



UF | College of Medicine - Jacksonville
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Faculty Relations Handbook



*Welcome to the
University of Florida
College of Medicine-
Jacksonville (COM-J)*

All COM-J faculty should mutually strive to develop and maintain positive and effective working relationships. UF encourages open, honest, and regular dialogue between supervisors and employees about work expectations, standards, and performance. The goal of the COM-J Faculty Relations handbook is to provide faculty with tools and resources to ensure an equitable, fair, and positive work environment.

You may contact Eric Conde, Associate Dean for Administrative Affairs at eric.conde@jax.ufl.edu or (904) 244-8525.

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The office of the Dean works with department chairs, faculty, and administrators to remove barriers to effective communication and job performance; and assists with problem solving and mediation.

The office of the Dean works with various stakeholders (UF Employee Relations team, General Counsel, Provost) across the University in an effort to create and maintain an equitable and positive work environment.

Hospitality & Service

Our patients are at the heart of everything we do at UF Health. Our top priority is to provide the highest quality health care and the best possible experience for every patient, family member and visitor who walks through our doors.

Hospitality and service are a state of mind — an approach that's reflected in all our actions throughout the day. It starts with the way we support and treat each other as colleagues and internal customers. In turn, our relationships create the foundation for how we serve those who trust us with their care.

We can make a positive impact with every interaction. By giving our caring attention to each customer — whether it is a patient, visitor or coworker — we create an environment where people feel acknowledged, understood, safe and valued.

We are held to Hospitality & Service Standards of Behavior. Each category includes specific behaviors that apply to all our interactions with those we serve, including each other.

Hospitality

The words hospitality and hospital are linked by their common Latin root. Hospitality reflects the relationship between a host and a guest. The concept of hospitality has come to mean a welcoming environment providing warmth and caring.

We are hosts at UF Health; our patients and their loved ones are our most important guests. We strive to determine and then meet their needs in an attentive and compassionate way. Similarly, our coworkers and colleagues from all departments are also our customers and deserve the same respect and care we provide patients and families. Our goal is to make every interaction warm, welcoming and attentive for everyone we encounter at UF Health.

Teamwork

Hospitality and service start with the way we support and treat each other. Our relationships with our teammates and staff in other departments set the tone for how we behave towards our patients and visitors. We will not be able to provide outstanding patient care if we do not support each other as UF Health colleagues. Health care can be a very high-stress environment. Working cooperatively with our colleagues in a supportive team environment is critical to our ability to provide safe, quality care and attentive service. Every day, our individual actions contribute to our team's morale, performance and accomplishments.

Communication

Communication is the way we exchange information and make a personal connection that leads to excellent patient care and a positive experience for everyone at UF Health.

Professionalism & Responsibility

As representatives of UF Health, we are ambassadors for an organization that stands for the best medicine has to offer. We serve patients who come to UF Health from throughout the Southeast, the nation and many countries. Their entire experience — the service and hospitality we provide — should match the high quality of medical care they receive.

Our patients come to us because they trust our doctors, nurses and clinical teams to provide the best, attentive and compassionate care available. That's why, in addition to our work performance, our actions and our appearance should be professional and serve as an extension of UF Health and its outstanding reputation.

Through our skills, knowledge, good decisions and polite behaviors, each of us represents our world-class organization.

Faculty Relations and Procedures

The University of Florida College of Medicine - Jacksonville (UFCOM-J) values the highest standards of professionalism in its faculty, residents, students, and staff. The importance of faculty role-modeling cannot be over-emphasized. Faculty members, supervisors, college and departmental leaders are expected to model appropriate workplace behaviors.

The office of the Dean works with department chairs, faculty, and administrators to remove barriers to effective communication and job performance; and assists with problem solving and mediation. In addition, the office of the Dean works with various stakeholders (UF Employee Relations, General Counsel, Provost) across the University in an effort to create and maintain an equitable and positive work environment.

