

University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine
Department of Surgery, Division of General Surgery

General Surgery Postgraduate Education Committee
Dispute Resolution Policy

1. This policy is based on the Postgraduate Education Committee of the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine document entitled “Resolution of Resident Conflict with Attending Physician or Supervisor on an Issue of Patient Care,” developed to provide a Provincial guideline to resolve situations where a resident experiences conflict with his/her attending physician or supervisor on an issue of patient care.

Process:

2. Each General Surgery resident must be provided with the contact information for each site coordinator at each rotation.
3. When there is a conflict or disagreement between the resident and the attending physician or supervisor, the premise is that the issue will be dealt with as close to the source as possible thereby limiting the number of people involved. The conflict can be handled either through the academic or hospital/site protocol, with the understanding that all involved parties will keep each other informed.
4. Examples of disagreements include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Perceived concerns regarding quality of care.
 - b. Perceived inappropriate professional behaviour.
 - c. Perceived inadequate supervision.
 - d. Perceived inadequate or unsatisfactory teaching.

Procedure for Academic Route of Resolution of Resident/Supervisor Disagreement:

5. Ideally, the resident and supervisor have a face-to-face discussion about the concern.
6. The resident consults with the site coordinator about the issue.
7. The site coordinator will speak with the supervisor to inform him/her of the concern.
8. The site coordinator may choose to arrange a joint meeting with the resident and attending physician/supervisor to reach a resolution.
9. If the resident does not believe that the issue has been resolved, then she/he should approach the General Surgery program director.
10. If the issue still remains unresolved, the resident should approach the Department of Surgery’s Director of Postgraduate Education.
11. In cases where immediate resolution is required, the resident will immediately contact the site coordinator for direction.
12. Recognizing that disagreements/conflicts occur, there is an expectation that a collegial, “no-fault” environment is in place. Regardless of the outcome of the immediate intervention and/or resolution, there shall be no repercussions to the resident for lodging a complaint made in good faith. The site coordinator will provide a follow-up written report of the incident to the General Surgery program director and/or the service chief, when appropriate.