



# STUDENT COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the student complaint policy is to provide equitable and orderly processes to resolve complaints by students against University personnel.
- 1.2 This policy defines our method of adhering to rules set forth by the Higher Learning Commission in its Federal Compliance requirements regarding Student Complaint processes.

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all situations where a difference or dispute between a student and a member of the University staff related to services rendered.

## 3. POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 A student complaint is defined as a difference or dispute between a student and a member of the University staff related to services rendered.
- 3.2 A student complaint may be raised to the level of grievance if both of the following conditions exist:
  - 3.2.1 The complaint is unresolved at the informal level, and
  - 3.2.2 The complaint involves an action that has been taken against a student by University personnel that misrepresents a policy or procedure; or,
  - 3.2.3 The complaint is routed from an external constituent, including, but not limited to: OSU A&M Regents, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, or the Higher Learning Commission.
- 3.3 The student complaint policy does not cover matters covered through other college policies and procedures, including, but limited to: sexual misconduct, discrimination, academic suspension, final course grades, late withdrawal, academic dishonesty, student conduct, or financial aid appeals.
- 3.4 Please note: students and other members of the institutional community can submit anonymous complaints through EthicsPoint (<https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/10933/index.html>).

## 4. PROCEDURE

### **Informal Student Complaint Resolution Process – Level 1**

- 4.1 The first step in the informal complaint resolution process is to directly contact the staff member with whom the student has a difference or dispute to arrange a mutually agreeable meeting time.
- 4.2 The staff member, as they deem appropriate, may request the student provide a written summary of the complaint at or before the arranged meeting. It is at the discretion of the staff member what specific information must be contained in the written materials.
- 4.3 If the complaint is not resolved during the first step in the informal complaint resolution process, the student may move to level 2.
- 4.4 If the complaint is of a nature that it cannot be reasonably discussed or resolved directly with the staff member alone, the student may move immediately to step two in the complaint resolution information process.
- 4.5 For the purposes of tracking student complaints, Level 1 complaints are not recorded. These are seen as a part of the routine business of conducting business on campus.

### **Informal Student Complaint Resolution Process – Level 2**

- 4.6 The second step in the informal complaint resolution process is to directly contact the staff member's direct supervisor or their designated proxy.
- 4.7 If the student chose not to engage in the first step of the informal complaint resolution process, it is at the discretion of the staff member's supervisor whether to require the student complete the first step in the process before moving to level 2.

- 4.8 The supervisor or their designee must contact the student and arrange a mutually agreeable meeting time upon receipt of the complaint.
- 4.9 The supervisor or designee may, as they deem appropriate, request the student provide a written summary of the complaint at or before the arranged meeting time. It is at the discretion of the supervisor as to what specific information must be contained in the written materials.
- 4.10 If the difference or dispute is not resolved at the informal level, and the complaint involves an action that has been taken against a student by University personnel that misrepresents a policy or procedure, the student may move to level 3, the formal complaint process.
- 4.11 For the purposes of tracking student complaints, Level 2 complaints are recorded through the Maxient website.

### **Formal Student Complaint Process – Level 3**

- 4.12 To initiate a formal complaint, the student must submit a formal, written complaint within 5 business days after the informal resolution meeting with the staff member's supervisor or designee.
- 4.13 The formal, written complaint must include the following information:
  - 4.13.1 Student Name
  - 4.13.2 CWID (Student ID)
  - 4.13.3 Student Contact Information (telephone, email, address)
  - 4.13.4 Dates and summaries of both level 1 and level 2 in the informal student complaint resolution process.
  - 4.13.5 Summary of complaint, to include information regarding the specific policy or process it is believed the staff member violated.
  - 4.13.6 Supporting documentation as appropriate.
- 4.14 The student may seek assistance in completing the complaint form from the Vice President of Student Experiences (VPSE) or designee.
- 4.15 The formal complaint form is submitted to the VPSE or designee.
- 4.15.1 The VPSE or their designee will review the complaint materials and determine that information provided meets the definition required to submit a formal complaint and forward the complaint materials to the appropriate vice president to which the staff member reports within 5 business days of receipt of the complaint materials, or
- 4.15.2 Determine that the information provided does not meet the definition required to submit a formal complaint and within 5 business days notify the student of the final decision of their complaint.
- 4.16 If determined that the information provided meets the definition required to submit a formal complaint, the vice president or designee will review and investigate the complaint.
- 4.17 The vice president will contact the student within 5 business days to arrange a formal meeting with the student. The meeting will be at a mutually agreeable time and date within normal business hours and within 10 days of contact with the student. At this time, it is at the vice president's discretion to require additional information, documentation, or specified supporting materials at or before the formal meeting with the student.
- 4.18 Within 5 business days following the formal meeting, the vice president will send the student a written decision.

### **Formal Student Complaint Process – Level 4**

- 4.19 The student may appeal the decision of the vice president if one of two conditions is met
  - 4.19.1 There is a concern with due process procedures, or
  - 4.19.2 New information is provided that is substantively relevant to the complaint.
- 4.20 If one of the above conditions is met, the student may submit a complaint appeal to the VPSE or their designee within 5 business days of the vice president's decision being sent.
- 4.21 The formal, written complaint must include the following information:
  - 4.21.1 Student Name
  - 4.21.2 CWID (Student ID)
  - 4.21.3 Student Contact Information (telephone, email, address)
  - 4.21.4 Dates and summaries of both level 1 and level 2 in the informal student complaint resolution process.
  - 4.21.5 Summary of complaint, to include information regarding the specific policy or process it is believed the staff member violated.
  - 4.21.6 Supporting documentation as appropriate.
  - 4.21.7 Specific information regarding questions of due process or clearly outlined new information that is substantively relevant to the complaint.
- 4.22 The VPSE will form an ad hoc committee, the Student Grievance Committee, to include three staff members, two faculty members, and one student all with no previous knowledge of the complaint.

