

Student Complaint and Student Grievance Procedure

Definitions

Informal Complaint: An informal complaint is defined as an issue that a student has with a faculty member/instructor, staff member, administrator, or department/program of Sheridan College and/or Sheridan College in Johnson County.

Formal Complaint: A complaint that is submitted formally in writing by a student to the Vice President of Student Affairs office.

Grievance: A grievance occurs when a grievance request form is filed with the Vice President of Student Affairs because a student believes that they have been dealt with in ways which violate established laws, rules, policies or procedures, or past practices by Sheridan College and/or Sheridan College in Johnson County. A grievance will only take place after attempts at informal and formal resolutions have taken place.

Non-Academic Complaint: Complaint about the conduct of a staff member, another student, or any other non-academic aspect of college operations.

Academic Complaint: Complaint from students regarding their academic experience. Academic misconduct reported (including reports from an instructor) will be considered an academic complaint. *Academic complaints will be address through the NWCCD Academic Code of Conduct (Procedure 6005.1)*

Complainant/Grievant: An individual who believes their rights have been violated.

Respondent: An individual who is the subject of the complaint or grievance, if applicable.

Confidentiality: It is understood that faculty, staff, and administrators involved in the discussion of complaints will maintain professional standards of confidentiality. Students should be aware that every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality; however, Sheridan College and/or Sheridan College in Johnson County officials may be obligated to disclose information to law enforcement or other agencies, as required by law.

Informal Complaint

Resolving an Informal Complaint

The student must first discuss and attempt to resolve the issue with whomever the issue arose, if at all possible. Please note, this requirement does not apply in cases of alleged sexual harassment,

sexual misconduct or discrimination. In those cases, the student should follow the Sexual Misconduct Report Procedures (*Procedure 5075.51*).

For non-academic matters, the student should first contact the individual with whom they are having a concern or conflict. The student may be aided by the Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA) office in following the procedures correctly. In the event that such an informal discussion is not possible or the issue is not resolved, the student should contact the VPSA office to try to reach an informal resolution.

The VPSA office will work with the appropriate department director, supervisor or student to attempt to reach an informal resolution. The director or supervisor receiving the complaint shall attempt to resolve the matter.

Formal Complaints

Initiating a Formal Non-Academic Complaint

Prior to any formal complaint process, the complainant must attempt to obtain a satisfactory resolution through the Informal Complaint Process. If the complaint is not resolved informally and the student wishes to have a formal resolution, they must submit a completed **complaint form** and return it to the VPSA office (W156). The complaint form is available on the NWCCD Hub or may be picked up at the VPSA office (W156). The form must be filed no later than five (5) business days after making an informal complaint.

The complaint form must include:

1. The complainant's name, student I.D. number (if applicable), and contact information, including email address.
2. The name(s) of the respondent(s).
3. A detailed description of the nature of the complaint.
4. A detailed description of the attempts at informal resolution.
5. A detailed description of the desired resolution.
6. Dated and signed by the complainant.

The appropriate supervisor or AVP will review the form and will attempt to resolve the matter and will report the decision, in writing, to the complainant and respondent(s) via their NWCCD email address within 10 business days of receiving the petition.

If the complainant does not agree with the formal resolution decision, the student must submit a **grievance form** to the office of the VPSA, along with the supervisor or AVP's written response to previous resolution attempts, no later than five (5) business days after the applicable decision deadline.

Grievance

If the complaint is not resolved through the formal complaint process and the student wishes to continue the process, the student must present a completed **grievance form** to the VPSA office no later than five (5) business days after the applicable decision deadline. The grievance form can be found on the NWCCD Hub or may be picked up at the VPSA office (W156). The **grievance form** must include:

1. The complainant/grievant's name, student I.D. number (if applicable), and contact information, including email address.
2. The name(s) of the respondent(s).
3. A detailed description of the nature of the complaint/grievance.
4. The name and number of the policy and/or procedure in question.
5. A detailed description of the attempts at both informal and formal resolution, along with the supervisor, Director or AVP written response to previous resolution attempts (both informal and formal).
6. A detailed description of the desired resolution.
7. Dated and signed by the complainant/grievant.

Any grievance submitted that does not include the required information will be dismissed without review.

The specific grounds to be addressed are:

- a) Were the procedures or policies followed?
- b) If a procedural error occurred, where the rights of the complainant violated to the extent that a fair review was not conducted?
- c) Was the review conducted in a way that did not permit the complainant adequate notice and opportunity to present the facts?
- d) Was the information presented during the review sufficient to justify the decision reached?
- e) Was there relevant information existing at the time of the review that was not discovered until after the review that is sufficient to alter the decision?

The grievance will be reviewed by the VPSA within 10 business days of receipt of the grievance.

Unless the VPSA requests additional information, the following will be reviewed to determine the final decision:

- a) To determine if the complaint procedure and investigation was conducted fairly in light of the complaint made and information presented and giving the appellant(s) a reason opportunity to present information.
- b) To determine whether the decision reached regarding the matter was based on substantial information, that is, where there were facts that were sufficient to support the decision.

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- c) To consider new information sufficient to alter a decision or other relevant facts not brought out in the original complaint, but only if such information or facts were not known to the complainant or responding party at the time of presenting the complaint.

The Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs will notify the complainant/grievant and respondent of the final decision in writing via their Sheridan.edu email address within 10 business days of the decision made. Individuals will be informed if extenuating circumstances require additional time.

Decisions of the Vice President of Student Affairs are final. There is no further appeal within the Student Complaint Procedure.

Student Complaint Flow Chart

Non- Academic Complaint

Step One: Attempt Informal Resolution.
May be aided by the VPSA office in following procedures correctly.

If resolved,
no further
action
needed

If not
resolved,
initiate Formal
Complaint

Step Two: Initiate Formal Non-Academic Complaint.
The appropriate Supervisor/Director or AVP reviews the complaint and attempts resolution.

If resolved,
no further
action
needed

If not
resolved,

Step Three: Grievance.
VPSA reviews the complaint/grievance and makes the final decision.