

Student Complaint and Grievance Process

The Student Complaint and Grievance Process outlines the process by which students may express and resolve complaints and grievances alleging improper, unfair or arbitrary treatment or action taken by any University of New Orleans employee, student, or third party associated with the University that is not explicitly covered by another university policy.

Exclusions

Complaints or grievances related to the following must adhere to the processes or policies outlined in the links below.

Title IX: <https://www.uno.edu/media/22001>

Power-Based Violence: <https://www.uno.edu/media/22001>

Sexual Misconduct: <https://www.uno.edu/media/22001>

Academic appeal: <https://www.uno.edu/registrar/forms/appeal>

Grade appeal: <https://www.uno.edu/media/1436>

Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation: <https://www.uno.edu/media/2465>

Student code of conduct: <https://www.uno.edu/media/17427>

Definitions

Business day: Business days do not include Saturday, Sunday, other days when the university is closed and official breaks between semesters and summer session(s).

Student: As defined in AP-SA 06.2.

Support person: Any one person who a student chooses at their expense to bring to a complaint or grievance meeting, such as a parent, legal guardian, friend, or teacher. The support person may only advise or consult with the student and is not permitted to participate or to speak on behalf of the student. The student will be required to have the support person complete a FERPA release of information form prior to any scheduled meeting.

Informal concern: A submission of a concern or issue from a student. Informal concerns should be directed to the office responsible for the process or service about which the student has a concern and may be submitted in writing or verbally. When students submit concerns, the university may or may not take formal action or report back to the student submitting the concern.

Complaint or Grievance: A written claim, made by submitting the Student Complaint Form, made by a student alleging improper, unfair or arbitrary treatment or action taken by a university employee or student. The terms complaint and grievance may be used interchangeably. Only complaints, grievances, or concerns reported using the "Student Complaint Form" in Beacon are considered formal complaints and follow this process. All other complaints, whether written or not, are considered informational and do not require a formal response.

Appeal of a complaint or grievance decision: A written request for reconsideration of a complaint or grievance decision under the Student Complaint and Grievance policy. Appeals may only be filed on the following grounds:

1. A procedural error occurred that substantially impacted the outcome of the review (e.g. material deviation from established procedures), OR

2. There is new information that was not available at the time of the review that would substantially affect the outcome of the review. A summary of the new information and its potential impact on the outcome must be included in the written appeal.
3. No response to the complaint or grievance received from department administrator within time frame outlined by Student Affairs.

Procedure

Complaints & Grievances

Students may bring any complaints or grievances forward within fifteen (15) business days of the first occurrence of the event giving rise to the complaint or grievance, or within fifteen (15) business days after the student, through the use of reasonable diligence, should have had knowledge of the first occurrence giving rise to the complaint or grievance.

Only complaints, grievances, or concerns reported using the “Student Complaint Form” in Beacon are considered formal complaints and follow this process. All other complaints, whether written or not, are considered information and do not require a formal response.

1. Students are encouraged to use available informal means to resolve concerns before filing a complaint.
2. Students shall use the [Student Complaint & Grievance Form](#) to submit their complaint or grievance completing all the information requested. The form is available at <https://uno.guardianconduct.com/incident-reporting>. Select Student Complaint and Grievance Form in the drop-down “Incident Type” menu.
3. Staff in the Office of Student Affairs shall contact the student to discuss the complaint or grievance within ten (10) business days of the submission. Where appropriate the complaint or grievance will be referred to the academic college or the office overseeing any process or procedures about which the student has complained for review and follow up. Staff in the Office of Student Affairs will inform the student of, and document in the Beacon database, a reasonable date by which the student will receive a written response. If the complaint or grievance results in a meeting to discuss the complaint, the student may have a support person in attendance for any such discussion.

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1. The student complaint and grievance form is submitted by a student. The link to the online form can be found on the university website or linked above.
2. The Office of Student Affairs receives an email notification of the submitted form.
3. Staff in the Office of Student Affairs forward the complaint and grievance form to the appropriate administrator for review. The appropriate administrator will be the person who oversees the process, policy, or person about whom the complaint or grievance has been received. This person will most often be a unit head or department chair.
4. The administrator becomes the main point of contact for the student, reviews details of the submitted incident and contacts other individuals to gather additional information and to verify facts.
5. The administrator communicates the complaint or grievance decision and informs the student of any appeal processes and supportive resources that are available to the student.
6. The administrator updates the staff in the Office of Student Affairs who then update the student complaint and grievance case in the database.
7. The academic deans and dean of student affairs review complaint and grievance data on a semi-annual basis to identify any trends and/or opportunities for continuous improvement.

Appeal of a complaint or grievance decision

If the complaint or grievance is not resolved, the student may submit a written appeal of the decision, within ten (10) business days after receiving the written response through the following steps.

Appeals may only be filed on the following grounds:

1. A procedural error occurred that substantially impacted the outcome of the review (e.g. material deviation from established procedures), OR
2. There is new information that was not available at the time of the review that would substantially affect the outcome of the review. A summary of the new information and its potential impact on the outcome must be included in the written appeal.
3. No response to the complaint or grievance received from department administrator within time frame outlined by Student Affairs.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Vice President responsible for the policy, procedure, or service for which the grievance was submitted. The Vice President's decision is final and binding.

Students who have exhausted the University of New Orleans grievance process options and the matter remains unresolved may contact the University of Louisiana System Office.

<https://www.ulsystem.edu/contact/>

Complaints or grievances that remain unresolved at the UL System level may be forwarded to the Louisiana Board of Regents.

<https://regents.la.gov/student-complaint-process/>

Timeframe

If a complaint or grievance is not presented within the specified time limits, it will be considered waived by the student. If a complaint or grievance is not appealed to the next step within the established time limits, it will be considered settled on the basis of the last decision. If, after submission of the complaint and grievance form, a university employee does not respond to the complaint or grievance within the specified 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. The time limits for any step may be extended by mutual written agreement of the student and the appropriate university employee.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a student for participating or not participating in a complaint or grievance is prohibited.

Procedure for change

Procedures for instituting change at the university are available to students. Individual students may submit items for consideration to the Student Government Association. Notice of Student Government Association meetings and copies of the minutes are posted online and all meetings are open to visitors.

Policy and procedure adapted from:

<https://www.minnesota.edu/about/policies-and-procedures/student-complaint-grievance-and-informal-concerns-procedure>