



STUDENT GRIEVANCE (COMPLAINT)

POLICY

A grievance is a formal written complaint from a student about the *conduct* of a college employee. A grievance may also be about any *issues related to the quality or conduct of the educational program*.

No Retaliation

This policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the college prior to seeking resolution outside the college. Therefore, the college prohibits retaliation against, threats, or punishment of anyone who reports an ethical violation in good faith, including, but not limited to, violation(s) of:

- the standards of professional conduct,
- Title IX,
- college policy,
- fraud
- government regulations, or
- the law.

This policy also safeguards anyone who cooperates and/or participates during an investigation or engages in other conduct protected by policy or law. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

A grievance should not be confused with any of the following:

Academic or Administrative Appeals

An appeal is a request for *an exception to college policy* or is submitted *to contest a decision* made by a faculty member, college committee or administrator *regarding the implementation of policy*. Students wishing to file an appeal should refer to Policy 8026 (Appeal).

Sexual Assault/Harassment

If a grievance involves a sexual assault or sexual harassment, the individual must follow the procedures detailed in college Policy 8027 (Sexual Misconduct and Non-Discrimination).

Student Code of Conduct Violations

Individuals who need to report a violation of the Student Code of Conduct should refer to Policy 8004 (Student Code of Conduct).

Prior to filing a formal grievance, the student must demonstrate a concerted effort to resolve the issue directly with the employee. If necessary, the student may request a neutral observer from the



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Office of Student Affairs or the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The student will still be responsible for presenting the concern directly to the individual who is the subject of the grievance.

Grievance Process

If, after private discussion, the matter is not resolved, the student may file a written grievance. The grievance must include the following information:

1. Date of grievance submission
2. Name(s) of the individual(s) filing the grievance (complainant)
3. Name(s) of the individual(s) involved or the related program/course requirement
4. Date(s) of incident(s)
5. A description of the incident(s) and circumstances surrounding the incident/issue
6. Steps that have already been taken toward resolving the situation
7. Supporting evidence
8. Any recommendations for resolution
9. Complainant's contact information (address, e-mail and telephone number) and signature

Incomplete grievances will be returned to the complainant; no action will be initiated without complete grievance documentation.

The grievance must be submitted to the appropriate college personnel as outlined below:

Subject of Grievance	College Personnel
Basic science faculty member/course	Dean of Basic Sciences
Clinical science faculty member/course (including clinic courses)	Dean of Clinical Sciences
Health Center faculty member/patient care experience	Dean of Clinics
College staff member or administrator	Supervisor (see org chart*)
College president	Board of Trustees Chair**

**Organizational chart is available on the college website or from the Office of the Chief Operating Officer (COO).*

***The mailing address for the current board chair may be obtained from the Office of the President.*

The supervisor will review the grievance and speak with individuals who have direct knowledge of the incident(s), if necessary, and will render a final decision, in writing, to the accused and the complainant within 10 class days.

Presentation of Additional Evidence

If additional evidence that may impact the original decision is discovered by the complainant after the decision is issued, this information should be presented to the individual who issued the original decision. If it is determined that the newly presented information was purposely withheld during the time of the original investigation, the request to have this new information reviewed may be denied or the complainant may face sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct.



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Petition of Final Decision (Based on Denial of Due Process)

Due process requires that the college treat each complaint in a careful manner that is not arbitrary, that the accused be given a reasonable opportunity to present a defense or explanation, and that the college's own established rules and definitions be followed. Dissatisfaction with the official ruling alone does not provide reasonable grounds for a petition of the original decision nor does it warrant additional investigation. **A petition not based on due process will not be considered.**

When there is clear evidence that due process was denied, a petition to review the investigation can be made to the executive team member (hereafter executive) who supervises the original investigator (see organizational chart). The petition must be submitted in writing to the appropriate executive within two (2) class days of receipt of the original decision and must include:

1. Date of petition submission
2. Name(s) of complainant
3. All materials submitted in the original grievance
4. A copy of the original decision
5. A specific outline of alleged errors in due process
6. Complainant's contact information (address, email and telephone number) and signature

Within ten (10) class days, the executive will review the petition, conduct an investigation as necessary and determine if due process was denied. The investigation may include the executive meeting with all of the originally involved individual(s) to review the original grievance, subsequent investigation process, and grievance outcome to determine whether a new decision is warranted and to render any such decision. The executive will provide a decision to the complainant and original investigator within five (5) class days of completion of the investigation.

There may be instances where it is unavoidable for an executive to be involved in a student grievance prior to its being filed or prior to a decision being rendered. In such a case where the student files a petition of the original grievance decision, the chief operating officer (COO) will determine if another uninvolved executive needs to conduct the review.

Chief Operating Officer (COO) Review

Once a final decision has been rendered on both the original grievance and a subsequent petition, an individual may request that the COO review the case outcome **only if there is clear evidence of blatant wrongdoing, misconduct by the investigators, or if the most extraordinary circumstances were not considered during the grievance and petition process.**

The complainant must be able to provide very specific examples of the above to warrant an investigation. Any extraordinary circumstances that are presented during this review must have already been presented to the original investigator as well as the executive who reviewed the



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subsequent petition. **Dissatisfaction with the original decision or petition response does not provide reasonable ground for COO review.**

To submit a request, an individual must present a written request including evidence of wrongdoing or the extraordinary circumstances not considered during the grievance process. The COO shall have ten (10) class days total in which to review the information and reach a final decision which shall be promptly communicated in writing to all principal participants.

Note: The college reserves the right to extend the time limits on any processes described in this policy should the pertinent individuals – including complainant(s), accused, witnesses or responsible personnel – not be available.

Unresolved Complaints

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education offers additional guidance for students who have exhausted the internal complaint process. The procedures for filing a complaint via the Commission can be found on the Commission's website at:

https://che.sc.gov/sites/che/files/Documents/Institutions%20and%20Educators/Complaint_Procedures_and_Form.pdf