

Policy Identification Number	
Policy Title	Student Concerns and Complaints Memorandum
Classification	Student
Approval Authority	Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Responsible Entity	Associate Provost for Educational Affairs and Student Life
Policy Owner	Darlene Shaw, PhD
New/Revision/Retired	
Original Effective Date	

I. Policy Statement

MUSC respects and protects the diverse interests of all students, faculty, and employees and promotes a philosophy of mutual respect. MUSC is committed to providing students with a quality learning experience in an environment where constructive feedback is encouraged and complaints are effectively addressed. It is the intent of the university to provide an open, fair, and accessible process that encourages the prompt resolution of complaints/issues encountered by MUSC students.

II. Scope

This memorandum outlines the elements required in the mechanism instituted by each college and the University for addressing complaints regarding college and university-wide services.

For complaints related to academic performance (e.g., grades, dismissal, progression) in a specific department or course, the student is to follow his/her college's procedures in keeping with the process outlined in The Bulletin.

Complaints about other issues occurring within the college are to be lodged with the college in which the student is/was/plans to be enrolled. The college procedure may be used for students to submit complaints related to mistreatment. An additional mechanism for addressing complaints related to mistreatment is provided by the MUSC Standards of Conduct for Treatment of Trainees. Complaints related to Education and Student Life, Library Services,

Student Accounting, or other University services are to be submitted to the Associate Provost for Educational Affairs and Student Life.

Complaint procedures related to other specific issues (e.g., gender equity, Americans with Disabilities Act, student mistreatment, etc.) are available on the MUSC Student Complaint Procedures website.

III. Approval Authority

The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost is the approval authority for this policy.

IV. Purpose of This Policy

The University and each college must provide a mechanism for students to submit an informal complaint and a procedure to submit a formal, written complaint (see [Student Complaint Form](#)). The University and colleges follow a common process for addressing formal complaints and the procedure in each area must include a committee or individual(s) designated by the college or university to review information related to the formal complaint and to reach a decision, and a mechanism for appeal. MUSC recognizes each of the six colleges which comprise the Medical University of South Carolina has a unique culture which will guide the implementation of the common process. A log of formal written complaints ([Complaint Monitoring Log](#)) including complaints related to academic performance (e.g., grades, dismissal, progression) and the process for resolution is submitted annually by the University and each college to the Associate Provost for Educational Affairs and Student Life. The Associate Provost for Educational Affairs and Student Life aggregates the data, which are reviewed annually by the Education Advisory Committee.

Prospective and current students as well as the general public have the option of filing a complaint with the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education ([SCCHE](#)), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges ([SACSCOC](#)), and federal agencies. Additional internal and external options for filing complaints are available on the MUSC Student Complaint Procedures website. Most external complaint processes, prior to considering a grievance, require the student to exhaust his/her options within the processes internal to the institution.

V. Who Should be Knowledgeable of This Policy

MUSC employees who interact with students should be knowledgeable about this policy, including College Deans, Associate Deans for Student Affairs, Associate Deans for Education, Chair, Department of Library Science and Informatics, Vice President for Finance & Administration, General Counsel, and employees in University Offices which report to the Associate Provost for Educational Affairs and Student Life on-campus offices/units/programs to which students are directed for specific types of complaints

VI. The Policy

Complainants' Rights

(Required element in each college or university complaint procedure)

- A. A complaint will be treated with appropriate confidentiality and in a timely manner.
- B. A complainant has the right to withdraw the complaint in writing at any point in the process.
- C. A complainant may file a written complaint without fear of retaliation. If the complaint is filed without basis or with the intent to harm a member of the MUSC community, disciplinary action may be taken.
- D. The procedure will be applied consistently to students across colleges/units, including distance-learning students.

Required Elements for College and University-Wide Student Complaint Procedures

The University and each college must develop a student complaint procedure that contains the following elements: (1) an informal complaint process that encourages resolution at an unofficial level; (2) a formal complaint process; and, (3) an appeals process.

- A. To file a formal complaint, a complainant must complete, sign, and date an MUSC formal complaint form. (Note: A formal complaint filed by an individual who is not currently enrolled at MUSC must be notarized.)

