

UAMS Academic Affairs Policy – 2.2.9



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES

Policy: University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Division of Academic Affairs
Subject: Student Formal Complaint Resolution Policy
Number: 2.2.9

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PURPOSE

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment that is supportive of student success. From time to time, students may have complaints regarding academic and non-academic decisions or actions by UAMS or a UAMS employee that the student contends was in violation of written campus policies or constitutes unfair or unequal application of such policies.

The formal complaint resolution policy outlines the policies and procedures in place to manage student academic and non-academic complaints.

SCOPE

This policy applies to students who have active or leave of absence status in traditional as well as online courses.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Complainant:** Student who is filing a formal complaint that goes through a formal resolution process. A faculty or staff member may also submit a complaint regarding student mistreatment.
2. **Working Day:** Monday through Friday, excluding official UAMS holidays.
3. **UAMS:** UAMS means any college, division, department, subunit, or program operated by the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. When used in this policy, the term “college” shall be deemed to include the Graduate School.
4. **Administrator:** The Department Director who receives the formal complaint.

UAMS Academic Affairs Policy – 2.2.9

5. Department Director: The Director of a department that is not housed in one of the colleges. The department may be housed in Academic Affairs (ex. Office of the University Registrar, Student Financial Services).
6. Non-Academic Complaint: A documented concern regarding matter not directly associated with the program of study that violates law or UAMS policy and follows the non-academic complaint resolution process.
7. Academic Complaint: A documented concern regarding an academic matter (ex. grades) that follows a formal process through the complainant’s college.

POLICY

Below are matters that are covered by campus policies or appeal procedures.

Topic Area	Examples	Initial Contact Person	Policy
Academics	Complaints about academic standards, grades, and decisions	Associate or Assistant Dean for college	Policies and procedures can be found in the college student handbook
Discrimination	Allegation of a discriminatory policy, procedure, or practice	Associate or Assistant Dean for college	<i>Academic Affairs Policy 2.2.1 Grievance Procedure for Students Alleging Discrimination</i>
Traffic citations	Parking tickets	UAMS Parking Operations appeal form	<i>UAMS Policy 11.3.03 Traffic Citation Appeals Policy</i>
Research misconduct	Fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results	Vice Chancellor for Research	<i>UAMS Policy 16.1.04 Responsible Conduct of Research</i>
Disability accommodations	Failure to provide reasonable accommodations for a disability.	Associate or Assistant Dean for college	<i>Academic Affairs Policy 2.2.1 Grievance Procedure for Students Alleging Discrimination</i>

UAMS Academic Affairs Policy – 2.2.9

Title IX issues	Complaints related to sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, sexual violence, stalking, gender-based harassment, and retaliation	Title IX Coordinator	UAMS Policy 3.1.48 <i>Title IX, Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Violence, Stalking, Gender-Based Harassment and Retaliation</i> ; https://hr.uams.edu/other/title-ix/
Student records data (FERPA)	Unauthorized disclosure of protected student records data	University Registrar	Academic Affairs Policy 2.1.2 <i>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act</i>
Student mistreatment	A continuous pattern of verbal abuse, threats, psychological mistreatment, physical endangerment, intentional neglect, or requirement to perform personal services	Associate or Assistant Dean for college if college faculty or staff involved or use the complaint form	For mistreatment by individuals not associated with the student's academic program and not falling within one of the categories in this table above, students may utilize the Non-Academic Complaint Process. Students who wish to complain anonymously regarding mistreatment associated with their program may submit this utilizing the complaint form.

If a student has a complaint that is not covered under one of the policies listed above, then they would follow the process for non-academic complaints described below. The non-academic complaint resolution process does not supersede or replace grievance or complaint processes that already exist. All academic complaints are subject to the policies and procedures of the relevant college.

Informal Resolution of Complaints

All complaints directed to departmental personnel by students are considered important and are to be initially addressed by the respective employee, department and/or office. Students may first seek to resolve concerns through informal discussions. If such informal discussions do not reach a satisfactory resolution, then the student may pursue a formal complaint following the steps in this policy.

Formal Non-Academic Complaint

If efforts to resolve a complaint informally are not successful, students must file a formal complaint with the designated department Director where the complaint originated within 30 calendar days following the incident which forms the basis for the complaint. The complainant will complete the online formal complaint form on the Academic Affairs website at <https://academicaffairs.uams.edu/irpa/complaint-resolution-process-information/>. The

UAMS Academic Affairs Policy – 2.2.9

complaint will be routed to the Associate Provost for Students and Administration who will forward to the administrator who is designated to review the issue.

The administrator receiving the complaint shall review the material provided by the complainant and may gather any additional information through writing or meeting with the student or other persons involved. The administrator shall make a decision, in writing, within 10 working days after receiving the student's complaint (excluding the day of receipt), or as soon as possible thereafter. The decision will explain the basis for the decision, remedial steps required, if any, and the procedure for requesting an appeal.

Non-Academic Complaint Appeals

If the student believes the complaint decision is in error, then the complainant may file, within 10 working days after the date of the written decision, an appeal to the Provost. The Provost will review the material provided by the student, the complaint decision, any other material that has been assembled regarding the matter, and any applicable University policies. At his or her discretion, the Provost may gather any additional information that will be helpful to a decision, whether in writing or through meeting or consulting with any individuals deemed necessary in the administrator's discretion. The Provost shall make a decision, in writing, within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, or as soon as possible thereafter. The appeal decision shall be final.

Formal Log of Complaints

A formal log will be maintained by all departments and colleges of all formal complaints. Complaint records shall be kept for no less than 2 years. For non-academic complaints, the log shall contain the formal complaint, additional information gathered with regard to the complaint, the date the complaint was issued, the date the decision was issued, and the decision. Formal academic complaints will be aggregated by type and logged separately. Departments and colleges will submit the log of formal complaints for the previous academic year to the Associate Provost for Students and Administration by August 1. The log will be reviewed annually to determine if a policy needs to be developed or changed based on complaints.

External Complaint Resolution

If a complaint cannot be resolved internally within the University, a student may file a complaint with the appropriate authority. Arkansas and out-of-state residents must file complaints in writing with the ADHE (Arkansas Division of Higher Education). Students may also mail written complaints to: Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE), 423 Main Street, Suite 400, Little Rock, AR 72201. Filing with ADHE must be within 20 days of completing the institution's complaint process. As required by ADHE, the complainant must provide a statement from the institution verifying that the institution's appeal process has been followed. ADHE inquiries are limited to courses/degree programs certified by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) under Ark. Code 6-61-301 and to matters related to the criteria for certification. Students may also contact the Higher Learning Commission, which is the University's institutional accrediting body at 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL 60604, or at inquiry@hlcommission.org or 1-800-621-7440. This information is provided pursuant to 34 CFR 668.43(b).

Anonymous Complaint Resolution

UAMS Academic Affairs Policy – 2.2.9

If a student wishes to submit an anonymous formal complaint, he or she may complete the formal complaint form on the Academic Affairs website (<https://academicaffairs.uams.edu/irpa/complaint-resolution-process-information/>) where they can remain anonymous. The nature and resolution of the issue will be documented and sent to the Associate Provost for Students and Administration. The Associate Provost will share the complaint with the appropriate college/department for resolution unless noted not to. If the details of the complaint are requested not to be shared, they will still be documented to identify complaint trends for development or changes to policy.

No person shall be subjected to retaliation for using or assisting others to use the complaint process (*UA Board Policy 355.1 Whistleblower Policy*).

REFERENCES

UA Board Policy 355.1 Whistleblower Policy
UA System Policy 525.1 Student Complaint Procedure