

Cowley County Extension Council Executive Board
Extension Board Grievance Policy

Approved date: 4/3/2018

Revised from 5/7/15 (6/5/14 & 1/8/14)

We value the contributions of volunteers to the Cowley County Extension Programs and we have established this grievance policy so that issues may be resolved in the simplest manner possible.

What issues may and may not be filed in a grievance

A grievance committee may be convened for the following situations/reasons:

- alleged wrongdoing.
- rule or policy violation from what is published by Cowley County Extension.

A grievance committee will not be convened for the following situations/reasons:

- Decisions made by judges (or judging committees), which are final.
- Issues related to any published Cowley County Extension deadlines or rules (Examples: membership enrollment, livestock ownership and tagging deadlines, fair entry deadlines, and/or county program pre-registration, etc.)
- Code of Conduct related violations, which will be addressed by staff according to the established process.

Level 1 - The grievant shall request an informal conference with the agent or staff within 15 days after he/she becomes aware of the issue. The purpose of this meeting is to have the opportunity to resolve the issue in an informal manner. Whenever possible it is strongly recommended that this meeting be in person.

If the grievant is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal approach, completing the attached Level 1 documentation is required prior to filing a Level 2 grievance.

Level 2 -

If the grievant is dissatisfied with the result of the informal conference, he/she shall, within another 15 days, complete and deliver the Extension Board Grievance Policy Form to the Extension Board Chair. The form must be completed in its entirety and must show that Level One was completed. The grievance must be described in 50 words or less and be limited to one issue.

Upon receipt, the Extension Board Chair and Vice-Chair shall review the form to determine if the issue should be forwarded to the Grievance Committee or if other action should be taken. If it is determined that the issue should not move forward to the Grievance Committee, the grievant will receive written notification with feedback or reasons for denial.

If forwarded to the Grievance Committee, the Committee will hold a conference with the grievant and parties involved within 15 days of receipt of the Level 2 Grievance form. The purpose of this meeting is to formulate a plan of action to resolve the issue. Written notification

of the Committee decision and plan of action will be sent to involved parties within 10 days of this conference.

Level 3 - If the individual is dissatisfied with results of Level 2, he/she shall request that the written grievance records be forwarded to the Extension Council Executive Board. The grievant shall submit a written letter addressed to the Extension Council Executive Board stating why the action taken at Level 2 was unsatisfactory in 50 words or less. A representative from the Extension Council Executive Board will contact the necessary parties and specify a place and time for a formal hearing to be conducted by the Extension Council Executive Board. This hearing should take place within 30 days of receiving the Level 3 request. See Attachment A: Cowley County Grievance Formal Hearing Process for details.

When the grievance is either allowed or denied, the course of action shall be entered in writing, and a copy delivered to the grievant and the person against whom the grievance was made. The Extension Council Executive Board reserves the right to institute further restrictions upon the person/persons upon whom the grievance was made.

Attachment A: Cowley County Grievance Formal Hearing Process

The formal hearing will be on the meeting agenda after roll call.

Board chair will say: I declare the formal hearing for the grievance filed by (*insert name of party*) open. I will invite (*insert name of party*) to address the Cowley County Extension Council Executive Board on this matter. Comments related to matters other than the stated grievance topic will need to wait until the "Public Comment" portion of this meeting.

The party who filed the grievance will have 5 minutes to address the board. The items included in the presentation must relate directly to issue identified in the grievance (the board chair can interrupt the person if they deviate and stop the person after the 5 minutes is up).

After the presentation, the board members can ask for additional information to provide clarity (the amount of time for questions may be defined by the board chair --i.e. not to exceed 5 minutes).

The board chair will thank the party, offer condolences and state that that the board will "take into consideration as an action item...either at the current meeting or at a future meeting".

The board chair will ask for a motion to close the formal hearing; the motion will be seconded and vote taken. The chair will "declare the formal hearing closed. "

The meeting will continue according to the agenda.

In new business, "grievance response" will be included on the agenda. An "Executive Session" will also be included on the agenda if this is necessary/appropriate. As a reminder, no action can be taken in Executive Session.

During "grievance response" the board members can discuss potential action. If taking action, the board chair will accept a motion and second, followed by a vote. Written notification of the action will be noted on the grievance policy form and sent to the party. (It is recommended that this written documentation be sent within 10 days of the action.)

Examples-

Q1. As a parent, I was not impressed with how the judge interacted with my child. I don't think my child deserved a red ribbon. Can I file a grievance?

A1. A grievance can not be filed because all decisions by judges are final. However, Extension staff appreciate your feedback about judges and if they are modeling positive youth development skills.

Q2. The published registration date for a meeting was January 15. I forgot to call so I didn't attend. Later I learned that my neighbor called on January 16 and registered. Can I file a grievance?

A2. Issues related to published deadlines or rules will not be reviewed by the grievance committee. You are welcome to discuss the issue with the Extension Agent or staff. Registration dates are firm while **target registration dates** might accommodate additional participants (if space and supplies are available).

Q3. I am aware of a situation that involves an Agent or a staff member. What options do I have instead of the Level 1 approach?

A3. Code of Conduct related violations can be addressed by the Southeast Area Extension Director or Board Chair according to the established process. Visit www.cowley.k-state.edu to obtain names and contact information.

Q4. The rule states animals can not vary in weight by 10 pounds.

A4. The rule did not dictate if the 10 pounds variation is a gain or a loss. Thus, a grievance is worthwhile because the rule may need to be clarified in the future (but an exception to this year's ruling may not happen).

**Cowley County Extension Council Executive Board
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Level One

Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Date grievance issue occurred:

Date informal contact was completed to discuss issue:

Method of informal contact:

- in person (preferred)
- E-mail
- Phone
- Writing
- Other _____

Please mark the appropriate division of the Cowley Extension staff area:

- Agriculture
- Community Development
- Family & Consumer Sciences
- 4-H Youth Development
- Office Staff

**Cowley County Extension Council Executive Board
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Level Two

Date this form is being submitted:
(Must be within 15 days from Level One contact date)

In 50 words or less, describe the grievance (limit to 1 issue):

What resolution are you seeking?

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Board Use Only

Action taken: Forward to Grievance Committee Denied Other

Reasons noted or other feedback:

Board Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____

Vice-Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____

Grievance Committee Use Only:

Date and time of conference:

Location of conference:

Action taken:

Written notification of action date:

Grievance Committee Chair

Signature: _____ Date: _____

**Cowley County Extension Council Executive Board
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Level Three

Extension Board Use Only

Lvl Three grievance receipt date

Date and time of conference:

Location of conference

Action taken (include reasons if appropriate)

Written notification of action date:

Board Chair

Signature: _____

Date: _____