

COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA-FSM

BOARD POLICY NO. 4903

Student Complaint Policy

Date Adopted: 24 August 2010

Date Revised:

Date Reviewed: 24 March 2014; 03-05 December 2025

References:

A. Policy Statement

The College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) is committed to providing students with a clear and fair process for addressing concerns or complaints about college policies, procedures, services, or staff behavior.

1. Students have the right to raise concerns without fear of retaliation.
2. Complaints should first be addressed informally whenever possible.
3. If informal resolution is unsuccessful, a formal written complaint may be filed.
4. All complaints will be handled in a timely, objective, and documented manner.

B. Scope

This policy applies to all students of COM-FSM and covers:

1. General complaints regarding staff, administrators, or College services (excluding grades).
2. Faculty-related complaints (excluding grades).
3. Grade-related complaints.

C. Definitions

To ensure clarity and a common understanding, the following terms are defined as they relate to the student complaint process. These definitions describe the types of complaints and the corresponding processes available to students:

1. **Informal Complaint.** A concern raised directly with the person involved (faculty, staff, or administrator) or their immediate supervisor to resolve the issue collaboratively and quickly without submitting a written complaint.
2. **Formal Complaint.** A written complaint submitted when an issue cannot be resolved through the informal process. The complaint is reviewed and investigated by the appropriate College administrator, with a written decision provided to the student.
3. **Appeal.** A request to have the outcome of a formal complaint reviewed by a higher authority, such as a Vice President or the President, to ensure fairness and compliance with college policy.

D. Principles

The Student Complaint Policy is guided by the following principles to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability in resolving student concerns:

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1. **Fairness and Impartiality.** All complaints will be handled objectively, without favoritism or bias.
2. **Timely Resolution.** Complaints will be addressed promptly, with clear timelines for each step.
3. **Accessibility.** Students have clear guidance on how to raise complaints and whom to contact.
4. **Documentation.** Records of all complaints, decisions, and appeals are maintained for accountability and reference.
5. **Right to Appeal.** Students have the ability to appeal unresolved complaints to higher levels of administration, including the President.

These principles ensure that all students know their rights and the steps available to resolve concerns effectively.

E. Types of Complaint Processes and the Appeal Process

The college provides a structured process for addressing student concerns, depending on the nature and severity of the issue:

1. Informal Complaint Process

- a. Encourages open communication and dialogue.
- b. If unresolved, the concern may be escalated to the appropriate supervisor or administrator.
- c. Designed to resolve most complaints efficiently.

2. Formal Complaint Process

- a. Provides a documented record of the concern and its resolution.
- b. Ensures a structured review by the College to address unresolved issues.
- c. May be escalated to higher levels of administration through the appeal process if necessary.

3. Appeal Process

- a. Allows a student to have the outcome of a formal complaint reviewed by a higher authority.
- b. Appeals are submitted in writing to the next level of authority, such as a Vice President or the President.
- c. The appeal is reviewed along with all documentation from the formal complaint investigation.
- d. A written decision is issued, constituting the final determination.

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F. Procedures

For detailed guidance on how to file and resolve complaints, including timelines, contact points, required forms, and steps for grade-related disputes, students should refer to the **Student Complaint Procedures** (AP No. 4903). This procedures provide step-by-step instructions for the informal and formal complaint processes, as well as the appeal process, ensuring that students can navigate the complaint system effectively.