

FLORIDA	OFFICIAL
POLYTECHNIC	UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY	POLICY

Subject/Title: Student Grievance Process
FPU Policy Number: FPU-3.0031P
<input type="checkbox"/> New Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major Revision of Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Technical Revision of Policy
Date First Adopted: November 4, 2014
Date Revised: January 17, 2017
Responsible Division/Department: President’s Office
Initiating Authority: Terry Parker, Provost & Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs

A. APPLICABILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY:

This Student Grievance Process provides students the opportunity to bring complaints to the attention of the University. The Student Grievance Process may only be used to grieve a University action or decision when there is no separate appeal process associated with that particular University action or decision. This process is designed for student complaints or concerns (“complaints”) for which there are no other avenues of redress.

B. POLICY STATEMENT:

The intent of this policy is to provide a process whereby student complaints are addressed promptly and resolved fairly. Students shall be given adequate opportunity to bring complaints to the attention of the University with the assurance that the proper University officials will promptly investigate the facts of the case and evaluate these facts in an objective manner.

Student complaints should be resolved, whenever possible, before the filing of a formal written grievance, and open communication is encouraged so that resorting to a formal written grievance process will not be necessary. Informal resolution of complaints may be continued throughout the process.

A listing of other University appeal processes (not inclusive of all processes) are detailed in the following University regulations and policies:

- FPU-1.005 Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Policy and Procedure
- FPU-2.001 Appeal of Admissions Decision
- FPU-3.006 Student Code of Conduct
- FPU-4.0012P Tuition Residency Appeals
- FPU-5.005 Academic Integrity
- FPU-5.00714AP Grade Appeals
- FPU-7.0021 Student Financial Aid Appeals

C. DEFINITIONS:

1. “Day” means a calendar day. The days during semester break (the days between the last day of final exams and the first day of classes of the following semester) and during Spring Break shall not be counted as calendar days for the purpose of this grievance

process. When any deadline incorporated in this process falls on a holiday recognized by the University or on a Saturday or Sunday, the document or action due on that day shall be considered timely if provided or done by the close of business (by 5 pm) on the following day that is not a holiday or weekend.

2. **“Complaint”** means a complaint or concern occurring when a student thinks that an action or decision by the University affecting him/her is unjust, inequitable or creates unnecessary hardship. Such complaints include but are not limited to problems with student or academic services, other university departments, or other matters.
3. **“Complainant”** means any student who files a formal written Complaint under this policy.
4. **“Formal written grievance”** means the formal written Complaint filed by a student and the process that follows.
5. **“Student”** means any student enrolled or admitted to Florida Polytechnic University.

D. PROCEDURES:

1. **Student Omuds Services.** The Student Ombuds Office exists to serve all students of the University. Reporting directly to the President/designee, the Student Ombudsperson operates in an impartial, informal and non-adversarial manner pursuant to Section 1006.51, Florida Statutes and Board of Governors Regulation 6.011. Students may voluntarily choose to utilize the services of the Student Ombuds Office at any time, before, during or even after formal written grievance processes have been exhausted or proven unsuccessful.

The purpose of the Student Ombuds Office is to assist students in resolving problems and conflicts that arise in the course of a student’s interactions with Florida Polytechnic University. By considering problems in an unbiased way, the Student Ombudsperson works to achieve a fair resolution and works to protect the rights of all parties involved. The Student Ombudsperson will work with students to interpret University policy, help identify options and strategies for resolving complaints, and serve as a mediator when appropriate. The Student Ombudsperson may not initiate a grade change or academic adjustment; however, the Student Ombudsperson may refer the student to the appropriate academic officer.

In service to students, the Student Ombuds Office will:

- a. Administer, through its processes, fair and equitable services to students voluntarily seeking assistance with complaints the students have or complaints students feel were not adequately addressed through formal channels.
- b. Operate in accordance with standards of practice, upholding principles of independence and neutrality when responding to any student complaint, inquiry, concern or conflict.
- c. Recommend changes to the processes or procedures that hinder resolving the issue or are causing an inordinate delay.
- d. Seek to resolve problems through various methods, including investigation, mediation or making referrals to the appropriate University department for review.

2. **Informal Resolution.** Students are encouraged to seek informal resolution of the complaint before filing a formal written grievance; however, students are not required to attempt an informal resolution prior to filing a formal written grievance in accordance with the process detailed below. A student may seek informal resolution by:
 - a. Talking with the individual he/she believes has caused the Complaint to see if informal resolution is possible, and/or
 - b. Talking with the supervisor of the individual he/she believes has caused the Complaint to see if informal resolution is possible.

3. **Formal Resolution.**

- a. Step One

A Complainant must provide a formal written Complaint to the supervisor of the individual alleged to have caused the Complaint (the “Respondent”) within ten (10) days of when the issue giving rise to the Complaint occurred. The formal written Complaint must include the following:

- i. Date of the formal written Complaint;
- ii. The Complainant’s name, local address, University email address (for purposes of receiving communications related to the formal written Complaint) and phone number;
- iii. The name and location of the office/department or individual by whom the Complainant feels aggrieved;
- iv. A concise statement of the event(s) causing the Complainant to feel aggrieved including the dates of the event(s);
- v. A statement of any action previously taken to resolve the Complaint and the results of these actions; and
- vi. The outcome desired by the Complainant.

