



Department Policy on Prohibition of Retaliation

I. Purpose

This policy establishes the University of Central Arkansas Physical Therapy Department's zero-tolerance stance against retaliation. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students, residents, faculty, staff, clinical education instructors, and guests (referred to as "Complainants" and "Participants") can file complaints, report concerns, or participate in related processes without fear of adverse action, harassment, or discrimination. This policy protects the integrity of the complaint process and encourages good faith reporting.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals involved in the Physical Therapy Department's academic and clinical activities, including but not limited to:

- DPT Students (in didactic coursework and clinical rotations).
- Physical Therapy Faculty (core and associated faculty).
- Departmental Staff and Graduate Assistants.
- Clinical Instructors/Site Coordinators (at affiliated clinical sites).
- Individuals enrolled in departmental Residency Programs
- Guests and Patients involved in departmental activities (e.g., standardized patients, clinic participants).

This policy covers retaliation related to *any* complaint, report, or good-faith participation in an investigation concerning violations of institutional or departmental policies, including those related to professional conduct, academic performance, discrimination, harassment, or clinical professionalism.

III. Definition of Retaliation

Retaliation is defined as any adverse action, intimidation, threat, harassment, or discrimination taken against a Complainant or Participant because they:

1. Filed a complaint or report.
2. Assisted, testified, or participated in any manner in an investigation or resolution process.
3. Opposed any act or practice prohibited by institutional or departmental policy.

Examples of Prohibited Retaliation:

- **Academic/Clinical:** Assigning an unwarranted lower grade in a course or on a performance assessment tool; arbitrarily denying a DPT student a pre-approved clinical placement; removing a student from a study group; providing an undeserved negative professional reference.



- **Employment (for Faculty/Staff/Clinical Instructors):** Undeserved negative peer reviews or performance evaluations; unwarranted changes in teaching load or administrative responsibilities; exclusion from departmental meetings or committees.
- **Social/Interpersonal:** Shunning, professional isolation, spreading false information, or engaging in bullying or harassment within the department or clinical setting.

Note: Actions that are genuinely and neutrally based on the individual's academic performance, clinical competency, or conduct unrelated to the complaint are not considered retaliation.

IV. Policy Statement

The Physical Therapy Department strictly prohibits and will not tolerate retaliation in any form against any individual who, in good faith:

- Files a complaint or report.
- Expresses an intent to file a complaint or report.
- Serves as a witness or otherwise participates in an investigation or resolution process.

V. Reporting Retaliation

Any Complainant or Participant who believes they have been subjected to retaliation should immediately report the alleged conduct to:

- **The Department Chair** (for internal/departmental matters) or the **College Dean** (for issues related to the Department Chair).
- **The University's Title IX Coordinator/Office of Institutional Equity** (for issues related to discrimination and harassment).
- **Lighthouse Confidential Reporting Hotline** (for serious violations or infractions)
1(855)440-0002 OR <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/uca>

A report of retaliation will be treated as a serious matter and will be investigated promptly and thoroughly, separate from (but related to) the original complaint.