

General Student Complaint Policy and Procedures

Purpose

Prairie View A&M University is committed to providing an educational environment that promotes integrity and fairness in its relationships with students. To support this commitment, PVAMU ensures that the rights of students are appropriately recognized, protected, and addressed by the appropriate unit. If a student is not able to resolve an issue or complaint with an individual or department, or feels that they have been mistreated, they should submit a university complaint online via the [Student Complaint and Appeals Management System portal](#) located on the PVAMU homepage.

Procedures Statement

This policy establishes the procedures for students seeking a resolution or reporting a complaint about a university-related issue. The complaint procedures apply to full-time and part-time students, regardless of instructional modality (traditional face-to-face vs. distance learning).

Definitions

Complainant: a current PVAMU student who makes a complaint.

Complaint – a complaint is a student’s expression of dissatisfaction that their rights, existing interests, and/or reasonable expectations have been adversely and unjustifiably impacted because of an action, decision, or omission within the control or responsibility of the University.

Complaint Log - a confidential record of student complaints, which identifies the persons involved with individual complaints and the outcomes of the complaints.

Institutional Officer – the University staff member who is appointed to investigate the complaint.

Respondent: a person or entity about whom a complaint is made, which may include a student, a staff member, a unit of the University, the University, and/or a person or entity associated with the University.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all PVAMU students. Complaints that are covered by other applicable University policies are not covered in this document, such as:

- Complaints about sex discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation are handled following the Office of Title IX Compliance’s, *Civil Rights Compliance Policy*, and corresponding procedures.
- Complaints about discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation, not based on sex, are handled following the Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity’s *EEO Reporting Policy* and corresponding procedures.

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- Complaints related to the ADA/Section 504 accommodation process or related to the implementation of approved reasonable accommodations are handled following the Office of Disability Services', *Disability Grievance Policy*, and corresponding procedures.
- Complaints made by employees or members of the public concerning student conduct should follow the actions defined in the Office of Student Conduct's *Student Rights and Responsibilities* procedures document.

Procedures and Guidelines for Student Complaints

Complaint Resolution

Any student who believes that his/her rights as a student have been infringed upon should initiate a written formal Student Complaint with the Office of Academic Affairs within thirty (30) working days of the incident unless extenuating circumstances necessitate additional time.

Student complaints and appeals must be routed through the appropriate departments. Students should click on the links above to initiate a concern. To follow catalog policies, complaints may be routed to a specific department or academic unit for further review. Complaints and concerns should be promptly addressed, and in the absence of extenuating circumstances, a response should, within fifteen (15) business days. Moreover, the student shall be informed, along with the nature of the extenuating circumstance, if more than fifteen (15) days is required to investigate the complaint.

Complaint Log Information

Where relevant, each complaint received will be logged noting the following:

- a. Student name and Student ID number;
- b. The basis for the complaint;
- c. The name of the person (or University Unit) about whom the complaint is made;
- d. A description of the events that have occurred, including efforts made to resolve informally the complaint;
- e. The name and contact details of any witness or supporting party;
- f. The outcome the complainant seeks;
- g. Relevant documentary evidence should be referenced within the statement;
- h. e-signature and date of the student filing the complaint.

Steps in the Process

Step 1: When possible and as circumstances allow, students should make every effort to resolve complaints by working informally at the department or college level with the person(s) whose actions or inactions have caused dissatisfaction or that person's department supervisor.

Step 2: If step 1 is not successful in resolving the complaint, formal complaints may be submitted online via the [Student Complaint and Appeals Management System portal](#). Students filing a formal online complaint will receive a notice of receipt, via email.

Step 3: The Office of Academic Affairs will review all complaints and assign them to the appropriate institutional officer to investigate accordingly. All formal complaints will be resolved as soon as reasonably possible and usually within fifteen (15) business days from the date of receipt of the complaint. The University recognizes that complex issues involving

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multiple parties normally take longer to resolve to ensure a fair and equitable outcome is achieved. Should the investigation take longer than the recommended fifteen (15) business days, students will be kept informed as to the progress of their formal complaint and the steps being taken to resolve the complaint.

Step 4: If the complaint is not resolved in steps 1-3, the Provost, or his/her designee, will determine if any further actions are required from the University for a resolution to be made.

Communication of Decision and Closure of the Formal Complaint

Students and other parties involved in an investigation or internal review, such as employees or other students, will receive a notice of the decision of the formal complaint or internal review and the rationale underpinning the decision.

Upon resolution, the status of the formal complaint will be updated as 'resolved' by the relevant Institutional Officer.

Confidentiality

All student-related information will be considered confidential and protected under FERPA (Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act). Records relating to employees and other records that do not include student information are not confidential.

Rights and Responsibilities of Parties to a Student Complaint

Parties to a student complaint have the **right** to the following:

- be treated with courtesy at all times
- a fair and timely investigation process
- express their points of view without fear of recrimination
- receive full information at all stages of the complaint process
- be advised in writing of all decisions made about the complaint

Parties to a student complaint have a **responsibility** to the following:

- treat all parties with courtesy at all times
- respect the rights of all parties to the complaint concerning confidentiality
- provide full and accurate information to the person investigating the complaint
- not take any action that may prejudice the situation

Related Policies

A copy of all related policies and procedures may be obtained from the university website, the University Catalog, the appropriate office/department, or the Student Handbook.

Additional Information

If an issue cannot be resolved internally through the PVAMU complaint and appeal process, you may file a complaint with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board ("THECB") by sending

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the required complaint and other forms General Student Complaint Policy and Procedures either by electronic mail to studentcomplaints@theccb.state.tx.us, or by mail to THECB, Office of General Counsel, P.O. Box 12788, Austin, TX, 78711-2788. For more information about THECB's complaint process.

Prairie View A&M University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The SACSCOC website provides complaint procedures against the Commission and its accredited institutions. For more information about the SACSCOC complaint process, visit the [SACSCOC](#) website.

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