

University Policy SA-27.02-02/17

Policy Title: Student Grievance Process

Originator: Division of Student Affairs

Responsible Office: Division of Student Affairs

Policy/Purpose:

The Student Grievance process provides students the opportunity to bring complaints to the attention of the University. The Student Grievance process may only be used to grieve a University action or decision when there is no appeal process associated with that particular University action or decision. This process is designed for student concerns for which there are no other avenues of redress.

Other appeal processes, including those listed below, can be found at the University Appeals Process Webpage at <http://www.uwf.edu/appeals/>:

- Academic misconduct code appeals
- Academic probation or suspension appeals
- Admission or re-admission denial appeals
- Discrimination complaints
- Financial aid appeals (athletic scholarships, other scholarships)
- Grade appeals
- Housing appeals (standards of community living violation appeals, fine appeals, etc.)
- Immunization exception appeals
- Library fine appeals
- Parking fine appeals
- Registration appeals (late class withdrawal, etc.)
- Residency for in-state tuition appeals
- Student conduct code appeals
- Tuition and/or fee appeals

I. Definition

A grievance is defined as a complaint or dissatisfaction occurring when a student thinks that an action or decision by the University affecting him/her is unjust, inequitable or creates unnecessary hardship. Such grievances include but are not limited to problems with student or academic services, other university departments, or other matters.

II. Informal Resolution

A student may seek informal resolution of the complaint or dissatisfaction before filing a written grievance if he or she wishes. A student may seek informal resolution by:

- a. Talking with the individual he or she believes has caused the complaint or dissatisfaction to see if informal resolution is possible, and/or
- b. Talking with the supervisor of the individual he or she believes has caused the complaint or dissatisfaction to see if informal resolution is possible.

III. Steps of the Written Grievance Process

A. Step 1

A student with a complaint meeting the definition detailed about ("the Student") must provide a written complaint to the supervisor of the individual alleged to have caused the complaint or dissatisfaction ("the Respondent") within 10 calendar days of when the issue occurred. The written complaint must include the following:

1. The Date of the written complaint
2. The Student's name, local address, UWF email address, and phone number
3. The name and location of the office/department or individual by whom the student feels aggrieved
4. A concise statement of the event(s) causing the student to feel aggrieved including, whenever possible, the dates of the events
5. A statement of any action previously taken to resolve the issue and the results of these actions
6. The disposition desired by the Student

The University employee receiving the written complaint, the Step 1 representative, shall meet with the Student to hear the Student's concerns within 10 calendar days of receiving the written grievance. The Step 1 representative shall also consult with the Respondent and may request additional information from the aggrieved student or others prior to rendering a decision. The Step 1 representative shall prepare a written decision and provide it to the student and to the Respondent within 10 calendar days of the Step 1 meeting. It shall be the responsibility of the Step 1 representative to inform the Student and the Respondent of any extension of time needed to complete the written decision.

If either the Student or Respondent is unsatisfied with the Step 1 decision, the grievance process continues. Should the Student not find the Step 1 decision satisfactory, the Student may appeal to the next level supervisor as detailed in Step 2. If the Respondent is unsatisfied with the Step 1 decision, he or she may submit a rebuttal.

B. Step 2

A Student not satisfied with the Step 1 decision may appeal to the next level supervisor of the Respondent. This appeal must be in writing and address the rationale for appeal. The appeal should be submitted to the appropriate University official within 10 calendar days of the date of the Step 1 decision.

If the Respondent is not satisfied with the Step 1 decision, he or she may submit a rebuttal to his/her next level supervisor. The rebuttal should be submitted to the appropriate University official within 10 calendar days of the date of the Step 1 decision.

The University official receiving the Step 2 appeal or rebuttal, the Step 2 representative, shall review the grievance, Step 1 decision, and appeal and/or rebuttal. He or she may request more information and/or request to meet with the student bringing the grievance and/or the Respondent. The Step 2 representative shall prepare a written decision and provide it to the Student and the Respondent within 10 calendar days of receipt of the appeal. It shall be the responsibility of the Step 2 representative to inform the Student and the Respondent of any extension of time needed to complete the written decision.

If the Student and the Respondent are satisfied with the Step 2 decision, the grievance process is complete. Should the Student or the Respondent not find the resolution satisfactory, a final appeal or rebuttal may be submitted to the appropriate Vice President (e.g., senior division head).

C. Final Decision

A Student who is not satisfied with the Step 2 decision may appeal to the appropriate Vice President. A Respondent who is not satisfied with the Step 2 decision may submit a rebuttal to the appropriate Vice President. The appeal/rebuttal must be in writing, must be submitted to the appropriate Vice President within 10 calendar days of the date of the Step 2 decision, and must address the rationale for appeal or rebuttal.

D. Grounds for appeal or rebuttal are limited to the following:

1. The Student's/Respondent's rights, as outlined in this policy, were violated in the grievance process;
2. New information is discovered that was not available at the time of the previous reviews;
3. The information presented does not support the decision.

The Vice President (or designee) receiving the final appeal shall review the grievance, appeals, and Step 1 and Step 2 decisions. He or she may request more information and/or request to meet with the Student bringing the grievance and/or the Respondent. The Vice President (or designee) shall prepare a written decision and provide it to the student and the Respondent within 10 calendar days of receipt of the appeal. It shall be the responsibility of the Vice President (or designee) to inform the student and the Respondent of any extension of time needed to complete the written decision.

This decision of the Vice President or designee shall be the final decision of the University.

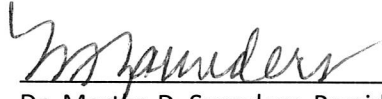
E. Timing

The semester break (the days between the last day of final examinations and the first day of class of the next term) and Spring Break shall not be counted as calendar days for the purposes of this grievance process.

Change Justification:

This policy is being updated with technical corrections only.

APPROVED:



Dr. Martha D. Saunders, President

Date:



History:

SA-27.01-03/12 Student Grievance Process, adopted March 2012 and effective June 2012; SA-27.02-02/17 Student Grievance Process, adopted February 2017.