



STUDENT GRIEVANCES

The primary goal of an **Informal Grievance Process** is to produce a mutually acceptable solution to the student's complaint as soon as possible and at the lowest administrative level possible. Experience has shown that most concerns which students have regarding support services and instructional matters are relatively easy to resolve through informal discussion. To initiate an informal grievance, a student can submit a **Student Grievance Form** to the appropriate person with whom they have a grievance.

Step 1

The student should discuss the problem directly with the person (faculty or staff) involved for a possible solution. If the student is not comfortable with Step 1, they may proceed directly to Step 2.

Step 2

The student shall discuss the problem with the Program Chair or immediate supervisor of the person against whom the complaint is directed. The Program Chair or immediate supervisor shall make every effort to resolve the problem with the student and the person being grieved. Upon receipt of the complaint from the student, the supervisor must respond within ten (10) school/working days, stating a decision to the student.

Step 3

If the problem cannot be resolved at the second step, the student shall make an appointment to discuss the grievance with the Division Dean or next level appropriate administrator within 10 school/working days of the step 2 decision. Complaints at this level must be submitted in writing at the time the appointment is being made. The written complaint shall contain the following information:

- A description of the general and specific grounds on which the grievance is based.
- A listing of the names of all persons involved in the matter at issue and the times, places, and events in which each person so named was involved.
- Requested resolution desired by the student (i.e. what outcome does the student desire).

The Division Dean must respond in writing to the student's written complaint within ten (10) working/school days.

At any point during the pre-grievance problem-resolution level, a student may also informally and orally present the complaint to the Dean of Student Services. The Dean will attempt to resolve the issue informally, if requested by the student.

Step 4

If the problem cannot be resolved at the third step then the student has the right to repeat Step 3 with the appropriate Vice President or next level administrator. The administrator will respond to the claimant, in writing, within 15 school/working days. After appealing to the level of the appropriate Vice President, if the grievance is still not resolved, the complainant may proceed to a formal procedure, except for academic matters.

Academic matters and grade disputes: Final authority to resolve grade disputes and other academic matters rests with the Vice President of Instruction. There are no exceptions.

The **Formal Grievance Procedure** is only to be used by students who are unable to resolve their grievance through the Informal Grievance Procedure. The Formal Grievance Procedure does not apply to complaints for discrimination and/or harassment under the College's Non-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy (AR5040).

To initiate a grievance at the formal level:

- The complainant shall complete all steps in the informal grievance procedures prior to filing the written formal grievance.
- The complainant must complete and submit a **Student Grievance Form** within ten (10) school/working days after receiving the decision of the appropriate Vice President.
- The remedy sought by the complainant must be included on the Student Grievance Form.
- The Dean of Student Services will retain the original Student Grievance Form and provide a copy to the complainant and one to the person against whom the grievance was directed.
- Within ten (10) school/working days after the filing date, the person against whom the grievance is directed (respondent) will submit a written response to the allegations to the Dean of Student Services.
- Within twenty (20) school/working days after receipt from the respondent, the Dean of Student Services will convene a Hearing Committee.

Hearing Procedures

- * The Hearing Committee shall be chaired by one of the Hearing Committee members.
- * The hearing shall be closed to everyone other than the Hearing Committee members, the complainant and the advocate selected by the complainant, the respondent and his/her advocate, any witnesses while they are presenting testimony, the Dean of Student Services or designee presenting on behalf of the District, and the person designated to record the minutes.
- * The Dean of Student Services or designee shall first make any further comments or answer questions regarding the procedures of the hearing.
- * The complainant and respondent together with advocates and witnesses (called at the appropriate time) shall appear before the committee to present evidence. Each party shall be allocated 30 minutes for his/her presentation with the complainant presenting first. Each party may ask to reserve 10 minutes of their 30 minutes allocated to provide rebuttal testimony.
- * Deliberations of the committee will be held in closed session.
- * The Hearing Committee will submit its findings and written recommendation on the grievance and the basis for its recommendation to the Dean of Student Services, the complainant, and the respondent within ten (10) working/school days of the hearing.