

Resident Complaints and Concerns

In this document, “Resident or Trainee” refers to both specialty Residents and subspecialty Fellows.

SUNY Downstate residents have several avenues of communication to identify problems related to their work environment or issues related to the program or faculty without fear of intimidation or retaliation.

Residents are expected to address complaints and grievances to their Program Director and/or department chair. However, if this fails to resolve the issue, or if the resident does not wish to discuss the matter within the program, the resident may directly and confidentially contact the Associate Dean/DIO who serves as Ombudsperson for GME. Additional Ombudspersons include the Ombudsperson for UHB and the Ombudsperson for KCH. Residents are assured that nothing can be communicated about what they say to the Ombudsperson without their express permission. Referrals, as well as problem-solving interventions, are provided in strict confidence. Residents can reach the Ombudsperson by phone, email, or in person as needed. Their contact information is accessed through the GME general office.

Program Level:

Chief Resident.

In most programs, Chief Residents serve effectively as liaisons advocating on behalf of their residents and students.

Faculty Advisor or Mentor

Many programs assign residents to faculty advisors or mentors. This concerned faculty members assist residents with issues related to performance in the program and often provide career guidance and help with both professional and personal concerns. In addition, many residents develop informal mentoring relationships with faculty, and these faculty can be a very helpful resource.

Program Director

Program Directors along with their Associate Program Directors are charged with the responsibility of looking after the welfare of their residents and assuring an appropriate environment for training and patient care. Program Directors are the principal advocate for residents and should be consulted for any areas of concern. Each program should also appoint a program ombudsman and maintain an electronic anonymous complaint/concern link.

Resident Review of Program and Faculty

Programs are required to provide residents with at least an annual opportunity to review and evaluate their educational program and their faculty anonymously in writing.

Departmental Level:

Educational Committee

Each Department has established a committee to address program outcomes, resident concerns, and/or resident performance. They are sometimes referred to as Resident Councils, Housestaff Affairs, or similar names. Residents can raise concerns to their department's education committee or to peer-elected representatives who sit on this committee. Each department has policies that describe the process and role of the Education Committee.

Department Chairperson

The Chairperson of each Department has responsibility for oversight of the conduct, quality, and outcomes of all its training programs and clinical services. Chairs are very concerned, dedicated, and potent advocates for students, residents, and, of course, patients.

GME Level:

To raise issues regarding your education, work environment or patient safety, any type of harassment, or any other interactions that may impact your ability to flourish and develop into the best possible doctor, the GME Office is available as a resource to hear your concerns in complete confidence.

GME training in Downstate's programs should be a positive experience. To facilitate that, there are multiple options for addressing issues that concern you. Beginning within your program and its division/department, you can contact your Chief Residents, Faculty Mentors, Attendings, Program Director, Section Chief, and Chairperson. However, if the need arises, you can also address your concerns to the GME Office by speaking to us in person, calling, or contacting us by email. The current GME Resident Ombudspersons are Dr. Helen Valsamis and Dr. Rhonda Osborne. Confidential comments regarding issues or concerns pertaining to SUNY Downstate's GME programs, faculty, and the clinical and educational settings can be sent to GMEHelp@downstate.edu. Comments will be reviewed and addressed appropriately by the D.I.O./Associate Dean for GME. The GME office will assure that your comments remain anonymous as requested. However, please provide a valid email address or other contact information if you would like a response or in case we need to obtain additional information.

We care about you, and we strive to provide you with an excellent training experience.

If you need us, call x-1984, or come by the GME Office. If you prefer, you can send email from an anonymous universal g-mail account that has been created to assure your anonymity is fully protected. The username is Downstate.gmecomplaint@gmail.com and the password is **resident** (all lower case). There is also the **GME Anonymous Link**, <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe09uyosICEUraZhhkzNEm7jMsHRRmYDxOJ7Pm88FVdWtpLQ/viewform>.

GME Office Staff: Many issues can be addressed by the GME Office staff. When necessary, referrals will be made to the DIO and Resident Ombudspersons.

Resident Ombudsperson/DIO: Residents can speak directly and confidentially to the Associate Dean/Designated Institutional Official (DIO) who serves as Ombudsperson for GME. Residents are assured that nothing is communicated about what they say to the Ombudsperson without their expressed consent. Referrals, as well as problem-solving interventions, are provided in strict confidence.

Chair of Resident Subcommittee: For educational, work environment, and institutional issues, residents from each department elect peer representatives to serve on the GMEC Resident Subcommittee. This committee meets, without program directors or faculty present, monthly as a forum for communication and exchange about resident concerns.

Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC): After consulting with the Associate or Vice Dean for GME, residents may formally seek adjudication through the GME Committee. (Please see Policy for Adjudication of Resident Complaints and Grievances) An ad hoc grievance subcommittee of the GMEC will be appointed to address the grievance or complaint.

Employer Level:

Affiliated employing hospitals may provide additional avenues for you to raise concerns.

Union Representation

For residents assigned to Kings County Hospital pay lines or other affiliated hospitals where they are represented by the Committee of Interns and Residents (CIR) as well as residents salaried by SUNY and represented by UUP, there are additional avenues for the redress of grievances within policies developed through collective bargaining.

Formal charges of discrimination based on race, sex, age, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or veteran status, should be filed with the campus ODAA Office and addressed as per institutional policy.

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