



Process for investigation of complaints against resident/fellows named in the context of mistreatment

General Principles:

Postgraduate Residency Training Program Directors (PDs) have the best understanding of the local learning environment, and are optimally placed to assure ongoing monitoring and follow-up of behaviors that are perceived as problematic in interactions between residents/fellows and/or residents/fellows with medical students. They have the primary responsibility to investigate and document reports of alleged learner mistreatment, and with the approval of the Associate Dean Postgraduate Medical Education implement remediation if deemed indicated. If disciplinary measures are deemed necessary the Associate Dean Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) is responsible for carrying out the investigations and implementing the necessary disciplinary measures as per the regulations contained within the McGill's *Code of Professional Conduct* [https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/code -student -conduct-discipline-procedures april 2013 final revised 3.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/code_-_student_-_conduct-discipline-procedures_april_2013_final_revised_3.pdf)

The complaint must be treated with the utmost respect for confidentiality by all parties involved.

PGME Complaint Process:

There are 2 major ways of identifying alleged mistreatment by a resident/fellow:

- 1) After collection of reports of alleged recurrent (i.e. 3 episodes) mistreatment by a resident/fellow through evaluations of the resident/fellow's teaching performance collected routinely (anonymously) from learners by the WELL office.
- 2) Concerns about alleged mistreatment may also be directly communicated to the WELL office by a learner, or another member of the academic community.

Normally, in allegations involving a resident or fellow where a medical student is allegedly affected the Assistant Dean Student Affairs receives notification, and initiates the investigation process by contacting the Program Director of the academic department in which the resident/fellow is enrolled, and, in parallel, notifying the Associate Dean PGME. In the allegations involving residents/fellows where other

residents/fellows are allegedly affected the Assistant Dean of Resident Affairs receives the notification, and follows the same procedure as outlined previously. If the Assistant Dean Resident Affairs is in a real or perceived conflict of interest when investigating a complaint, because of prior knowledge of the resident, s/he will delegate the investigation to another Assistant Dean working in the WELL Office (Assistant Dean Students Affairs for medical students or other health professional students). If a resident is in distress related to an allegation of mistreatment against him/her brought forth by the Assistant Dean Resident Affairs, the resident may choose to seek guidance and counselling from another learner advocate at the WELL office, such as a Wellness Counsellor or another Assistant Dean in the WELL Office and does not have to discuss his/her concerns with the Assistant Dean Resident Affairs.

The PD is required to arrange a meeting with the resident/fellow named in the alleged complaint to discuss the complaint. The PD is also expected to interact with the Assistant Dean, Student Affairs (or Resident Affairs) and other pertinent parties so as to gather the necessary information to better understand the context and nature of the allegation. This is not a formal disciplinary process; rather an effort to understand and if appropriate with the approval of Associate Dean PGME remediate the problem.

The PD will document the content and outcome of the meeting in the form of a letter to the resident/fellow under investigation, within 30 days of receipt of the complaint. Furthermore, if indicated and approved by the Associate Dean PGME the PD must submit to the resident under investigation a written plan for any obligatory remedial measures that are to be undertaken. These measures are tailored to each case, and could range from changing processes within the learning environment, to targeted upgrading of conflict management or teaching skills through formal courses or peer coaching, to addressing personal stressors that may be affecting the resident/fellow's performance.* This letter will be sent in cc to the Associate Dean PGME, who will also maintain a record of the event. The Associate Dean PGME will follow up with the PD if no letter has been received within 30 days of notification that this process has been triggered by the Assistant Dean Student Affairs or Resident Affairs, or if the investigation or action plan developed by the PD do not meet Faculty standards.

The PD's may contact the Associate Dean PGME for assistance or advice at any time in this process.

* This range of options is routinely drawn upon already, and includes programs through the WELL office, professionalism coaching, PAMQ, and mentoring structures within individual departments.

As the Disciplinary Officer (DO), the Associate Dean PGME may at any point if deemed warranted (e.g. major or critical incident, mistreatment of learners despite remediation) initiate a disciplinary investigation process and implement appropriate measures as outlined in the McGill's *Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities*

<https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/policies/students/handbook-student-rights-and-responsibilitiesle-recueil-des-droits-et-obligations-de-letudiant>

The various possible outcomes of this process are well outlined in the McGill's *Code of Professional Conduct*

https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/code_-student_-conduct-discipline-procedures_april_2013_final_revised_3.pdf.



Approved FPGEC October 2016