**Procedures for Addressing Graduate Student Grievances Related to SAA and/or Complaints by Supervisors with the Performance of Student Academic Appointees (SAAs).**

Department of Biology – August 2022

**Overview:** This policy describes Biology's part of due process involving employment of graduate students as SAAs (AIs and RAs). It was drafted and/or reviewed by the Chair, Associate Teaching Chair (ACT), Director of Graduate Studies, Graduate Program Directors and Graduate Advisor. The policy is governed by [OVPFAA](https://vpfaa.indiana.edu/policies/bl-aca-d28-saa-grievances-recommendations/index.html#scope) with ultimate arbitration at the [BFC](https://vpfaa.indiana.edu/policies/bl-aca-d23-saa-mediation/index.html#scope). Separate due process pathways - not described here - exist for the academic status and standing of graduate students in the Programs.  Those pathways involve academic probation, dismissal, and due process via the [College Graduate office](https://college.indiana.edu/student-portal/graduate-students/academic-procedures/appeals.html). The GPDs and the DGS can help students and advisor navigate these two pathways.

1. **Discuss first with supervisor:**

When possible, the first attempts at resolving issues between graduate students and supervisors or others related to their student academic appointments (AIs or RAs) should be made through direct discussions between the student academic appointee and their supervisor (instructor or PI).

1. **Next, bring to ACT (for SAA-AIships) or GPD (for SAA-RAship):**

*(A) Whom to consult:* If such discussions are not able to resolve the issue(s) and/or if the SAA is uncomfortable discussing them with their supervisor, the issue should be brought to:

- for AI appointments: the Associate Chair for Teaching (ACT, currently Pranav Danthi),

- for RA appointments: the relevant Graduate Program Director (GPD).

*(B) Process*: With the permission of the SAA, the ACT or GPD will discuss the issue with the supervisor and attempt to resolve it, and/or take appropriate steps at the departmental level to resolve the complaint.

*(C) Confidentiality*: Where possible, the ACT or GPD will make efforts to respect the confidentiality of the SAA. The SAA will be notified whenever information regarding the complaint is placed in the student’s personnel file.

*(D) Consultation with other offices*: The ACT or GPD may also engage relevant campus offices (e.g., the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs, Office of Institutional Equity; Office of Student Conduct).

(E) *Timeline:* It is anticipated that this stage will be handled within two weeks. For complaints that involve possible sexual misconduct, the campus and/or university Title IX coordinators must be informed as soon as possible.

1. **Next level: Departmental SAA Committee:**

(A) *Creation of ad hoc departmental SAA committee:* If the ACT or Graduate Program Director is unable to resolve the issue(s) to the satisfaction of the SAA appointee and their supervisor, or if the ACT or GPD have a conflict of interest, the issue may be referred by the student, instructor, ACT, or GPD to a departmental SAA committee.

(B) *Membership of committee:* The committee will typically consist of the Department Chair, Director of Graduate Studies, and either the ACT (for AIs) or the relevant GPD (for RAs). Members of the committee may be disqualified and/or replaced in case of conflict of interest.

*(C) Confidentiality*: Where possible, the departmental SAA committee will make efforts to respect the confidentiality of the SAA. The SAA will be notified whenever information regarding the complaint is placed in the student’s personnel file.

(D) *Timeline:* It is anticipated that this stage will be handled within two weeks.

1. **Final level: SAA Mediation Committee and SAA Board of Review, Bloomington Faculty Council**  
   (A) *First* - *BFC SAA Mediation Committee*: If the department does not resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of the SAA, the SAA may refer the grievance to the SAA Mediation Committee of the Bloomington Faculty Council ([SAA Mediation Committee: Policies: Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty & Academic Affairs: Indiana University Bloomington](https://vpfaa.indiana.edu/policies/bl-aca-d23-saa-mediation/index.html)).

(B) *Second – BFC SAA Board of Review:* If the SAA Mediation Committee does not resolve the grievance, it may be further appealed to the [SAA Board of Review](https://vpfaa.indiana.edu/policies/bl-aca-d24-saa-board-of-review/index.html).

(C) *Timeline:* Appeals to the SAA Board of Review typically need to be filed within two months of the incident that resulted in the grievance, although the Board of Review may waive this time limit.

Additional Information on the Rights and Responsibilities of SAA appointees may be found in the Graduate Student Academic Appointees Guide ([graduate-student-academic-appointees-guide.pdf (indiana.edu)](https://vpfaa.indiana.edu/doc/graduate-student-academic-appointees-guide.pdf).