

Student Grievance/Complaint Policy

The purpose of this procedure is to establish a process for students to express and resolve misunderstandings, concerns, or grievances/complaints that they have with any seminary employee in a prompt, fair, and equitable manner. This procedure emphasizes informal resolution.

I. GRIEVABLE MATTERS

A student may use this procedure if the student believes that a seminary employee has violated a seminary policy or has otherwise acted in a manner resulting in unfair treatment of the student.

II. NONGRIEVABLE MATTERS

A student may not use this procedure for grievances related to the following matters:

- A. Actions of other students, which are handled under the Student Code of Conduct.
- B. Grade appeals, which are handled under the Grade Appeal Policy.
- C. Allegations of discrimination or other conduct that falls within the jurisdiction of the Sexual Harassment or other seminary policies that contain grievance, hearing and/or appeal procedures.
- D. The outcomes of student disciplinary proceedings.
- E. Matters concerning the student in his or her capacity as an employee of the seminary, which are resolved in accordance with applicable personnel policies.
- F. Billing disputes.

III. CAMPUS SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Prior to initiating an informal or formal grievance under this policy, a student may choose to contact a campus consultant to assist him or her in making decisions about how to address the situation of concern and whether to pursue an informal or formal grievance under this policy. Consultants will maintain confidentiality to the extent reasonably possible. The following people will serve as consultants under this policy:

- Dean of Students, hkuo@eden.edu
- Title IX Coordinator, mwobbe@eden.edu

IV. PROCEDURE

Any student alleging a grievable matter shall pursue the grievance as follows:

Step 1. Informal Discussion with Seminary Employee

In many cases, informal actions can be taken to resolve a dispute between a student and a seminary employee. The student may choose to meet with the employee and make a good faith effort to resolve the dispute promptly and fairly. This discussion should be initiated within fourteen (14) working days of the grievable event or as soon thereafter as reasonably possible. If this conversation does not resolve the issue, or if the student does not feel that he or she can discuss the matter with the employee, the student may, but is not required to, contact one of the consultants identified in Section III above to discuss the situation.

Step 2. Discussion with Supervisor

If a satisfactory resolution is not reached after direct discussion with the employee, or if the student chooses not to discuss the matter informally with the employee, the student shall, within fourteen (14) working days of the informal discussion or grievable event, or as soon thereafter as reasonably possible, meet with the employee's supervisor or the individual to whom such employee reports, who will attempt to resolve the situation informally. If a faculty member is the subject of a grievance, the student should ordinarily discuss the matter with the Academic Dean, who may refer the matter to a member of the Faculty Development Committee. The supervisor or Dean shall notify the employee that a grievance has been raised by the student, provide information about the nature of the grievance, and indicate that he or she will attempt to resolve the matter. The supervisor, Dean or designee shall investigate the matter, propose a resolution, and then provide a copy of a summary in writing to the student and the employee. This shall be done within 60 days or as soon thereafter as reasonably possible.

Step 3. Formal Grievance

If the matter is not resolved through the informal process, the student may submit a written statement of the grievance to the Academic Dean within fourteen (14) working days after the informal process has ended. The statement shall contain:

- a) a complete narrative of the circumstances giving rise to the grievance;
- b) identification of the parties involved, including names, addresses, and contact information;
- c) a statement of the remedy requested.

Remedies under this procedure are generally limited to restoring losses suffered by the student or making changes in seminary policy, practice, or procedure. Monetary damages, fines or penalties, or disciplinary action against the individual who is the subject of the grievance are not remedies available to the student under this policy. The Dean shall notify the appropriate vice president or other administrator that a formal grievance is pending in his or her area of responsibility. The employee shall also be notified of the grievance. Written copies of the grievance statement will be provided to the appropriate vice president, dean, or other administrator, and to the employee.

Step 4. Investigation of Grievance

The Dean or a designee will gather any material deemed necessary for review and will meet with all parties directly related to the grievance, in order to gather facts and information needed to make a fair and equitable decision. The student and the individual against whom a grievance is filed may be advised or accompanied by another person at any stage of the grievance procedure, except that practicing attorneys may not participate in any meetings as a representative of any party. This stage of the grievance procedure shall be completed within thirty (30) days after the Dean receives the grievance, or as soon thereafter as reasonably possible.

