
Student Complaint Form

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Student ID # _____

College/Student Email address _____ Phone # _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Complaint filed against (instructor name) _____

- **Describe the nature of the complaint/grievance.** Be factual – include names, dates, locations, etc. (Attach additional pages if necessary.)

- **Describe the actions you have taken to resolve the issue.**

- **Identify the resolution/actions requested.**

Signature _____ Date _____

*Submit complaint forms to:
Shelly Bomstad, Educational Services – Coon Rapids Campus, C226
Complaint form will be routed to the appropriate College Administrator for review/resolution*

*******College Use Only*******

College Response:

Signature of College Official _____ Date _____

Procedure 3F.2/11: Student Complaints

Complaints

A complaint is an oral or written claim concerning a college issue brought by a student alleging improper, unfair or arbitrary treatment. If your situation does not involve a complaint please refer to the other circumstances section on page 3 of this policy.

To Make/Resolve a Complaint

Note: All processes are subject to the time limits as listed within this policy.

The college encourages informal resolution of complaints through the student discussing the complaint with the employee(s) and/or administrators with whom the complaint exists. If not resolved through this informal discussion, a formal written complaint may be filed. Exceptions to this may include

Discrimination and Harassment (1.B.1) or Sexual Violence (1.B.3) allegations. If a complaint cannot be resolved at the college level, you may contact the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. If you reside in another state, you may contact your [PDF] local state agency (113 KiB) (PDF) for further information.

Grade Disputes – Grading decisions supported by published policies or written expectations of faculty are not appealable (see faculty)

Step 1

Complaints must be submitted in writing on the appropriate complaint form and include the following:

- The reason for the complaint
- Factual summary of complaint with supporting documentation
- The remedy sought as a resolution to the complaint

The appropriate paperwork to file a complaint can be obtained from the Information Desk on both campuses. All decisions regarding the outcome of the complaint will be sent to the student in writing.

If there is no agreement or resolution during the initial complaint process, the student may proceed to step 2. Disagreement with an administrative decision or the outcome of a complaint cannot move forward unless it alleges improper, unfair or arbitrary treatment.

Step 2

If a student has reason to believe the outcome of step 1 was determined using improper, unfair or arbitrary treatment they may submit an appeal letter. Documentation to support the claim of improper, unfair or arbitrary treatment must be included as well as all prior correspondence included in the original complaint process.

The direct supervisor will review previous resolution steps and investigate the complaint. All decisions regarding the outcome of the complaint will be sent to the student in writing.

Step 3

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If there is no agreement or resolution during the investigative process with the direct supervisor, the student may proceed to step 3. If a student has reason to believe the outcome of step 2 was determined using improper, unfair or arbitrary treatment they may submit an appeal letter to the Vice President. Documentation to support the claim of improper, unfair or arbitrary treatment must be included as well as all prior correspondence included through in the original complaint process. All decisions regarding the outcome of the complaint will be sent to the student in writing. This decision is final and binding.

Appeals will not be accepted if the first two (2) steps in the complaint process have not been completed.

Other Considerations

If the complaint involves a college or university rule or regulation, a student may appeal through procedural steps up to the vice president. The decision of the vice president is final and binding.

If the complaint involves a board policy, the actions of a college or university president, or issue of institutional or program quality such as an institution's compliance with the standards of an accrediting or licensing agency, or a claim of consumer fraud or deceptive trade practice, a student may further appeal the college or university decision to the chancellor. The decision of the chancellor is final and binding.

- **Time Limits** The initial complaint must be presented within thirty (30) business days after the first occurrence of the event giving rise to the complaint, or thirty (30) business days after the student, through use of reasonable diligence, should have obtained knowledge of the first occurrence of the event giving rise to the complaint.
- All subsequent time limits (written response, appeal, final resolution, etc.) are limited to fifteen (15) business days.
- By mutual agreement of the student and college personnel, time limits may be extended due to extenuating circumstances approved by the appropriate dean or vice president if a complaint is not presented within the established limits, it shall be considered waived.
- If a complaint is not appealed to the next step within the established time limits, it shall be considered settled on the basis of the last answer.
- If, after presentation at any step, a college staff member does not discuss and/or answer the complaint or grievance with the student within the established time limits, the student may treat the complaint or grievance as denied at that step and may appeal the complaint or grievance to the next step.
- Time limits are excluded in 1.B.1 and 1.B.3 complaints

Retaliation Prohibited: No retaliation of any kind shall be taken against a student for participating, or refusing to participate, in a grievance. Retaliation may be subject to action under appropriate student or employee policies.

