

## **Vaughn College Student Grievance Procedure**

Vaughn College Students are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, and in return they should expect College faculty and staff members to treat them with the honesty, fairness, and respect that characterize an academic community. When student grievances concerning faculty, staff, or college departments arise, the college takes them seriously and treats them with sensitivity and urgency.

In many cases, the best way for a student to resolve a grievance is to approach the parties directly involved in the situation and attempt to reach a resolution informally. If speaking with the parties directly involved does not resolve the conflict, the student may wish to meet with the chair of the relevant academic department. The student may also consult informally with the Dean of Students who can offer impartial advice and suggest steps to resolve the issue.

If an attempt to resolve a grievance informally proves unsuccessful, a student may file a formal grievance. This procedure applies to formal grievances where a student alleges that a faculty member, staff member, or college department has violated a college policy or practice that directly and adversely affects the student.

This procedure does not apply to financial appeals, academic appeals, or allegations of sexual or gender-based misconduct, which have their own, separate grievance procedures.

For financial appeals, please see the College Catalog [here](#).

For academic appeals, please see the College Catalog [here](#).

For allegations of sexual or gender-based misconduct, please see the sexual and gender-based misconduct policy [here](#).

### **How to File a Grievance**

Grievances must be in writing and should include the following information:

- Full name, SONIS identification number, email and phone number of the grievant
- Name and title of individual or department against whom the grievance has been filed
- A detailed statement identifying the policy or practice that the student believes was violated and the factual basis for that belief, including the location, date, and time of the incident giving rise to the grievance
- A list of witnesses with personal knowledge of the alleged violation
- A summary of the steps taken by the student to resolve the concern
- An expected outcome of the grievance
- Any supporting documentation

## **Where to File**

Online: <https://www.vaughn.edu/student-grievance-procedure/>.

Via email to the Dean of Students: [elaine.white@vaughn.edu](mailto:elaine.white@vaughn.edu)

Hand delivered to the Dean of Student's office, located in the main building.

## **When to File**

The grievance should be filed as soon as possible after the incident being grieved and no later than 10 business days after incident or the student's last attempt to resolve the matter informally.

## **Investigation and Decision**

The Dean of Students or her/his designee<sup>1</sup> will investigate each grievance filed, and the grievant will be typically be notified of the outcome of the investigation within 60 calendar days of the filing. Where extenuating circumstances require more time for investigation, the Dean of Students will inform the student of this within the initial 60 calendar day period.

The Dean of Students or his/her designee will gather information from the grievant, the individual(s) against whom the grievance was filed, and all relevant witnesses and then issue a written decision. The written decision will outline the findings of the investigation and provide reasons for each finding.

When an allegation of a policy violation is found to have merit, the investigation decision will be forwarded to the appropriate college department which will take steps to address the violation. Where an investigation shows evidence of discrimination, the college will take steps to prevent recurrence of the discrimination and to correct discriminatory effects on the grievant and others.

Vaughn College cannot ensure total confidentiality in its investigation of grievances filed under this procedure. However, the college makes every reasonable effort to conduct investigations and related proceedings in a manner that respects the privacy of all parties. In each situation, information is only shared with those who need to know about it in order to investigate and resolve the problem. All participants in an investigation will be advised that they should keep the grievance and the investigation confidential.

## **Right of Appeal**

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<sup>1</sup> Where a grievance alleges discrimination based on disability, the designee shall be the College's Americans with Disabilities (ADA)/Section 504 Coordinator.

A student will have 10 business days following the issuance of a grievance decision to file an appeal. All appeals must be submitted in writing, to the Dean of Students and will be forwarded to the appropriate Associate Vice President<sup>2</sup> or Vice President for consideration. Failure to submit an appeal by the appropriate deadline will render the decision final and conclude the grievance process.

Appeals may be made on the following grounds:

**Unsupported Findings:** The findings made by the Dean of Students or her/his designee are not supported by the reasons offered in the written decision.

**New Information:** There is new information available that wasn't available at the time the grievance was originally filed and that is sufficient to alter the original decision.

### **Retaliation Prohibited**

Vaughn College strictly prohibits retaliation against students who file complaints under the grievance procedure or participate in the investigation of any such complaints. Individuals who believe they are experiencing retaliation are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students.

### **Record Retention**

The Dean of Students office will retain written grievance decisions for six years.

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<sup>2</sup> Appeals of grievances alleging disability discrimination shall be heard by the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.