

Student Grievance Procedure

A. Purpose

The purpose of the student grievance procedure is to provide a system to channel student complaints against faculty and staff concerning the following:

1. Alleged discrimination on the basis of age, sex, race, handicap or other conditions, preferences or behavior, excluding sexual harassment complaints.
2. Sexual harassment complaints should be directed to the vice president for student services. Because of the sensitive nature of this kind of complaint, a conference with the vice president will replace the first step of the grievance procedure. The vice president will counsel the student to determine the appropriate action that is required. If the grievance is not resolved after this meeting, then the remainder of the grievance procedure will be followed.
3. Academic matters, excluding individual grades, except where the conditions in Item 1 above apply.

B. Procedures

1. First Step

The student must go to the instructor or staff member where the alleged problem originated. An attempt will be made to resolve the matter equitably and informally at this level. The conference must take place within five working days of the incident which generated the complaint.

2. Second Step

If the grievance is not resolved at the informal conference, the student may file a written grievance. A grievance form shall be made available to the student by the vice president for student services. The vice president will explain the grievance process to the student. The completed grievance form must be presented to the vice president within five working days after satisfying the first step in the grievance process. The vice president will then refer the grievance to the immediate supervisor involved. The supervisor shall respond in writing to the student within 10 working days of receipt of the grievance form from the department involved.

3. Third Step

If the student wishes to appeal the decision of the supervisor, a further appeal may be directed to the appropriate vice president within five working days. The vice president shall respond in writing to the student within 10 working days of receipt of the grievance form.

4. Fourth Step

If the written statement of the vice president does not satisfy the grievant, a request to appear before the Student Grievance Committee may be made. The student must

submit a written request within five working days after receiving the written response of the vice president. The request shall include a copy of the original grievance form and the reason why the responses are unsatisfactory. A copy of the responses must be attached to the request by the student.

The vice president shall notify immediately the president who shall ensure that the committee is organized in a manner consistent with Section C of this procedure (The Student Grievance Committee). The vice president will send copies of the appeal to the members of the committee, the employee and the employee's supervisor. The employee against whom the grievance was filed shall be given an opportunity to respond in writing to the chairperson of the committee. Meeting(s) shall be conducted between five and 15 working days following the date of the request. A postponement may be granted by the chairperson upon written request of either party, if the reason stated justifies such action.

The committee shall hold interviews with the grievant, the employee and the supervisor, singularly, and in the absence of other witnesses. The committee may interview any additional witnesses that it considers necessary to render a fair decision.

The committee shall decide by a majority vote the solution of the grievance. In case of a tie, the chairperson shall vote, thus breaking the tie. The chairperson shall forward a copy of the committee's decision to all parties involved and to the Office of the President of the College within two working days.

5. Fifth Step

The committee's decision may be appealed by either party involved to the president of the college within 10 working days of the committee's decision.

The president shall review the committee's findings, conduct whatever additional inquiries that are deemed necessary and render a decision within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.

6. Sixth Step

The president's decision may be appealed by either party involved to the Board of Trustees of the College within 10 working days of the president's decision. The Board of Trustees or a committee of the board shall review any information to date, conduct whatever additional inquiries that are deemed necessary and render a decision within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal.

The record of the written student complaint and any responses will reside in the office of the vice president for student services and be managed according to the North Carolina Records Retention and Disposition Schedule.

C. The Student Grievance Committee

A Student Grievance Committee will be formed for each grievance. The committee make-up

and method of appointment will be the same as for the Disciplinary Review Committee.

D. Right of Parties Involved in a Grievance

When a grievance committee meeting is scheduled, the parties involved are entitled to:

1. A written notice of the time and place of the meeting. This notice shall be forwarded to all parties at least five working days prior to the meeting, unless they waive this requirement.
2. Review all available evidence, documents, or exhibits that each party may present at the meeting.
3. Have access to the names of the witnesses who may testify.
4. Appear in person and present information on his or her behalf, call witnesses, and ask questions of any person present at the meeting.
5. The right to counsel. The role of the person acting as counsel is solely to advise the client. The counsel shall not address the committee.