

Minnesota State University, Mankato
University Policy

Policy Name: Student Complaints and Grievances	Effective Date of Policy July 1, 2014
Custodian of Policy: Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management	Date of Last Review September 2013
Date of Adoption August 2001	Date of Next Review September 2020

Policy

Minnesota State University, Mankato has a commitment to a respectful learning environment. Students have the right to seek a remedy for when they believe a campus office/department or a Minnesota State employee treated them in an improper, unfair or arbitrary manner. Students are encouraged to resolve the matter informally before initiating this process. Students seeking advice may contact the Minnesota State Student Association or an academic advisor.

Procedures

The Student Complaints and Grievances policy does not apply to Minnesota State Mankato or MnSCU System rules or regulations with an existing appeal or grievance process. For certain situations, other policies and procedures must be followed.

<i>Applicable Policy</i>	<i>Responsible Office</i>
Discrimination or harassment based on protected class status	Affirmative Action Office
Student misconduct allegations	Office of Student Conduct
Grade appeals	Office of Academic Affairs
Academic suspension appeals	Office of Academic Affairs
Parking	Office of Parking and Traffic Services
Recognized Student Organization concerns	Minnesota State Student Association

Definitions

Complaint – An oral or written claim of improper, unfair or arbitrary treatment (MnSCU policy 3.8.1) submitted by a student for possible informal resolution.

Grievance – A written claim raised by a student alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary action by an employee involving the application of a **specific provision** of a college or university rule/regulation or a board policy or procedure (MnSCU policy 3.8.1), submitted by a student on the student grievance form if the initial complaint is not resolved informally.

Appeal – The outcome of a grievance may be appealed by the student or the respondent(s) named in the grievance if either party offers new information or evidence of procedural errors in the handling of the grievance that substantially impacted the outcome.

Retaliation prohibited- No retaliation shall be tolerated as a result of any individual's participation in the student complaint or grievance process.

Data Privacy- Records shall be protected under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and the Student Records Policies and Procedures of Minnesota State.

Contractual stipulations- This policy is not an employee disciplinary process. Information collected about an employee while investigating a student grievance, must conform to the procedures included in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement or personnel plan.

Informal resolution procedure

The student presents an oral or written complaint to the office, department or employee(s) involved. For full consideration, the complaint should be filed during the term in which the concern arises or within the first two weeks of the subsequent term. Matters can often be resolved through direct, informal conversation. The student shall be provided an oral or written response to the complaint within 14 business days unless reasonable cause for delay exists. If the complaint is resolved, the process is complete.

Formal grievance procedure

If a concern is not resolved informally, the student may then proceed to the formal grievance procedure. The grievance form must be submitted within 14 business days of receiving the outcome of the complaint.

Step 1

The student obtains an official grievance form, either from the Minnesota State Student Association or online, located at the end of the policy and submits the form to the Department Head, Dean or Vice President with direct responsibility for the employee(s), office or department involved in the claim. Academic grievances must go to the academic dean.

- a. Employees named on the grievance form will receive copies of the submitted form and any supporting materials, including a copy of the letter determining if the claim documented on the form constitutes a grievance.
- b. Employees named on the grievance form may submit a written response to the Department Head, Dean or Vice President.

Step 2

The Department Head, Dean or Vice President or designee determines if the claim doesn't constitute a grievance.

Step 3

If the claim on the grievance form constitutes a grievance (as defined by MnSCU policy 3.8), the Department Head, Dean or Vice President will appoint a designee to review the grievance within 21 business days of receipt unless reasonable cause for delay exists. If a meeting is held as part of the review process, both the student grievant and the respondent may be accompanied by a support person who shall not participate directly in the process but may advise the person who invited her/him. The designee will review the grievance and report findings to the Department Head, Dean or Vice President.

Step 4

Within 14 business days of receiving the designee's findings, the Department Head, Dean or Vice President will inform the grievant and the employee(s) of a decision. This response will support the student's proposed remedy, suggest an alternative remedy, or find the grievance without merit.

Appeals

The outcome of a grievance may be appealed by the grievant or the employee(s) named in the grievance if either party has new information or evidence of procedural errors in the handling of the grievance that substantially impacted the outcome. Appeals are reviews of process, not a new examination of contested issues.

Appeals must detail the grounds for appeal and identify a suggested remedy. Appeals are to be filed with the administrator responsible for the Department Head, Dean, or Vice President who responded to the grievance form, no later than 7 business days after the parties receive notice of the outcome of a grievance. The administrator reviewing the appeal, or designee, may request a meeting or additional information, if needed. A written decision will be provided to all parties within 21 business days of receiving the appeal unless reasonable cause for delay exists.

If the grievance specifically involves a MnSCU System Board policy or the actions of the University president, a student may further appeal the University decision to the MnSCU chancellor. The decision of the chancellor is final and binding.

Minnesota State University, Mankato Student Grievance Form

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Mailing address: _____

A grievance may be initiated only after the informal complaint has been completed. According to MnSCU policy 3.8.1, a grievance is “a written claim raised by a student alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary action by an employee involving the application of a **specific provision** of a college or university rule/regulation or a board policy or procedure. This policy does not apply to those college/university rules or regulations or to board policies or procedures that include an appeal or grievance process.” A disagreement with an administrative decision is not a grievance unless it includes improper, unfair or arbitrary action. The entire Student Complaints and Grievances policy can be found online at <http://www.mnsu.edu/atoz/policies/>.

To initiate a grievance:

1. Attach a written summary of your grievance, including the previous steps taken to resolve this matter informally.

2. Identify the remedy that you are seeking.

3. Attach any documentation you deem appropriate.

Student Signature

Date Submitted

Submit this form and attachments to the Department Head, Dean or Vice President with direct responsibility for the employee(s), office or department involved in the grievance. Academic grievances must be submitted to the academic dean of the department named in the grievance within the policy timeline.

