

## **Non-Academic Student Grievance Policy**

### **PURPOSE**

Niagara University is committed to ensuring that all members of the University community demonstrate respect, fairness, and kindness in their interactions with one another to build and sustain healthy relationships that are free from harassment and discrimination. This policy provides opportunity for students and alumni to raise concerns through an official grievance process and to ensure that these concerns will be dealt with in a just and fair manner.

### **SCOPE**

Students may file grievances regarding:

- Misapplication or misinterpretation of university policies, standards, regulations, or procedures
- Violations of municipal, provincial, or federal law

Students needing further guidance as to what constitutes basis for a grievance should contact [Student Services](#).

### **Exclusions**

This policy does not apply to:

- Academic integrity issues or grade appeals
- Student Code of Conduct matters
- Claims based on purchases or contracts
- Claims against university employees unrelated to their job duties

### **Groups of Students with Complaints**

Should a group of students wish to complain about a shared grievance, the group of students must meet with the Manager of Student Services and follow the same steps for individual grievance. However, at any point a student may enter his or her own grievance, starting at Step 1.

### **Oversight of the Student Grievance Policy**

If any situation occurs that is not covered in the procedure of this policy, the Campus Dean and Principal will issue guidance consistent with the overall fair and respectful spirit of the policy. This decision regarding the procedure to be followed will be final.

### **Revision of this Policy**

Any revision of this policy must be approved by the Campus Dean and Principal, consulting as needed with student leadership, the Policies and Procedures Review Committee and Senior Administration.

### **MAIN PROVISIONS**

Niagara University is committed to respect and fairness. The following steps are set out to ensure clear, prompt, and fair procedure for resolving student concerns under the purview of this policy in a fair and just manner.

The procedures outlined below are to be followed by students enrolled at Niagara University (referred to as the 'grievant') when filing a grievance. To be eligible to file a grievance under this policy, the grievant must have experienced an incident that falls within the scope of offenses defined in the policy.

## **Grievant Rights During the Process**

Students have the right to:

- Make both written and oral submissions throughout the formal grievance process
- Have a support person present during all stages of the proceedings
- Have this support person make submissions on their behalf
- Receive written documentation of decisions
- Appeal decisions through the specified process

This Policy does not prohibit a grievant from also filing claims in other forums to the extent permitted by national, provincial, or local law or by applicable accrediting agencies.

## **Informal Resolution**

Before a grievance can proceed to the formal resolution process, the grievant must have discussed the concern with the person he or she alleges to have caused the grievance (referred to as the 'respondent') to resolve the concern. This requirement may be waived if the grievant has a reasonable basis for believing, as determined at the discretion of the Manager of Student Services, that engaging in such a discussion may result in physical injury, severe emotional distress, retaliation, or discrimination.

Where the respondent does not respond to the grievant's attempts at discussion, or where an equitable solution cannot be found, the case will proceed through the formal resolution process outlined below.

## **Formal Resolution**

Where an informal resolution was not successful, the complainant must file a written request for review with the Manager of Student Services.

The request must:

- Provide the names of all respondents;
- State the law or university policy, standard, procedure, etc. that has allegedly been misapplied or misinterpreted;
- State how the decision or action was unfair and/or harmful to the grievant
- State how the respondents are responsible for the action or decision; and
- State the requested remedy.

The Manager of Student Services will review the request.

## **Dismissal of Grievance Submissions**

If a grievance is untimely, outside the Policy's scope, or filed by an unauthorized individual, the Dean of Students will dismiss it and notify the grievant in writing

## **Acceptance of Grievance Submissions**

If the grievance submission is accepted, the Manager of Student Services will review the information provided, gather any additional information required, and formulate a decision within 15 business days of receipt of the request.

If the respondent is the Manager of Student Services, the Campus Dean and Principal will designate another University administrator to issue the decision. Once a decision is reached, it will be officially documented by the University, and both the grievant and respondent(s) will be notified in writing.

## Final Appeal

If the resolution provided by the Manager of Student Services or the designated University administrator is not satisfactory to the grievant or respondent, that person may file a request for reconsideration via a final appeal. These requests must be submitted in writing to the Campus Dean and Principal within 5 business days of receipt of the original decision.

The Campus Dean and Principal will review the information provided concerning the grievance, the request for reconsideration, and details regarding the grievant's desired remedy. The Campus Dean and Principal will issue a final decision within 15 business days of receiving the request for reconsideration. The decision of the Campus Dean and Principal may include one of the following options:

- A determination that the complaint was valid;
- A determination that the complaint was not valid; or
- A modification of the remedy proposed by the Manager of Student Services.

The Campus Dean and Principal will forward his or her decision to the grievant, respondent and the Manager of Student Services. The decision of the Campus Dean and Principal is final and cannot be appealed.

Note: If the Campus Dean and Principal is the subject of the grievance, the Dean of Student Engagement and Belonging will designate another University administrator to determine the final appeal. The appointed administrator's decision is final.

## TIMELINE

Business Days	Action
∞	Formal grievances may be filed at any time after the date of the incident. The Manager of Student Services may extend this time limit at their discretion if good cause is shown.
15	The Manager of Student Services will make an initial decision within 15 business days
5	Appeals must be filed within 5 business days of receiving the initial decision and will be sent to the Campus Dean and Principal for review.
15	Final appeal decisions will be made by the Campus Dean and Principal or another designated administrator within 15 business days

The Maximum total time for resolution: **35 days**

## PROCEDURE

The Grievance Tracking Form documents the steps of the grievance process. It is designed to ensure that the specified timelines of the grievance process have been adhered to and to provide information for future statistical data.

This form will be completed by the Manager of Student Services. Following resolution of the grievance, the form is filed in the office of the Campus Dean and Principal.

## Grievance Tracking

At the end of each academic year, the Manager of Student Services will review the grievances filed through his or her office and provide a written report of his or her findings to the Campus

Dean and Principal, who in turn will create a report that will be presented to the Academic Senate at one of the fall meetings of the next academic year.

**Appendix**

**Grievance Tracking Form**

<b>Grievance Tracking Form</b>		
<b>Grievance</b>		
<b>Name of Student</b>		
<b>Name of Staff / Student</b>		
<b>Name of Ombudsman</b>		
		<b>Notes on Resolution / Next steps</b>
<b>Date Ombudsman Appointed</b>		
<b>Statement and Explanation of the Grievance</b>		
Date of Informal Meeting		
Date of Step 1		
Date of Step 2		
Date of Step 3		
Date of Step 4		
Date of Step 5		
Date of Step 6		