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* POLICY NAME:	General Student Complaint Procedure
* POLICY TYPE:	Presidential Policy - University Academic Policy
POLICY #:	D.9.1.
*STATUS:	Active
*CONTACT OFFICE:	Office of the Provost
*OVERSIGHT EXECUTIVE:	Provost
*APPLIES TO:	All students, staff, and faculty.
*PURPOSE:	To provide a specific step-by-step procedure for addressing non-grade related student disputes/complaints.
DEFINITIONS:	A student complaint concerns a decision, action, or lack of action by a faculty or staff member acting in an official capacity that has adversely affected the student and may be corrected by the University.
*POLICY STATEMENT:	This policy applies to written student complaints that do not concern grade appeals or claims of discrimination or harassment. Policies concerning those matters are outlined elsewhere.
PROCEDURES:	
* General Procedures for Implementation:	<p>This policy applies to written student complaints that do not concern grade appeals or claims of discrimination or harassment. Policies concerning those matters are outlined elsewhere. A general student complaint concerns a decision, action, or lack of action by a faculty or staff member acting in an official capacity that has adversely affected the student and may be corrected by the University.</p> <p>A. To initiate this complaint procedure, the student must submit a written statement of the complaint, with any supporting material, to the Chair of the department of the faculty or staff member concerned, if the complaint is with a faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). For complaints in the College of Business (COB) or College of Education (COE), the written statement is sent to the Associate Dean in COB or COE. The student must also send a copy of the written statement of the complaint (with supporting materials) to the faculty member or staff. The general complaint procedure must be initiated no later than the end of the semester following the one in which action (or lack of action) that precipitated the complaint occurred.</p>

	<p>B. If the complaint is with the Chair of a CAS department, or with the Associate Dean in COB or COE, the written statement of complaint is sent to the College Dean. If the College Dean is the party against whom the complaint is filed, the Provost will receive the written statement of complaint and will stand in the place of the College Dean.</p> <p>C. Within 15 working days of the receipt of the written statement of complaint, the Department Chair or the Associate COB or COE Dean or the Dean or the Provost (as relevant) will meet with the student, confer with the relevant faculty or staff member, contact the faculty or staff member's direct supervisor, and gather any other additional information needed to thoroughly investigate the matter and render a decision. The official leading this process (e.g. Department Chair, COB/COE Associate Dean, Dean or Provost, as relevant) will write a summary decision of the complaint, outlining any steps that have been or will be taken to remedy the issue, or explaining why further action was unnecessary. Copies of the written summary are provided to the student (complainant), to the faculty and or staff members named in the complaint, to the faculty/staff member's immediate supervisor, and to the academic unit head's immediate supervisor.</p> <p>D. If either the student or the faculty/staff member named in the complaint is dissatisfied with the action taken by the Department Chair or the Associate COB or COE Dean, the decision may be appealed in writing to the College Dean. Appeals must be submitted within 7 working days from the date of the written summary decision of the complaint. The decision must be provided to the student in writing within 15 working days of the receipt of the written appeal, with a copy to the faculty or staff member against whom the complaint was made. The Dean's decision on the appeal is final.</p> <p>E. If the Dean was acting in the place of the Department Chair or the Associate COB or COE Dean, any written appeal would be made to the Provost. If the complaint was against the College Dean, and the decision was made by the Provost, any written appeal would be made to the UMW President. Appeals to the Provost or the President must be submitted within 7 working days from the date of the written summary decision of the complaint. The decision must be provided to the student in writing within 15 working days of the receipt of the written appeal, with a copy to the faculty or staff member against whom the complaint was made. The Provost's and/or President's decision on the appeal is final.</p> <p>F. Following exhaustion of campus-based procedures, students may direct complaints to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. Additional information is available from their website at http://www.schev.edu/index/students-and-parents/resources/student-complaints.</p>
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<p>* Process for Developing, Approving, and Amending Procedures:</p>	<p>The Office of the Provost is responsible for oversight of this policy. Reviews, adjustments, and/or amendments will be undertaken on an as needed basis.</p>
<p>* Publication and Communication:</p>	<p>In addition to appearing in the UMW online Policy Manual, this policy will be placed in the <i>Faculty Handbook</i> as Appendix D (replacing what is currently in that appendix). The appendix would be re-titled as “Procedure for a Student Complaint Against a Faculty Member.”</p> <p>The policy will also be added to the <i>Student Handbook</i>. A reference to the UMW Policy Manual location for this policy would be added to the UMW Employee Manual (the “handbook” covering administrative/professional faculty, classified, and wage employees).</p> <p>The current Grade Appeal policy (contained in the <i>Academic Catalogs</i>) will have this direction added: “Complaints that do not involve grade disputes are handled through the General Student Complaint procedure, which is outlined in the <i>Student Handbook</i> and in the UMW Online Policy Manual.”</p>
<p>* Compliance Monitoring and Reporting: <i>(How is compliance with the policy monitored and reported?)</i></p>	<p>All academic units and offices are responsible for following this policy. Instances of written complaints and any actions taken on them will be formally documented on the Complaint Logs maintained by all offices and reported to the Office of the President twice a year in accordance with federal requirements and the expectations of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.</p>
<p>RELATED INFORMATION:</p>	
<p>Policy Background:</p>	<p>While UMW has a procedure for students to file a written grade appeal, procedures for addressing non-grade related disputes/complaints are not clearly outlined. This policy addresses that gap in current policies and procedures. On an <i>ad-hoc</i> basis, general student complaints have been addressed through the steps outlined in the proposed policy. But there was no documentation for that procedure. The new policy provides a specific listing of the steps that need to be taken when such general student complaints arise. The policy was revised in 2018 to specify a timeline for decision/appeal actions and to clarify what the initial complaint step is in the Colleges of Business and Education, which do not have Department Chairs.</p>
<p>* Policy Category:</p>	<p>Academic Affairs</p>
<p>Category Cross Reference:</p>	

Related Policies:	Grade disputes policy (contained in the Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Catalogs), the <u>Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence</u> (B.8.1), and <u>Bias Offense and Incident Reporting</u> (B.8.2).
HISTORY:	
* Origination Date:	October 1, 2015
* Approved by:	The Provost's Academic Affairs Council, the University Academic Affairs Committee, and the University Faculty Council.
* Approval Date:	December 3, 2015 – by the Provost's Academic Affairs Council January 21, 2016 – by the University Academic Affairs Committee February 3, 2016 – by the University Faculty Council
* Effective Date:	February 3, 2016
* Review Process: <i>(How is this policy reviewed to ensure that it is effective? By whom? How often?)</i>	When conditions necessitating review arise, policy review starts with the Provost's Academic Affairs Council and proceeds through the necessary levels of faculty governance when required for substantive changes. Editorial changes are made by the Office of the Provost.
* Next Scheduled Review:	As needed
Revision History:	02/21/2018 - Revised by the Office of the Provost to specify a timeline for decision/appeal actions and to clarify what the initial complaint step is in the College of Business and the College of Education, which do not have Department Chairs.