

**Society of Gynecologic Oncology  
Policy and Procedure**

**POLICY NUMBER** 1.12

**POLICY NAME** Judicial Grievance Procedure

**DATE OF ORIGIN** July 2020

**PURPOSE** Members of the Society of Gynecologic Oncology (SGO) pledge to adhere to the SGO Bylaws, the SGO Code of Ethical Conduct and Practice Policy, the SGO Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy, and final determinations by the of the SGO Board of Directors

This procedure establishes a process for the SGO to address reports and complaints of behavior by a member that may violate the Code of Professional Ethics, adopted by SGO, or is inconsistent with SGO Bylaws or policies, or violates professional licensure or certification.

- POLICY**
- I. Policy Inclusions & Exclusions
    - A. Definition of a Member
      - i. The membership categories of the Society of Gynecologic Oncology SGO are covered by this grievance procedure, including Full, Associate, Trainee and Senior members.
      - ii. Non-members are not included in this procedure.
    - B. Inclusions for the Grievance Procedure
      - i. Complaints alleging violation of SGO's Code of Ethical Conduct, Policies and Bylaws.
      - ii. Revocation of Board certification or revocation of state licensure
      - iii. Primary review of incidents that have happened at SGO related events including official events and social events held in conjunction with SGO meetings.
      - iv. Incidents that violate the SGO meeting code of conduct, the anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies.
    - C. Exclusions from Grievance Procedure
      - i. Business disputes between SGO members
      - ii. Matters currently in litigation, arbitration or appeal with a court, other professional society, state medical board, or other healthcare entity.
      - iii. Advertising disputes
      - iv. Disputes regarding fees or reimbursement issues
      - v. Disputes between two members occurring outside of SGO sanctioned events should be handled within local administrative mechanisms.

II. Initial Review

- A. Review of complaints of violation of the SGO Code of Professional Ethics, SGO policies or Bylaws will be reviewed by an ad Hoc Grievance Committee as described in the Bylaws, under operational procedure, section A. Grievance Committee Appointment, Composition and Hearing Process.
- B. Review of Complaints at SGO Meetings
  - i. SGO will contract with an independent complaint management service to triage complaints that are submitted during an SGO meeting. Contact instructions for the professional complaint management services will be publicized at the SGO meeting. Initial investigation of complaints will be performed by the service after ensuring the safety of the complainant. Grievances may also be submitted to the SGO CEO, SGO president, SGO ethics committee chair, or program committee co-chairs.
  - ii. The CEO of SGO, as well as the Ethics Committee Chair, will be notified by the management service of all complaints from the preceding meeting.
  - iii. If a complaint is filed in writing after the meeting, the complaint will go to the Ethics Committee Chair or Vice-Chair for initial investigation.
  - iv. Complaints directed towards meeting participants who are not SGO members will be referred to the SGO CEO and may include immediate expulsion from the meeting and prohibition from future attendance
  - v. Any complaints involving an SGO member found to have merit on an initial investigation will be forwarded to the Grievance Committee for further deliberation (see section VII.)
- C. Review of Termination of State Medical Licensures or Board Certification of SGO Members for Issues of Professionalism
  - i. Any SGO member who has severe a disciplinary action taken by the state medical boards that results in the loss of said member's medical license will automatically have their membership in SGO revoked.
  - ii. Any SGO member who has their Board Certification involuntarily revoked (not due to the choice of not keeping their certification up to date), will automatically have their membership revoked.
  - iii. Sanctions of lesser degree from a state medical board or certification board such as probation or reprimand will not subject an SGO member to sanction on their SGO membership.
  - iv. Authority to terminate SGO membership for licensure or board certification revocation is found in Section 3.4 (d) of the SGO Bylaws

