

GRACE COLLEGE AND SEMINARY
Student Formal Complaint Resolution Process

Policy: Grace College will investigate in a fair and prompt way all student complaints that are formally submitted to the institution using the procedures outlined within this policy.

Purpose

Grace College recognizes that complaints about the institution may surface from time to time. We believe that it is in the best interest of all involved to resolve these matters as soon as possible and at the lowest possible level. Regardless of the outcome, when receiving a complaint, Grace will use this as an opportunity to clarify and explain its policies, procedures, or actions, and review and modify its practices as necessary.

Scope

This process is to address institutional complaints, grievances, or issues that have not or otherwise would not be resolved by an existing academic or institutional appeals procedure.

It is not intended to replace institutional appeals policies and procedures that exist in various support offices, such as those in the academic office, campus safety, registrar, or student affairs related to grade disputes, fines and citations, academic status, or discipline. A student appeal, whether for an exception to a policy, decision by a disciplinary board, or a financial award, is not considered a complaint.

Further, this process is not intended to supersede application of an individual professor's or department's published policies and complaint resolution process such as those related to attendance, participation, course expectations, or grading.

Definitions

Complaints are defined as grievances or dissatisfaction with the college, its policies, or its employees that have not been resolved informally or by an existing procedure.

Submitting and Documenting Complaints

Complaints must be documented in writing, including the nature of the complaint, prior efforts to resolve the complaint, and the desired outcome. They are submitted to the vice president of administration and compliance or to the dean of students.

Complaints that rise to this level – beyond those that are resolved through regular institutional processes – are logged and monitored by the vice president of administration and compliance.

A notification form is available on *Student Right to Know* page of the institution's web site. Complaints submitted using this form must include the student's name and contact information or will not be processed as a formal complaint.

Reporting to Other Agencies

FERPA complaints: Parents and eligible students who need assistance or who wish to file a complaint under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) should do so in writing, sending pertinent information through the mail to the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920
Phone: 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327)

For more information, see: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/students.html>.

Accrediting Agencies: Students and others also have the right to go directly to one of the institution's accrediting agencies [here](#).

General Procedures

Grace asks that all parties first try to reconcile their complaints with the individual or department in which the complaint surfaced. If the complaint cannot be resolved at this level, parties should follow the procedures as noted below.

1. *Informal Complaint:* A student who has a complaint about Grace College and Seminary but has not been able to resolve it by speaking with the individual(s) involved should discuss the issue with the college official responsible for that area – typically the dean or director of that area. The student should attempt to resolve the issue informally within 30 days of the original occurrence. If the matter still cannot be resolved, then the student may file a formal written complaint.
2. *Formal Complaint:* A student who has attempted to resolve the issue through the informal complaint process and is still not satisfied with the outcome may file a formal written complaint with the vice president of administration and compliance or the dean of student affairs. This should be done as soon as possible after the informal process is completed, but within three months of the occurrence.
 - a. The student must complete the **Student Formal Complaint Form**, which is available in the office of administration and compliance, in the student affairs office, and on the college's website.
 - b. The completed form should be submitted to the vice president of administration and compliance or the dean of students, who will forward the complaint to the vice president of the area involving the complaint.
 - c. If the complaint is about a vice president or chief student affairs officer of the college, then the student should file the complaint with the office of the president.

- d. If the complaint is about the president of the college, then the student is advised to speak with the dean of students or the student may file a formal written complaint by submitting the complaint form to the secretary of the board in a sealed envelope addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- e. If the student is enrolled in an online program, and the complaint has not been resolved in the program in which it originated, complaints should be submitted in writing to the agency representing the student's home state, all of which are located [here](#).

Procedures for Resolution of Formal Written Complaints

1. The vice president of administration and compliance or the dean of students – whoever receives the initial formal complaint – will forward the written complaint to the vice president who oversees the area related to the complaint.
 - a. The vice president or his/her designee will review to the extent possible the circumstances, procedures, individuals, and prior efforts to resolve the complaint. This process may include interviews with those involved, review of the student's educational record, consultation with other campus personnel, or other efforts to investigate and resolve the complaint.
 - b. The vice president (or designee) will conduct a timely, thorough, and fair review of the complaint within 10 business days while the institution is in session. If the review process is delayed for any reason and, therefore, expected to take longer than 10 days, then the vice president will advise the student within those 10 business days the expected date of completion and reason for the delay.
2. If the complaint involves a specific staff or faculty member's action, the vice president should consult with the chief human resources officer for guidance. The vice president will also inform any staff or faculty member upon receipt of a formal complaint that names a specific employee.
3. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the vice president may request a meeting of all parties involved to mediate the situation and find a reasonable solution. The vice president can also send the complaint directly to the senior administrative team if she or he chooses in lieu of mediation.
4. If no resolution is found or the resolution is unsatisfactory to any party, the student or an individual directly involved in the dispute may re-submit the written complaint – including any updated information – to the senior administrative team (through the president's office) within 72 hours of the attempt to resolve the matter.
5. Upon receipt of the formal complaint, the senior administrative team has 10 business days while the school is in session to convene for a final decision, which will be communicated in writing to the student and others relevant to the complaint.

Related Policies

Academic Appeals

Academic Status Appeals

Sexual Misconduct

Employee Grievance Procedures (*Employee Handbook*)

Student Handbook (including housing and lifestyle policies)

Non-Retaliation (see sexual misconduct policy)

Revision History:

Date	Description of Revision
6/13/14	Creation and initial approval
8/13/14	Revised
8/26/14	Revised
3/12/15	Revised
11/1/18	Revised; added process to resolve complaints; deleted <i>Korean Students</i> section because program is no longer offered; deleted individual sections by program type and for employee complaints. Added related policies.