Informal Resolution

Addressing problems quickly and locally is often the best way to resolve an issue and move forward. Faculty are encouraged to pursue informal resolutions to complaints and concerns through their immediate supervisor (Division Chief/Medical Director/Department Chair) or their supervisor's supervisor, if the primary supervisor is the source of the complaint or concern. Supervisors have a responsibility to meet with the faculty in a timely and professional manner to discuss the faculty member's complaint or concern and should consider reasonable solutions with the goal of remedying the situation consistent with university policy. Faculty and supervisors are obligated to make earnest attempts at informally resolving problems since they are closest to the facts and in the best position to come up with feasible resolutions. Faculty are also encouraged to obtain guidance and/or feedback from mentors and/or senior colleagues.

Complaint Process

For complaints or concerns that cannot be solved through supervisory channels, the office of Administrative Affairs through the UF Employee Relations (ER) office manages the complaint process. Employees are strongly encouraged to file complaints as soon as reasonably possible, as older complaints are more difficult to investigate. Employees have the option of requesting a complaint be formally investigated or informally investigated. Some of the differences between formal and informal investigations are described in the [FAQs](#), but essentially, a formal complaint implies more serious or on-going misconduct, where an informal complaint may not be as serious or may be an isolated incident, that does not truly require a formal investigations in order to identify the material facts and determine what happened.

ER may decline to formally investigate complaints for a variety of reasons. It may be that the complaint was filed more than one year after the issue or concern occurred (or more than one year after the complainant gains knowledge of the incident). It could be that the alleged misconduct, even if true as alleged, is minor and may be adequately addressed through an informal investigation or maybe even verbal counseling. Anyone wanting to file a

formal or informal complaint may complete the [ER Complaint Form](#) (or contact Employee Relations by calling (352) 392-0172 or emailing EmployeeRelations@hr.ufl.edu). Always attach to the complaint form any and all additional documentation that is relevant and may be helpful in assessing the nature of the allegations.

Confidential/Anonymous Hotline Complaints

The [University of Florida Compliance Hotline](#) is a 24-hour, 7 day-a-week resource for reporting potential legal, policy, or ethical conduct violations or concerns. You have the option to remain anonymous when submitting reports via the Compliance Hotline, and University policy prohibits retaliation against employees who report any concern in good faith.

Source: [UF Employee Relations](#)

Overview of the UF Formal Complaint Process

Any UF employee who believes another UF employee has violated a UF policy or regulation or engaged in misconduct may file a formal complaint with the UFCOM-J Associate Dean for Administrative Affairs and/or ER by submitting a completed [ER Complaint Form](#) (or contacting Employee Relations by calling (352) 392-0172 or emailing EmployeeRelations@hr.ufl.edu). Complaints should be accompanied by additional supporting documents, including a detailed narrative written by the complaining employee, copies of relevant emails, letters, memos, photographs, and anything else relevant to the allegation(s) set forth in the complaint.

ER strongly encourages UF employees who suspect violations or witness misconduct to report such acts right away, as timely complaints are much easier to investigate. While ER will review any complaint, complainants should recognize that less timely complaints are more difficult to investigate. Over time, memories fade, documents get misplaced, and witnesses may leave the institution.

In investigating workplace complaints, ER functions as neutral investigators operating in an impartial manner. One of the primary goals of ER investigations is to determine whether the employee accused of wrong-doing actually engaged (or is engaging) in activities that violate UF policy or expectations of conduct. While every investigation is unique, the investigatory process generally entails interviewing witnesses, collecting and analyzing relevant documents, and reviewing relevant UF policies and procedures.

If a policy violation or misconduct is substantiated through the formal complaint process, it then becomes the responsibility of the office of the Dean and the department leadership (not the Investigator and not ER) to determine the appropriate response, whether disciplinary or non-disciplinary.