Definitions

Appeal: A request for reconsideration of an administrative decision.

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- Complaint: An oral or written claim concerning a college issue brought by a student alleging improper, unfair or arbitrary treatment.
- Retaliation: Retribution of any kind taken against a student for participating or not participating in a complaint, or grievance.
- Student: An individual who is enrolled in a college.

Separate, but complementary policies, procedures and practices are used for other circumstances, such as:

- Academic Petition – used when a student wishes to petition for exception to academic standards or program requirements
 - **Petition Process**
 1. If, after your transcripts have been officially evaluated, you believe that a course should be reconsidered for transfer or competency of a requirement, you may submit a Transfer Course Request. **All Transfer Course Requests must be completed with an Academic Advisor.** To schedule an appointment, you may call 763-433-1230. This petition will be reviewed by a Student Services Director.
 2. If you are not satisfied by the results of the petition, you may work with an Academic Advisor to provide additional documentation or rationale to support your appeal. This petition will be reviewed by the Academic Dean.
 3. If you are not satisfied by the third appeal results, you may provide written rationale for your final institutional appeal. This petition will be reviewed by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.
 4. If dissatisfied with the results of the petition after three institutional appeals, you may appeal to the Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs at the MnSCU system office. <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/321p1.html>
- [Code of Student Conduct](#) – used when a student is alleged to have violated acceptable modes of academic and social conduct (see Dean of Student Life)
- Discrimination and Harassment ([MnSCU Board policy 1B.1](#)) – used when action that is of a discrimination or harassment nature is directed toward a member of a protected class as identified by law (see Dean of Student Life)
- Sexual Violence – ([MnSCU Board policy 1.B.3](#)) used when incidents of sexual violence on system property have been reported (see Dean of Student Life)
- Exception to Policy Petition: used when a student was unable to make registration changes by the deadline date due to unforeseen circumstances. This process does not consider any financial refund for courses, only registration changes. (Dean of Student Life).
- Request due to Extenuating Circumstances – used when unusual circumstances warrant deviation from standard policy, procedure or practice for financial refunds (see business office)

- [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#) – used when a student wishes to appeal probation or suspension status (see Dean of Student Services)

** If you are unsure which process fits your particular needs or concerns make an appointment with a college advisor to determine the appropriate action.

History:

08.2006 *Adopted new procedure*

05/2014 *Change delegation and clarify procedure.*

Changed timeline to submit a complaint from 20 days to 30 days and the timeline to appeal a decision from 10 days to 15 days.

Changed language concerning grade disputes from “stated expectations” to “written expectations.”

How to Communicate and Problem Solve With Your Instructor

1. Identify the Issue

Prepare. Think it through. Write it out. Remove the emotion and focus on specifics. See things from your instructor's point of view. Tell yourself this is not about personalities. Your instructor wants you to do well and cares about your progress. If you assume otherwise, it is unlikely you will find a resolution. Effective communication examples include "I am not sure why I received the grade I did." "Can you explain again what you mean by..."

2. Make an Appointment

Faculty have office hours. Use them. Catching your instructor in the hall or after class does not provide your instructor with enough time to listen to your concern or offer a solution.

3. Be Assertive NOT Aggressive

There's a difference. Focus the conversation on your issue, not your anger. If you have prepared by writing your issue down, it will be easier to focus on the situation rather than emotion. Be patient. Choose your words carefully. You will find most people stay calmer and more able to focus on your issue if you set that tone. If you find yourself getting angry, try saying - "Excuse, me. I don't mean to sound angry, but this issue is important to me and I want to do well."

4. Adopt a Problem Solving/Cooperative Attitude

Let your instructor know you want to work with them to do better. Ask what help may be available or where you could find out more information. Tell your instructor what he/she already does that you find helpful.

5. Listen

Really listen. Don't interrupt. If your instructor is able to offer a solution or suggestion, repeat it back to make sure you understand.

6. Accept Responsibility

Let your instructor know you understand that as a student you are responsible for your own learning. Assure him/her you are willing to do the work and accept the consequences of your actions.

7. Offer Realistic Solutions

Prepare to offer a solution. When writing out your issue, also write your suggestions for improvement. Make sure you are open to new solutions if they emerge.

8. Clarify Outcome

Make sure you understand what is expected before you leave. Write it out. Read it back to your instructor. Set up time lines if appropriate.

THANK YOUR INSTRUCTOR FOR HIS/HER TIME!

Adapted from a handout prepared by Mark J. Felsheim, Ph. D.

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