**OPERATIONAL  
PROCEDURE**

- III. Grievance Policy Operational Procedure
  - A. Grievance Committee Appointment, Composition and Hearing Process
    - i. Ad Hoc Grievance Committee Appointment and Composition
      - a. The Ethics Committee Chair will appoint an ad hoc Grievance Committee to provide review of the complaint and offer a formal hearing to the SGO member
      - b. The ad hoc Grievance Committee will be composed of three voting members and will include the SGO Immediate Past President and two members of the SGO Professional Ethics Committee. Non-voting members of the ad hoc committee will include legal counsel and a staff liaison appointed by the SGO CEO.
      - c. The Immediate Past President of SGO will serve as Chair of the ad hoc Grievance Committee.
    - ii. Grievance Committee Hearing Process
      - a. The SGO member will be sent a copy of the complaint, and any related materials to be considered by the ad hoc Grievance Committee.
      - b. The SGO member will receive a notification of the ad hoc Grievance Committee panel member composition
      - c. Within 30 days after notification of the complaint, the SGO member may request a formal hearing.
      - d. The SGO member may notify the Ethics Committee Chair of any significant conflict of interest with one of the Ad Hoc Committee members, and the Ethics Committee Chair may consider replacement of a committee member prior to the formal hearing.
      - e. The SGO member may have representation by legal counsel, but such representation is not required.
      - f. The SGO member and Ad Hoc Committee will conduct a hearing, either in person, or via electronic communication for a time period of 30 minutes. Members of the Committee, or SGO legal counsel may ask questions of the SGO member and/or attorney representation.
      - g. Immediately after the hearing concludes, the Ad Hoc Committee will meet in closed executive session to determine the outcome of the matter, and recommend a course of action.
    - iii. Appeal Process
      - a. The SGO member has a right to appeal the decision of the ad hoc Grievance Committee to the full Ethics Committee.
      - b. The two Ethics Committee members who participated in the ad hoc Grievance Committee in the initial hearing will be excluded from the appeal process. The non-voting staff liaison and SGO counsel may participate in the Appeal process.
      - c. The full Ethics Committee will review the materials provided to the ad hoc Grievance Committee by the SGO member and the initial complaint.
      - d. A 30-minute appeals hearing will be held in person or by electronic communication.
      - e. The decision of the Ethics Committee on the appeal will be sent to the Board of Directors for final action.

IV. Types of Disciplinary Actions

A. No Action

- i. Initial review of the complaint by the, the SGO CEO and Ethics Committee Chair determines that no violation of the Ethical Code of Professional Conduct or Anti-discrimination and Anti-harassment policy occurred.
- ii. Cases of complaints involving violation of the Code of Ethics, SGO policies or Bylaws that are determined to require no action will also be reported in an information only report to the Executive Committee of the Board and the Ethics Committee

B. Reprimand

- i. A formal letter of reprimand may be recommended for actions deemed as minor infractions of the Principles of Ethical Conduct and Practice
- ii. The Executive Committee of the Board will receive an information-only report of SGO members recommended for reprimand for approval.
- iii. The Professional Ethics Committee will issue the letter of reprimand to the member under the signature of the Chair. A copy of the letter will be kept in a confidential file in the SGO headquarters office.
- iv. The Ethics Chair will have a conversation with the SGO member regarding the reprimand and any suggested remedial actions.
- v. The letter of reprimand is a one-time final action, with no continuing oversight.

C. Probation

- i. A recommendation for probation denotes a higher level of concern for a more significant level of ethical infraction, a concern for the potential of a repeat violation
- ii. An SGO member on probation will be allowed to serve on committees and attend meetings.
- iii. The Executive Committee of the Board will receive an information-only report of SGO members recommended for probation for approval.
- iv. The I Ethics Committee will issue the letter of probation to the member under the signature of the Chair of the Ethics Committee with suggested remedial actions, such as completion of an ethics course. The letter will also denote the length of time of the probation.
- v. The letter of probation will inform the member that a repeat grievance violation or a failure to complete required remediation may result in a final action of termination of membership.
- vi. Probation is a time-limited sanction.
- vii. A copy of the letter will be kept in a confidential file in the SGO headquarters office.

D. Termination for SGO Grievance

- i. For particularly egregious violations of the Principles of Ethical Conduct and Practice, Anti-Harassment and Antidiscrimination Policy, or SGO Bylaws, and after due process, the Ethics Committee may recommend termination of membership.
- ii. Recommendations for termination of membership will be forwarded to the Board of Directors for an action by vote. A 2/3 vote of the Board shall be required to terminate an SGO membership for grievance.

- iii. The SGO member will be notified of the termination, and from the date of the notification, the person will not be allowed to participate in meetings, events or leadership positions affiliated with SGO.
  - iv. Termination of membership for Grievance will be reported to the National Practitioner Databank (NPDB).
  - v. After a period of a year, the former member is eligible to reapply for membership in SGO. The new application will be reviewed by the Ethics Committee.
- E. Termination for Loss of Medical Licensure or Board Certification for Cause
- i. According to SGO Bylaws, section 3.4(d), loss of medical licensure or board certification for cause automatically results in revocation of SGO membership.
  - ii. No vote of the SGO Board is required for removal of membership for loss of medical licensure or board certification for cause.
  - iii. Loss of SGO membership due to loss of medical licensure or board certification will be reported to the NPDB.
  - iv. Restoration of medical licensure or board certification restores the ability of the person to reapply for SGO membership, with review by the Ethics Committee.

Revisions: