



Student Grievance Procedures

Formal Grievance Procedure for Students

Edward Waters College hopes that minor differences can be resolved without recourse to the process listed below. However, there may be situations where a more formal process may be necessary. This process is intended to settle disputes through mediation and reasoned discussion. It is not intended to supplant the student conduct process or the administrative rules of the College. Usually the resolution of a complaint or grievance involves resolution of the problem/issue; not punishment of those involved. Students who intend to file a complaint of an academic or nonacademic grievance must follow the instructions below.

1. Dispute Resolution for Incidents other than Grievances

This Grievance Procedure applies to minor complaints or disputes between a student and the College for which a formal procedure does not otherwise exist for resolution as otherwise set forth in this Student Handbook. More formal alternative procedures exist for more serious situations (which do not qualify as grievances) such as the following:

- A student is erroneously denied registration;
- A student is erroneously required to pay a fine or penalty;
- A student erroneously has money withheld by the College;
- A student has been denied the right to amend his/her educational records;
- A student is charged with an offense under the this Student Handbook or another College policy or procedures;
- A student is alleging discrimination on the basis of a Protected Class; or
- A student is alleging sexual harassment.

2. Definitions

A) Informal Complaints: An informal complaint is defined as an academic or non-academic issue that a student has with another student, faculty/instructor, staff member, administrator, or department or program of the College.

B) Non-Academic Grievance: A non-academic grievance occurs when a Grievance Petition Form has been filed because a student believes that he/she has been dealt with arbitrarily, unfairly or in ways which violate established laws, rules, policies or procedures, or past practices by the College as a whole or any unit or agency or function thereof and in a manner that has caused actual harm to the student.

C) Academic Grievance: An academic grievance occurs when a Grievance Petition Form is submitted to the College because a student believes he/she has been harmed by being treated arbitrarily or unfairly within the context of a particular class or course. In order to file an academic grievance, the student must demonstrate actual harm. It does not involve perceived rude treatment, classroom style or general grading policies. For example, the student may not like a particular professor's classroom style or grading practices as a whole, but this does not constitute grounds for a grievance. The student may, however, use the Informal Complaint Process set forth below to talk with an administrator about the perception of inappropriate behavior. The assignment of course grades are at the heart of the faculty member's responsibility. Only the responsible faculty member can judge students' performance in a particular course. Thus, only the responsible faculty member can assign or recommend changes of letter grades (A, B, C, D, F) for his or her courses.

D) Complainant/Grievant: A Complainant/Grievant is an individual who believes his/her rights have been violated.

E) Respondent: A Respondent is an individual who is the subject of the grievance or complaint, if applicable.

F) Appellant: An Appellant is an individual who is filing an appeal.

G) Appeal: The resolution of an academic or non-academic grievance may be appealed. Appeals must be based on the issue of substantive or procedural errors, which are prejudicial to impartial consideration of the case.

H) Confidentiality: It is understood that committee members, faculty, staff, and administrators involved in the discussion of complaints or grievances will maintain professional standards of confidentiality. Students should be aware that every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality; however, College officials may be obligated to disclose information to law enforcement or other agencies as required by law.

3. Informal Complaints

A) Resolving a Non-Academic Informal Complaint

The student must first discuss and attempt to resolve the issue with whomever the issue arose, if at all possible. In the event that such an informal discussion is not possible or the issue is not resolved, then the student should contact the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (VPSAEM), or his or her designee to try to reach an informal resolution. The student is strongly encouraged to initiate a complaint immediately after the alleged incident. The Dean of Students or appropriate administrator or designee receiving the complaint shall attempt to resolve the matter and report the decision, in writing, to the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) via their EWC email address within a timely manner of receiving the complaint. A copy of this decision/resolution will be sent to the Dean of Students who maintains a repository for student complaints/grievances.

If the complaint is about a grade, please see the Resolving an Academic Informal Complaint section of this policy.

B) Resolving an Academic Informal Complaint

Given the nature of complaints covered by this procedure, it is expected that in all but the most unusual circumstances, students will first address the issue with the faculty/instructor. In the event this is not feasible, or the student and faculty/instructor have not resolved the issue, the student is strongly encouraged to contact the Department Chair (DC) after the alleged issue. The DC receiving the complaint shall attempt to resolve the matter and report the decision, in writing, to the complainant(s) and respondent(s) via their EWC email addresses within a timely manner of receiving the complaint. A copy of this decision/resolution will be sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) who will forward the resolution to the Dean of Students who maintains a repository for student complaints/grievances.

C) Academic Grievances

If the complaint is not resolved informally, the student may submit a completed Grievance Petition Form to the Department Chair (DC) or designee, who will investigate the grievance. The DC then has fifteen (15) class days to make a determination and report the decision, in writing, to the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) via their EWC email addresses. The DC has the discretion to accept a grievance filed after the fifteen (15) day deadline. In instances where the DC is the subject of the complaint, or has decided the student's informal complaint, the student should submit the completed Grievance Petition Form to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) for resolution. The VPAA then has fifteen (15) class days to make a determination and report the decision, in writing, to the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) via their EWC email addresses. A copy of the resolution will be sent to the Dean of Students who maintains a repository of written complaints/grievances.

4. Grievance

A) Initiating a Grievance

If the complaint is not resolved informally and the student wishes to continue the process, the student must present a completed Grievance Petition Form to the Dean of Students. Prior to filing any grievance, the Complainant(s) must attempt to obtain a satisfactory resolution through the Informal Complaint Process. If still unresolved, a Grievance Petition Form must be filed no later than ten (10) class days after receipt of the notice of informal complaint resolution decision, or if no decision was issued, no later than fifteen (15) class days after the applicable decision deadline.

