

Student Complaint Policy and Log

Revised and Adopted June, 2012; Updated and Approved December, 2013

Student Complaint Policy

The College provides the right to a fair hearing for each student complaint arising during his/her time as a student at St. Augustine College.

Complaints. This procedure is designed to address complaints regarding any department or service, including, but not limited to:

- Dissatisfaction expressed by a student because he/she believes that a policy, procedure or practice has occurred that adversely affects the student.
- Allegations of discrimination by reason of race, sex, national origin, disability, religion or other areas covered by federal or state laws, guidelines and regulations, and College policies and procedures.

St. Augustine provides published policies in the College catalog on **Grade Appeals**, which is a separate procedure. **Grade Appeals** are **not** considered as complaints that are to be included in the log of student complaints.

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

It is recommended that, when possible and as circumstances allow, a student first make an informal or verbal complaint to the institutional officer who is responsible for the area to which the complaint is directed. If, however, an informal complaint is not satisfactorily resolved or is inappropriate, a student may submit a formal written complaint through the Office of Academic Advising at any location.

The form for the filing of a formal written Student Complaint is available at the Office of Academic Advising at any location, or may be printed from the St. Augustine website at www.staugustine.edu, under the Student Services tab. The written Student Complaint must be returned to the Office of Academic Advising, again at any St. Augustine location, to be received and recorded in the receipt book. A copy will be provided to the student upon receipt, with the signature of the person in the Office of Academic Advising who has accepted the complaint.

A written complaint filed with the Office of Academic Advising must contain the following information (see the form attached to this policy):

- a. Student name and Student ID number;
- b. Description and date of the problem or concern;
- c. Names of persons, department or policy responsible for the complaint (if known);
- d. Description of any actions taken informally to resolve the problem or concern;
- e. Recommendation as to what could be possible resolution(s) of the complaint;
- f. Any background information believed to be relevant;
- g. Signature and date of the student filing the complaint.

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

The student filing the complaint will be informed of the action taken or progress accomplished within thirty (30) working days of the filing date of the complaint, unless extenuating circumstances necessitate additional time. Moreover, the student shall be informed, along with the nature of the extenuating circumstance, if more than fifteen (30) days is required.

Formal Office of Academic Advising Student Complaint Process:

The process that is followed by the Office of Academic Advising in responding to a student complaint specifically has six steps:

Step #1: The Student completes the “Written Student Complaint Form,” which is included with this policy, and submits the written complaint to the Office of Academic Advising at any location.

The Office of Academic Advising representative will immediately:

- a. Return a signed and dated copy of the complaint to the student;
- b. Record receipt of the complaint in the paper log book , noting all appropriate details; and
- c. Submit the original written complaint to the Associate Dean of Student Services.

Step #2: The Associate Dean of Student Services will:

- a. Create a folder in the electronic complaint log,
- b. Respond to the student in writing at the student’s St. Augustine e-mail address to acknowledge the complaint has been received and logged;
- c. Collect all pertinent information;
- d. Direct the complaint to the institutional officer who is responsible for the area in which the complaint is made, and convene all parties involved, as appropriate.

An “institutional officer” may be anyone in the position of director or above at any St. Augustine campus or site.

Step #3: The institutional officer to whom the student complaint has been referred is expected to respond within 20 working days to the Associate Dean of Student Services regarding the recommended action or explanation as appropriate.

Step #4: The Associate Dean of Student Services will:

- a. Collect copies of all communication and other supporting documents for inclusion in the complaint file;
- b. Document any other external actions initiated by the student to resolve the complaint, if known to St. Augustine (e.g. lawsuit, EEOC investigation, etc.);
- c. Document in the electronic file all steps taken to resolve the complaint;
- d. Present the recommended resolution to the complaint to the Dean of Academic and Student Affairs for review and approval.

Step #5: The Associate Dean of Student Services is responsible for then informing the student, again at the student’s St. Augustine e-mail address, of the recommended resolution, action or explanation regarding the formal written complaint.

