

Grievance Policy/Student Complaints

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.

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 or posted on Scholar.

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.

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.

The complaint/grievance process outlined above 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 for instance), 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.

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

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.

Complaints and grievances related to sexual harassment involving faculty should contact the Provost, if involving staff, the Vice President of Finance or if involving students, the Vice President for Student Affairs. Please refer to the sexual harassment section of the Student Conduct and Community Standards under Residence Life.

If a fair and reasonable resolution cannot be reached through the above processes, the individual may file a complaint with the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools and/or the Georgia Office of Inspector General.

Procedures for Complaint to Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)

Persons wishing to file a complaint about an institution accredited by the Commission on Colleges should read the Commission policy “Complaint Procedures for the Commission or Its Accredited Institutions” at www.sacscoc.org. The complaint form should be downloaded and mailed to:

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033

Procedures for state complaints

If unable to satisfactorily resolve issues with the university using Shorter University’s complaint and appeals channels, and the student wishes to file a complaint, the Georgia Office of Inspector General is designated as the state agency responsible for receiving such complaints. More information and the online complaint form are available at <https://gnpec.georgia.gov/student-complaints>.