

STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

1. Purpose: In order to align with certain federal requirements and with a complaint procedure established by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, each campus shall adopt a student complaint procedure for matters that are not covered by other campus appeal or grievance policies. The following is a model policy, which can be adapted as appropriate for each campus, and then published in the student catalog for the campus or with other policies governing student life. Any changes to the model policy must first be submitted to the Office of General Counsel for approval.

Further, until such time that each campus adopts a student complaint procedure for matters that are not covered by other campus appeal or grievance policies, the model policy shall apply. If the campus has adopted its own complaint procedure, the model policy supplements the campus policy as needed.

2. Model Policy:

STUDENT GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

Informal Resolution

Students who wish to seek further review of an academic or non-academic decision or action by the University or a University employee (in an official capacity) that the student contends was in violation of written campus policies, or constitutes unfair or unequal application of such policies, should first seek to resolve such concerns through informal discussions. In particular, grievances regarding academic matters should generally begin with informal discussions with the student's instructor or with the faculty member supervising a course. If such informal discussions do not reach a satisfactory resolution, then the student may pursue a grievance following the steps in this policy.

Applicability of Policy

This policy applies to students enrolled in traditional courses as well as online courses. This policy does not apply to matters which are covered by other campus policies or appeal procedures, including, but not limited to, the following:

- allegations of discrimination or harassment (including sexual harassment) under the University's non-discrimination policy;
- allegations of failure to provide reasonable accommodations for a disability;
- financial aid;
- violations of student disciplinary or academic dishonesty policies;
- violations of the University's Research Misconduct Policy.

In particular, matters involving allegations of unlawful harassment (including sexual harassment), discrimination and/or retaliation should be reported to the University's equal opportunity office, and matters involving alleged failure to provide reasonable accommodations for a disability should be pursued through the University's office for disability services. Additional information about each of the above policies is available on the University's web site and through the University's student affairs office.

Furthermore, this grievance process is intended to address alleged violations of University policy with respect to individual students, rather than disagreements with existing policies. Questions regarding the applicability of this grievance policy to a particular issue will be determined by the chief student affairs officer for the campus, in consultation with the chief academic officer and other University officials, as necessary.

Formal Grievance Process

If efforts to resolve a grievance informally are not successful, no later than sixty (60) calendar days following the decision or action that the student seeks to have reviewed, the student shall put the grievance in writing, clearly and succinctly stating the facts relating to the grievance and which policies the student contends have been violated or misapplied. For an academically-related grievance, the written grievance shall be submitted to the academic unit chair, head or his or her designee; if the concern relates to the chair, then the written grievance may be submitted to the Dean who may appoint an alternate official to consider the grievance. For a non-academic matter, the grievance should be considered by an administrator with authority over the relevant area. The administrator considering the grievance will review the material provided by the student, and may, at the administrator's discretion, gather any additional information that will be helpful to a decision, whether in writing or through meeting with the student or other persons involved. The administrator reviewing the grievance shall make a decision, in writing, within ten (10) working days after receiving the student's grievance (excluding the day of receipt), or as soon as possible thereafter. The decision will explain the basis for the decision, remedial steps required, if any, and the procedure for requesting an appeal.

Appeals

If the student believes the grievance decision is in error, then that person may, within ten (10) working days after the date of the written decision, appeal the decision to the relevant dean (for an academic matter) or to the relevant Vice Chancellor or a designee (for non-academic matters). The administrator considering the appeal will review the material provided by the student, the grievance decision, any other material which has been assembled regarding the matter, and any applicable University policies and may, at his or her discretion, gather any additional information that will be helpful to a decision, whether in writing or through meeting or consulting with any individuals deemed necessary in the administrator's discretion. The administrator reviewing the appeal shall make a decision, in writing, within ten (10) working days of receiving the student's grievance, or as soon as possible thereafter. The appeal decision shall be final.

External Complaint Resolution

If a grievance cannot be resolved internally within the University, a student may file a complaint with the appropriate authority in his/her state of residence. Arkansas residents must file complaints in writing with the ICAC Coordinator, Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), 114 East Capitol, Little Rock, AR 72201, within 20 days of completing the institution's grievance process. As required by ADHE, the grievant must provide a statement from the institution verifying that the institution's appeal process has been followed. ADHE inquiries are limited to courses/degree programs certified by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) under Ark. Code § 6-61-301 and to matters related to the criteria for certification. For other states, the Student Complaint Process by State Directory, available on the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association website <http://www.shceo.org/node/434>, provides a list of appropriate state officials and/or entities for each state. Students may also contact the [Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools](#), which is the University's regional accrediting body, at 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL 60604, or at inquiry@hlcommission.org or 1-800-621-7440. This information is provided pursuant to 34 CFR § 668.43(b).

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