

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA

## Title: General Student Grievance (Complaint) Procedure

### I. PURPOSE

This procedure defines the process by which general grievances of University of Tennessee at Chattanooga ("UTC" or "University") students against the University or its faculty or staff may be reported and resolved. This procedure does not apply to student appeals, complaints, or grievances that are subject to one of the specific UTC grievance processes or procedures listed in **Appendix A** or other specific UTC grievance process or procedure.

### II. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Appropriate Administrator" refers to the University administrator responsible for making a determination regarding a student's grievance under this procedure.
- B. "Determination" refers to the Appropriate Administrator's resolution of a student's grievance under this procedure.
- C. "Faculty" refers to any University employee who holds faculty rank and whose primary appointment is to engage in academic instruction, research, or service.
- D. "Grievance" refers to any complaint or grievance not subject to one of the specific UTC grievance processes or procedures listed in Appendix A or other specific UTC grievance process or procedure.
- E. "Notice" is defined as receiving information directly from University employees, public safety officials, and/or medical professionals.
- F. "Office of the Dean of Students" refers to the University office designated with primary responsibility for the administration, safety, and welfare of University students.
- G. "Staff" refers to any full-time or part-time University employee not primarily engaged in academic instruction, research, or service, who holds either an exempt or non-exempt position with or without administrative, executive, or managerial responsibilities, excluding student employees of the University.
- H. "Student(s)" refers to a person who is admitted, enrolled or registered for study at the University, either full-time or part-time, pursuing undergraduate, graduate, professional, and/or non-degree courses; or has completed a preceding academic term at the University

and is eligible for re-enrollment without re-applying for admission and/or otherwise has a continuing relationship with the University.

### **III. PROCEDURE**

#### **A. Informal Resolution**

1. Whenever possible, students are encouraged to seek an informal resolution of their grievance directly with the faculty or staff member(s) involved, or with the appropriate supervisor of the University program or service.
2. If an informal resolution cannot be reached or is not desired, the student should utilize the formal resolution process.

#### **B. Formal Resolution**

1. Grievances are submitted to the Office of the Dean of Students by the student.
2. Grievances should be reduced to writing by the student utilizing the electronic form ([www.utc.edu/complaintform](http://www.utc.edu/complaintform)) or other written means.
3. Grievances must contain:
  - a. Name(s) of the faculty or staff member(s), or the University program or service that are the subject of the grievance.
  - b. Name(s) of other individuals involved.
  - c. Date of the incident (if applicable).
  - d. Time of the incident (if applicable).
  - e. Description of the grievance.
  - f. Description of any efforts the student has made to resolve the matter.
  - g. Description of the desired resolution.
  - h. Any documentation related to the grievance.
4. The Office of the Dean of Students will review the submitted grievance. If additional clarification, documentation, or investigation is needed, the Office of the Dean of Students will serve as the information gatherer and/or investigator.
5. The Office of the Dean of Students will send notice of the grievance to the Appropriate Administrator for review and resolution.
6. The Appropriate Administrator shall review the grievance and make a determination as to the appropriate resolution of the grievance.

7. The Appropriate Administrator shall submit their determination to the Office of the Dean of students within ten (10) business days of receipt of notice of the grievance. If there are circumstances requiring additional time to make a determination, the Appropriate Administrator shall notify the Office of the Dean of Students.
8. The Office of the Dean of Students will send a summary of the determination to the student, with copy to the Appropriate Administrator.

#### **A. Appeal of Determination**

1. If the student is not satisfied with the determination by the Appropriate Administrator, the student may appeal the determination through each succeeding administrative level.
2. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Office of the Dean of Students within five (5) business days of receiving the summary of the determination.
3. The administrator at each succeeding level of review shall review the grievance, the determination, and letter of appeal, and shall submit their decision to the Office of the Dean of Students within ten (10) business days of notice.
4. The Office of the Dean of Students will send a summary of the decision to the student, with a copy to the Appropriate Administrator.
5. The final level of review shall be the appropriate Vice Chancellor (or the Chancellor, if the determination on appeal was made by a Vice Chancellor). The Vice Chancellor (or Chancellor's) decision shall be final and not subject to appeal.

#### **B. Other General Student Grievance Processes**

1. Complaints regarding any University of Tennessee institution not resolved at the campus level may be directed to the **University of Tennessee, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success**.  
The University of Tennessee  
Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success  
821 Andy Holt Tower  
Knoxville, TN 37996  
[utvpacademicaffairs@tennessee.edu](mailto:utvpacademicaffairs@tennessee.edu)  
<https://aass.tennessee.edu/student-grievances/>
2. Complaints may also be reported to any agency that offers accreditation to the University, including:
  - a. **Southern Association of Colleges and Schools - Commission on Colleges**

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commission on Colleges  
1866 Southern Lane  
Decatur, GA 30033  
404-679-4500

- b. Tennessee Higher Education Commission**  
Tennessee Higher Education Commission  
404 James Robertson Parkway Suite 1900  
Nashville, TN 37243  
615-741-3605

## **IV. RECORDS**

### **A. Maintenance**

1. Grievance records are maintained by the Office of the Dean of Students. Grievance records are not maintained as part of a student's academic record.

### **B. Disclosure**

1. A student may inspect and review their submitted grievance(s) and resolution(s) upon request of the Office of the Dean of Students.
2. A faculty or staff member may inspect or review any grievance(s) or resolution(s) in which they are grieved against upon request to the Office of the Dean of Students.
3. A supervisor of a program or service may inspect and review any grievances related to that program or service upon request to the Office of the Dean of students.
4. Grievances concerning faculty or staff may also be disclosed to that individual's supervisor, the Office of Human Resources, Office of Equity and Inclusion, or other University or System official for employment or investigation purposes upon request to the Office of the Dean of Students.

### **C. Retention**

1. The University will retain grievance records for a period of seven (7) years from the date of submission of the grievance by the student unless required to retain the records for a longer period of time by law or University policy.

## **V. HISTORY AND REVIEW**

### **A. Version**

This is the second version of this procedure.

**B. Periodic Review**

This procedure is effective January 1, 2021. This procedure shall be reviewed on or before August 1, 2025.

Authorization

REVIEWED BY:

*Gousef Hamadeh*  
Office of General Counsel

12/17/20  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Policy Review Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chancellor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Appendix A: Specific UTC Complaint/Grievance Processes and Procedures**

- Academic Forgiveness
- Academic Suspension/Dismissal Appeal
- ADA Complaints
- Admissions Appeals
- Discrimination Complaints
- Financial Aid Appeals
- Food Service Requirement Waiver
- Grade Appeal
- Graduate School appeals
- Housing Contract Cancellation
- Honor Code (Academic Integrity) Violations
- Request for Release from Contract
- Housing Residency Exception
- Petitions
- General Education Petition
- Undergraduate Petitions
- Residency Appeals
- Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Sexual Harassment Complaints / Resources
- Scholarship Appeal
- Student Conduct Violations
- TELS (HOPE Scholarship) Appeal
- Transfer Course Classification
- University General Refund Policy