



PHOENICIA UNIVERSITY

Grievance Policy and Procedure

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Grievance Policy and Procedure

I. Overview

Phoenicia University (PU) is committed to fostering a respectful, fair, and supportive environment for all members of its community, including faculty, staff, and students. The University recognizes that grievances may arise and is dedicated to ensuring that such matters are addressed through a fair, transparent, and accessible process.

The purpose of this policy is to provide an impartial and structured framework for resolving grievances related to employment and non-academic matters in a manner that upholds the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved.

II. Scope of Policy

This policy and its associated procedures apply to all members of PU community, including faculty, staff, and students, whether employed, enrolled, or otherwise engaged in University activities.

The policy covers grievances arising from, but not limited to, issues such as discrimination, harassment, inequitable treatment, or any action, decision, or behavior that adversely affects the work, academic, or campus experience of a member of the University community.

III. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- **Grievance:** a formal or informal expression of dissatisfaction by a member of the University community regarding an act, decision, or omission believed to violate this policy, another University policy, or established standards of conduct, and which directly and adversely affects the person raising it.
- **Grievant:** the individual who initiates a grievance under this policy.
- **Respondent:** the individual, office, or unit against whom a grievance is filed.
- **Calendar Day:** every day of the year, including weekends and University holidays. Unless otherwise specified, all time periods referenced in this policy are measured in calendar days.

IV. Policy Statement

PU is committed to ensuring that all members of its community — including faculty, staff, and students — have access to a fair, transparent, and efficient process for submitting and resolving grievances arising from violations or non-compliance with established University policies, procedures, or standards of conduct.

V. General Provisions

A formal grievance must be submitted within 15 calendar days from the date on which the issue, action, or decision giving rise to the grievance occurred or became known to the grievant. The individual submitting the grievance must be personally affected by the matter and may not file on behalf of another individual or group.

Concerns regarding the general fairness or advisability of University-wide policies do not constitute valid grounds for a grievance. Similarly, isolated instances of discourteous or disrespectful behavior do not, in themselves, warrant a grievance unless they represent a serious or repeated pattern of conduct that may amount to abuse of authority or harassment.

The primary purpose of the grievance process is to promote the fair and constructive resolution of disputes through procedures that are impartial, consistent, and aimed at achieving outcomes acceptable to all parties involved.

The use of the grievance process shall not, under any circumstances, adversely affect the academic standing, employment status, or reputation of any individual involved in good faith. PU strictly prohibits retaliation or threats of retaliation against any person who files a grievance, assists in the filing process, or participates in an investigation or resolution process.

Failure to cooperate in a grievance investigation or the provision of false or misleading information may result in disciplinary action in accordance with university policies.

Any individual appointed to serve on a grievance committee or panel under this policy who has a personal, professional, or financial relationship with a party to the grievance, or who otherwise cannot render an impartial judgment, shall promptly disclose the conflict and recuse themselves from the matter. Where a member recuses or is otherwise unavailable, the relevant University office shall appoint a qualified alternate consistent with the composition requirements set out for that committee.

Where a grievance concerns the conduct of the senior administrative staff, the written complaint shall be submitted directly to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or such other body as the Board may designate, who shall determine an appropriate impartial process for investigation and resolution consistent with the principles set out in this policy.

Where warranted by the nature of the allegations, particularly in matters involving harassment, discrimination, or safety concerns, the relevant University office may implement reasonable interim measures pending the outcome of the grievance process, including modified reporting lines, temporary reassignment, or no-contact directives. Interim measures are protective, not disciplinary, in nature and shall not be construed as a determination of responsibility.

VI. Procedure for Student Filing Grievance

1. Informal Grievance:

Students wishing to grieve an alleged violation of the University's policies regarding non-academic matters shall, within 15 calendar days of any occurrence giving rise to the grievance, first contact the person responsible for the matter being grieved (the respondent) and attempt to resolve the grievance informally. Students who require assistance in identifying or contacting the person responsible may consult the Student Affairs Office. If a resolution is reached informally, it shall be documented in writing. The documentation shall include both the underlying allegation(s) and the terms of the agreed upon

resolution.

Students have the option to submit any grievances by completing the complaints form and depositing it into one of the designated complaint boxes on campus. Submitted complaints will be handled formally and in a confidential manner.

2. Formal Grievance:

If the informal grievance procedure does not yield a satisfactory resolution within 15 calendar days after the student contacted the person responsible, or in cases of urgent incidents, the student may submit a formal grievance to the Student Affairs Office (In the event that the complaint is against the Student Affairs Office, the written complaint should go directly to the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office (QAA)). The student who wishes to resolve the grievance policy must submit a written complaint to the Student Affairs Office within 45 calendar days of the incident.

