

Addressing Student Academic Complaints

Responsible University Officer(s):

- Executive Vice President and Provost

Policy Owner(s):

- Executive Vice President and Provost

Policy contact(s):

- Jessica Kuecker Grotjohn, Toni Abts

Date Revised:

Oct 1, 2014

Effective Date:

Nov 1, 2008

Policy Statement

Each campus will develop and maintain processes for the good faith review and resolution of student academic complaints that will:

- encourage informal resolution of alleged violations at the lowest unit level;
- allow for a formal resolution mechanism if not resolved informally; and
- provide for appeal to a final decision maker.

The final decision following appeal ~~is not appealable~~ **cannot be appealed** further within the University.

Scope

Student academic complaints are brought by students regarding the University's provision of education and academic services affecting their role as students and must be based on a claimed violation of a University rule, policy, or established practice.

Student academic complaints do not include student complaints regarding:

- their University employment;

- discrimination, sexual misconduct, nepotism, or related retaliation;
- disciplinary action under Board of Regents Policy: *Student Conduct Code*;
- Grades; or,
- University admission decisions.

Relief Available

Resolution of complaints under this policy may include student reinstatement or other corrective action for the benefit of the student, including refunds, but may not include the award of monetary damages or direct disciplinary action against any employee of the University.

This policy does not limit the University's right to change rules, policies, or practices related to the provision of academic services and education.

Reason for Policy

To implement Board of Regents Policy: *Conflict Resolution Process for Student Academic Complaints*, and to comply with law, including Title IX. This policy provides a framework for resolving student academic complaints that is simple and fair and allows for both informal and formal resolution of conflicts. This policy implements criteria and requirements for accreditation established by the Higher Learning Commission.

Procedures

- *Conflict Resolution Process for Student Academic Complaints: Twin Cities*
- *UMC Student Academic Grievance Procedures*
- *Duluth: Student Academic Complaint Resolution*
- *Morris: Student Academic Grievance Procedure (see page 44)*
- *Rochester: Grievance Procedures*

Forms/Instructions

Students should consult the procedural document for their campus for instructions on filing their academic complaint. If unsure, please use the contact information for your campus listed below.

Appendices

- [Guidelines for Colleges: Hearings Under the Conflict Resolution Process for Student Academic Complaints: Twin Cities](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **I am a student with a complaint, and I don't know where to direct it. Where can I get information and advice?**

The University of Minnesota takes student complaints and grievances seriously and has processes in place to ensure that complaints are addressed appropriately and in a timely manner. Helpful resources and information about the channels for student complaints are provided on the [One Stop student services website](#):

- Twin Cities: [One Stop Student Services](#)
- Duluth: [One Stop Student Services](#)
- Crookston: [One Stop Student Services](#)
- Rochester: [One Stop Student Services](#)
- Morris: [One Stop Student Services](#)

2. **I don't agree with the grade I received from my instructor. Is there anything I can do?**

While grades are not subject to complaint, you are entitled to an explanation for the grade assigned. [Please see the Grade Accountability policy](#) for additional information (Duluth maintains a separate [Grade Accountability policy](#)). As stated in the [Grade Accountability policy](#), if ~~if~~ you are not able to get an explanation for the grade from your instructor, consult the appropriate director ~~offer~~

undergraduate students, **director of graduate studies**, or department **head**~~chair~~. Students ~~on the Twin Cities campus~~ also may wish to seek assistance from the **conflict resolution center or office on their campus**~~. Student Conflict Resolution Office~~. An instructor's judgment in assigning a grade is not a subject ~~to~~**for** a formal hearing, and can only be reviewed through these informal processes.

3. **I have been dismissed by my college for academic reasons. What steps can I take to challenge the dismissal? What is my enrollment status while the dispute is pending?**

If your college or program has an appeal process for dismissals, you must follow ~~the that~~ process **at that level** before filing a student academic complaint. Your enrollment continues while the appeal is pending. If ~~that your~~ appeal is denied, your enrollment ends. ~~and y~~ You may ~~file a student~~ **initiate the conflict resolution procedure** for academic complaints **in place for your campus**. ~~at that point~~. If your academic complaint is successful, you then would be reinstated as a student.