Due Diligence in Investigating Complaints

As part of its efforts to exercise due diligence, ER is dedicated to conducting objective, prompt, and thorough investigations. ER ensures that the investigative process affords reasonable opportunities for both the employee who filed the complaint and the person or persons responding to the complaint to share their perspectives and provide documentation supporting their positions. The investigative process invites both sides to identify witnesses they believe possess relevant firsthand knowledge and may be helpful in establishing the facts material to the allegations set forth in the complaint.

While no investigation can be exhaustive, ER exercises reasonable care in collecting and analyzing all available information pertaining to the material allegations set forth in the complaint and any defenses offered by the person or persons responding to the complaint.

Standard of Proof

ER investigations apply preponderance as the standard of proof. Preponderance is basically establishing a fact more likely than not occurred. The preponderance standard has also been described as a percentage, such as, 51% or even 50.1%.

Preponderance is the standard utilized by most universities in internal investigations because it reflects the legal standards that a jury would use in a civil trial or that an enforcement agency (such as the Equal Employment and Opportunity Commission) would use in an administrative proceeding. Although ER investigations are not legal proceedings, the preponderance standard is widely applied in higher education as the standard of proof for employee complaints.

Part of the investigator's role is to gather and analyze information sufficient to make a determination as to whether the allegations directed against a UF employee are substantiated by a preponderance of the information provided by the parties, witnesses, and supporting materials. The goal of establishing a clear and consistent standard of proof also assists the ultimate decision-maker (typically the immediate supervisor or division head of the person accused of wrongdoing) in responding to investigative findings.

Duty of Cooperation

Under university regulations, employees are required to cooperate with internal investigations. Any employee serving as a party or witness to an ER investigation is prohibited from withholding information, impairing, or obstructing the investigation, and failure to cooperate could constitute a violation of university policy. When employees feel they have been mistreated, the university has an obligation to investigate in a thorough, fair and timely manner. The investigator expects open and honest participation even if the party or witness does not believe that he or she has information of value and does not wish to be interviewed. (See [UF Reg. 1.008](#)).

The reasoning for requiring employee cooperation should be clear: If an employee is violating policy or engaging in misconduct, UF has a vested interest in stopping this behavior. Similarly, if an employee has been wrongly accused of engaging in misconduct, UF has the same vested interest in exonerating the employee. To most effectively, efficiently, and accurately assess allegations of misconduct, people with knowledge of the situation must share what they know.

Investigative Reports and Investigatory Findings

The University of Florida is committed to establishing and maintaining harmonious working relationships between supervisors and employees. Toward that end, the formal complaint process is intended to serve as a prompt and impartial way to address complaints that cannot be resolved through other routes.

Some complaints filed as formal may be referred back to the UFCOM-J if it appears the matter is best resolved informally. Other complaints may be very straightforward and require only a limited investigation. Such complaints that are either minor in nature or simple in form may not necessitate a formal investigative report. In some cases, a written case summary may be adequate.

More egregious and/or complex complaints may warrant a full investigation. Such complaints will culminate in a written investigative report or a memo, depending on the complexity of the claims and nature of the findings. These written summaries outline the investigative process and make findings of fact and contain conclusions on whether the alleged misconduct violated UF policy. Final reports will be referred back to the UFCOM-J. The investigators do not make recommendations or determinations regarding discipline imposed on employees who have been found to have violated policy or engaged in misconduct. These are responsibilities of the office of the Dean and department leadership with support and recommendations from UFHR Employee Relations.

Depending on what information the investigator is able to gather and assess, this is the range of findings our investigators typically apply:

Substantiated – A preponderance of the information provided supports a finding that the Respondent has violated the specified University regulation(s) or policy(ies) (i.e., UFHR will likely recommend corrective action be taken).

Partially Substantiated – Conduct within the scope of the allegation being examined is found to have occurred and, while it may not rise to the level of a violation of University regulation or policy, the department is strongly encouraged to assess the findings against its own internal policies and expectations for conduct (i.e., UFHR will likely recommend corrective action be taken).

Unsubstantiated, Inconclusive – The available information does not allow for the establishment of facts or supported conclusions necessary to render a finding that misconduct occurred (i.e., a lack of information prevents the investigator from making a conclusive finding).

