Graduate College Handbook Chapter 10 – Grievance Procedures DRAFT

**10.7 Postdoctoral Scholars Grievance Procedures**

This section sets forth the procedures designed for all Postdoctoral Scholars to assure prompt and impartial review and consideration of disputes and/or complaints that may arise in their working environment. Generally, these procedures apply to suspected policy violations, working conditions, etc.

These procedures do not apply to facts or circumstances involving imminent fears of workplace violence or threats of violence. See [Violence-Free University](http://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/violence). For situations involving violence or threats of violence, immediately contact the [ISU Police Department](http://www.police.iastate.edu/). These procedures also do not apply to matters covered by the University’s policy prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment. For situations involving known or suspected discrimination or harassment, the University’s [Office of Equal Opportunity](http://www.eoc.iastate.edu/) should be contacted.

**10.7.1 Informal Grievance Options**

A Postdoctoral Scholar who has a work-related dispute or complaint may choose to first attempt informal resolution by discussing the matter with the individual involved, if they are comfortable doing so. If the concerns or complaints relate to a general policy or contractual issue, rather than an individual, the Postdoctoral Scholar should bring the matter to the attention of the Dean of the Graduate College.

The Postdoctoral Scholar always has the option of contacting the University’s [Ombuds Office](http://www.public.iastate.edu/~ombuds/homepage.shtml). The Ombuds Office is a professional, confidential, independent, and neutral resource available to informally work through work-place challenges. Ombuds Office contact information: 37 Physics Hall, (515) 294-0268, ombuds@iastate.edu.

**10.7.2 Formal Grievance Options**

If a resolution cannot be reached through the informal options outlined above, the Postdoctoral Scholar has the right to file a formal grievance. Grievances must be filed in a timely manner. All formal grievances must be filed within ten (10) business days after the most recent event that is the cause of the concern, or, if informal resolution has been attempted, within ten (10) business days after use of the informal grievance option described above has concluded. \*Add Form

The Postdoctoral Scholar may withdraw his or her grievance at any point during the process. Grievances that have been withdrawn may not be refiled.

Grievances must be filed in good faith (*e.g.*, grievances should not be filed in retaliation to other conduct; in an attempt to avoid performance management; etc.).

**Step 1**: **File with Appropriate Person or Committee.** All grievances related to scholarly and professional issues in the workplace must start at the department, appointing unit, or program level by contacting the department chair / unit director. If the department chair / unit director is directly involved in the issue in question, then the grievance should be discussed with the Dean of the Graduate College, who shall review the matter or create an ad-hoc committee to review.

**Step 2**: **Prepare Written Grievance.** To file a grievance, the Postdoctoral Scholar shall provide a written statement. This written grievance statement should be concise; clearly state the relevant background facts and the primary issues/concerns/complaint; identify the key people involved; possible witnesses; and state preferred outcomes/remedies. The supporting documentation should be attached to the written grievance statement, including relevant emails, departmental procedures, University policies, letters, etc.

**Step 3:** **Grievance Review.** The person or committee who receives the written grievance statement (reviewing party) will promptly review the materials submitted. The reviewing party shall respond in writing to the Postdoctoral Scholar within ten (10) business days, unless that is insufficient time to appropriately investigate and consider the substance of the grievance. If additional time is needed, the reviewing party shall contact the Postdoctoral Scholar to provide a new date by which the decision shall be made. Once the review of the grievance is complete, the reviewing party shall meet with the Postdoctoral Scholar and provide a written decision.

**Step 4**: **Appeal to the Graduate College Dean.** Either party may appeal the decision of the reviewing party to the Dean of the Graduate College. Such appeals must be filed within ten (10) business days of meeting with the reviewing party. If the Dean has already made a determination as provided under Step 2, the postdoctoral school may advance directly to Step 5. The Dean shall respond in writing within thirty (30) business days of receiving the appeal, unless that is insufficient time to appropriately investigate and consider the substance of the grievance. If additional time is needed, the dean shall contact the parties (i.e., the Postdoctoral Scholar and the reviewing party) to a new date by which the decision shall be made.

The Dean of the Graduate College will make a decision and inform all parties involved, including the Postdoctoral Scholar, department chair, and the faculty supervisor.

**Step 5**: **Appeal to the Senior Vice President and Provost.** Decisions of the Graduate College may be appealed by either party to the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost (the Provost). Such appeals must be filed within ten (10) business days of the dean issuing their decision, per Step 4. The Provost shall respond in writing within thirty (30) business days of the receiving the appeal, unless that is insufficient time to appropriately investigate and consider the substance of the grievance. If additional time is needed, the Provost shall contact the parties to provide a new date by which the decision shall be made.

The Provost will make the final institutional decision and inform all parties involved, including the Postdoctoral Scholar, Graduate College Dean, department chair, College Dean, and PI/ supervisor. Any further appeal may be made to the Board of Regents, as provided under its Board Regents Policy Manual.

**10.7.3. Non-Retaliation**

Retaliation against persons who file complaints and persons involved in the grievance process (witnesses, ad hoc committee members, decision-makers, etc.) is strictly prohibited.

**10.7.4. Confidentiality**

The grievance process, findings, and outcomes are to be held in strict confidence. Individuals and participants involved in the process shall make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of the process. Grievance information shall be kept in a confidential file in the Graduate College, and it will be accessible only to those individuals engaged in the complaint process and appropriate administrators with an official need to know.

**Resources and References**

[Non-Retaliation Against Persons Reporting Misconduct](http://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/nonretaliation/)

[Discrimination and Harassment Policy](http://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/discrimination/)

[Violence Free University Policy](http://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/violence)

[Research Misconduct Policy](http://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/research/misconduct)

[Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Assault, and Sexual Harassment Involving Student Policy](http://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/students/sexualmisconduct#intro)

[Office of Equal Opportunity](http://www.eoc.iastate.edu/)

[Ombuds Office](http://www.public.iastate.edu/~ombuds/)

[Employee & Family Resources (EAP)](http://www.hrs.iastate.edu/hrs/eap)

[Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)](http://www.celt.iastate.edu/about-celt/)

[ISU Police Department](http://www.police.iastate.edu/)