

Complaint/Concern Protocol

Complaints and concerns arrive in the Director of Student Life and Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Any parties could use the Questions/Concerns/Comments button on the homepage or visit in person any of these two offices. They could arrive in a variety of formats—letters, e-mails, telephone calls, “House Calls” and office visits. They come from a broader array of constituencies—students, faculty, staff, board members, elected officials, the press, and community at large.

Complaints and concerns should be promptly addressed and in the absence of extenuating circumstances, a response should be provided within five working days.

Each complaint or concern received will be logged in noting the date, constituency, originator’s name, a description of the complaint, the individual assigned to address the issue, assigned report date, actual report date, and file reference section. Where possible a copy of the written complaint/concern document should be filed in the Office of the Provost.

Student Complaints

The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe and organized way for students to voice complaints that they have. It is important that students have a wide-spread understanding of how to rectify situations that pertain to their experience at USW. When practiced well, the ability to biblically and respectfully resolve conflict is a restorative process for the individuals involved.

The University of the Southwest values the process of resolving complaints that may arise. Seeking resolution is the conscientious response to a grievance that one may have within any community. Conflict resolution is often the necessary element to bring health back to a community. Complaints commenced through this process may bring about an inquiry and/or disciplinary action involving another member of the University community (student, faculty or staff). Student Life is committed to keeping a confidential and professional process that facilitates resolution within a safe environment, guarding against retaliation.

Steps

1. Initially, complaints should be resolved respectfully following the biblical model of addressing the person or department responsible for resolving your complaint. If you are unsure who that person is, please contact the Office of Student Life to get appropriate direction. You may find the student complaint policy and form at the links below:

<https://www.usw.edu/Student-Life/Student-Complaint-Policy>

<https://www.usw.edu/Student-Life/Student-Complaint-Form>

2. If step 1 is not successful in resolving your complaint, formal complaints may be registered with the Office of Student Life. Formal complaints may be registered by downloading the complaint form located on the student life link. Please complete

this form and turn it in to the Office of Student Life for the Director of Student Life. This form will be kept confidential.

3. The Office of Student Life will act as a mediator between the student and party or parties named in the complaint. After your complaint is reviewed, you will receive a letter documenting the receipt and appraisal of your grievance from the office who is named in the document within ten days of receiving the complaint.

4. If the complaint is not resolved in steps 1-3, the Director of Student Life will determine if any further actions are required from the University in order for resolution to be made.

Students should seek resolution of complaints with the other party or parties involved. When unable to reach a resolution, students should register complaints, in writing, with the Director for Student Life.

In accordance with the new Federal Program Integrity Rules effective July 1, 2011, the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) will review complaints which were unable to be resolved through the institution's internal complaint process.

The University of the Southwest is a NC-SARA (National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements) institution. In addition to the steps above, a student may refer to the complaint process through NMHED and NM-SARA.

For example:

What can I do if I am still not satisfied?

Student complaint process for non-distance education students:

The New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) has authority to help facilitate resolution to student complaints, only after the student has utilized all internal complaint procedures at the educational institution. Please visit <http://www.hed.nm.gov/students/hed-student-complaint-form.aspx> for more information about NMHED's Student Complaint Process for non-distance education students. Complaints regarding grades and student conduct violations shall not be reviewed by NMHED.

Student complaint process for distance education students:

The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) is an agreement among member states, districts and territories that sets national standards for interstate offering of post-secondary distance education courses and programs. University of the Southwest (USW) is a NC-SARA approved institution and the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) is the NC-SARA Portal Entity for New Mexico. Distance Education students attending USW who would like to resolve a

grievance should follow USW's established Student Complaint Process. However, if an issue cannot be resolved internally, you may file a NC-SARA complaint with the New Mexico Higher Education Department. Complaints regarding grades and student conduct violations shall not be reviewed by NMHED. Please visit <https://hed.nm.gov/students-parents/nc-sara> for more information.

Additional contact information for complaints:

NMHED/PPSD, 2044 Galisteo

St. Suite 4

Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505-

2100 505-476-8442 or 505-476-

8416

<https://hed.nm.gov/students-parents/student-complaints>

The formal written response should be copied to all concerned parties except in cases where confidentiality directs otherwise.