As a student at Eastern Washington University, if you believe you've been treated unjustly you have the right to make a formal complaint. The best method of settling misunderstandings is to talk to the individual involved. While we all like to view ourselves as reasonable people, disagreements can still occur. To the extent possible, disagreements should be resolved at the department level.

It should be noted that this document details the steps to be taken when filing a general complaint against a faculty or staff member, the department chair, or an off-campus practicum supervisor that is not grade-related or involves sexual harassment. The University has clear policies for filing complaints involving grades or sexual harassment. These policies can be found in the University catalog and can also be obtained through the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Human Resources, Rights, and Risks.

The information below details procedures you should follow when filing a general complaint against a faculty or staff member, the department chair, or an off-campus practicum supervisor. Information is also provided to guide you in filing a formal complaint with the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) should you believe the program is not in compliance with ASHA's accreditation standards.

**Complaints Against a Department Faculty or Staff Member**

The following are procedural guidelines to follow when filing a complaint against a faculty or staff member of the Department of Communication Disorders. In general, there are three levels at which a complaint is addressed: (a) the individual against whom the complaint is lodged; (b) the department chair; and (c) the dean of the college or graduate school. The complaint process must begin at the lowest level. No complaint will be considered if the proper chain of command is not utilized.

1. Under normal circumstances, the student should discuss the issue with the individual with whom he or she has the complaint. To the extent possible, the student and faculty member should work cooperatively and diligently to resolve the issue. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, the student should proceed to steps 2 through 4 below if the complaint is against an instructor or staff member, or steps 3 and 4 below if the complaint is against the department chair.

2. If the student is unable to resolve the issue through consultation with the faculty or staff member and would like to take the matter forward to the next level, the student must submit a written complaint detailing the grievance against the course instructor or staff member. The formal written complaint must be submitted to the department chair within 10 calendar days of the beginning of the following Fall or Spring semester. Upon receipt of the formal written complaint, the department chair will forward a copy of the complaint to the faculty or staff member involved and will request a written rebuttal from that person. The rebuttal must be submitted to the department chair within 10 calendar days of receipt by the faculty or staff member of the student’s complaint. Upon receiving both complaint and rebuttal, the department chair will render a decision (in writing) within 10 calendar days of receipt of the
rebuttal. If the student is not satisfied with the department chair’s decision, the student may submit in writing a request for reconsideration. The request for reconsideration should detail the reason(s) for the request and must be submitted to the department chair no later than 10 calendar days after receipt of the department chair’s initial decision. Once the request for reconsideration has been received, the department chair will weigh the issues and make a final decision. The final decision must be given to the student in writing within 10 calendar days of submission of the request for reconsideration.

3. If the student is not satisfied with the department chair’s final decision regarding a faculty or staff member, the student will notify the department chair within 5 calendar days that he or she wishes to pursue the matter further. The department chair will then forward the student’s formal written complaint, faculty/staff member’s rebuttal, initial chair’s decision, request for reconsideration, and chair’s final decision to the dean of the College of Science, Health and Engineering (for undergraduate students) or the dean of the Office of Graduate Studies (for graduate students). If the complaint is against the department chair, the student must submit a written complaint to the appropriate dean within 10 calendar days of the beginning of the following Fall or Spring semester. Upon receipt of notification of complaint from the dean, the department chair must respond in writing within 10 working days to the appropriate dean.

4. The appropriate dean will make a decision based upon the documentation presented. The dean may request a formal meeting with the complainant and respondent before making a decision. The decision of the dean is final. The dean’s decision will be in writing and will be forwarded to the complainant and respondent within 20 calendar days of receipt of documentation pertaining to the complaint.

Complaints Against an Off-campus Practicum Supervisor

A complaint against 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 for their actions. 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 Communication Disorders administrative structure. This structure is as follows:

- The external practicum or internship coordinator
- The Clinical Director of the Communication Disorders program
- The Chair of the Department of Communication Disorders
- The Dean of the College of Science, Health and Engineering or the Dean of Graduate Studies

If the issue cannot be resolved with the off-campus practicum supervisor, the student must draft a formal written complaint. The written complaint must be submitted to the external practicum or internship coordinator within 10 calendar days of the beginning of the following Fall or Spring semester. A written response from the external practicum or internship coordinator must be forwarded to the student within 10 calendar days of receipt of the complaint. The time line for response is the same at every level of the chain of command. At any level in the chain of command, the student may be asked to meet with the off-campus supervisor and the individual representing a level of the chain of command before a response is offered. If the response at a lower level of the chain or command is not to the student’s satisfaction, the written complaint and response(s) to that point are forwarded to the next higher level. If the complaint makes its way to the appropriate dean, the decision of the dean will be final.
COMPLAINTS TO THE COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION (CAA)
BY ANY INTERESTED PARTY

Any individual who feels that it is necessary to contact the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) should follow the guidelines established by the CAA. These guidelines can be found on ASHA’s web site and are entitled Procedures for Complaints Against Graduate Education Programs. Keep in mind that the CAA is only contacted in cases of most serious offenses related to the Communication Disorders program’s compliance with accreditation standards. The CAA is concerned primarily with ASHA’s accreditation standards for programs that train students to become speech-language pathologists and audiologists and therefore should not be contacted for the purpose of airing complaints of a general or unspecified nature. Complaints to the CAA can also involve behavior that you suspect is in violation of the ASHA Code of Ethics. To view the Code of Ethics, visit ASHA’s web site. All complaints must be signed and submitted in writing to:

Chair
Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology
American Speech Language-Hearing Association
2200 Research Blvd., #301
Rockville, MD 20850

The CAA will not accept complaints delivered by e-mail or facsimile.

RECORD KEEPING

The Department of Communication Disorders will keep copies of all formal complaints on file in the department chair’s office. Complaints will be kept on file during the period of accreditation. With each renewal of accreditation, the department will shred and dispose of all complaints on file from the previous accreditation cycle. Complaints on file will not be shared with any person or entity except the individuals who were a party to the complaint and site visitors from the Council on Academic Accreditation.