Step #6: If the complaint is not resolved to the student’s satisfaction, the student may first submit an appeal to the President; it would be the President’s prerogative to either involve the Cabinet in the

appeal process or to decide by himself on the merit of the request. There is a timeframe of 30 days for the President to formally respond the appeal; his decision is final.

Any student who has completed the full complaint resolution process, but believes that the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, has the right to contact The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association at www.ncahlc.org and/or the higher education regulatory agency in his or her home state. Illinois residents may contact the Illinois Board of Higher Education at www.ibhe.state.il.us. Indiana residents may contact the Indiana Board of Proprietary Education at www.in.gov/bpe.

Retaliation Any retaliatory action taken by a member of St. Augustine College (student or employee) against any student or employee of the College as a result of a student seeking a resolution of a written complaint under this policy, or cooperating in an investigation, is prohibited and shall be regarded as a separate and distinct matter under these procedures.

Student Complaint Log The information in the electronic log of student complaints, which is maintained by the Office of Academic Advising, includes the following confidential information on each complaint:

1. Date the complaint was submitted;
2. Nature of the complaint;
3. Steps taken to resolve the complaint, and all documentation associated with those steps;
4. Date and the final resolution, action or explanation regarding the complaint, including referral to outside agencies; and
5. Any other external actions initiated by the student to resolve the complaint, if known by St. Augustine (e.g. lawsuit, EEOC investigation, etc.)

Information on all student complaints may be made available for outside review by the Department of Education, the Higher Learning Commission and any other official legally entitled to such review; however, steps will be taken to insure the anonymity of any student who files a complaint.

The purpose of an outside review can include but is not limited to:

1. Establish that St. Augustine processes complaints in a timely manner
2. Demonstrate fairness and attention to student concerns, and
3. Identify any pattern in the complaints that suggests problems with institutional quality.

**St. Augustine College
Written Student Complaint Form**

Instructions: Please complete Part A1-6 of this form in your own words, and submit it to an Academic Advisor in person at any St. Augustine campus. Be sure to receive a copy of this complaint, signed by the Academic Officer who accepted this written complaint before leaving the office.

Part A1: Student Information:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

SAC ID number: _____

Please note that St. Augustine College, for the protection of the confidentiality of the student and of the College, will relay all communications regarding this complaint to the student's St. Augustine College assigned e-mail address only.

Part A2: Briefly describe the problem or concern in terms of what happened, person(s) involved, when and where it occurred. Please attach a copy of any additional information that may be pertinent to the complaint:

Part A3: Briefly describe what you did informally to resolve the problem, if anything, before filing this formal, written complaint. And why was your informal attempt at resolution not successful:

Part A4: What is your best recommendation as to the resolution that you prefer St. Augustine to take to resolve this complaint?

Part A5: Student signature: The information that I have reported above is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge and will be treated as confidential.

Signature of Student _____

Date: _____

Part A6: Office of Academic Advising acknowledgement: Signature of the Academic Advisor who received this written complaint and accepts responsibility for assuring the complaint is logged and forwarded to the Assistant Dean for Advising.

Signature of Academic Advisor _____ **Date:** _____

Complaint Log Number _____ **COPY TO STUDENT AFTER SIGNATURE!**

Part B1: Analysis by the Associate Dean for Student Services of the actions/discussions needed to resolve the complaint: What steps/actions need to be taken in order to resolve this complaint, including identification of those St. Augustine personnel who need to be involved in the resolution.

Part B2: Recommended resolution of the written complaint by the Office of Academic Advising: Please document here the steps/actions taken in order to resolve the Student Complaint, including identification of those St. Augustine personnel involved in the resolution.

Additional notes on any special circumstances or explanations:

Part B3: FORWARD COMPLAINT, RECOMMENDATION AND ALL BACKUP DOCUMENTATION TO THE DEAN OF ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS

Date: _____

Part B4: Dean – Approve and Acknowledge resolution of the complaint, with an attached copy of the communication sent to the student explaining the resolution put in place.

Signature _____ Date: _____
Dean of Academic and Student Affairs