

# GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The University is committed to providing a workplace that is supportive and responsive, and part of this commitment is providing employees with guidance and resources to assist them when issues arise.

The University encourages faculty and staff to resolve disagreements respectfully through informal, frank, and open discussion. We encourage faculty and staff to discuss any problem informally with their supervisor, department head/chair/assistant chair/program director/coordinator/dean at any time without the discussion being considered part of a formal grievance procedure. Should the faculty or staff member wish to meet with the Assistant Vice President for People & Culture to share their concerns, the Assistant Vice President will consult with them and discuss how best to approach their concerns with the other person(s). During this informal process, the University agrees to assure the greatest degree of confidentiality possible unless the information disclosed poses a threat to a person's safety or requires the University to act to fulfill duties imposed by law.

Should a faculty member wish their problem to be considered formally by the University, that person should report their grievance, either verbally or in writing, to their immediate supervisor. If the immediate supervisor is the subject of the grievance and the faculty member is uncomfortable reporting the grievance to this person, the faculty member may begin an informal process as described above. If the issues are not resolved promptly or satisfactorily in this manner, the faculty member may appeal to the dean of their respective school/division. The Vice President for Academic Affairs is the final avenue of appeal for faculty grievances.

Should a staff member wish their problem to be considered formally by the University, that person should report their grievance, either verbally or in writing, to their immediate supervisor. If the issues are not resolved promptly or satisfactorily in this manner, the staff member may appeal to their division vice president who will consult with Human Resources. If an investigation is undertaken, it will include a private interview with the person reporting the grievance, with the person(s) named in the grievance and with any witnesses. Once the information has been collected and a determination is made, the University will make recommendations about resolving the grievance. The result of the investigation and final determination by the University will be placed in writing and retained in a confidential file.

The University may, at their sole discretion and after careful review of the final determination, engage the services of a consultant, selected by the University, who is trained and experienced in conflict resolution or a similar field related to the situation.

Where the investigation results in a determination that the person complained against has engaged in conduct in breach of a University policy, that person may be disciplined. Any disciplinary action is a confidential matter between the affected person(s) and the University.

If the grievance involves a claim of harassment and/or discrimination, the employee may contact their division vice president to discuss the harassment complaint. The vice president has an obligation to notify the Assistant Vice President for People & Culture of such a complaint and will work with the director to determine if an acceptable solution can be achieved. If an acceptable solution is not attained, a formal investigation will be initiated.

If the person who believes they have been the victim of harassment and/or discrimination decides that they wish to file a formal complaint this may be done in writing or orally to the:

Assistant Vice President for People and Culture  
588 Longmeadow Street  
Longmeadow, MA 01106  
Telephone (413) 565-1272

Please consult the Anti-Harassment/Anti-Discrimination Policy for additional information.

Reports of violations of the sexual misconduct/civil rights policy should be made to the Title IX Coordinator.

Informal and formal grievances and the investigation process will be treated with the greatest degree of confidentiality that the University determines is possible. However, limitations on confidentiality may include the University's obligations to investigate grievance allegations, provide individuals accused of misconduct an opportunity to respond, inform appropriate individuals of the imposition of corrective action or to fulfill duties imposed by law. In all cases, those proceeding through an informal process and those filing a formal grievance are protected from discrimination and retaliation in connection with exercising rights in good faith under this grievance policy.