Unsubstantiated, No Misconduct – A preponderance of the information supports finding of no violation of University regulation or policy (i.e., the investigator had sufficient information to conclude finding that the alleged misconduct did not occur).

Prohibition Against Retaliation

UF strictly prohibits retaliation against any employee who seeks assistance in resolving a concern informally, files a formal complaint, or participates in the investigation of a complaint. Any employee who believes he or she has been retaliated against for any type of participation in the ER complaint process should immediately inform his or her supervisor, Associate Dean for Administrative Affairs, or the UF Director of Employee Relations.

Employees must feel comfortable and confident in reporting misconduct. Consequently, the university takes very seriously any allegation of retaliation or intimidation of anyone involved in the investigative process. Any supervisor or employee found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Confidentiality

ER acknowledges the potential impact investigations may have on careers and/or reputations. Thus, investigators are vigilant in carefully identifying and involving only those individuals necessary to investigate complaints. At the same time, Florida's broad public records laws mean that complaints, investigative materials, and investigative materials may be subject to disclosure.

Reporting Guidance By Office

When an individual has a concern about possible employee misconduct or wants to file a complaint alleging employee misconduct, there are several different options to consider.

Immediate Supervisor

Employees are always encouraged to first speak with their immediate supervisor (Division Chief/Medical Director/Department Chair) any time they have a workplace problem or concern. Immediate supervisors are in the best position to help employees address and resolve work-related concerns or issues. If the problem involves the employee's immediate supervisor, speaking to the supervisor's immediate supervisor (i.e., the next person in the chain of leadership) is the appropriate person to contact about a possible complaint.

Office of the Dean

A faculty member can always start here with questions, guidance or to voice concerns. Similarly, faculty may choose to engage a [Senior Associate Dean](#) and/or more than one [Assistant/Associate Dean](#) to look into the concern or complaint, depending on the subject matter and severity. To avoid confusion and redundancies, please do not bring the same concern or complaint to multiple deans. In other words, pick the dean that makes the most sense and we will sort it out. You may contact the Associate Dean for Administrative Affairs by calling (904) 244-8525.

UF Employee Relations

Employee Relations is an appropriate office for employees to contact if they are concerned that another UF employee may be violating a UF regulation or policy, or if the employee is unsure of where to report an issue in the workplace. It is also an appropriate office to contact when it appears another UF employee is engaging in misconduct, such as bullying. This is true even if the reporting employee is not being directly harmed by the misconduct (i.e., the bully is targeting someone else). You can contact Employee Relations by calling (352) 392-1072 or emailing EmployeeRelations@hr.ufl.edu.

UF Title IX Office

The Title IX Office is the appropriate place to initiate a complaint (if the reporting party is the victim) or file a report (if the reporting party is a witness) of anything that may be construed as sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual assault. As is always the case, if there is a crisis situation, call 911. You can complete a [Title IX complaint form](#) or you may contact the Title IX Office by calling (352) 273-1094.

UFCOM-J Privacy Office

If a UF employee is aware of any unauthorized disclosure or acquisition of private data, including anything that may be protected by HIPAA (protecting medical records) or FERPA (protecting student records), they may contact the UFCOM-J Privacy Manager at (904) 244-6229, or 1-866-876-4472 (hotline) or complete a [Privacy Incident Report](#).

UFCOM-J Office of Research

The Office of Research is the best office to contact about research misconduct. Research misconduct generally means fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. You may contact the UFCOM-J Office of Research at (904) 244-9620.

UFCOM-J Compliance Office

The University of Florida is committed to operating in an environment of integrity and has established the UF Compliance Office as a point of coordination and a resource to all employees for all compliance activities. Employees are asked to report any activities or conduct that they believe violates a state or federal law or university policy. This includes violations of the FL Code of Ethics, UF Ethics Policy, exclusions screenings, higher education or healthcare related laws, and any other compliance related violations. You may contact UFCOM-J Compliance by calling (904) 244-2158 or to reach the Billing Compliance and Corporate Responsibility Hotline please call 1-877-264-2520.