The written complaint should include the following:

- Statement of the allegation
- Description of the alleged facts
- Summary of steps the student already has taken in attempt to resolve the problem
- Name/s of the person/s thought to be responsible for the alleged events
- Other facts considered to be pertinent to the case
- Any relevant supporting documents
- Signature of the person initiating the complaint

3. Non-Academic Grievance Committee Investigation

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Non-Academic Grievance Committee shall investigate the complaint and provide a written response within 30 calendar days. If the investigation cannot be completed within 30 calendar days, the student will be informed of the status and provided with an estimated timeframe for completion.

The Non-Academic Grievance Committee comprises of three permanent members and one student representative:

- The Supervisor of the Student Affairs Office
- The Director of the Office of the Registrar
- Legal Advisor
- Student Representative (A student filing a grievance may request to proceed without one)

This investigation shall include but need not be limited to:

- Meeting/s with the person aggrieved and the person/s (or representatives of the department or program) grieved against.

- Consultation with such others as the Non-Academic Grievance Committee deems necessary to provide a thorough investigation of the grievance.
- Requiring additional documents.

The Committee shall not consider any matters not included in the written complaint.

4. Outcome

Based on the investigations, the committee shall take any actions that it deems appropriate including:

- Dismissing the complaint without further proceedings if it determines that there would be no violation of the University policy.
- Upholding the complaint and imposing appropriate and proportional disciplinary actions against offenders as deemed necessary.

Some examples of disciplinary actions that can be imposed against the offender may include:

- Verbal Warning
- Written Warning
- Probation
- Suspension
- Expulsion

The student who submitted the complaint will be notified by email of the outcome of the investigation.

VII. Procedure of Staff Filing Grievance

1. Informal Grievance

A staff member wishing to grieve an alleged violation relating to their employment should, within 15 calendar days of any occurrence giving rise to the grievance, first contact their direct manager and may request to speak to someone in the Human Resources Department. If the grievance is against the direct manager, the employee shall raise the issue directly with the Human Resources Department.

2. Formal Grievance

If the informal grievance procedure does not yield a satisfactory resolution within 15 calendar days after the staff member has contacted the direct manager and the Human Resources Department, or in cases of urgent incidents, the staff member may submit a formal grievance to the Human Resources Department (In the event that the complaint is against the Human Resources Department, the written complaint should go directly to the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office (QAA). The staff member who wishes to resolve a grievance must submit a written complaint to the office of the Human Resources Department within 45 calendar days of the incident.

The written complaint should include the following:

- Statement of the allegation
- Description of the alleged facts
- Summary of steps the staff member already has taken in attempt to resolve the problem
- Name/s of the person/s thought to be responsible for the alleged events
- Other facts considered to be pertinent to the case
- Any relevant supporting documents
- Signature of the person initiating the complaint

3. Staff Grievance Committee Investigation

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Staff Grievance Committee shall investigate the complaint and provide a written response within 30 calendar days from the date the complaint was lodged. The Staff Grievance Committee shall not consider any matters not included in the written complaint. If the investigation cannot be completed within 30 calendar days, the complainer will be informed of the status and will be provided with an estimated timeframe for completion.

The Staff Grievance Committee comprises of three members:

- HR Director
- Legal Advisor
- Director of an administrative unit uninvolved in the dispute

This investigation shall include but needs not be limited to:

- Reviewing all materials and request documents.
- Meeting/s with the person aggrieved and the person/s (or representatives of the department or program) grieved against.
- Consultation with the Human Resources Department deems necessary to provide a thorough investigation of the grievance.
- Requiring additional documents.
- Submit findings and recommendations to the Chancellor within 30 calendar days (or extended with justification)
- Chancellor makes final, binding decision

The Committee shall not consider any matters not included in the written complaint.

4. Outcome

After completing the investigations, the Chancellor shall make a determination about the validity of the complaint and shall take any actions that it deems appropriate including:

- Dismissing the complaint without further proceedings if it determines that there would be no

violation of University policy.

- Upholding the complaint and imposing appropriate and proportional disciplinary actions against offenders as deemed necessary.

Some examples of disciplinary actions that can be imposed against the offender may include:

- Verbal Warning
- Written Warning
- Suspension
- Expulsion

The staff member who submitted the grievance will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

VIII. Procedure for Faculty Filing Grievance

1. Informal Grievance:

A faculty member wishing to grieve an alleged violation relating to their employment or academic responsibilities should, within 15 calendar days of any occurrence giving rise to the grievance, first contact the faculty member, department chair, or other person responsible for the matter being grieved and attempt to resolve the grievance informally. Faculty members may request guidance or assistance from the Human Resources Department or the Dean of Faculty.

