

**Distinguishing Between Concerns and Formal Complaints
Frequently Asked Questions**

Concern	Formal Complaint
<p>What is a concern?</p> <p>A concern is a care, trouble, or distress someone has about a residency training program and/or its institution that creates uncertainty and apprehension. Examples may be: inability to access one’s file, fear and intimidation in the program/institution; resident well-being issues; untimely verification of residency training; inability to obtain a date for a grievance hearing; vacation and leave of absence issues; injustices and abuses of power or discretion. (The above examples could also be grounds for a formal complaint rather than a concern. For example, chronic and routine non-compliance with the ACGME standard regarding access to the resident file could be a violation. The key is routine and chronic occurrences and not a single instance.)</p>	<p>What is a formal complaint?</p> <p>A formal complaint pertains to chronic and routine non-compliance with ACGME Institutional and Program Requirements.</p>
<p>How do I submit a concern to the ACGME?</p> <p>Concerns can be made by phone, email, letter, or through the annual resident survey, which has a direct link to the Resident Services email account.</p>	<p>How do I raise and lodge a formal complaint with the ACGME?</p> <p>Formal complaints must be submitted and in writing and signed.</p>
<p>May I submit the concern confidentially?</p> <p>Yes, however, there may be times when Resident Services may need to identify you to the program and/or institution in order to advocate for fair process and to identify options and strategies for resolution; however, we would never do so without your permission. Providing your name and contact information enables Resident Services to inform you about the actions taken in response to your concern, and also to contact you should additional</p>	<p>May I submit the formal complaint confidentially?</p> <p>Yes, names are never revealed, unless the complaint is about the lack of due process.</p>

information be needed.	
<p>Must I inform my program director and/or the designated institutional official of my concern(s) before contacting Resident Services?</p> <p>You should utilize all the resources available in the program and/or institution before submitting a concern to Resident Services, unless you have a valid reason for not utilizing these resources first. For example, your concern involves the program director and designated institutional official and you feel that the existing channels of communication or dispute resolution have proven unsatisfactory.</p>	<p>Must I inform my program director and/or the designated institutional official of my formal complaint(s) before contacting Resident Services?</p> <p>As with concerns, you should utilize all the resources available in the program and/or institution before submitting a formal complaint to Resident Services, unless you have a valid reason for not utilizing these resources first. For example, your formal complaint involves the program director and designated institutional official and you feel that the existing channels of communication or dispute resolution have proven unsatisfactory.</p>
<p>Will submitting a concern affect the program and institution's accreditation status?</p> <p>Submitting a concern will not affect the program and/or institution's accreditation status. The specific duties of Resident Services are: to determine the facts in each case; to work with the concerned physician and designated institutional official in seeking a satisfactory resolution; to call attention to any injustices and abuses of power or discretion; and to recommend the use of the formal complaint process for violation of ACGME Institutional and Program Requirements.</p>	<p>Will submitting a formal complaint affect the program and/or institution's accreditation status?</p> <p>Submitting a formal complaint may affect the program and/or institution's accreditation status. The program director will be asked to provide a response to the formal complaint, the designated institutional official must sign the response, and the relevant residency review committee will review the formal complaint and render a decision, which may affect the program and/or institution's accreditation status.</p>
<p>Through the concern process, does Resident Services address individual residency credit and contract issues?</p> <p>No. Neither process addresses individual residency credit and contract issues.</p>	<p>Through the formal complaint process, does Resident Services address individual residency credit and contract issues?</p> <p>No. Neither process addresses individual residency credit and contract issues.</p>
<p>Does Resident Services act as a mediator or adjudicator for concerns?</p>	<p>Does Resident Services act as a mediator or adjudicator for formal complaints?</p>

<p>Resident Services does not mediate or adjudicate individual disputes. Resident Services functions on an informal basis by such means as: listening, providing and receiving information, identifying and reframing issues, developing a range of responsible options. When possible, Resident Services helps people develop new ways to solve problems themselves.</p>	<p>Resident Services does not act as a mediator or adjudicator for formal complaints. Resident Services addresses only matters regarding compliance with the published standards and does not adjudicate individual disputes between persons in residency programs or sponsoring institutions.</p>
<p>Can Resident Services assist residents and fellows in finding another residency or fellowship position?</p> <p>No. Resident Services does not find positions for residents and/or fellows.</p>	