12. 4 - Resolution of Grievances Policy & Procedure

Satisfactory student-faculty relationships and effective school operation depend on shared goals and objectives. Best results are achieved in an atmosphere where problems and opinions can be discussed freely without fear of reprisal and with an expectation of mutual cooperation.

The grievance procedure provides students the opportunity to bring matters that require resolution to the attention of appropriate members of the faculty or administrative staff, who will respond as outlined by this policy. Students are encouraged to resolve matters first by talking with the appropriate faculty or staff member involved. If a resolution is not reached, the student is encouraged to submit a written complaint using the formal complaint procedure outlined in the on the VUU Web site. A record of written complaints and actions taken is recorded on the Grievance Log Template.

Grievance & Complaint Procedure

Virginia Union University has established procedures for student grievances and complaints, as outlined in the steps below.

Step 1: Informal Resolution

- Any student with a concern about an event or condition is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the appropriate faculty, staff member or department personnel in which the issue originated.
- If the issue is not resolved, the next contact would be the department supervisor, chair or dean to investigate the issue.

Step 2: Formal Complaint

- If a resolution is not reached, the student is encouraged to submit a written complaint using the online complaint form https://www.vuu.edu/student-complaint-form---how-do-i-make-a-complaint, or by email to grievance@vuu.edu.
- This written letter of grievance or complaint must include the name and contact information of the student filing the complaint, a detailed description of the circumstances, including who is involved and the current status. It is necessary to demonstrate how the student has already attempted to resolve the concern following the procedure as defined in Step 1.

Step 3: Formal Resolution

- The Dean of Students will investigate the complaint and refer findings to the Grievance Committee. Complaints may be referred to appropriate college/division for additional investigation and proposed resolution. Complaint will be investigated and resolved within seven (7) work days. The Dean of Students will advise the complainant if additional time is needed for resolution. Once resolved, the student may appeal the resolution to the VP of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs.
Step 4: Appeal

- If resolution does not occur to the student’s satisfaction at Step 3, the student may appeal to the VP of EMSA within five (5) business days following the date the proposed resolution was presented. The VP of EMSA may request additional information from involved parties. VP EMSA will issue a written response to the appeal within 14 days which will be distributed to the complainant and the affected department or individual. The appeal response by the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs is final.

Exclusions to this procedure include complaints regarding academic grade disputes, academic integrity, non-academic misconduct, sexual violence, harassment and discrimination.

- Academic grade disputes or academic integrity charges/appeals: are processed by the respective academic unit’s policies and procedures. Complaints about academic procedures or personnel must be filed with the appropriate department chairperson.

- Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation: Virginia Union University believes that students, faculty, and staff have the right to work and learn in an environment free from harassment and discrimination and condemns such behaviors. The University will take all reasonable efforts to prevent and avoid the recurrence of harassment or discrimination prevent retaliation and correct discriminatory effects as appropriate. Students with a complaint concerning discrimination, harassment and retaliation should file a complaint using the online complaint form [https://www.vuu.edu/student-complaint-form---how-do-i-make-a-complaint](https://www.vuu.edu/student-complaint-form---how-do-i-make-a-complaint), or by email to grievance@vuu.edu or make an appointment with the Dean of Students or Title IX Coordinator to discuss available reporting options. Informal resolution can involve a variety of remedies tailored to the involved individuals. Formal Resolution will be initiated through the Dean of Student’s office or the Title IX Coordinator. Once the respondent has been notified of the complaint an investigation will be directed by an appointed Investigator who will interview the parties and other witnesses as necessary. Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator will prepare an investigative report to be reviewed by a panel. If a violation is found, the panel will make a sanction recommendation to the Title IX office. Outcomes will be communicated to all parties. Either Complainant or Respondent may appeal an outcome with the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs.