

William Woods University's mission as an independent voice in higher education distinguishes itself as student-centered with a commitment to the values of ethics and self-liberation. Consistent with our mission, student thought and feedback about how our policies, programs, and services contribute to student success, development, and goal attainment is important. Thus we are committed to ensuring that students have access to appropriate procedures for articulating concerns. Students have the right to request a review of academic or non-academic policies, programs, or incidents where no formal process exists or that do not pertain to any other specific University policy or procedure. For example, issues involving sexual misconduct are dealt with through a separate policy and grade appeals are handled through the grade appeal policy. This policy pertains to all students in all programs and modalities.

In most instances, complaints can be resolved through an informal process beginning with talking to the individual and his/her supervisor or the person with oversight of that area. Basic steps include discussing the matter with the staff, faculty, or department in which the issue originated. If the issue is not resolved, the next contact will be the supervisor, department chair, or appropriate director.

If still unresolved, students may contact the appropriate Dean or designee. In most cases, the following individuals have been designated as the student contact for complaints: Venita Mitchell, Vice President and Dean of Student Life; Aimee Sapp, Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs. Unresolved complaints pertaining to concerns in the Business Office or Student Financial Services should be directed to Julie Houseworth, Chief Financial Officer. Formal complaints should be written and include information regarding how the student has attempted to resolve the concern through the informal procedures, contact information, a brief description of the circumstances including who has been involved, and the current status.

Once received, the appropriate administrator or designee will meet with the student to review the concern and document the complaint. In most cases, the issue can be addressed through dialogue and mutual consent. If this process does not provide for satisfactory resolution, a grievance committee will be formed and the matter will be forwarded to said committee. This committee will meet with the student to review the grievance. Following that meeting, the committee will meet privately and make a decision to resolve the matter. The student filing the complaint will be informed of the decision in writing within seven (7) class days of the meeting. Decisions of the grievance committee are final.

The grievance committee will be formed as needed and will be composed of a total of three (3) representatives from the University Judicial Council (UJC). The senior member of the UJC will select the members and call the meeting. The meeting will not be considered a judicial hearing and thus will not follow the judicial procedures.

In addition, students have the opportunity to file complaints with the Missouri Department of Higher Education and the Higher Learning Commission:

The Missouri Department of Higher Education serves as a clearinghouse for postsecondary student complaints. The MDHE complaint policy may be found at <https://dhewd.mo.gov/documents/POLICYONCOMPLAINTRESOLUTION-reviseddraft.pdf>. This webpage contains information about the complaint process and includes instructions for how to file a formal complaint. Note that the policy provides that a student who wishes to file a complaint with the department must first exhaust all formal and informal avenues provided by the institution to resolve disputes.

William Woods University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission https://www.williamwoods.edu/about/accreditation_and_recognition/index.html. For information regarding an accreditation complaint, please consult the Higher Learning Commission website at <https://www.hlcommission.org/Student-Resources/complaints.html>. Their contact information is as follows The Higher Learning Commission, 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, Illinois 60604-1413; Phone: 800-621-7440/312-263-0456; Fax: 312-263-7462; info@hlcommission.org.

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