

MERCER
UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Title: Non-Academic Grievance and Appeal Policy
Effective Date: August 1, 2025
Issuing Authority: Provost
Policy Contact: Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students
478-301-2685

Purpose

Mercer University recognizes the importance of providing an efficient procedure for a timely and fair resolution of a non-academic grievance or appeal.

Scope

This policy applies to all students at Mercer University.

Exclusions

The non-academic grievance policy and process shall not be used to appeal a grade, contest course requirements, examinations, course content, admission to a program, disciplinary decisions, housing appeals decisions, residency classification decisions, discrimination, disability and accommodations, traffic appeals decisions, or any other type of decision where a clearly defined appeal process has already been established.

Definitions

As used in this policy, the following term(s) have the meaning specified below:

Non-Academic Grievance or Appeal: a student's complaint or dispute concerning issues outside of academic matters such as a University employee, an administrative policy or procedure, and/or University program, service, or activity.

Policy Statement

Students shall have the right to file a grievance and appeal according to established procedures. Students are encouraged to use the non-academic grievance or appeal process without fear of prejudice or reprisal for initiating the process or participating in its resolution.

As a general proposition, the student should first seek an informal resolution by discussing the problem and seeking a solution with the individual(s) most directly involved. However, should these avenues not rectify the grievance, or the student wishes to bypass the informal resolution process, then the formal grievance process in the Appendix of this policy shall be implemented.

Additional Resources

A number of specific grievance policies and procedures that are prescribed by law, accrediting body, or organization are available to students.

1. Equal Employment Opportunity Policy: <https://policies.mercer.edu/equal-employment-opportunity/>
2. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): <https://policies.mercer.edu/family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act-ferpa/>
3. Sexual Misconduct Policy: <https://policies.mercer.edu/sexual-misconduct>
4. Accrediting bodies: Specific contact information for each accrediting body is listed in the Mercer Catalogs.

Appendices

Appendix A: Informal Resolution Procedure

Many grievances can get resolved via informal personal meetings, phone calls, or emails directly with the employee or office responsible for the grievance. Whenever possible, students are encouraged to exercise these avenues of communication first. However, should these avenues not rectify the grievance, or the student wishes to bypass the informal resolution process, then the formal grievance process below should be implemented.

Appendix B: Formal Resolution Procedure

When a student wishes to file a formal grievance that is nonacademic in nature and does not already have a stated appeal or grievance process as prescribed by law or the institution, he or she should follow this procedure:

1. The student should submit the grievance in writing to the supervisor of the University employee responsible for the action or event that forms the basis of the grievance. This statement should contain a brief statement of the grievance and the remedies sought and be clearly labeled "Formal Grievance" for tracking purposes. A copy of the statement must also be presented to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources for employee-related grievances and to the Vice President for Student Affairs for all other non-academic grievances. The grievance should be submitted to the employee's supervisor within ten (10) days of the action or event that forms the basis of the grievance.
2. The supervisor will meet with the respondent to discuss the grievance within ten (10) days of receipt of the written grievance. The employee's supervisor will reply in writing to the student with the results of the discussion and plans for further action, if any, within ten (10) days of the meeting. A copy of this reply will be provided to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources for employee-related grievances and to the Vice President for Student Affairs for all other non-academic grievances.

3. If the student is not satisfied with the results from the supervisor and wants the grievance to be considered further, the student will have an opportunity for appeal as follows:
 - a. In the case of grievances concerning employees, policies, procedures, or programs of a nonacademic nature within a specific school or college, the student may appeal to the Dean with responsibility for the employee's unit and request a meeting in order to seek a resolution. This appeal must begin within ten (10) days after the employee's supervisor has completed consideration of the grievance and responded in writing to the student. A written reply from the Dean indicating the results of the meeting and including further action, if any, to be taken will be sent to the student within ten (10) days after consideration of the grievance. A copy of the appeal and the response from the Dean must be provided to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources for employee-related grievances and to the Vice President for Student Affairs for all other non-academic grievances.

If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Dean, the student may appeal in writing to the Provost with responsibility for the school or college and request a meeting. The appeal must begin within ten (10) days of the date the Dean has completed consideration of the grievance and responded in writing to the student. A written reply by the Provost indicating the results of the meeting and including further action, if any, to be taken will be sent to the student within ten (10) days after consideration of the grievance. The decision of the Provost with responsibility for the employee's unit will be the final University decision on the grievance. A copy of the appeal to the Provost and the Provost response will be copied to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources for employee-related grievances and to the Vice President for Student Affairs for all other non-academic grievances.

Once the University grievance or appeal procedure has been exhausted, the student can seek a solution outside the University by filing a complaint with the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (GNPEC). The details for filing a complaint with the GNPEC are located on their website and require a specific form. The student can access <https://gnpec.georgia.gov/> and click on "complaint form" for this information.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and program accreditors can be contacted to file a complaint if a student believes accrediting standards were violated or grievance procedures were unfair and applied inappropriately and min consistently. The student can access SACSCOC at <https://sacscoc.org/?s=complaint> and click on "Complaint Procedures Against SACSCOC or Its Accredited Institutions" for more information. A listing of all University accreditors with contact information can be found in the Mercer University catalog. [Note: The procedures associated with the accrediting agencies are not intended to be used to involve the agency in disputes between

individuals and member institutions, or cause the agency to interpose itself as a reviewing authority in individual matters of admission, grades, granting or transferability of credits, application of academic policies, fees or other financial matters, disciplinary matters or other contractual rights and obligations.]

(b) In the case of grievances concerning employees, policies, procedures, or programs of a nonacademic nature outside of the administrative organization of a specific school or college, the student may appeal to the Vice President with responsibility for the employee's unit and request a meeting in order to seek a resolution. This appeal must begin within ten (10) days after the employee's supervisor has completed consideration of the grievance and responded in writing to the student. A written reply from the Vice President indicating the results of the meeting including further action, if any, to be taken will be sent to the student within ten (10) days after consideration of the grievance. The decision of the Vice President with responsibility for the employee's unit will be the final University decision on the grievance. A copy of the grievance and their response will be submitted to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources for employee-related grievances and to the Vice President for Student Affairs for all other non-academic grievances.

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The Dean of Students or student affairs designee on each campus serves as a resource for students seeking assistance with grievance procedures.