- B. A formal complaint can only be filed in a single system, either with the University or through the appropriate college, to ensure proper tracking and resolution.
- C. A committee or individual(s) designated by the college or university reviews the formal complaint and reaches a decision.
- D. The decision will be communicated in writing to the student.
- E. The complainant has the right to submit a written appeal of the decision of the committee or the individual designated by the college or university. The appeal must be made within the unit to which the complaint was submitted (college or university).
- F. The appeal decision must be communicated in writing to the student.
- G. The decision of the college or university is considered a final decision; however, if the complaint believes that due process was not followed, he/she has the option of submitting a written appeal to the Provost. In the written appeal, the student must identify how due process was not followed. The complainant must provide the college or university with a copy of the written appeal to the Provost. The Provost's finding will be communicated in writing to the student and college or university.

Additional Required Elements

- A. The University and each college will implement a plan to ensure the complaint procedure is well-publicized to current and prospective students.
- B. The University and each college will furnish information on how to submit complaints to regulatory organizations and agencies external to the university.
- C. Documentation related to the formal complaint will be maintained for 10 years in accordance with South Carolina Retention Schedule.
- D. A log of formal written complaints including complaints related to academic performance (e.g., grades, dismissal, progression) and the process for resolution is submitted annually by the University and each college to the Associate Provost for Educational Affairs and Student Life.

The log includes the following information related to each complaint:

1. College
2. Academic Year
3. Date complaint was filed
4. Complainant's relationship to MUSC
5. Brief description of complaint

6. Brief description of resolution
7. Date resolution communicated to student
8. Date of appeal (if applicable)
9. Brief description of appeal outcome (if applicable)

E. The Associate Provost for Educational Affairs and Student Life will aggregate complaint data and review with the Education Advisory Committee annually.

VII. Related Information

[Student Complaint Procedure Memorandum](#)

[Student Complaint Form](#)

[Complaint Monitoring Log](#)

[Complaints related to university-wide services](#)

College-Specific Complaint Procedures

[Dental Medicine](#)

[Graduate Studies](#)

[Health Professions](#)

[College of Medicine](#)

[College of Nursing](#)

[College of Pharmacy](#)

[Code of Conduct violation](#)

[Confidential Hotline \(legal, regulatory, or policy compliance, or fraud, waste, or abuse\)](#)

[Faculty instructor - proficiency in spoken and written English](#)

[Gender equity or sexual harassment](#)

[Honor Code violation](#)

Mistreatment, but not sexual harassment

[Protections of an individual with a disability \(ADA\)](#)

[Release of and/or access to student education records \(FERPA\)](#)

[Research misconduct](#)

[Standard or requirement of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools \(SACS\)](#)

VIII. Communication Plan

The memorandum will be distributed electronically as an email attachment to the following individuals/offices:

- College Deans
- Associate Deans for Student Affairs

- Associate Deans for Education
- Chair, Department of Library Science and Informatics
- Vice President for Finance & Administration
- General Counsel
- University Offices which report to the Associate Provost for Educational Affairs and Student Life on-campus offices/units/programs to which students are directed for specific types of complaints. (A detailed listing is available on the MUSC Student Complaint Procedures website.) The memorandum will request a summary of student complaints for the calendar year. The summary will follow the same format as the Complaint Log required by each of the six colleges and the university.

The Associate Provost for Educational Affairs and Student Life will send an annual memorandum to other on-campus offices/units/programs to which students are directed for specific types of complaints. A detailed listing is available on the MUSC Student Complaint Procedures website. The memorandum will request a summary of student complaints for the academic (July 1-June 30) year. The summary will follow the same format as the Complaint Log required by each of the six colleges and the university.

IX. Definitions

Academic Performance Complaint

A complaint regarding a student's academic performance (e.g., grades, dismissal, progression) in a specific program or course. Complaints of this nature are not covered under this memorandum. The student is to follow the college's procedure in keeping with the information outlined in The Bulletin.

Complainant

A student or other individual (e.g., parent) who submits a complaint

Formal Complaint

A written allegation against the college and/or university; may also be called a grievance

Formal Complaint Form

The official MUSC form used to file a formal complaint

Formal Complaint Log

The official MUSC form documenting all formal complaints and submitted annually to the Associate Provost for Educational Affairs and Student Life

Informal Complaint

A complaint communicated verbally, in writing (e.g., email or text), or in a manner other than through the submission of the official MUSC formal complaint form

Student

An individual who is currently, formerly, or likely to be enrolled at MUSC; includes individuals who are enrolled in distance education programs University - Includes all units outside the colleges that provide services to students (Division of Education and Student Life, Library Services, and Finance and Administration, etc.)

X. [Review Cycle](#)

This memorandum will be reviewed every three years.

XI. [Approval History](#)

Original approval date and subsequent review dates:

Approval Authority	Date Approved

XII. [Approval Signature](#)

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Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Reference Link: