

The University of Mississippi
Student Complaints
DSA.DS.100.003

Summary/Purpose: To provide a process for timely addressing student complaints.

Students at the University have the right to complain, whether verbally or in writing, regarding any area of academic or student life without fear of coercion, harassment, intimidation, or reprisal from the University or its employees. Students also have the right to expect a timely response to any complaint. Defamatory or baseless charges may cause a student to be held responsible for violations of University policies or for action through the courts.

Student concerns should be resolved at the lowest possible University unit that has the authority to act as quickly as practicable. Because no single process can serve the wide range of possible complaints, the University provides specific processes for responding to certain kinds of student complaints. Where University policy provides a specific complaint or grievance procedure, an aggrieved student should use that procedure.

Examples of established procedures for specific types of student complaints:

- University Conduct Process
- Traffic Appeals
- Grade Appeals
- Academic Discipline
- Financial Aid
- Mississippi Residency
- Sexual Harassment
- Discrimination
- Housing
- Scholarships
- Academic Standing.
- Conduct (Institutional or Agents of the Institution)

General Complaint Procedures for Students

Students may use the following procedures to formally question the application of any University regulation, rule, policy, requirement or procedure, **not otherwise covered by a more specific policy or procedure.**

The University of Mississippi

Step One:

The student should meet with the University decision-maker concerned to discuss the complaint and to attempt to arrive at a solution. This meeting should occur no later than 30 calendar days after the action which resulted in the complaint.

Step Two:

If the student's complaint is not resolved at Step One, that student must, within 14 calendar days of the Step One meeting, submit a written complaint to the next level in the University's administrative structure (department chair, director or his/her designee in the administrative unit within which the complaint originated). The complaint must be signed and dated by the student. The name and title of the person to whom the request should be addressed can be obtained from the employee in Step One.

If the student's issue cannot be resolved by the Step Two administrator by telephone call or email correspondence, he or she shall make a reasonable effort to arrange for a meeting with the student and the employee within 14 calendar days from the date that the request is received. If this timeframe cannot be met, the Step Two administrator will notify all parties in writing and determine a mutually agreeable time. The meeting should be informal, with a candid discussion of the problem in an attempt to find a solution. The Step Two administrator may give an oral decision at the close of the meeting, or he or she may choose to take the matter under advisement. Typically, the Step Two administrator will render a final decision within 14 calendar days, informing all parties of the decision in writing.

Step Three

If the student wishes to appeal the Step Two decision, he or she may appeal to the dean or vice chancellor at the next level in the administrative structure of the University within 14 calendar days from the date of the Step Two written decision. The student may obtain from the employee in Step One or Step Two the name and title of the person to whom the request should be addressed.

The appeal must be in writing, signed and dated. Upon receiving this written appeal, the Step Three administrator will review all information concerning the complaint and appeal and render a written decision within 14 days from the date of receipt of the appeal. The Step Three administrator's decision is final.

The following describes additional steps for students enrolled in University of Mississippi supported distance education programs under the auspices of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement also referred to as SARA.

Students who have complaints related to academic or administration actions at The University of Mississippi who have exhausted the avenues described in process included in this policy and who have resolved that the complaint cannot be resolved internally may file a formal complaint with the Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation using the MCCA Student Complaint Form within two years of the incident. Note: this process is not applicable for matters related to student grades or discipline/conduct matters.

In all cases, if the final decision requires any change to an official record of the University, the University employee must comply with all University regulations and procedures necessary to accomplish the change.