

Policy Title: Student Grievance Policy

Policy Number: 5.4.1-A

Loras College aspires to provide a transformative educational environment and is committed to the growth and development of its students and to upholding the dignity of each individual.

The College recognizes that grievances (concerns, disputes, complaints) may arise between students and faculty, staff, or the College and takes seriously its responsibility, as prescribed under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (HEA), to provide a mechanism that ensures students are able to voice their concerns and to address concerns in a fair and timely manner. The College also believes that student engagement in this process can promote the development of skills needed to address concerns effectively and in a professional manner.

For the purposes of this policy a student grievance describes a problem or condition that a student believes is unfair, inequitable, or a hindrance to a quality learning experience.

Scope

The Student Grievance Policy applies to all students enrolled in one or more courses at Loras College at the time the complaint is filed. Parents, relatives, employers, or other persons acting on behalf of a student are not considered students under this policy.

This policy covers both academic and non-academic matters and is limited to actions of faculty, staff, or other agents of the college. Student grievances against other students are not covered under this policy.

Appeals, including those for exceptions to policy, judicial body or administrative decisions, final grades, academic standing, or financial aid awards, are not considered student grievances. In addition, this policy does not apply to grievances that are covered by other college policies and processes, including complaints related to sex discrimination and harassment or equal opportunity employment, outlined in the Loras College Bulletin, Loras College Graduate Bulletin, Loras College Student Handbook, or the Loras College Staff Handbook.

This policy does not supersede specific grievance processes defined at the program or department level and articulated in program handbooks, policy manuals, or other public materials. Students are encouraged to first review and complete the steps mandated by program specific policies prior to submitting an institutional complaint.

The following procedures should be followed for all other types of grievances:

Step 1: Informal Resolution

In many instances, an issue or problem is due to a misunderstanding that can be resolved with open and honest communication. A student who has a grievance must first attempt to resolve concerns on an informal basis through direct communication (conversation, e-mail, letter) with the faculty or staff member(s) involved.

If the concern is not resolved through direct communication, the informal grievance should be directed to the appropriate supervisor, director, or School Dean/Associate Dean. If a student is uncertain who to contact regarding the complaint the Office of Student Development or the Office of Academic Affairs can assist in identifying the appropriate individual.

Students should attempt to resolve the issue informally within 30 days of the occurrence. If the matter still cannot be resolved, the student may file a formal grievance.

Step 2: Formal Grievance

A student may file a formal grievance if the issue remains unresolved after exhausting informal means. Formal grievances should be submitted by completing [Student Grievance Form](#) accessed through Advocate system. Formal complaints should be filed within 90 days of the event that prompted the complaint.

Grievances submitted via the Advocate system are received by the Associate Provost and/or the Vice President for Student Development and directed to the appropriate College official for review and resolution.

Formal student grievances addressed in this policy are not confidential, but will be treated as sensitive communication and kept within appropriate channels during the resolution process. As part of this process, individuals identified in the formal grievance will be notified of the grievance and asked to provide information regarding the occurrence or concern.

To comply with federal regulations, the college maintains a record of formal grievances and their resolution that is made available to the Higher Learning Commission evaluators at the time of comprehensive accreditation review.

Additional Resources

In the unlikely event that the student grievance cannot be resolved through institutional processes, students have the right to file a complaint with external licensing or accrediting agencies. It is recommended that students filing a grievance with an external agency refer to the individual agency policies to familiarize themselves with agency requirements including filing deadlines and expectations for first exhausting institutional avenues for resolution.

Relevant external agencies:

Iowa College Student Aid Commission

475 SW 5th St., Suite D

Des Moines, IA 50309-4608

Phone: (877) 272-4456

Student Complaint Form: <https://iowacollegeaid.gov/StudentComplaintForm>

Higher Learning Commission

230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500

Chicago, IL 60604

Phone: (800) 624-7440

<https://www.hlcommission.org/Student-Resources/complaints.html>