



Student Complaint and Grievance Policy

Riverland Policy # 3.8

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to denote the process for a student to resolve a complaint or grievance. Minnesota State expects that all colleges have a policy on this topic. In addition, it outlines the process of seeking an appeal on a decision associated with a complaint or grievance.

APPLICABILITY:

Student Complaint and Grievance Policy

In the event a dispute arises between a student and a college employee, students have a right to initiate the Student Complaint and Grievance Policy. Prior to initiating a formal complaint or grievance, the college expects that a student has:

- Met with the college staff or faculty member to address the concern and to seek a resolution to the dispute.
- If the student does not receive a satisfactory resolution after directly engaging the staff or faculty member, the student should try to meet with the staff or faculty member's supervisor.

No retaliation of any kind shall be taken against a student for participating, or refusing to participate, in a grievance. Retaliation may be subject to action under appropriate student or employee policies.

DEFINITIONS: For the purposes associated with this policy, the following definitions apply:

Complaint: An oral or written claim concerning a college issue brought by a student alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary treatment.

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 rule/regulation, or a board policy or procedure. This policy does not apply to those college rules or regulations, or to board policies or procedures that include an appeal or grievance process. In addition, this policy does not apply to a complaint about a course grade.

SCOPE: Students, faculty, and staff

DEFINITIONS:

For the purposes associated with this policy, the following definitions apply:

Complaint: An oral or written claim concerning a college issue brought by a student alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary treatment.

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 rule/regulation, or a board policy or procedure. This policy does not apply to those college rules or regulations, or to board policies or procedures that include an appeal or grievance process. In addition, this policy does not apply to a complaint about a course grade.

DOES THIS POLICY HAVE A PROCEDURE? Yes (below)

Pursuant to the Minnesota State Board Policy 3.8; after trying to resolve the dispute with the staff or faculty member and/or their supervisor; if the student feels compelled to initiate a formal complaint, they must do so through the following steps:

- The student must complete a Student Complaint and Grievance Form and file the completed form with the Office of Human Resources.
- Within ten (10) business days of receiving a completed form, the Office of Human Resources will refer the written complaint to the appropriate department head, administrator, and/or area supervisor for investigation of the charges. If the complaint should involve issues of harassment or discrimination it will be forwarded to the Regional Investigator.
- If the complaint appears unwarranted, the department head, administrator, and/or area supervisor may discontinue proceedings.
- If there is sufficient evidence to support the complaint or grievance department head, administrator, and/or area supervisor shall offer the student an opportunity to resolve their concern at an informal meeting with the staff and the department head, administrator, and/or area supervisor, and additional staff/faculty.
- Within five (5) business days of the meeting, the department head, administrator, and/or area supervisor shall inform the student in writing of his/her decision concerning their complaint or grievance and any remedy to their grievance.

Appeals

Following the outcome of a decision, a student may request an appeal review before the Vice President of Strategic Enrollment & Equity or their designee. The request for an appeal must be submitted, in writing to the Vice President of Strategic Enrollment & Equity within ten (10) business days of the date of notification of the decision. Failure to file an appeal or request an extension in a timely manner constitutes a waiver of the right to an appeal. The basis for an appeal will be limited to the following grounds:

- New or newly discovered evidence of a nature that may substantially affect the outcome of the hearing exists.
- There was a procedural error that substantially affects the outcome of the hearing.

The Vice President of Strategic Enrollment & Equity will review the appeal letter and will determine if one or more of the grounds for appeal has merit. If a determination is made that the appeal has merit, the Vice President of Strategic Enrollment & Equity will schedule a meeting with the student and staff or faculty member. A student's advisor or advocate may attend this meeting but may not participate except to advise the student. The Vice President of Strategic Enrollment & Equity will render a decision to the student in writing within ten (10) business days of the appeal hearing.

If the grievance involves a Minnesota State Board Policy, the actions of the college Vice President of Strategic Enrollment & Equity, an issue of institutional or program quality such as an institution's

compliance with the standards of an accrediting or licensing agency, or a claim of consumer fraud or deceptive trade practice, a student may further appeal the college decision to the chancellor. The decision of the chancellor is final and binding.

LIST RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES OR FORMS:

[Minnesota State Board Policy 3.8](#)

Submit completed form and policy to the Cabinet Member responsible for the division affected by the proposal. This section to be completed by President's Office.

Date Issued: 4/9/2015

Responsible Division / Author: Academic & Student Affairs / VP of Academics & Innovation &/or VP of Strategic Enrollment & Equity

Date Revised: 3/30/16 remove final step review of President; 8/2016 NEW Riverland and Minnesota State branding added; 6/2022 number and new template