- 4.23 The VPSE will designate a non-voting chair of the committee. Their purpose is solely to facilitate the process.
- 4.24 The committee will be given the complaint materials within 5 business days of the receipt of the complaint appeal and given 5 business days to review the materials and request additional information from the student.
- 4.25 The student will be contacted within 5 business days of the committee's review of the materials to schedule a formal appeal meeting. The meeting will be at a mutually agreeable time and date within normal business hours and within 10 days of contact with the student.
- 4.26 At the completion of the formal appeal meeting, the committee will have 5 days to deliberate and notify the VPSE or their designee of the decision.
- 4.27 Within 5 business days following receipt of the decision, the VPSE will send the student a written decision. This decision will stand as the final institutional decision.

### **Formal Student Complaint Process – Level 5**

- 4.28 Upon receipt of the final institutional decision from level 4, the student can appeal this decision to the institution's governing board, the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural & Mechanical Colleges.
- 4.29 The student must contact the Board staff to determine the documentation requirements and processes specific to requesting an appeal of the decision of the institution.

### **Formal Student Complaint Process – Level 6**

- 4.30 Issues not resolved at the institutional level may be directed to the home state authorization reciprocity agreement portal agency of the institution against which the complaint has been logged. For institutions with the principal campus or central administrative unit domiciled in Oklahoma, the portal agency is the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.
- 4.31 Students attending a public or private (not-for-profit or for-profit) institution should pursue concerns directly with the institution according to its dispute resolution or complaints policy.
- 4.32 If the institution has responded, but the student disagrees with the response, the student may elect to follow the institution's dispute resolution or complaints policy for taking the complaint to a higher administrative level within the institution. It is important to examine the policy carefully in effort to know when the student has exhausted the appeals process.
- 4.33 If the student pursues the complaint via the institution's formal procedure for complaints to the highest level possible and still perceives the concerns have not been adequately addressed, the student may file a complaint against a higher education institution in Oklahoma with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
- 4.34 Complaints must be submitted on the official student complaint form (<https://www.okhighered.org/resources/Student-Complaint-Form/>). OSRHE staff request permission to contact the institution on the student's behalf to identify any possible resolution.
- 4.35 It is important to note that the student must have exhausted the institution's complaint and appeal process before the OSRHE will attempt to help the student identify any possible resolution with the institution.
- 4.36 For more information, please visit <https://www.okhighered.org/current-college-students/complaints.shtml>.

### **Formal Student Complaint Process – Level 7**

- 4.37 Students, faculty, staff, and members of the public may submit a complaint about an HLC-accredited or candidate institution.
- 4.38 HLC policy COMM.A.10.030, Complaints and Other Information Regarding Affiliated Institutions states, "Because the complaint process is intended to pursue only those matters that suggest substantive non-compliance by institutions, the Commission shall expect individuals who have a personal dispute with an institution to use other internal and external grievance mechanisms, particularly the internal grievance procedures of the institution, to resolve the dispute.
- 4.39 For more information, please visit <https://www.hlcommission.org/Student-Resources/complaints.html>.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Compliance, monitoring, and review**

- 5.1 The office of the Vice President of Student Experiences (VPSE) is responsible for compliance with this policy.
- 5.2 The VPSE and Campus Behavioral Assessment Team (CBAT) are responsible for the ongoing monitoring of the processes associated with this policy.
- 5.3 The VPSE and CBAT meet quarterly to review the submitted complaints, identify themes, identify potential issues, and provide a report to the Executive Team.
- 5.3.1 The Executive Team reviews the report for instances of an individual being identified as a potential issue or identified in themes. These situations are managed using existing hierarchical processes.
- 5.3.2 The personnel information is redacted from the report and the report is shared with the campus.

## Reporting

- 5.4 Level 1 complaints are considered a part day-to-day business and have no formal reporting requirement, but reporting is recommended to allow for capturing of data.
- 5.5 Level 2 or higher complaints must be reported via the Maxient website.
- 5.6 Employees who field student complaints must submit a report to the Maxient website. This cannot be delegated to a supervisor or other employee.

## Records Management

- 5.7 Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy and procedure in a recognized University recordkeeping system.
- 5.8 The primary recordkeeping system for the student complaint process is the Maxient website.
- 5.8.1 All reported complaints are captured in Maxient.
- 5.8.2 All documentation associated with complaints is captured in Maxient.
- 5.8.3 All subsequent follow up actions are documented in Maxient.
- 5.8.4 All resolutions are documented in Maxient.
- 5.9 Anonymous complaints are submitted through EthicsPoint
- 5.9.1 All documentation associated with complaints submitted through EthicsPoint is captured in EthicsPoint.
- 5.9.2 All subsequent follow up actions are documented in EthicsPoint.
- 5.9.3 All resolutions are document in EthicsPoint.
- 5.9.4 If a true student issue, all data associated with an EthicsPoint complaint are transferred to Maxient once resolved.
- 5.10 All complaint materials, both documented and anonymous, must be compiled, digitally captured, and archived on an annual basis.

## 6. RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

- Higher Learning Commission Assumed Practices (Policy CRRT.B.10.020), A.4., “The institution provides clear information regarding its procedures for receiving complaints and grievances from students and other constituencies, responds to them in a timely manner, and analyzes them to improve its processes.”
- Federal Compliance requirements.

## 7. APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	
Administrator	Vice President for Student Experience
Next Review Date	10/2023

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	
Amendment Authority and Date	
Notes	