

**3356-8-06      Student complaint process.**

- (A) Policy statement. Youngstown state university (“university”) is committed to the continuous improvement of the services it provides to its students. Students who have complaints regarding the fairness or quality of service they have received from the university are encouraged to share their concerns pursuant to this policy so that the university may address these concerns in a timely and professional manner.
- (B) Purpose. The purpose of this policy is to establish an effective complaint resolution process for general student complaints and to allow the university to collect and track these complaints.
- (C) Scope. This policy applies to all university divisions, colleges, departments, and units. This policy does not apply to student complaints regarding academic (grading) grievances, disability accommodations, harassment or discrimination, university admission decisions, or complaints or disciplinary action pursuant to the student code of conduct.
- (D) Definitions.
  - (1) “Student” – any person enrolled at the university in a course offered for credit.
  - (2) “Student complaint” – a written and/or clearly documented verbal statement alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary action relating to the university’s delivery of academic, administrative, and support services. A student complaint must be based on a claimed violation of university policy, regulation, or established practice.
  - (3) “Academically-related complaint” – a student complaint related to the services and responsibilities provided by the departments within academic affairs, including but not limited to academic colleges, academic departments, student success, distance education, library, mathematics assistance center, reading and study skills, and writing center.
  - (4) “Nonacademically-related complaint” – a student complaint related to the services and responsibilities provided by the departments and divisions of budget and finance, enrollment management and

planning, equal opportunity and diversity, facilities, human resources, ~~multicultural affairs~~, and student experience.

(E) Procedures.

- (1) Informal resolution. Students are encouraged, but are not required, to resolve complaints on an informal basis. In seeking informal resolution, a student will speak directly with the staff, faculty, or administrator with whom the student has an issue. This process allows the individual to have an opportunity to hear the student's concerns and work with the student to resolve the issue in a mutually constructive manner. If the student's complaint or concern is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may utilize the formal complaint process.
- (2) Formal resolution.
  - (a) Complaint format. A student complaint ~~page~~section and submission form is available on the [office of the dean of students](#) webpage for students to submit their complaints in writing to the university. The university will respond to the student within ten business days of the alleged issue. Complaints may also be sent in writing to deans, directors and unit heads, division heads, and the president. Students should describe the nature of the complaint, the remedy sought, and a description of all previous attempts to informally resolve the issue. Students will receive a receipt of complaint and notification of resolution within a timely manner. Students have the right to withdraw a complaint at any time during the process. In which case, the complaint will be registered as concluded and noted as withdrawn in the online repository. The withdrawal should be submitted in writing, include the student's reasons for the withdrawal, and be directed to the person handling the complaint.
  - (b) Complaints via web submission. All academically related complaints will be sent to the associate provost for academic administration. All nonacademically related complaints will be sent to the [office of the dean of students](#). Both parties will ensure that a timely written acknowledgement is sent to the student within five business

days from receipt of the complaint and that the complaint is forwarded to the appropriate department/division for review and resolution.

- (c) Complaints to deans, directors, and unit heads. All written complaints will be addressed at the appropriate level at which the complaint was filed. If the complaint is filed with a dean or chair within the colleges or with a director in the divisions of student experience, student success, enrollment management and planning, ~~multicultural affairs~~, and/or a unit head in business and financial services, they must acknowledge the complaint in writing to the student and identify the staff member handling the complaint within ten business days of the complaint being filed. All responses to the complaint will be in writing. The complaint will be documented using the online student complaint repository. If the issue is resolved at the departmental level, then documentation using the online portal is sufficient. If the issue is not resolved at departmental level, then it will be forwarded to the appropriate division head. The division head making the referral will indicate in the online repository that the complaint has been referred.
- (d) Complaints to division heads. All written complaints forwarded to the vice president's and/or associate vice president's office will be addressed within the division in which the complaint was filed. The division head must acknowledge a complaint in writing to the student and identify the staff member handling the complaint within five business days of the complaint being filed. Complaints may come directly to the division head or they can be forwarded from an office within the division. All responses to the complaints must be in writing. The complaint will then be documented using the online student complaint repository. If the issue is resolved at the divisional level, then documentation using the online portal is sufficient. If the issue is not resolved at the divisional level or requires presidential approval, then it will be forwarded to the president's office for resolution. The division head making

the referral will indicate in the online repository that the complaint has been referred.

- (e) Complaints to the president. All written complaints forwarded to the president's office may be addressed by the president or referred to the appropriate division head for resolution. If the complaint is referred to the division head, the division head will follow the same process as outlined in the section above. If the complaint is addressed by the president, the president's office must acknowledge the complaint in writing to the student and identify the staff member handling the complaint within five business days of the complaint being filed. All responses to the complaints should be in writing. The complaint will be documented using the online student complaint repository.
- (3) Complaint resolution. The university will treat complaints seriously and ensure all processes are clear, prompt, confidential, to the extent permitted by law, and fair to all parties and will endeavor to ensure an acceptable resolution.
- (4) Complaint log. An online student complaint repository will be used to document and track the date the complaint was received, the student's name, and contact information, the type of complaint, the date of response, the referral source (if necessary), and the resolution. Designated units receiving complaints under this policy will note the complaint in the online repository whether the complaint is received directly or whether the complaint is referred by or to another designated unit. If a complaint is referred to another designated unit, the receiving designated unit will notify the original unit when the matter is resolved. The online student complaint repository will securely maintain the student complaint logs with records of resolution for a minimum of ten years.
- (5) Complaint review. A student complaint review committee comprised of the dean of students and/or their designee, the associate provost for academic administration, one faculty member (appointed by the university's academic senate), at least one staff member appointed by the dean of students, and one student appointed by the student government association will meet once per semester, excluding summer term, to review all submitted

complaints and records in the online student complaint repository from the previous semester. The committee will review all complaints and resolutions for potential themes/trends. All theme-based complaints will be forwarded to the appropriate department or division for policy and procedure review. A report of aggregate data will be provided to the board of trustees annually.

- (F) Retaliation. Retaliation against a student who makes a complaint in good faith is prohibited and may result in further action up to and including termination for employees and expulsion for students.