

**DIN: 3320-2-01**

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

**Purpose**

Students who have complaints are encouraged to resolve these informally with a faculty member or staff member, however, when students are unable to resolve a complaint through informal discussion, this process provides a venue for students 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 student 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. Students may also choose to complete a written “Student Concern Form” after which a 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 student appeals and grievances of college policy and/or process, both academic and non-academic.

**Student Consumer Complaint Process**

Pursuant to the United States Department of Education’s Program Integrity Rule, institutions providing online education are required to provide all prospective and current students contact information of the state agency or agencies that handle complaints against postsecondary education institutions offering distance learning within that state.

We encourage you to seek resolution to any concerns by discussing them informally with a staff member at the college. If a complaint cannot be handled informally, NTC students are encouraged to use our college’s complaint process, outlined in this policy.

If a complaint cannot be resolved at the college level, you may contact the [Minnesota Office of Higher Education](#). If you reside in another state, you may contact your [local state agency \(PDF\)](#) for further information.

**Definitions**

The following is a list of key definitions:

| Term/Phrase | Definition   |
|-------------|--|
| Appeal      | A request for reconsideration of the application of a college policy or procedure.   |
| Complaint   | An oral claim by a student alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary discriminatory treatment. A student may complete a written ‘Student Concern Form’ to allow the faculty member to discuss the issues with others without committing to a formal appeal or grievance procedure. |

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| Grievance                     | A written claim raised by a student, 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 student for participating in an appeal, complaint, or grievance.   |
| Student                       | Any individual student, a group of students, or the campus government  |
| Appeals and Grievance Process | College process for filing complaints, appeals and grievances with specific timelines for each step. The steps of this process shall not substitute for other procedures specific in Minnesota State procedures or negotiated agreements. This process shall also protect data privacy rights. |

**Process**

The table below describes responsibilities for this process:

| Stage | Who                     | Description  |
|-------|-------------------------|--|
| 1     | Student                 | Brings complaint/issue to a faculty or staff member for informal discussion as the first step in problem resolution. Faculty and staff are encouraged to guide the student through the various levels of complaint processing, depending on student wishes. If the faculty or staff member is comfortable dealing with the complaint informally, then faculty or staff member may conduct stage 2. Student may decide to file a complaint or appeal/grievance immediately. If so, start this process at stage 3. |
| 2     | Faculty or staff member | Talks with the student to learn the nature of the complaint. If appropriate, works toward informal resolution. Explains resolution options: informal discussion with appropriate parties or filing of formal complaint/appeal/grievance. Completes 'Student Concern form' with student if the issue involves more than a conversation with the student.  |

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|    |                                     | If academic issue, brings student to appropriate Division Chair who works with the student (and faculty as appropriate) to reach resolution through informal discussion.   | If non-academic issue, works with student and/or, if appropriate and with the student's permission, brings student together with the subject of complaint, to try to work toward resolution through discussion. |
| 3  | Student                             | If complaint is still not resolved to satisfaction, the student completes 'Student Concern Form' and submits to Vice President for Academic Affairs, along with any supporting documentation.  |   |
| 4  | Vice President for Academic Affairs | Conducts follow-up contact with the student filing the complaint. Vice President determines if the complaint moves to the Appeals and Grievance Committee or has been resolved. Vice President logs the complaint in complaint log.  |   |
| 5  | Vice President for Academic Affairs | Appoints an Appeals and Grievance Committee member to investigate the complaint, appeal or grievance and report findings to the Appeals and Grievance Committee at a scheduled meeting within 5 days. Vice President for Academic Affairs schedules the Appeals and Grievance Committee meeting. |   |
| 6. | Appeals and Grievance Committee     | Convenes to review appeal. Student may present his/her case to the committee during the meeting, but must leave during the deliberation. The Appeals and Grievance Committee reviews the appeal and judges the merits of all the information provided. Makes determination on appeal.            |   |
| 7. | Appeals and Grievance Committee     | Records appeal and decision. Informs student 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.  |   |

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| 8. | Student | <p>May appeal a committee's decision to the college Vice President for Academic Affairs within ten (10) days of being informed of the decision. The decision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs is final. Appeals to the Vice President for Academic Affairs should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student 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 student regarding why the student feels the committee decision should be reversed.</li> <li>▪ Copy of 'Student Concern Form' and committee's written response.</li> <li>▪ Any related documents or correspondence</li> </ul> <p>Credit Transfer appeals: If a student is not satisfied with the college's transfer appeal decision, the student may submit a request to the Minnesota State 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 Minnesota State level, the student 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 Minnesota State website for steps and forms:<br/> <a href="http://www.minnstate.edu/board/procedure/321p1.html">http://www.minnstate.edu/board/procedure/321p1.html</a></p> |
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**Supporting references**

Listed below are college documents that support this process:  
 3320-1-01 Appeals and Grievances Policy  
 3320-4-02 Student Concern Form

**Compliance References**

Listed below are compliance references related to this policy (e.g., Minnesota State policy, federal regulations):  
 Minnesota State Policy 3.21 [Http://www.minnstate.edu/board/policy/321.html](http://www.minnstate.edu/board/policy/321.html)

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