

## **Procedures for Student Complaints/Grievance Policies**

Situations may arise in which a student believes that he or she has not received fair treatment by a representative of the University or has a complaint about the performance, actions, or inaction of staff or faculty. The procedure for bringing these issues to the appropriate person or body is outlined below. Students are encouraged to seek assistance from their advisors or another member of the faculty or staff in evaluating the nature of their complaints or deciding on an appropriate course of action. A complaint should first be directed to the person or persons whose actions or inactions have given rise to the problem within three weeks of the incident.

The complaint/grievance process is meant to answer and resolve issues arising between individual students and the University, and its various offices, from practices and procedures affecting that relationship. In many cases, there are mechanisms already in place for the reporting and resolution of specialized complaints (sexual harassment, grade appeals, Honor Code violations), and these should be fully utilized where appropriate. Violation of student conduct rules should be addressed through the Student Conduct process specifically designed for that purpose.

### Complaint Procedures in the Academic Setting

For complaints in the academic setting, the student should talk personally with the instructor. Should the student and instructor be unable to resolve the conflict, the student may then turn to the chair of the involved department for assistance. The chair (or dean) will meet with both parties, seek to understand their individual perspectives, and, within a reasonable amount of time, reach a conclusion, share it with both parties, and reach a final resolution. See the policies related to academic procedures in the University Catalog. Grade appeal process may be found in University Catalog and on Scholar.

### General Complaints Outside the Academic Setting

Students having complaints outside the academic setting, and who have been unable to resolve the matter with the individual directly involved, should process the complaint in a timely manner through the administration channels of the appropriate unit. Students uncertain about the proper channels are encouraged to seek advice from faculty advisors, deans' offices, or the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students. Complaints that rise to the level of a grievance may be heard, as a final appeal, before a committee, chaired by an appropriate person chosen by the President and including a representative of the faculty and a member of the student body. The grievance must be filed in writing. Grievances not deemed frivolous by the committee will be heard. The student may be assisted during the hearing by a member of the University community.

Complaints and grievances related to non-academic employees of the University should be made to the supervisor of the employee or the Vice President of that area.

Complaints and grievances related to student life, residence life, student support services, health services, campus safety, or campus ministry should be made to the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students.

Complaints and grievances related to admissions practices and recruitment should be made to the Vice President for Enrollment Management.

Complaints and grievances related to financial aid, accounts payable, or the business office should be made to the Vice President of Finance.

Complaints and grievances related to athletics should be made to the Athletic Director.

Complaints and grievances related to program accessibility for individuals with disabilities should be made to the Director of Student Support Services. Grievances unresolved at this level may be forwarded to the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

*Note: Due to federal regulations, the University generally only corresponds with students and not parents or guardian.*

If a student believes he or she has been harassed or otherwise discriminated against because of race, color, gender, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, age, disability, or military service, the student should report the matter immediately to the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students.

### Procedures

Complaints should be presented orally to the appropriate University official. If an informal discussion of the matter is not satisfactory, a written statement of the complaint will be requested. A formal grievance/complaint form may be picked up in the appropriate University office. A written statement should contain the following:

- (1) the exact nature and details of the grievance,
- (2) the date, time, and place of the grievance,
- (3) the names of witnesses or persons who have knowledge of the grievance,
- (4) any available written documentation or evidence that is relevant to the grievance,
- (5) description of steps already attempted to resolve concern through informal procedures,
- (6) resolution being sought by student, and
- (7) student signature and contact information.

The University official who receives the written complaint will investigate the complaint, take whatever action is necessary and appropriate, and will respond to the student in a timely

manner. If a student has followed the grievance policy process and remains dissatisfied with the response to the complaint, the student may appeal to the Appeals Committee. Decisions by the Appeals Committee are subject to review by the President. The President may take whatever action he deems necessary and appropriate. The President's conclusions and actions regarding the complaint are final.

No person against whom a complaint is filed shall intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any subject submitting a complaint. Complaints about retaliation may be communicated to the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students.

## **Disability Accommodations Grievance Procedure**

Shorter strives to provide access to programs and services to all qualified students with disabilities and is committed to adhering to the guidelines of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It is the student's responsibility to voluntarily identify himself/herself as having a disability to the Director of Student Support Services in order to receive services. For details on the steps to receiving accommodations, please refer to the Shorter website: [http://www.shorter.edu/academics/services/disability\\_services.htm](http://www.shorter.edu/academics/services/disability_services.htm).

If a student with a disability feels that they have not received the accommodation(s) they are entitled to, the following information may be helpful:

- The ADA requires that accommodations be developed in a give-and-take dialogue process between the institution and the person with a disability. The student might need to meet with the Director of Student Support Services to more completely discuss and explore appropriate, reasonable accommodations. Students may need to meet with their professors, as well.
- Universities are not required to provide the requested or preferred accommodation. They are required to provide reasonable, appropriate, and effective accommodations for disabilities which have been adequately documented and for which the accommodation has been requested. The question, therefore, should be asked, "Is the accommodation that has been offered reasonable and effective?"

If reasonable accommodations are not implemented in an effective or timely manner, the student should contact the Director of Student Support Services. The Director works with students with disabilities and University personnel to resolve disagreements regarding recommended accommodations. If no resolution is obtained, students who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability may choose to file a written grievance with the Disability Services Committee. Once the Director of Student Support Services receives such a written request, the Director will call a meeting of the Disability Services Committee for such a review and determination. The Director will inform the student in writing of the Committee's decision within 48 hours of the Committee's meeting.

If the student believes he/she is entitled to accommodations not approved by the Director of Student Support Services, the student can request in writing to the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students for the Disability Services Committee to review their documentation and the request for accommodation for reconsideration. Once the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students receives such a written request, a meeting of the Disability Services Committee will be called for such a review and determination. The Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students will inform the student in writing of the Committee's decision within 48 hours of the Committee's meeting.

A student may, at any time, choose to file a formal complaint with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) instead of or in addition to requesting a review by the Director of Student Support Services and/or the Disability Services Committee. The contact information for OCR is below:

OCR Atlanta Office

U.S. Department of Education  
61 Forsyth St., SW, Suite 19T70  
Atlanta, GA 30303-6350

Voice: 404-562-6350      TDD: 404-331-7236

FAX: 404-562-6455

Email: [OCR\\_Atlanta@ed.gov](mailto:OCR_Atlanta@ed.gov)