



Procedure Title: Student Complaint, Grievance and Informal Concerns

Policy Purpose Statement:

To provide students with an avenue to seek remedy for a complaint or grievance. To provide students with a way to express an informal concern.

Associated M State Policy:

Student Complaint, Grievance and Informal Concern

Definitions:

Appeal of a Grievance Decision – A written request for reconsideration of a grievance decision under the Student Complaint, Grievance and Informal Concern policy.

Complaint – A written claim made by a student using the college’s Student Complaint, Grievance, and Informal Concern Form, alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary treatment or action taken by a college employee or student.

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

Grievance – If a student determines a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved and the complaint alleges improper, unfair or arbitrary action by an employee involving the application of a specific provision of a college or system policy or procedure, a student may file what is considered a grievance.

Informal Concern – An informal concern is a written submission of an informal concern or issue from a student. When students submit informal concerns, the college may or may not take formal action or report back to the student submitting the informal concern.

Student – An individual who is enrolled at the college.

Procedure:

- A. **Complaints** – Students may bring any complaints forward 15 business days of the first occurrence of the event giving rise to the complaint, or within 15 days after the student, through the use of reasonable diligence, should have had knowledge of the first occurrence giving rise to the complaint.
 1. Students are encouraged to use available informal means to resolve concerns before filing a complaint.
 2. Students shall use the college’s Student Complaint, Grievance and Informal Concern form to submit their complaint, completing all the information requested. The form is available on

the college's website, by contacting the student services office on any campus, or by calling the Support Center at 877.450.3322.

3. The college supervisor who receives the complaint shall contact the student to discuss the complaint within ten business days of the complaint submission. The college supervisor shall inform the student of, and document on the complaint form, a reasonable date by which the supervisor shall make a written response. The student may have an appropriate campus representative (e.g., counselor or instructor), in attendance for any such discussion.
4. Information submitted and gathered in a student complaint is subject to the Minnesota Data Government Practices Act.

B. Grievances – If students determine that a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, and the complaint alleges improper, unfair, or arbitrary action by a college employee involving the application of a specific provision of a college or Minnesota State system policy or procedure, the student may file a grievance.

1. The grievance must be filed on the Minnesota State Community and Technical College's *Student Complaint, Grievance or Informal Concern form* within 10 business days of receipt of the written response to the complaint under Part 3, Subpart A. The grievance shall state the reason for the grievance, a factual summary of the grievance, the specific policy or procedure application that is of concern, and the requested remedy. The form is available on the College website, by contacting the student development services office on any campus, or by calling the Support Center at 877-450-3322. The student may submit the grievance through the following steps:
 - a. The administrator to whom the employee reports. The student may elect to waive this step if the student previously submitted the matter to the same administrator under the Complaint Process in Part 3, Subpart A.
 - b. The chief officer to whom the employee reports.
2. Each administrator who receives the grievance shall meet with the student to discuss the grievance within ten business days. The administrator shall inform the student of, and document on the grievance form, a reasonable date by which the administrator shall make a written response.
3. Information submitted and gathered in a student grievance is subject to the Minnesota Data Practices Act.

Subpart C. Appeal of a Grievance Decision.

If the grievance is not resolved, the student may submit a written appeal of the grievance decision, within ten business days after receiving the written response in Part 3, Subpart B., through the following steps:

1. To the college president. The president's decision is final and binding, except as provided for in Part 3, Subpart C.2.
2. If the grievance involves a Minnesota State system Board policy, or the actions of the college President, to the Chancellor. The decision of the Chancellor is binding.

Subpart D. 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 presentation at any step, a college 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 college or Minnesota State system personnel.

Subpart E. Retaliation.

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

Subpart F. Procedure for change.

Procedures for instituting change at the college are available to students at both local and state level. Individual students may submit items for consideration to the Student Government Association or the appropriate college committee. Notice of Student Government Association meetings and copies of the minutes are posted, and all meetings are open to visitors.

Student Complaint, Grievance and Informal Concern Process:

1. The student complaint, grievance and informal concern form is submitted by a student. The link to the online form is on the forms page of the college's web site.
2. The dean of student success and administrative assistant to the associate vice president of academics receive an email notification of the submitted form and form information.
3. The dean of student success forwards the complaint, grievance or informal concern form to the appropriate supervisor for review.
4. The supervisor 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 supervisor communicates complaint and/or grievance decision(s) and informs the student of any appeal and/or grievance processes and supportive resources that are available to the student.
6. Informal concern submissions do not require a formal response but supervisors are encouraged to take appropriate action and communicate back to the student with information on any action taken and to thank the student for expressing an informal concern.
7. The supervisor completes the student complaint, grievance and informal concern supervisor decision form. The form is in the employee portal, files and forms, academics.
8. The academic and student services supervisors review complaint, grievance and informal concern data on a semi-annual basis to identify any trends and/or opportunities for continuous improvement. Data review is completed in accordance with applicable data privacy policies.

Associated M State Forms/Documents:

Student Complaint, Grievance and Informal Concern Form **{Note: Forms to be posted after policy and procedure approval & this sentence will be removed from policy and procedure documents.}**

Supervisor Complaint, Grievance and Informal Concern Decision Form {Note: Forms to be posted after policy approval & this sentence will be removed from policy and procedure documents.}

Procedure History:

Procedure Author: Jill Abbott

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