



Accreditation Review Commission on Education  
for the Physician Assistant, Inc.

## Concerns about Program Compliance with Policies and/or *Standards*

The ARC-PA will investigate, according to its procedures, concerns regarding PA programs only if the concern contains facts or allegations that, if substantiated, may indicate that the program is not following established ARC-PA policies or does not comply with accreditation *Standards*.

The ARC-PA will only consider concerns submitted in writing and signed. The ARC-PA procedures provide programs with an opportunity to respond to the nature of the concern.

These procedures also protect the confidentiality of individuals, information and results of the investigation of concerns.

The ARC-PA will not take any action based on an anonymous concern or concerns in litigation through the legal system. The ARC-PA will not intervene on behalf of an individual concerned about program or institutional issues unrelated to the *Standards*, will not serve to mediate or determine the results of disputes between program applicants, students or faculty and the PA program or institution.

### Procedure

1. To receive formal consideration, all concerns shall be submitted in writing and signed. The ARC-PA will **not** take any action based on an anonymous concern. The concern should demonstrate that reasonable efforts have been made to resolve the concern, or alternatively that such efforts would be unavailing.

2. In consultation with the Executive Director, the Chair of the ARC-PA will determine whether a concern raises issues relating to compliance with the *Standards* or ARC-PA policy. If the chair determines that the concern does not raise such issues, the executive director will notify the complainant, within 20 working days that the concern is beyond the purview of the ARC-PA.

3. If it is determined that the concern raises issues relating to compliance with the *Standards* or ARC-PA policy, the Program Director will be notified and will be provided with a summary of the allegations. The Program Director will be requested to respond in writing within 30 days. The Program Director also may be requested to answer specific questions or provide other information, documentation, or materials.

4. The complainant will be informed that an ARC-PA investigation has been initiated, but the result(s) of any ARC-PA investigation will be treated as confidential and will be entered into the Program's confidential accreditation file.

5. The ARC-PA will conduct a confidential investigation of the concern indicating that a program may not be in compliance with the *Standards* or ARC-PA policy. Such an investigation will typically be conducted by one or two members of the ARC-PA, appointed by the Chair to conduct the investigation, who will review the concern and its supporting evidence. The ARC-PA may request further information or material relative to the concern from the complaining party, the institution, or other relevant sources. The findings of the investigation, which may or may not include recommendations for action, will be presented at the next regularly scheduled ARC-PA meeting occurring not less than 60 days after the written, signed, concern and any requested corroboration are received by the ARC-PA. If the investigation has not been completed by the time of such meeting, a progress report will be presented.

Concerns received in such a manner that they cannot be considered at a regular ARC-PA meeting may be handled by presentation to the Executive Committee or via conference call meeting, and vote if action is required, of the entire commission, at the discretion of the ARC-PA chair.

6. If the ARC-PA, in its sole discretion, determines that sufficient evidence does not exist to indicate that the program is not in compliance with the *Standards* or ARC-PA policy, it will close the matter and report the same in a timely manner to the Program Director.

7. If the ARC-PA, in its sole discretion, determines that sufficient evidence exists to indicate that the program may not be in compliance with the *Standards*, it may request additional information or a progress report, or schedule a limited site visit to further investigate the matter. The cost of such a visit, if needed, will be borne by the program. The Program's accreditation status may be affected by the results of the evidence. The Program Director will be notified in a timely manner of the ARC-PA's action.