B) A Grievance Petition

A Grievance Petition Form must be in writing and contain:

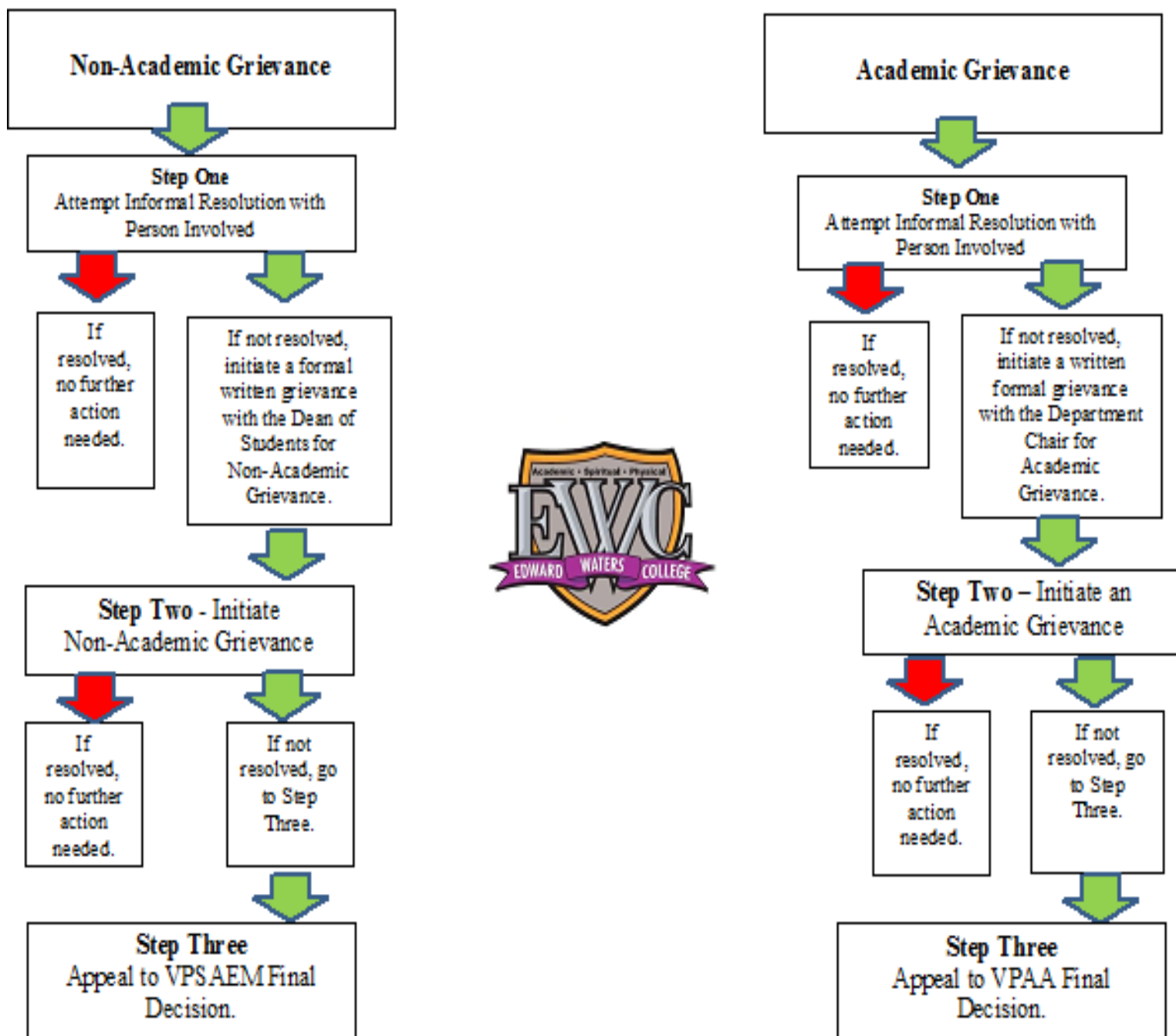
1. The Grievant(s)'s name, student identification number (if applicable), and contact information, including email address
2. The name(s) of the Respondent(s)
3. A detailed description of the nature of the grievance and the actual harm suffered by the Complainant
4. A detailed description of attempts at informal resolution
5. A detailed description of the relief sought
6. Signature of Complainant(s)
7. Date of grievance submission

C) Non-Academic Grievances

If the complaint is not resolved informally, the student may submit a completed Grievance Petition Form to the Dean of Students. A non-academic grievance must qualify as a Grievance in order to be reviewed and/or heard and must not be covered by any other College policy, procedure, or administrative rule (i.e., policy or procedure set forth in this Student Handbook or otherwise). The Dean of Students receiving the written grievance shall attempt to resolve the matter and is required to report the decision, in writing, to the Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) via their EWC email addresses within fifteen (15) class days of receiving the grievance petition. If the Grievant(s) wishes to appeal the grievance decision, the Grievant must submit an appeal to the VPSAEM along with the Dean of Student's written response to previous resolution attempts within ten (10) class days of receiving the decision, or if no decision was issued, no later than ten (10) work days after the applicable decision deadline.

**Edward Waters College
Student Complaint and Grievance Procedures
Flow Chart**

Student has a complaint/grievance regarding the following:



A Repository of All Decisions is stored in
the Office of the Dean of Students