

Grievance Policy and Resolution of Conflicts

Student Complaint Policy and Procedure

ETSU Policy

East Tennessee State University is committed to respecting all members of the university community and providing fair treatment regarding complaints by students. The objective of the Student Complaint Policy and Procedure is to ensure that concerns and complaints of undergraduate or graduate students are addressed fairly and are resolved promptly. Complaints usually involve actions affecting students that are alleged to be unjust, inequitable, or create unnecessary hardship. A student may pursue this complaint procedure if he or she believes a problem is not governed by other complaint or appeal procedures at the university:

http://catalog.etsu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=136#Complaint_Policy_and_Procedure and the ETSU catalogs <http://www.etsu.edu/reg/catalog/> for other examples). The Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy have their own student complaint policies; complaints should be directed to appropriate personnel as identified by those colleges.

East Tennessee State University seeks to provide students, staff and faculty members with a safe and secure learning environment, free of crime and/or violations motivated by discrimination, sexual and other bias-related harassment. There are two important complaint policies not governed by the Student Complaint Policy and Procedure: Sexual, Racial, and Other Harassment and Hate Crimes and Bias-Related Incidents. These types of complaints should be filed with the Special Assistant to the President for Equity and Diversity/Affirmative Action Director or, when a charge is by one student against another student, with the Dean of Students according to the procedures described in those policies.

Procedure

When a concern occurs, the student is encouraged to discuss it with the appropriate faculty member or administrator. Often a resolution or an answer can be attained informally. If an informal approach is neither successful nor advisable, the student should use the Student Complaint Policy and Procedure. The procedure for filing student complaints governed by this policy is as follows:

Step 1:

To submit a complaint a student must complete the official Student Complaint Form <https://www.etsu.edu/students/documents/electronicstudentcomplaintform.doc> and send it via email attachment, within ten working days of the date of the initiating event, to the chair or director most directly involved (if the complaint is directed against the chair or director, it should be referred to the dean of the college or next level administrator). The chair or director will attempt to determine the validity of the complaint, and in the case of a valid complaint, seek resolution, including administrative action. He or she will communicate his or her decision on the Student Complaint Form and make every effort to do so within ten working days from the conclusion of this process.

Step 2:

If a student wishes to appeal the decision made in Step 1, he or she must submit the Student Complaint Appeal Form A <http://www.etsu.edu/etsuhome/search.aspx?q=Student+Complaint+Appeal+Form+A&imgEtsuSrch.x=0&imgEtsuSrch.y=0> and the completed Student Complaint Form via email attachments to the appropriate dean or administrator within ten working days from the date of the decision. Undergraduate students submit the materials to the dean of the college where the issue(s) arose and graduate students submit to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. In the case of a complaint involving a director, the student submits materials to the next level administrator. The student will be invited to discuss the complaint with that individual, who will attempt to determine the validity of the complaint and, in the case of a valid complaint, seek resolution, including possible administrative action. He or she will communicate his or her decision on Student Complaint Appeal Form A and make every effort to inform the student within ten working days of the conclusion of the appeal.

Step 3:

If the student believes that he or she has not been afforded due process, the student must submit Student Complaint Appeal Form B <http://www.etsu.edu/etsuhome/search.aspx?q=Student+Complaint+Appeal+Form+A&imgEtsuSrch.x=0&imgEtsuSrch.y=0> together with Student Complaint Appeal Form A and the Student Complaint Form via email attachments to the vice president of the university division in which the complaint occurred within ten working days from the date of the decision. The vice president

will make the final determination about the matter and communicate his or her decision on Student Complaint Appeal Form B and make every reasonable effort to submit his or her decision to the student within ten working days from the conclusion of this appeal. The determination will include reasons for the decision and direct a remedy, if any, to the student complaint.

Documentation

A record of all complaints and their resolution will be documented at each level of the review process by the appropriate administrator.