Confidential/Anonymous Hotline Service

The [University of Florida Compliance Hotline](#) is a 24-hour, 7 day-a-week resource for reporting potential legal, policy, or ethical conduct violations or concerns. You have the option to remain anonymous when submitting reports via the Compliance Hotline, and University policy prohibits retaliation against employees who report any concern in good faith.

Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Faculty

[UF-7.103 – Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured and Non-Permanent Status Faculty Appointments: Notice of Ending of Employment of Non-Tenured and Non-Permanent Status Faculty](#)

The appointment of non-tenured faculty is subject to an annual renewal effective July 1st in accordance with University of Florida Regulations [UF-7.003](#) and [UF-7.004](#). Appointment periods are stated for the purpose of encumbering funds, thus non-tenured faculty appointments shall not create any rights, interest, or expectancy of continued employment.

Only after receiving approval from the UF (HR, OGC, Provost), a department chair (in consultation with the Dean) may choose to discontinue the employment of a non-tenured faculty member in accordance with the provisions of UF Regulation 7.103.

Notice that a faculty member's employment will end shall be provided in writing. At any time during any appointment, the employment of a non-tenured faculty member may be ended upon written notice as follows:

- Three (3) months – for employees in their initial (July 1 – June 30) appointment period of faculty employment.
- Six (6) months – for employees in their second appointment period of faculty employment.
- Twelve (12) months – for employees in their third appointment period of faculty employment.

If funded through “soft” money, e.g., contracts and grants, sponsored research funds, grants and donations trust funds, the position may be eliminated or reduced as a result of conditions beyond the control of the University of Florida, which may result in termination of your employment, with ninety (90) days advance written notice.

Faculty wishing to appeal a non-renewal decision or believe their rights pursuant to University regulations have been violated, may elect to proceed through the appeal procedures available to faculty members. The grievance procedures are noted in [University Regulation 7.041](#).

Faculty Grievance-Related Regulations

UF Regulations

<http://regulations.ufl.edu/regulations/>

UF-7.036 – [Complaints Against Faculty Members](#)

UF-7.041 – [Methods for Review and Resolution of Faculty Grievances](#)

UF-7.042 – [University Grievance Procedure for Faculty](#)

UF-7.0441 – [Procedures of the University Senate Committee on Academic Freedom, Tenure, Professional Relations and Standards Committee](#)

UF-7.048 - [Suspension, Termination, and Other Disciplinary Action for Faculty: Definition of Just Cause, Termination, Suspension, and Other Disciplinary Action, Suspension pending Investigation, Notification and Records of Disciplinary Action.](#)

Additional Resources

University of Florida College of Medicine – Jacksonville (UFCOM-J)

Academic Leadership

<https://hscj.ufl.edu/college-of-medicine/Leadership.aspx>

Departmental Leadership

<https://hscj.ufl.edu/college-of-medicine/DepartmentalLeadership.aspx>

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

<https://hscj.ufl.edu/college-of-medicine/Exec-Committee.aspx>

UFCOM-J Faculty Council

<https://hscj.ufl.edu/college-of-medicine/faculty-council/>

UF Regulations – Health Science Center

UF-5.0763 – [College of Medicine; Duty to Maintain Active and Unrestricted Clinical Privileges](#)

UF-5.0764 - [College of Medicine Policy on Pharmaceutical, Medical Device, and Biotechnology Industry Conflicts of Interest](#)

University of Florida (UF)

Faculty Senate

<http://www.senate.ufl.edu>

UF Regulations - General

<http://regulations.ufl.edu/regulations/>

UF-1.011 – [Disclosure of Regulation of Outside Activities and Financial Interests](#)

UF-1.0101 – [Policy for Dealing with Conflict in Research](#)

UF-1.0103 – [Policy on Restricted Data](#)