

STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Student Complaint and Grievance procedures at Huston-Tillotson University are intended to provide a formal and consistent process for students to seek redress concerning actions of the University and/or by university faculty, administrators, and staff. Students considering filing a formal complaint should read the complete text of the Student Complaint and Grievance Procedure described in this volume of the Huston-Tillotson Policy Manual.

Situations may arise in which a student believes that s/he has not received fair treatment by a representative of the University, or the student has a complaint about the performance, action, or inaction of a member of the staff or faculty affecting the student. A student who wishes to have a complaint addressed by the University should first use the following Complaint Procedure and then utilize the Grievance Procedure if the results of the Complaint Procedure prove unsatisfactory. Students are encouraged to seek assistance from the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Office, Dean of Students Office, Department Chair, College or School Dean, their advisor, or another member of the faculty or staff. If the complaint concerns sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination, the Director of Human Resources and the Title IX Coordinator should be consulted, and a determination will be made to investigate claims of harassment. In the event that a student wishes to dispute a grade, the student should consult the Appeal of Grades policy found in this document.

A formal complaint by a student arises out of an alleged action of the University, including faculty, administrators, and/or staff of the University. Such action is alleged by the student to be unauthorized and/or unjustified and adversely affecting the status, rights or privileges of the student, including actions based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, handicap, or veteran status.

Students are reminded that the complaint procedure is not designed to replace open communication and understanding that are vital to the academic environment. The student should, in most circumstances, attempt to first speak directly to or to the supervisor of the faculty, staff, or administrator of the University whom he or she feels has committed an unfair act against them before filing a formal complaint. The student may withdraw the complaint at any stage and the process will immediately terminate.

Complaint Procedure

A written complaint, which is a completed Student Complaint form available on my.htu.edu together with appropriate supporting documents should be directed as soon as possible to the person whose actions or inactions have given rise to the complaint. Every effort should be made to resolve the problem fairly and promptly at this level.

If the student is not able to resolve the complaint satisfactorily at this level, the student should file a written formal complaint including supporting documents with the employee's supervisor. This may be a department chair, program coordinator, director or dean. The supervisor must respond to the student with resolve within 10 working days. After ten (10) working days and if a satisfactory solution is not found, the complaint must be forwarded by the supervisor to the unit

Vice President. The unit Vice President will make every effort to resolve the complaint within 15 working days and notify the student of the resolution.

If the complaint involves allegations of sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination, the Director of Human Resources and the Title IX Coordinator should be and consulted by the student and employee.

Grievance Procedure

A student who believes that he/she has not received fair treatment or who has a complaint about the performance, action, or inaction of a member of the faculty or staff and believes he/she has not received appropriate redress through the complaint procedure may file a written statement of grievance with the Vice President of the unit in which the employee serves.

The statement of grievance is a clear, simple statement of fact according to the students' understanding of what happened and should provide enough information to give a complete understanding of the situation from the student's perspective. The Dean of Students' Office is available to help students understand the details of the Student Complaint and Grievance Policy and should be called on for assistance. The Dean of Students' Office telephone number is 512.505.3036.

Each grievance must be submitted in writing and only one subject matter should be covered in any one grievance. Formal grievance statements received by the unit Vice President are referred to a department or program level committee that recommends a resolution to the unit Vice President within fifteen (15) working days. The student is then notified of the resolution.

If the grievance is against a senior administrator, the student may file a written statement of grievance with University President who then refers the written statement of grievance to a department or program level committee that recommends a resolution to the President within fifteen (15) working days. The student is then notified of the resolution.

If the grievance is against the President of the university, the student may file a formal written grievance in a sealed envelope addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees through the Office of the Clerk of the Board located in Anthony and Louise Viaer – Alumni Hall (Administration Building), third floor room 310.

Complaints Against the University

If an individual (student, faculty, staff, or other interested party) or individuals wish to claim wrongdoing or deficiency on the part of the University, a complaint may be filed directly with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The Commission's address is 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, and the telephone number is 404.679.4500. Alternatively, the website for the SACSCOC complaint process is <http://www.sacscoc.org/FAQTOC.asp>. Additionally, students may also file a complaint with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The Board's address is 1200 E. Anderson Lane, Austin, Texas 78752 and the telephone number is 512.427.6101. For additional information regarding the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, please visit their website: <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us> for more information regarding the THECB complaint process please visit: <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=051F93F5-03D4-9CCE-40FA9F46F2CD3C9D>

Complaints Regarding Performance of a Faculty Member

If the complaint concerns performance of a faculty member, the student should first confer with the course instructor (faculty). If the student does not gain resolution, the student should direct the complaint to the Department Chair. If the matter is not resolved, it should be referred to the College or School Dean and finally to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. If the complaint involves allegations of sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination, the Director of Human Resources and the Title IX Coordinator should be consulted by the student and employee.

Appeal of Grades

The grade represents an instructor's evaluation of a student's performance in a given course. This grade is not changed unless evidence exists of a clerical or computational error or of student cheating. A student who believes that an error has occurred should request a grade re-evaluation by completing an official Appeal of Grade form available on my.htu.edu together with evidence of his/her claim. A request for a grade re-evaluation must be submitted within the calendar year of the date on which the grade was officially issued. A student desiring to improve a course grade for reasons other than those listed above must officially re-register for and re-take the course.

Student grade appeals are handled according to the following procedure:

1. The student completes an Appeal of Grade form available on my.htu.edu together with evidence of his/her claim. A reasonable justification for review of the grade must be included in the written appeal. Notification of the appeal is forwarded to the instructor for review and action.
2. The student arranges a conference with the instructor to obtain criteria for the assessment of the final grade that was assigned. If a student cannot schedule a meeting with the instructor, the student contacts the Department Chair, who will arrange a conference between the student and the instructor. Every possible effort should be made to resolve any disagreements at this point.
3. The student's grade may be changed at this step of the appeal procedure by written consent of the instructor if the findings warrant such modification. A Change of Grade form must be completed by the instructor and forwarded to the Office of Records and Registration.
4. A student who is not satisfied by the outcome of the appeal to the Department Chair may request that the written appeal be forwarded to the Dean of the College or School.
5. If the Dean is unable to bring resolution to the appeal, the student may appeal to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

6. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will make every effort to resolve the grade conflict issue within a 30-day period.

Designated University officials maintain records of all written student complaints.

SARA State Complaint Process

Students outside of Texas in a **SARA member state** enrolled in an online course offered by HT must first follow the **Huston-Tillotson University (HT) Student Complaint and Grievance Procedures** to seek resolution of their complaint. If the complaint is not resolved through the University's process, the student may then file a complaint with the **Texas SARA Portal Entity**.

Non-SARA State Complaints

Students outside of Texas in a **non-SARA state** enrolled in an online course offered by **Huston-Tillotson University (HT)** may file a complaint with the **Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)** or with the appropriate state agency in the state where they are located.