The supervisor receiving the formal written Complaint (“Step 1 Representative”), shall meet with the Complainant to hear the Complainant’s concerns within ten (10) days of receiving the formal written Complaint. The Step 1 Representative shall also consult with the Respondent and may request additional information from the Complainant or others prior to rendering a decision. The Step 1 Representative shall prepare a written decision and provide it to the Complainant and the Respondent within ten (10) days of the Step 1 meeting. It is the Step 1 Representative’s responsibility to inform the Complainant and the Respondent, in writing, of any extension of time needed to complete the Step 1 written decision. If either the Complainant or the Respondent is not satisfied with the Step 1 written decision, the dissatisfied party may continue the formal grievance process in accordance with Step 2. If neither the Complainant nor the Respondent timely files an appeal or rebuttal, the formal grievance process is completed and the Step 1 written decision is final.

A Complainant not satisfied with the Step 1 written decision may appeal to the next level supervisor (“Step 2 Representative”) of the Respondent. This appeal must be in writing, must contain a copy of the Step 1 written decision, and must address the rationale for the appeal. The Complainant must submit the written appeal of the Step

1 written decision to the Step 2 Representative within ten (10) days of the date the Step 1 decision was issued.

If the Respondent is not satisfied with the Step 1 written decision, he/she may submit a written rebuttal to the Step 2 Representative. The rebuttal must be in writing, must contain a copy of the Step 1 written decision and must address the rationale for the rebuttal. The Respondent must submit the rebuttal to the Step 2 Representative within ten (10) days of the date the Step 1 decision was issued.

b. Step Two

The Step 2 Representative shall review the formal written Complaint, the Step 1 written decision and the appeal and/or rebuttal. The Step 2 Representative may request additional information and may also request to meet with the Complainant and/or Respondent. The Step 2 Representative shall prepare a Step 2 written decision and provide it to the Complainant and the Respondent within ten (10) days of receiving the Step 1 appeal or rebuttal. The Step 2 Representative is responsible for informing the Complainant and the Respondent, in writing, of any extension of time needed to complete the Step 2 written decision.

If neither the Complainant nor the Respondent timely files an appeal of the Step 2 written decision, the formal grievance process is completed and the Step 2 decision is final. If the Complainant or the Respondent are dissatisfied with the Step 2 written decision, a final appeal or rebuttal may be submitted to the appropriate Vice President.

A Complainant who is not satisfied with the Step 2 written decision may appeal the decision to the Vice President who is responsible for the area in which the Respondent works; or if the Vice President acted as the Step 1 Representative, the appeal shall be filed with the President. A Respondent who is not satisfied with the Step 2 decision may likewise submit a rebuttal to the appropriate Vice President/President. The appeal or rebuttal must be in writing, must be submitted to the Vice President/President, as appropriate, within ten (10) days of the date the Step 2 decision was issued and must address the rationale for the appeal or rebuttal. Grounds for appeal or rebuttal to the Vice President/President are limited to the following:

- i. The Complainant's/Respondent's rights, as outlined in this policy, were violated in the formal grievance process;
- ii. New information is discovered that was not available at the time of the previous steps; and/or
- iii. The information presented to the Step 2 Representative does not support the Step 2 decision.

c. Final Appeal/Rebuttal

The Vice President/President receiving the final appeal or final rebuttal shall review the formal written Complaint, the appeals and/or rebuttals and the Step 1 and Step 2

written decisions. He/she may request additional information and may also request to meet with the Complainant and/or Respondent. The Vice President/President shall prepare a final written decision and provide it to the Complainant and Respondent within ten (10) days of receiving the final appeal or final rebuttal. It shall be the Vice President's/President's responsibility to inform the Complainant and the Respondent, in writing, of any extension of time needed to complete the final written decision. The final written decision of the Vice President/President shall be the final decision of the University and the formal grievance process is completed.

d. Time Limits

Time limits contained in this policy may be extended by mutual agreement of the parties. Upon failure by the University to provide a decision within the time limits provided in this policy or any extension thereof, the Complainant may appeal to the next appropriate step. Upon failure of the Complainant or Respondent to submit a written appeal, take prescribed action, within the time limits provided in this policy, the Complaint shall be deemed to have been resolved at the prior step of the process.

e. Filing Complaint with Florida Board of Governors or Accrediting Agency

If a student's Complaint cannot be resolved using this process, the student may file a complaint with the Florida Board of Governors (BOG) and/or the University's accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

- i. To request that a complaint be addressed by the BOG, a student may complete and submit the Student Complaint Form to the BOG. That form is available at the following web address:

http://www.flbog.edu/contact/_doc/ComplaintFormRevisedFinal.pdf

- ii. The Florida Board of Governors may be contacted at:

The Florida Board of Governors State University System
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1614 Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
Phone: 850.245.0466
Fax: 850.245.9685
E-mail: info@flbog.edu

- iii. To request that a complaint be addressed by SACSCOC, a student may complete and submit a complaint form to SACSCOC. That form is available at the following web address:

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/complaintpolicy.pdf>

- iv. SACSCOC may be contacted at:

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane Decatur, GA 30033
Phone: 404.679.4500
Fax: 404.679.4558

POLICY APPROVAL

Policy No.: FPU-3.0031P

Initiating Authority

Date

Policies & Procedures Review Committee Chair

Date

President/Designee

Date

Approved by FPU BOT, if required

Date

**EXECUTED SIGNATURE PAGES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL**

10.31.2016