If a resolution is reached informally, it shall be documented in writing, including both the underlying allegation(s) and the terms of the agreed-upon resolution.

2. Formal Grievance:

If the informal grievance procedure does not yield a satisfactory resolution within 15 calendar days after the faculty member contacted the responsible party, or in cases of urgent incidents, the faculty member may submit a formal grievance.

The faculty member must submit the written grievance within 45 calendar days of the incident. The written complaint should include the following:

- Statement of the allegation
- Description of the alleged facts
- Summary of steps already taken in an attempt to resolve the problem
- Name(s) of the person(s) thought to be responsible for the alleged events
- Other facts considered to be pertinent to the case
- Any relevant supporting documents
- Signature of the person initiating the complaint

3. Faculty Grievance Panel Investigation:

Upon receipt of the formal grievance, the Faculty Grievance Panel shall investigate and provide a

recommendation to the University President within 30 calendar days. If the investigation cannot be completed within this timeframe, the faculty member will be informed of the status and provided with an estimated completion date.

Panel Composition:

- Legal Advisor
- Academic Dean from an uninvolved faculty
- Two faculty members of equal or higher rank than the grievant (from separate faculties; one involved, one uninvolved)

As set out under Outcome below, the President reviews the Panel's recommendation independently and renders the final, binding decision.

The Panel may conduct:

- Review of all submitted materials and relevant documents
- Meetings with the faculty member filing the grievance and the person(s) grieved against
- Consultation with other parties as deemed necessary to ensure a thorough investigation
- Request additional documentation as needed

The Panel shall not consider any matters not included in the written complaint.

4. Outcome

Based on the investigation, the Faculty Grievance Panel shall issue a written recommendation to the University President. The President, shall independently review the record and render the final, binding decision, and may:

- Dismiss the grievance if no violation of University policy is found
- Uphold the grievance and impose appropriate and proportional disciplinary actions against offenders

Examples of possible disciplinary actions:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Probation
- Suspension
- Termination (if applicable under faculty contract)

The faculty member who submitted the grievance will be informed of the outcome.

IX. Appeal of Grievance Decisions

1. Right to Appeal

The grievant has the right to appeal a grievance decision if they believe that:

- a. A material procedural error occurred that affected the outcome of the grievance;

- b. New, substantive evidence has become available that was not reasonably accessible during the original review; or
- c. The decision rendered was arbitrary, disproportionate, or inconsistent with University policy.

2. Eligibility to Appeal

Only the individual who filed the grievance (the grievant) may submit an appeal. In cases involving harassment, discrimination, or misconduct where both a complainant and a respondent are identified, each party shall be granted the same right of appeal.

3. Filing an Appeal

- a. An appeal must be submitted in writing within 10 calendar days from the date on which the grievance decision was communicated to the grievant.
- b. The written appeal shall clearly state the grounds for appeal and include any relevant supporting documentation.
- c. Appeals submitted after the prescribed deadline shall not be considered unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated and accepted by the reviewing authority.

4. Review of Appeal

- a. Appeals shall be reviewed by the Appeals Committee.

The Appeals Committee shall be composed of individuals who were not involved in the original grievance investigation or decision, so as to ensure an independent review.

- b. The reviewing authority shall examine only whether the grounds for appeal, as outlined above, are met. The appeal does not constitute a re-hearing of the original grievance.

5. Outcome of Appeal

- a. The reviewing authority may uphold, modify, or overturn the original decision.
- b. The decision reached on appeal shall be final and binding. No further appeal or review within the University shall be permitted.

6. Notification of Decision

The grievant shall be notified in writing of the appeal outcome within a reasonable period, normally not exceeding 30 calendar days from the date of submission, unless additional time is required due to the complexity of the case.

X. Confidentiality

All parties involved in the grievance process are expected to maintain confidentiality to the greatest extent possible. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if it limits the University's ability to conduct a thorough investigation or if disclosure is required by law.

XI. Retaliation

Retaliation against any individual who files a grievance, participates in the grievance process, or assists in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Any act of retaliation will result in disciplinary action in accordance with University policies.

XII. Record Keeping

The relevant University office handling the grievance (e.g., Student Affairs for students, Human

Resources for staff and faculty) shall retain a copy of the grievance, any amendments, and the final decision of the Grievance Committee, in accordance with University record-keeping procedures. Records shall be retained for a minimum of 3 years from the date of final resolution, in accordance with the University's Records Retention Schedule and applicable law.

XIII. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with other applicable University policies, including but not limited to the Student Code of Conduct, the Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy, and the Academic Integrity Policy. Where a matter is also governed by a more specific policy, the more specific policy shall govern as to the issues it addresses.



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