UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI · DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS

Suggestion and Action System (SAS) Procedures

October 2026

1. Purpose

This document describes how the Department of Physics receives, reviews, and responds to suggestions and concerns submitted to the Suggestion and Action Box, an online form that allows anonymous submissions. We continue to encourage members of the department to raise issues first with their supervisors, advisors, departmental committees, and departmental leadership whenever they feel comfortable doing so. The Suggestion and Action System (SAS) provides an additional venue for doing so.

The SAS welcomes input on any aspect of departmental life, including facilities and logistics, teaching and advising, research and working conditions, events and communication, and the way we interact with one another. The system

a) provides students, postdocs, staff, and faculty a retaliation-free and, if desired, anonymous venue for suggestions and concerns,

b) ensures that suggestions and concerns are addressed in a timely and objective manner,

c) assures that confidentiality, when desired, is maintained to the greatest extent possible, and

d) provides a path for unresolved concerns to be addressed by departmental leadership.

The SAS does not change any rights that members of the department have under university policy, any contract, or any collective bargaining agreement that applies to them. It is not intended to circumvent or replace any existing grievance procedure.

Departmental leadership has the responsibility to take ownership of the suggestions and concerns brought to its attention, to address them in a timely manner while maintaining confidentiality when requested and when rules allow, and to make a sincere attempt to reach a resolution.

2. Other avenues for reporting

The SAS does not provide an alternative path for reporting matters that university policy directs elsewhere. Members of the department who are UC employees have reporting obligations[1], and those obligations also apply to anything submitted to the Suggestion and Action Box. We encourage members of the department to use the following resources whenever they are more appropriate.

- **Emergencies or criminal activity.** Call 911 as soon as you are safely able. The University of Cincinnati Police Department can be reached at (513) 556-1111.
- **Discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct (Title IX).** Contact the Office of Equal Opportunity at (513) 556-3349 or eooffice@uc.edu, or use its online reporting form.
- **Illegal, unethical, or policy-violating conduct.** The UC Anonymous Reporting Hotline, operated by NAVEX EthicsPoint, accepts anonymous reports by phone at 1-800-889-1547 or online.

[1] All UC employees must report felonies of which they become aware to the University of Cincinnati Police Department. UC employees are also generally required to report possible sexual misconduct, and any other potential violation of the university's Title IX policy, to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity. Exceptions apply to employees designated as confidential resources.

- **Confidential and informal help with a conflict.** The Office of the University Ombuds, 607 Swift Hall, (513) 556-5956, is independent of the university administration and confidential except for Title IX matters and situations involving imminent risk of harm. Conversations with the Ombuds do not constitute notice to the university.

3. Definitions

SAS Oversight Team. The Department Head, the members of the Department Executive Committee, and the members of the Access and Inclusion Committee.

SAS Administrators. The Department Head, who chairs the Executive Committee, and the Chair of the Access and Inclusion Committee, currently Prof. Alex Sousa (Department Head) and Prof. Kay Kinoshita (Chair of the Access and Inclusion Committee). The two SAS Administrators are the only people with access to the Suggestion and Action Box and to the submissions it receives.

The SAS Administrators review submissions consulting only the members of the SAS Oversight Team whose input is needed to develop an action plan, and using paraphrased, non-identifying summaries. Original submissions are never shared beyond the two SAS Administrators.

Submitter. Any member of the department who uses the Suggestion and Action Box.

4. Anonymity and replies

Submissions are anonymous by default. A submitter may include their name, but is not required to do so. A submitter who wishes to receive a reply may enter an email address in the designated field of the form. That address is never shown to the SAS Administrators. Replies are relayed to the submitter by the platform, so the exchange remains fully anonymous in both directions.

The only way a submitter can be identified is by including their name, email address, or other identifying details in the text of the submission itself. Submitters who wish to remain anonymous should avoid doing so.

Submissions that do not include an email address cannot receive an individual reply. When they are not sensitive, they and the actions taken in response are summarized on the Suggestions and Actions page (Section 6).

5. Procedure

	Process	Responsible
1	Submit a suggestion or concern through the Suggestion and Action Box at https://www.custominsight.net/box/?cb46056qjyt. The submitter may remain anonymous, and may request a reply by entering an email address, which the SAS Administrators cannot see at any point in the process. The submitter can only be identified if they choose to provide their name or other identifying information in the body of the submission.	Member of the department
2	Track and review all submissions and maintain their current status.	SAS Administrators
3	Prepare paraphrased, non-identifying summaries of submissions and share them only with the members of the SAS Oversight Team whose input is needed to develop an action plan.	SAS Administrators

	Process	Responsible
4	Review each submission, consulting those members of the SAS Oversight Team, and either (a) assign a person or persons to assess it and prepare a response plan, or (b) decide to take no action.	SAS Administrators and consulted Oversight Team members
5	Within two weeks of receipt, acknowledge the submission and provide the planned course of action, or the reason for the decision not to act, to submitters who requested a reply, unless legal restrictions exist.	SAS Administrators
6	Propose a concrete response and resolution plan with specific actions that address the submission, and review it with the SAS Administrators and the consulted members of the SAS Oversight Team. Additional steps and reviews are considered if necessary.	Person(s) assigned by the SAS Oversight Team
7	Approve the plan.	SAS Administrators and consulted Oversight Team members
8	Share the plan or resolution with the submitter, if a reply was requested and unless legal restrictions exist.	SAS Administrators
9	Respond to the plan or resolution, if desired, within two weeks.	Submitter
10	Close the submission, unless the submitter expressed dissatisfaction with the plan or resolution. In that case, steps 4 to 10 are carried out again.	SAS Administrators
11	Carry out the adopted plan or resolution where relevant, and record it on the Suggestions and Actions page when it is not sensitive.	Person(s) assigned and SAS Administrators

If a submission concerns one of the SAS Administrators, or anyone on the SAS Oversight Team, that person does not take part in its review or response. A submission concerning the Department Head is handled by the Chair of the Access and Inclusion Committee together with the other members of the Executive Committee, and a submission concerning the Chair of the Access and Inclusion Committee is handled by the Department Head together with the other members of the Executive Committee.

6. Suggestions and Actions page

The department maintains a public Suggestions and Actions page on its website, listing in two columns the suggestions received and the actions taken in response. Entries are paraphrased and include only submissions that are not sensitive. No entry will contain information that could identify a submitter or any other individual. The page is updated by the SAS Administrators as actions are completed.

7. Where to submit

The Suggestion and Action Box is available at https://www.custominsight.net/box/?cb46056qjyt. This document is posted on the Department of Physics website at https://www.artsci.uc.edu/natural-sciences/physics/suggestion-action-system.html, and the Suggestions and Actions page is at https://www.artsci.uc.edu/natural-sciences/physics/suggestion-action-system/suggestions-and-actions.html.