



Policy on Non-Retaliation, Anti-Favoritism, and Fair Treatment of Students

Effective Date: January 2026

Approved by: COO/CAO

Proposed by: Student Wellness Committee and the Office of Student Affairs

1. Purpose

AUSOMA is committed to maintaining a safe, ethical, and professionally respectful learning environment in which all students can learn without fear of retaliation, retribution, intimidation, or favoritism. This policy defines prohibited conduct, reporting mechanisms, and institutional protections.

2. Scope

Applies to all:

- Faculty – Both Basic Sciences and Clinical Sciences
- Adjunct / Visiting/ Guest faculty
- Clinical preceptors
- Administrative staff/ Clinical site personnel
- Administration
- Any individual acting on behalf of AUSOMA

3. Policy Statement

Retaliation or favoritism toward students is strictly prohibited. Any individual who engages in retaliatory behavior will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal from teaching responsibilities, suspension, or termination.

4. Definitions

Retaliation is defined as, but is not limited to:

- Penalizing a student academically because they raised a concern
- Excluding a student from learning opportunities
- Making negative remarks or threats
- Reducing grades/ assessment/ evaluation scores without justification
- Delaying grades, forms, or requirements
- Negative treatment following a report or participation in an investigation

Favoritism is defined as, but not limited to:

- Granting unfair academic advantages
- Preferential grading
- Allowing certain students privileged access (resources, roles, opportunities)
- Providing additional information, materials, or exam hints
- Offering mentorship or research selectively based on personal preference

5. Reporting Channels

Students may report concerns through any of the following:

1. **Anonymous Online Reporting Form** (Anonymous Feedback portal <https://ausoma.org/feedback/>)
2. **Associate Dean for Student Affairs**
3. **Associate Dean for Academic Affairs**
4. **Clinical Sciences Office (USA Clinical Sites)**
5. **COO or CAO Office**

Students may choose **any** of these channels

6. Assurance of Protection of Students

AUSOMA guarantees that:

- No adverse academic action will occur because a student submits a complaint.
- Faculty involved in an investigation may not evaluate the student until resolution.
- Students have the right to remain anonymous.
- Students have the right to appeal any academic decision they believe was influenced by retaliation or favoritism.

7. Investigation Process

- All reports are reviewed within **3 working days**.
- Investigations are conducted by either the CAO/ Grievance Committee or an appointed neutral investigator.
- Investigations follow standardized procedures, including interviews, document review, and analysis of grading patterns.
- Findings are reported to the CAO, COO and the Executive Committee

8. Sanctions for Violations

Faculty or staff may be subject to:

- Written warnings
- Professionalism remediation
- Removal from teaching or precepting duties
- Suspension
- Non-renewal or termination

9. Annual Review

The Office of Student Affairs, the CAO and the COO will review all trends annually and report them to the Executive Committee

Summary -

AUSOMA maintains a learning environment where students are protected from retaliation, intimidation, and favoritism. Policies on non-retaliation and fair treatment are published in the Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, Clinical Handbook and on the AUSOMA website.

Students have access to **multiple reporting channels**, including an anonymous reporting portal, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, the Clinical Education Office, and CAO/ COO.

All reports are reviewed within 72 hours, investigated using standardized procedures, and documented by the Office of Student Affairs. Faculty involved in a pending investigation are removed from evaluating the student to prevent any risk of retaliation.

The Grievance Committee conducts trend analysis and reviews patterns of concern. Findings are reported quarterly to the CAO and Quality Assurance Committee and annually to the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees.

Faculty undergo annual training on professionalism, non-retaliation, implicit bias, and fair evaluation practices. Rubric-based assessment systems, standardized clerkship evaluations, and blinded grading mechanisms help reduce subjectivity and prevent favoritism.

The school's comprehensive system ensures that students feel safe, respected, and able to learn without fear of retaliation or retribution, in full alignment with ACCM Standards.