

STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The Student Complaint Procedure is a process for **students (face-to-face and online)** to express and resolve misunderstandings, concerns, or disputes that they have with any faculty, staff or administrator in a prompt, fair and equitable manner. It is intended that the complaint procedures provide a problem-solving atmosphere which stresses resolution and reflects the best interests of the complainant and the University. **This procedure is not used in cases of Sex and Gender Based Misconduct, Discrimination or Harassment. In those cases, please contact the Director of Human Resources.** When a student has a complaint about mistreatment by another student, the procedure under the Student Code of Conduct should be followed.

All complaint records are maintained and stored in the respective Offices of the Vice Presidents and Chief of Staff. All files and records related to sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, personnel and personnel related issues are maintained and stored in the Office of the Director of Human Resources.

Informal Complaint: An informal complaint is defined as an academic or non-academic dispute or complaint that a student has with faculty, staff or administrator that is verbally communicated.

Formal Complaint: A formal complaint is defined as an academic or non-academic dispute or complaint that a student has with faculty, staff or administrator that is in writing. All formal complaints shall be in writing.

Complainant: A complainant is a student who files a grievance or complaint.

Respondent: A respondent is a University official subject of the complaint, if applicable.

Appellant: An individual who is filing an appeal.

Appeal: The resolution of an academic or non-academic complaint may be appealed. Appeals must be based on the issue of substantive or procedural errors which are prejudicial to impartial consideration of the case.

Confidentiality: Faculty, staff and administrators involved in the discussion of complaints or grievances will maintain professional standards of confidentiality. Students should be aware that every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality; however, University officials may be obligated to disclose information to law enforcement or other agencies as required by law. Copies of the reports are kept in the offices where they originated.

Filing a Student Complaint

It is assumed that most student concerns or complaints can be resolved informally through communication between the students and appropriate University official. Recognizing that complaints should be raised and settled promptly, a complaint should be raised within ten (10) business days (a business day is defined as any day the University is in operation as specified in the University calendar) following the event giving rise to the complaint.

Prior to initiating an informal or formal complaint under this policy, a student may choose to contact a University official to assist him or her in deciding about how to address the situation of concern and whether to pursue an informal or formal complaint under this policy. University officials will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible. The type of complaint or issue, and the appropriate officials are as follows:

| Complaint/Issue | University Official |
|--|---|
| Sexual Harassment/Misconduct Discrimination | Director of Human Resources |
| Academic Matters | Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs |
| Financial, Facilities, Food Services Matters Administration | Vice President for Finance and |
| Athletics Matters | Chief of Staff |
| Student Services/Residence Halls Matters | Vice President for Student Services |

The student must first discuss and attempt to resolve the dispute with whomever the issue arose, if at all possible. This requirement does not apply in cases of **Sex and Gender Based Misconduct, Discrimination or Harassment**. In those cases, the student should contact the Director of Human Resources. In the event that such an informal discussion is not possible or the issue is not resolved, then the student should submit a written, formal complaint within ten (10) business days of the informal complaint. The written, formal complaint shall be submitted to the appropriate University official.

Academic grievances should follow the chain of command as listed below.

- Faculty/Instructor
- Department Chair (if applicable)
- Dean
- Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs

The written complaint must contain the following information:

- The name of complainant(s), student identification number (if applicable) and contact information, including email
- The name(s) of the respondent(s)
- A detailed description of the nature of the complaint and the actual harm suffered by the student (if applicable) including date(s) of occurrence
- A detailed description of attempts at informal resolution
- A detailed description of the solution sought
- Signature of the complainant(s)
- Date of complaint submission

Review and Decision

The University official will review the written complaint and attempt to resolve the matter. He/she may choose to meet with the student and/or other parties as identified and respond in writing to all parties concerning the decision of the complaint within ten (10) business days.

Appeal

Should the student desire to appeal the decision of the University official, the student may submit a signed statement of appeal within five (5) business days to the appropriate Vice President with the written response to previous resolution attempts by a University official. The Vice President will review the appeal, may choose to meet with the student and/or other parties as identified and respond in writing to all parties concerning the disposition of the appeal within ten (10) business days. The appeal must consist of the following:

- The written decision of the Administrative/Academic Unit that is being grieved
- The specific written University policy (or policies) alleged to have been violated
- A description of the facts and evidence supporting the allegation
- A description of the redress that the Complainant seeks

Final Review

Should the student desire to request a final review of the appropriate Vice President's decision, the student may submit a signed statement of appeal within five (5) business days to the President. The President will review the appeal, may choose to meet with the student, and/or other parties as identified and respond in writing to all parties concerning the final review within ten (10) business days. **Academic grievances may not be submitted for review by the President. The Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs has the final decision for all academic grievances or complaints.**