

STUDENT COMPLAINT POLICY

Informal Complaints

The purpose of the informal complaint process is to encourage a student who has a complaint to speak directly with the University employee most responsible for the situation that is the cause of complaint. The student should do this in a timely manner (within 14 days) and it is the hope of VIU that the problem may be solved with dialogue. A majority of issues are resolved at this stage with calm, rational dialogue and Christ-like demeanor. If the conversation does not bring a satisfactory response, or if it is not appropriate for the student to speak with the employee, the student should speak with the Dean of Students or the Academic Dean, who can assist them in presenting their informal complaint.

Formal Complaints

The purpose of filing a formal complaint is to allow both parties due process in resolving an issue that has not been settled informally. The Dean of Students or the Academic Dean Serve as the Student complaint officers for VIU and will advise the student through the formal complaint process.

Writing the Formal Complaint Letter

Formal complaints must be addressed in writing to the Dean of Students or the Academic Dean. It is advisable (although not required) for students to meet with one of the Deans to discuss the matter prior to writing the letter. The written complaint must be clear and organized, explain the situation in detail and must be dated and signed. The dean will send a copy of the complaint letter to the person named in the complaint (the respondent) and the respondent's supervisor. The respondent is normally required to respond in writing to the dean about the student complaint within 10 working days of receiving the letter. After the dean receives the response from the respondent, a written decision from the dean will be sent to the student as well as the respondent. Both letters, and any other documentation, will be used in the decision-making process.

Meeting Together to Reach a Solution

If the written response does not resolve the complaint, the Dean of Students or the Academic Dean can call the parties together for a conference where the two parties can talk face to face (or if this is not practical, over the phone) in an atmosphere of fairness and cooperative problem solving. This meeting will include the student, the respondent, the respondent's supervisor, and the dean. The student may bring an advocate if desired.

Appeals Process

The student may request a meeting with the President, if the complaint is not resolved at the conference level. The President will be given a copy of all documentation related to the situation prior to the meeting. A written decision from the President's office normally will be rendered within 10 working days of the meeting and will be sent to the student. The decision of the President is final. It is important to note that the complaint policy is *only* for complaints not addressed by other stated policies. For information regarding issues or concerns that are not covered by this process (such as issues of sexual harassment, grade appeals, etc.) please refer to the VIU Student Handbook.

Outside Assistance

Should a student need further assistance or clarification regarding a complaint, or should they need to inform the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS), they may contact TRACS at: TRACS 15935 Forest Road Forest, VA 24551 Tel: (434) 525-9539 www.tracs.org. VIU ensures students that all staff and faculty members will fully cooperate with TRACS in the event of any complaint proceedings.

Student Complaint Process for Distance Education Students

The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) is an agreement among member states, districts and territories that sets national standards for interstate offering of post-secondary distance education courses and programs. Veritas International University is a NC-SARA approved institution and the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) is the NC-SARA Portal Entity for New Mexico. Distance Education students attending VIU who would like to resolve a grievance should follow VIU's established Student Complaint Process. However, if an issue cannot be resolved internally, you may file a NC-SARA complaint with the New Mexico Higher Education Department. Complaints regarding grades and student conduct violations shall not be reviewed by NMHED. Please visit <https://hed.nm.gov/students-parents/nc-sara> for more information.