Introduction: It is the standard operating procedure of the NC State Veterinary Hospital (VH) to provide the highest quality care to our patients and excellent customer service to both our clients and referring veterinarians (RDVM). There will be instances when clients or RDVMs are not satisfied with the quality, timeliness or, cost of services provided by the VH. Efforts will be made to thoroughly investigate every instance of client and /or RDVM dissatisfaction.

Procedures: The procedures for processing client and RDVM complaints are as follows:

I. Verbal Complaint Processing:

1. Any faculty or staff member receiving a complaint that they are unable to resolve should be immediately referred to the Director of Business and Administrative Services or the Hospital Administrator. The Director of Business and Administrative Services or the Hospital Administrator will contact the complainant regarding their concerns, and complete a Client Complaint or RDVM Complaint Form to document the issue and the resolution. Once the complaint is resolved, the completed form is sent to the Office of the Associate Dean for Veterinary Medical Services (Associate Dean) to be filed and logged into the client or RDVM complaint database. If the complaint involves further investigation, such as a concern with the medical care, the Director of Business and Administrative Services or the Hospital Administrator may ask them to put their concerns in writing and follow the written complaint process below.

2. The VH sends out surveys to referring veterinarians along with the discharge summary. The completed surveys are then faxed by the RDVM back to the VH. Surveys will be collected daily and any surveys that show a concern with the care or service rendered at the VH will be sent to the Associate Dean for resolution.

II. Written Complaint Processing:

All written complaints received will be processed as follows:

1. All written complaints should be forwarded to the Hospital’s Administrative Assistant and date stamped.

2. A Client or RDVM complaint form is attached to complaint file.

3. If the client complaint involves a communication or financial issue, it will be managed by the Hospital Administrator. If the complaint concerns a medical or quality of care issue,
that the Hospital Administrator can’t address, it will be forwarded the Office of the Associate Dean for resolution.

4. If the complaint is from an RDVM, the complaint letter is sent to the Office of the Associate Dean for resolution.

5. In either case of a complaint, RDVM or client, the complainant will be contacted acknowledging receipt of the complaint and informing them that an investigation has been initiated.

6. The complaint is logged into the client or RDVM complaint database for tracking.

A. Client Complaint:

1. The Hospital Administrator, their designee or the Associate Dean will review the complaint and contact either the service chief, senior clinician and/or house officer at their discretion to obtain assistance in resolving the issue.

2. The Hospital Administrator, their designee or the Associate Dean will determine an appropriate resolution and provide feedback to the client verbally or in a written correspondence. Any written correspondence will be sent in a draft format to the service chief, senior clinician and/or house officer, if appropriate, for editorial review prior to being sent to the client. After review, the letter will be sent to the client outlining any activity, if any that will be taken by the VH.

3. The client complaint form should be completed outlining the resolution and sent with any relevant documentation to include written correspondence or write off form to the Associate Dean to be entered into the client complaint database as resolved and then filed.

B. RDVM Complaint:

1. The Associate Dean or their designee will review the complaint and contact the service chief, senior clinician and/or house officer to obtain assistance in resolving the issue.

2. The Associate Dean or their designee will determine an appropriate resolution and provide feedback to the RDVM verbally or in a written correspondence.

3. The RDVM complaint form should be completed outlining the resolution and sent with any relevant documentation to include written correspondence to the Office of the Associate Dean to be entered into the RDVM complaint database as resolved and filed.

C. Documentation of the Complaint Resolution Process

Any documentation in the client communication logs should be limited to communication regarding the care of the case and or follow up questions or concerns but not documentation of the complaint resolution process. All communications regarding the complaint should be summarized in writing either on the client complaint form or in a separate document.

D. Time Tables for Resolution

- Client complaints not involving quality of care or multiple concerns - 10 working days.
- Clients complaints involving quality of care or multiple concerns and requiring service chief involvement - 15 working days
- Client complaints involving a case review 30 working days
- RDVM complaints - 5 working days