

 Methodist College UnityPoint Health	Page # 1 of 4	Section: S	Policy#: S-037
	Approval: <i>James R. Dwie</i>		Date: 8/2020 Review by: 8/2025
	Date Revised: 07/18, 08/15, 07/14, 04/14, 03/12, 07/08		
	Policy/Revision Submitted by: Cabinet		
SUBJECT: Student Complaint Policy			

I. POLICY:

Methodist College provides both informal and formal processes for students to seek resolution of a complaint. Methodist College values investigation and inquiry to ascertain the perspective of the complainant and the facts surrounding the situation. It is the policy of the college to promptly investigate and seek resolution of these complaints. The investigation process will follow the timeline outlined in this policy. Students are encouraged to begin either process as soon as a concern exists. The investigation and deliberations of the administrators and committee members will be held in confidence with no information released to those without a need to know. All persons involved with the investigation will be unbiased with no conflict of interest.

Note: In order to avoid any pressure imposed by the investigation process on a student’s academic performance, no investigations requiring student participation will take place during finals week. The process will resume upon completion of finals week.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION:

A. Informal Complaint Process

Occasions may arise in which a student feels that he or she has a legitimate basis for complaint. Those involved should initially attempt to resolve the matter informally and without the need to establish a record. The informal process for resolution of a complaint is as follows:

1. Within five (5) business days (M-F, exclusive of school closures) of any incident about which a student desires to make a complaint, the complaint should be taken by the student directly to the other party (parties) involved. This process is primarily a verbal discussion of the concerns the student reports to the individuals with whom the concern exists. All parties are expected to engage in a way that upholds the human dignity of each other.
2. If the student and the other party(s) are unable to resolve the matter or if, for any reason, the student does not feel at ease in going to the other party, he or she should contact the appropriate Director (e.g. Director of Financial Aid or Academic Department Chair/Program Director). These individuals can facilitate a meeting with the other party involved.
3. The Director of Access, Support and Inclusion Services is available to assist students in managing the communication process regarding the concern.

B. Formal Complaint Process

Should a student feel that a formal complaint is necessary, either before or after completing the informal complaint process, the student shall file a written complaint as

follows:

1. Students have the right to file a written complaint regarding academic, student and business services, facilities, technology, or student events. The complaint should be addressed to the head of the unit to which the complaint applies and the appropriate Vice Chancellor should be copied on the communication (refer to the organizational chart on the Methodist College website). All communications shall be in a formal, written format addressing the following:
 - a. Identification of date, time and location of the complaint.
 - b. Rationale for concern
 - c. Identification of the parties involved in the complaint and their contributing roles relevant to the complaint.
 - d. Description of the nature of the complaint and any informal processes that have occurred and provide documentation of the outcomes
 - e. Relationship of the parties to the complaint
 - f. Desired resolution of the complaint

2. Exclusion to the Complaint Process
 - a. Violations of the student code of conduct are not covered in this process; please refer to the Student Code of Conduct Policy.
 - b. Violations pertinent to Title IX are not covered in this process; please refer to the Title IX policy.
 - c. Final Grade Appeals are not covered in this process; please refer to the Final Grade Appeal policy.

3. Complainants are not permitted to file a complaint anonymously, and the Respondent against whom the complaint is lodged will be notified. In all cases, the accused party will be informed of the complaint and will have the opportunity to respond or explain during the investigation process.

4. Administrator Review: The affected administrator is responsible for investigating the complaint by reviewing materials provided by the Complainant, by reviewing materials identified in the course of reviewing the complaint, by interviewing the Complainant and Respondent, by interviewing witnesses and other involved parties, and through other reasonable and prudent avenues of investigation.
 - a. The administrator will determine a course of action. The investigation and course of action may lead to the following:
 - i. A mutually agreeable resolution is determined and the complaint is administratively handled by the director, chair, dean or other appropriate administrator.
 - ii. A decision that, upon review, the complaint has no merit.
 - b. Within ten (10) days of receiving the complaint, the affected administrator will communicate the findings of their review, either a mutually agreeable resolution or a decision that the complaint has no merit, to the Complainant and the Respondent in writing via Methodist College email.

