



**PA:005 – Student Complaints**

Purpose: This policy applies to complaints concerning the delivery of academic services (curricular) and student services (co-curricular).	
Origination: 09/01/2025	Divisions: Academic Affairs & Student Affairs
Last Approved/Effective: 11/01/2025	Policy Owners: Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Chief Student Affairs Officer
Last Reviewed/Revised: N/A	
Next Required Review: 11/01/2030	

**Introduction**

The University is committed to providing appropriate and clear processes for addressing written student complaints. It upholds the principles of fairness and timelines in resolving student complaints while using the process as a means to continuously improve its student support services in both student and academic affairs. By resolving complaints effectively, the university is able to identify patterns, address concerns, and enhance the overall quality of student services and student satisfaction.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all written student complaints related to the delivery of academic services (curricular) and student support services (extracurricular). This policy is applicable to all students, inclusive of all levels, modalities, and locations.

**Definitions**

*Student Complaint*

A complaint is a written statement by a student indicating that the treatment they received appears inconsistent with an official university document (e.g., policy, procedure, syllabus) and requires a formal resolution.

*Student Concern*

A concern is the identification of an issue, problem, situation, etc. related to treatment that appears inconsistent with an official university document (e.g., policy, procedure, syllabus). Concerns are typically resolved through direct and effective communication with appropriate parties, as outlined on the university’s website. If a concern cannot be resolved, it may be elevated to a student complaint.

**Student Complaint Submission**

If a student concern cannot be resolved through direct communication with the appropriate parties, the student may initiate the student complaint process by submitting a written complaint online. Complaints are routed to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs for curricular matters, or the Chief Student Affairs Officer for extracurricular matters.

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the designated Vice President, Chief Officer, or their designee will: 1) acknowledge receipt of the complaint and inform the student of the next steps; and 2) conduct an inquiry and/or seek resolution through administrative means, following the published procedure. If the complaint can be resolved administratively, the student will receive a written response outlining the resolution.

If additional steps are required, as in a case involving a complaint against a faculty member, the Vice-President or Chief Officer will follow the prescribed procedures. After completing this process, the student will receive a written response describing the University’s action(s) Once this response has been issued, the matter will be considered closed, and the decision is final.

## Student Complaint Procedure Publication

The Student Complaint Procedure and Guidelines are available on the university website along with procedures and guidelines for specialized circumstances not covered in this policy. These include: Academic Integrity, Accessibility/Disability Grievances, FERPA Related Complaints, Final Grade Appeals, Traffic Appeals, Student Conduct, Title IX Complaints (Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence). Instructions for submitting complaints for these specialized areas are available on the website alongside the general Student Complaint Procedure and Guidelines, for ease of access.

If a student complaint cannot be resolved through the university's internal processes, the website also provides contact information for the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

### Retention of Files

The Offices of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Chief Student Affairs Officer will each maintain a record of all written student complaints submitted to their office, along with documentation of how each complaint was addressed. Records will be retained for a minimum of ten years. Redacted records will be available for accreditation or regulatory review in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

The record will include, at a minimum, the following information:

- The name(s) of the student(s) initiating the written student complaint and the individual(s) referenced in the complaint;
- The date that the written student complaint was received;
- The nature of the complaint, including a copy of the written student complaint;
- The University official(s) assigned to investigate the written student complaint and the steps taken to resolve it;
- The date and details of the final resolution or disposition of the written student complaint;
- Any external actions taken by the complainant, if any, of which the University becomes aware.

Maintaining these records allows the university to: monitor for any serious or systemic issues, identify any patterns of concern in curricular or co-curricular programs, and ensure compliance with federal regulations requiring institutions to receive, respond to, and track student complaints.

This information will be made available to regulatory agencies and accrediting bodies, including the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, as required by applicable laws, regulations, and policies.