4. **I have ~~A student has~~ a complaint about **discrimination, retaliation, nepotism, or sexual misconduct** harassment by a University employee. Where should ~~the student~~ I go?**

A student with a complaint **of discrimination, retaliation, nepotism, or sexual misconduct by a University employee** should consult the **Equal Opportunity and Title IX Office** for reporting resources.

~~of sexual harassment by a University employee (1) can seek assistance from the campus equal opportunity office (see Administrative Policy: *Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking and Relationship Violence*) or (2) can bring a student academic complaint under this policy and procedure, where applicable. If the student chooses the latter, the University will provide training for resolving the complaint under this procedure to all administrators and other staff who are authorized to investigate or resolve student complaints of sexual harassment. Colleges can contact the Office of General Counsel (612-624-4100) or the campus's equal opportunity office to arrange the training.~~

Contacts

Subject	Contact	Phone	Email
Primary Contact(s)	<i>Jessica Kuecker</i> <i>Grotjohn</i> (undergraduate) <i>Toni Abts</i> (graduate)	612-624-1328 612-625-2815	jkuecker@umn.edu gspolicy@umn.edu
Crookston	<i>Jason Tangquist</i>	218-281-8424	jtangqui@crk.umn.edu
Duluth	Jennifer Mencl (undergraduate) Erik Brown (graduate)	218-726-7385 218-726-8891	jmencl@d.umn.edu etbrown@d.umn.edu
Morris	Janet Ericksen	320-589-6015	ericksja@morris.umn.edu
Rochester	Paul Hanstedt Molly Dingel	507-258-8006	hanstedt@r.umn.edu carrell@r.umn.edu

Definitions

Student Academic Complaint

Complaints brought by students regarding the University's provision of academic services and education affecting their role as students.

~~Sexual Harassment~~

~~Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic advancement in any University activity or program; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an~~

individual is used as the basis of employment or academic decisions affecting this individual in any University activity or program; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or academic environment in any University activity of program.¶¶

Student

For purposes of this policy, student will be defined as:

- any person taking courses at the University or enrolled in a University academic program;
- any person who has taken courses or enrolled in a University academic program within the past three terms (including summer) and who has not withdrawn, transferred, or graduated;
- any individual who has registered for classes or has been approved for readmission to the University;
- any person participating as a student in University activities, even if prior to the start of classes;
- any person previously enrolled within the last three terms (including summer) and who has a continuing relationship with the University through active participation in student groups or University-sponsored activities;
- any person on an official leave of absence with an intent to return; and
- any person who withdraws, transfers, or graduates after an alleged academic complaint and before the allegation is resolved.

Responsibilities¶¶

Academic Complaint Officer¶¶

Comply with the Conflict Resolution Process for Student Academic Complaints procedures.¶¶

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Chancellor¶¶

Ensure that campus has processes consistent with policy.¶¶

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College¶¶

Schedule a hearing should the Academic Complaint Officer refer the matter to a College Hearing Panel.¶¶



Complaint Coordinator

Comply with the Conflict Resolution Process for Student Academic Complaints procedures.



Office of the General Counsel

Provide legal advice to the University and provide legal representation to the University respondent when the student is represented by a lawyer.



Executive Vice President and Provost

Ensure that campus has processes consistent with policy.

Related Information

- Board of Regents Policy: [Conflict Resolution Process for Student Academic Complaints](#)
- [Higher Learning Commission. Criteria and Requirements for Accreditation](#)

History

Amended:

October 2014 - Comprehensive Review. Minor Revision. Edits were made to clarify existing procedures and action steps.

Amended:

April 2009 - Added question and answer to FAQ about what to do when Students have a complaint about sexual harassment by University Employees.

Effective:

November 2008