

**DIN: 3320-2-01**

**Name of Process: Resolving Learner Complaints, Appeals and Grievances**

**Purpose**

Learners who have complaints are encouraged to resolve these informally with a faculty member, staff member, or counselor; however, when learners are unable to resolve a complaint through informal discussion, this process provides a venue for learners who feel that their right to an education is being affected unfairly in the application of college policy or process or by an action the learner deems to be improper, unfair, arbitrary, or discriminatory in the application of policy to exercise their right to submit a written appeal or grievance, which could ultimately be heard by an appeals committee. Learners may also choose to complete a written “Learner Concern Form” after which a counselor or faculty member may speak with others in relation to the complaint without rising to the level of a formally filed appeal or grievance.

**Scope**

This process applies to all learner appeals and grievances of college policy and/or process, both academic and non-academic.

**Definitions**

The following is a list of key definitions:

<b>Term/Phrase</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Appeal	A request for reconsideration of the application of a college policy or procedure.
Complaint	An oral claim by a learner alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary discriminatory treatment. A learner may complete a written Learner Concern Form to allow the counselor or faculty member to discuss the issues with others without committing to a formal appeal or grievance procedure.
Grievance	A written claim raised by a learner, alleging improper, unfair, arbitrary, or discriminatory action by an employee involving the application of a specific provision of a college rule or regulation.
Retaliation	Retribution of any kind taken against a learner for participating in an appeal, complaint, or grievance.
Learner	Any individual learner, a group of learners, or the campus government
Appeals and Grievance Process	College process for filing appeals and grievances with specific timelines for each step. The steps of this process shall not substitute for other procedures specific in MnSCU procedures or negotiated agreements. This process shall also protect data privacy rights.

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Document Number: 3320-2-01	Rev. 1-29-08	Page 1 of 4	Level # 1
Title: Appeals and Grievance Process			Implementation Date: 3-2-07

**Process**

The table below describes responsibilities for this process:

Stage	Who	Description
1	Learner	Brings complaint/issue to a faculty or staff member or the Counselor for informal discussion as the first step in problem resolution. Faculty and staff are encouraged to bring learners who approach them with a complaint to the Counselor, who will guide the learner through the various levels of complaint processing, depending on learner wishes. If the faculty or staff member is comfortable dealing with the complaint informally, then faculty or staff member may conduct stage 2. Learner may decide to file a complaint or appeal/grievance immediately. If so, start this process at stage 4.
2	Counselor or faculty or staff member	Talks with the learner to learn the nature of the complaint. If appropriate, works toward informal resolution. Completes Learner Concern form with learner if the issue involves more than a conversation with the learner. Explains resolution options: informal discussion with appropriate parties or filing of formal appeal/grievance.
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>If academic issue, brings learner to appropriate Division Chair who works with the learner (and faculty as appropriate) to reach resolution through informal discussion. Return the Concern Form to the Counselor when resolution is reached for logging on the complaint log.</td> <td>If non-academic issue, works with learner and/or, if appropriate and with the learner's permission, brings learner together with the subject of complaint, to try to work toward resolution through discussion. If Concern Form is completed, Counselor logs on the complaint log.</td> </tr> </table>
If academic issue, brings learner to appropriate Division Chair who works with the learner (and faculty as appropriate) to reach resolution through informal discussion. Return the Concern Form to the Counselor when resolution is reached for logging on the complaint log.	If non-academic issue, works with learner and/or, if appropriate and with the learner's permission, brings learner together with the subject of complaint, to try to work toward resolution through discussion. If Concern Form is completed, Counselor logs on the complaint log.	
3	Counselor	Conducts follow-up contact with complainant.
4	Learner	If complaint is still not resolved to learner's satisfaction, learner completes Appeal and Grievance Form and submits to Counselor, along with any supporting documentation. Counselor may assist the learner in completing the form.
5	Counselor	Appoints an Appeals Committee member to investigate the appeal or grievance and report findings to the Appeals Committee at a scheduled meeting within 5 days. Counselor schedules the Appeals Committee meeting.
6.	Appeals Committee	Convenes to review appeal. Learner may present his/her case to the committee during the meeting, but must leave during the deliberation.
		Committee reviews the appeal and judges the merits of all the information provided. Makes determination on appeal.

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Title: Appeals and Grievance Process			Implementation Date: 3-2-07

7.	Appeals Committee recorder	Records appeal and decision. Informs learner making the appeal of the outcome in writing within two days of the review meeting. Response includes committee decision and succinct statement of rationale, if appropriate.
8.	Learner	<p>May appeal a committee's decision to the college Provost within ten (10) days of being informed of the decision. The decision of the Provost is final. Appeals to the Provost should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learner name and major</li> <li>▪ Credits completed to date and cumulative GPA if applicable to degree</li> <li>▪ Most recent term GPA</li> <li>▪ Statement from learner regarding why the learner feels the committee decision should be reversed.</li> <li>▪ Copy of appeal form and committee's written response.</li> <li>▪ Any related documents or correspondence</li> </ul> <p>Credit Transfer appeals: If a learner is not satisfied with the college's transfer appeal decision, the learner may submit a request to the MnSCU Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs for a system level appeal of the college or university transfer appeal decision. The system level appeal request shall include a copy of the college or university transfer appeal decision with supporting rationale, transcript and other documentation.</p> <p>To be considered at the MnSCU level, the learner appeal for a decision that involves credits from system colleges and universities must have the support of the chief academic officer or designee of the sending system college or university. When a transfer decision involves credit earned at an institution outside the system colleges and universities, the support of a chief academic officer or designee is not required.</p> <p>See the MnSCU website for steps and forms:  <a href="http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/321p1.html">http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/321p1.html</a></p>

**Supporting references**

Listed below are college documents that support this process:

3320-1-01 [Appeals and Grievances Policy](#)

3320-4-01 [Appeals and Grievance](#) Form

3320-4-02 [Learner Concern](#) Form

**Compliance References**

Listed below are compliance references related to this policy (e.g., MnSCU policy, federal regulations):

MnSCU Policy 3.21 <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/321.html>

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Document Number: 3320-2-01	Rev. 1-29-08	Page 3 of 4	Level # 1
Title: Appeals and Grievance Process			Implementation Date: 3-2-07

MnSCU Procedure 3.21.1 [Http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/321p1.html](http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/321p1.html)

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