Step 5. Grievance Decision Within seven (7) working days after completion of the investigation, the Dean shall issue a written finding as to whether the employee has violated a seminary policy or has otherwise acted in a discriminatory or arbitrary manner, resulting in unfair treatment of

the student, and, if so, what remedies should be made available to the student as described in Step 3(c). A copy of the decision will be sent to the vice president or dean in the appropriate administrative area, as well as to the student and the employee. The decision of the Dean shall be final.

V. GRIEVANCES AGAINST CERTAIN ADMINISTRATORS

Grievances against the Dean or President of the seminary shall be addressed as described below but shall otherwise follow the procedures of this policy to the greatest extent practicable.

Academic Dean.

Grievances against the Dean shall be reported to the president of the seminary, who shall direct a designee to conduct an investigation and report written findings and recommendations to the president. The president shall issue a written decision, which may be appealed by the Dean or student to the Academic Committee of the Board of Trustees. The decision by the Academic Committee represents the final decision of the seminary. The president shall notify the chair of the Board of Trustees about the grievance and shall keep the chair informed throughout the grievance process.

President.

Grievances against the president shall be reported to the chair of Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, who will inform the chair of the Board of Trustees. The chair shall appoint a panel of three tenured faculty members, who shall conduct an investigation and report findings and recommendations to the Executive Committee, which shall issue a written decision. The decision of the Committee may be appealed by the student or president to the chair of the Board of Trustees. The Board's decision represents the final decision of the seminary.

VI. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Although disciplinary action against the employee is not a remedy available to a student who files a grievance under this policy, the seminary reserves the right to impose discipline on its employees as a result of determinations made through the grievance process. Any such discipline will be imposed only after a final decision has been issued and/or the appeal period has run with no appeal being filed. If the employee is a staff member, the employee's supervisor, in consultation with the President, shall determine whether disciplinary sanctions should be imposed. If the employee is a faculty member, the Dean, in consultation with the President, shall determine whether disciplinary sanctions should be imposed. The imposition of disciplinary sanctions may not be appealed by the employee under this policy. Faculty members may appeal the imposition of disciplinary sanctions under the faculty grievance procedure in the Faculty Handbook.

VII. CONFIDENTIALITY

All parties to the proceedings held or actions taken under this policy shall maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings and all written reports to the extent reasonably possible. Original records, documents, and reports shall be maintained in the office of the President.

VIII. NON-RETALIATION

No person against whom a grievance is filed, or any other person shall intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for filing a grievance under this policy. Complaints of such retaliation or interference may be filed and processed under this procedure.

IX. TIME GUIDELINES

If the seminary is not in session during part of these proceedings, or in instances where additional time may be required because of the complexity of the case, unavailability of the parties or witnesses, or other extenuating circumstances, any of the time periods specified herein may be extended, at the request of any party or individual involved in the grievance procedure. If a period is extended, the student and the person against whom the grievance has been filed will be so informed.

X. MISUSE OF POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide a mechanism to address legitimate student complaints and grievances. Any student member of the seminary community is encouraged to use the procedures provided in this policy, not only for the benefit and protection of that individual but ultimately of the entire seminary community. However, fabricated complaints undermine the purpose and effectiveness of this policy. Accordingly, persons who knowingly fabricate complaints may be subject to disciplinary action. Allegations of fabricated complaints must be reported within ninety (90) days of the date the grievance was brought. Such allegations may be reported to the administrator handling the grievance, who shall investigate the allegations and take any appropriate action. The fact that a complaint may not result in a finding that an employee has violated a seminary policy or has otherwise acted in a manner resulting in unfair treatment of a student is not alone evidence that the complaint was fabricated.

If an NC-SARA student is dissatisfied with the resolution, then they may file a formal grievance against the school by contacting the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD)

<https://dhewd.mo.gov/higher-education/state-authorization-reciprocity-agreement>