

Grievance Policies and Procedures

Northwest Tech aims to provide clear information regarding its procedures for receiving complaints and grievances from students and other constituencies, responds to them in a timely manner, and analyzes them to improve its processes. Northwest Tech personnel shall maintain records of formal written student complaints, which will be filed with the Assistant to the President. These records will include information about the disposition of the complaints. These records will be kept on file, for possible review, for a minimum of two years past the disposition date of the case(s).

Northwest Tech has established this process to address student issues, problems, and concerns relating to college facilities, services and academic functions.

A. Student Complaint/Grievance Procedure

In the event that a student may feel the need to voice a complaint or concern regarding a college employee, or an educational activity associated with the college, the student is directed to use the procedure outlined below. (An exception to this procedure would involve complaints of a sexual assault/harassment or one of a discrimination nature. Those complaints should be directed either according to the procedure below or to the Dean of Students and/or another NWKTC mandatory reporter as indicated in NWKTC's sexual assault/harassment/anti-discrimination policy).

First Step: Direct Discussion With Employee. The first step normally should be to discuss the concern/complaint directly with the employee. Students are encouraged to talk to the employee as soon as possible. Many situations can be satisfactorily addressed, or misunderstandings clarified, at this level. When this occurs, no further action is called for.

Step 2 (If Step 1 does not resolve complaint/grievance): Division Chair Review. In the event that a concern/complaint cannot be adequately addressed through direct discussion with the employee, the student may take another step by contacting the Division Chair. To do so, the student should submit a **written statement**.

Written Statement. The written statement should identify the student, employee, course or activity, a factual description of the problem, and any other relevant information such as past efforts to address the problem.

Employee Response. Normally, the Division Chair will ask the employee to review the written statement of complaint and to file a written response. The Division Chair may also meet with the employee to discuss the situation and to review any related materials that may be relevant. This must be completed or moved up the process within three (3) business days.

Division Chair. Following his or her review, the Division Chair is authorized to undertake whatever action and/or discussion may be called for per relevant College policies and procedures. That action may involve denying the complaint, working out a solution with the employee, referring the matter to another office, or other appropriate action. The Division Chair action will be communicated in writing to the student and the employee. A copy of this response will also be submitted to the Dean of Student Service's Office.

Step 3: Dean of Student Service Review. In the event that the student or the employee is dissatisfied with the resolution at the division level, he or she may appeal the decision to the Dean of Student Services. A student wishing to pursue this level of appeal should submit a written statement to the Dean of Student Services accompanied by a complaint form. The Dean of Student Service will review the complaint and the record of review at the division level and will adjudicate the case within ten (10) business days. Any appeal made in writing to this point or beyond is to be considered a formal complaint/grievance.

Step 4: Vice President Review. Any appeal of the decision made by the Dean of Students Services shall be done in writing and be accompanied by complaint form and shall be filed within ten (10) business days of the decision letter. The Vice President will then adjudicate the appeal in writing within ten (10) business days and supply a copy of the adjudication to the Office of the President.

Step 5: Presidential Appeal. Should the student deem it necessary he or she may appeal in writing the decision of the Vice President to the Office of the President. This must also be done in writing and filed within ten (10) business days. The President shall respond within ten (10) days and may do so by meeting with parties involved or by written response.

Step 6: Student Welfare Committee Review. Should the student desire to appeal the review of the President's decision, the student may submit a signed written statement of appeal within ten (10) business days to the Board Clerk. The Clerk will then notify the Chairperson of the Student Welfare Committee. The Student Welfare Committee Chairperson will then arrange to hear the grievance prior to the next regularly scheduled board meeting. The Board Clerk will notify all parties concerned of the decision of the Student Welfare Committee within ten (10) business days from the hearing.

Step 7 (Final Step): Area Board of Control. Should the student desire to appeal the decision of the Student Welfare Committee to the Area Board of Control, the student may submit a signed written statement of appeal within ten (10) business days to the Board Clerk. The Clerk will then notify the Chairperson of the Area Board of Control. The Board Chairperson will then arrange to hear the grievance at the next regularly scheduled board meeting. The Board Clerk will notify all parties concerned of the decision of the Area Board of Controls within ten (10) business days from the hearing.