5. Appeal to the Vice Chancellor (if the above review was not a vice chancellor)
 - a. Within ten (10) business days a Complainant who is dissatisfied with a decision that a complaint has no merit may appeal the finding to the Vice Chancellor of

- the area. There are three Vice Chancellors, including the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, and the Vice Chancellor for Strategic Marketing and External Affairs. If necessary, the Director of the Office for Access, Support, and Inclusion Services can assist the student in identifying the appropriate Vice Chancellor to whom to address an appeal.
- b. The appeal shall be in writing and sent via Methodist College email; it shall address all the items in B.1. a – f above. Additional materials may be submitted with the complaint and shall be sent simultaneously.
6. The Vice Chancellor will appoint an Investigation Committee within five (5) business days of the notification from the Administrator performing the initial investigation. The committee shall include three unbiased individuals comprising a mix of exempt staff and faculty members who have no conflict of interest, one of whom will be appointed chair.
 - a. This Investigation Committee will conduct a review of the case based on the student's report detailing the basis for the complaint and documents provided. The Investigation Committee will have access to all prior material pursuant to the review.
 - b. The Committee will have access to additional materials that will be helpful in making a recommendation, and shall have the capacity to call witnesses and interview the
 - c. Complainant and the Respondent.

The committee will make a recommendation to the Vice Chancellor not less than fifteen (15) days from the appointment of the committee (NOTE: no investigatory meetings or communications with students shall occur during finals week). The report shall be sent via Methodist College email and shall include the following

 - i. The specific nature of the complaint, including date, time, persons involved, and rationale for the concern
 - ii. What resolution is desired by the complainant
 - iii. What evidence the committee uncovered and by what means.
 - iv. Who the committee interviewed and when.
 - v. What specific evidence exists with regard to the complaint.
 - vi. What actions are recommended to be taken.
 - vii. Report signed by all committee members with names printed below.
 - a. The committee chair shall submit the report, all materials collected for the investigation, all correspondence, and all notes and minutes of interviews to the Vice Chancellor in writing via attachment to Methodist College email.
 - b. The Vice Chancellor shall review all materials and, as deemed necessary, may interview the Complainant and Respondent (who is not required to respond), interview witnesses, and/or meet with the Investigation Committee.
 - c. The Vice Chancellor shall, within ten (10) business days, make a decision regarding the resolution of the complaint. The decision will be communicated to the Complainant, with copies to the Chair of the Investigation Committee, and the administrator who initially investigated the complaint. The decision will be communicated via Methodist College email via a PDF attachment.
7. If the outcome is not satisfactory to the complainant, within five (5) business days of

receiving the decision of the Vice Chancellor, the student may appeal the Vice Chancellor's decision to the Chancellor of the College. The student must submit the appeal in writing via a formal, written letter submitted via Methodist College email in PDF format.

- a. All materials pertinent to the case shall be forwarded to the Chancellor by the Vice Chancellor for consideration in the appeal.
 - b. The Chancellor has ten (10) business days from receipt of the appeal to communicate a decision to the student. The decision will be communicated via formal letter sent via an email to the student's Methodist College email address with copies to the affected Vice Chancellor and administrator of the initial investigation.
8. Information from formal complaints is used, as appropriate, to foster ongoing program improvement. Formal complaints, as defined by the College, and their resolution are filed in the Office of the Chancellor. Complaints impacting the students' grade shall be sent to the Office of the Registrar.

III. STATE AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION FOR STUDENT COMPLAINTS

If after the formal and informal process noted above have been completed and a student is not satisfied with the outcome, the student may contact the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Attorney General or The Higher Learning Commission to file a formal complaint using the contact information noted below:

Illinois Board of Higher Education
431 E. Adams, 2nd Floor Springfield, IL 62701-1404
inf@ibhe.org
Institutional Complaint Hotline (217) 557-7359

Illinois State Board of Education
100 N. 1st Street
Springfield, IL 62777
[http://webprod1.isbe.net/contactisbe/\(email\)](http://webprod1.isbe.net/contactisbe/(email))

Illinois Attorney General
Consumer Fraud Bureau 500 South
Second Street Springfield, IL
62706

The Higher Learning Commission 230 South
LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500
Chicago, IL 60604
inquiry@hlcommission.org
(800) 621-7440