. The sub-group may elect to make decisions based upon the written documents available, or the subgroup may convene a hearing. This delegated body will have authority to examine written documentation and other records in accordance with the Department and institution policy and to interview those directly and indirectly involved in the alleged incident. The sub-group may determine that additional meetings are required to reach its conclusions. The final decision of the grievance sub-group will be determined by the majority vote of its members, and the process shall be completed within sixty (60) working days after receiving the complaint.

8. The conclusions of the grievance sub-group will be filed in writing, with copies given to the principals and the CPE Certified Clinical Pastoral Educator. In that statement, the grievance sub-group will address:
 - a. Whether the people involved have made an adequate effort to resolve the complaint by discussion or agreement.
 - b. Whether the complaint or grievance has or is without merit.
 - c. Whether the complaint or grievance involves a violation of *ACPE Standards*.
9. Based upon its findings, the grievance sub-group may:
 - a. Recommend redress that it determines to be appropriate to rectify the complaint.
 - b. Determine that no redress is appropriate.
 - c. Determine that the relief sought is beyond the power of the CPE program or institution to grant.
 - d. Determine that the complaint falls within the jurisdiction of another authority.
10. If the student submitting the grievance is not satisfied by the action of the grievance sub-group, they have the right to appeal. The written complaint, along with the relevant documents, should be sent to ACPE within thirty (30) calendar days of the completion of the CPE program's grievance procedure, who may appoint a mediator as defined in *The Professional Ethics Commission Manual* found at www.acpe.edu.
11. A student has the right at any point in the complaint process to withdraw the complaint. The withdrawal should be submitted in writing to the same people as in Section #3. However, the ACPE reserves the right to continue the process to prevent potential physical or psychological harm to other persons.

Processing a Complaint with ACPE

1. When a complaint arises concerning the ethical and/or professional conduct of a CPE Certified Clinical Pastoral Educator/Candidate or concerning a CPE program and is not resolved at the CPE program level or if issues remain over which ACPE has jurisdiction, the complainant(s) may register a complaint with ACPE within six (6) months of the conclusion of the educational experience at Upstate. The time limit for a complaint alleging that sexual exploitation occurred is ten (10) years. Any complaint may be made within a longer period if the delay is caused by fraud, intimidation or other unethical conduct that prevents the earlier surfacing of the complaint.
2. The signed complaint should be sent to ACPE, who will process the complaint according to the established procedures of ACPE. Information on how to access ACPE Standards and the Professional Ethics Manual is included in the *CPE Student Handbook*. For mediation procedures as an option, see the *Processing Complaints of Ethics Code Violations in the ACPE Professional Ethics Manual*.

Required ACPE Complaint Policies (Please access www.acpe.edu or <https://acpe.edu/programs/accreditation/information-on-filing-a-complaint> for latest policies).

- 1.** Policy for Complaints Alleging Violations of ACPE Education Standards
- 2.** Policy for Complaints Against the Accreditation Commission
- 3.** Professional Ethics Violations
- 4.** Whistleblower Policy

*As of January 2025, the following persons held the named positions:

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Originating Department: Spiritual Care

Contributing Department(s): N/A References: N/A

Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE, January 2025)