



FR 4.5 | Student Complaints

The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints.

Compliance Finding: IN COMPLIANCE

Narrative:

Student Complaint Procedures

The University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) has a written Student Grievance Policy that provides a formal, standardized method by which students can seek a resolution to interactions or situations where treatment by a faculty and/or staff is considered unjust or improper. These complaints are categorized as 1) academic grievances relating to violation of teaching responsibilities, and 2) non-academic grievances dealing with conditions that disadvantage a student unnecessarily such as instructor's abuse of authority, discrimination, harassment, and wrongful assessment of fees. Each of these types of complaints has a specific process for review, including identification of an individual or office responsible for the process and maintenance of the records. However, the philosophy at USCB is to resolve complaints in the early stages, prior to filing a formal grievance.

Student Complaint Process

The purpose of the student grievance process is to furnish a student enrolled at USCB, whether as a full-time or part-time student and regardless of course mode of delivery (face-to-face or distance education), with a formal, standardized method for seeking a resolution when the student believes he or she has been treated unjustly or improperly by a faculty or staff member. Students seeking a redress of grievances may do so without fear of reprisal. The full Student Grievance Policy can be found in the [USCB Student Handbook](#) and the [University Bulletin](#), both of which are available on the USCB website. Hardcopies are available upon request.

Academic Grievance Policy ([Example](#))

Academic Grievances are addressed through the Academic Affairs Office. Academic grievances against instructors are limited to violation of teaching responsibility, violation of the University policy on Protection of Freedom of Expression, or violation of the University policy on Protection

Against Improper Disclosure. In most cases, the student must first meet with the instructor, and then, if necessary, with the department chair or program coordinator, and subsequently with the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (EVCAA). The grievance may be referred to the USCB Honor Court only if these options have been exhausted. The Academic Affairs office is responsible for maintaining records of these complaints, the steps taken, documentation of the review process in the [Academic Grievance Log](#), and the outcome of the review.

Non-Academic Grievance Policy ([Example](#))

Non-Academic Grievances are filed with the Vice Chancellor for Student Development using a tracking form that identifies the actions taken and when they were taken. These grievances concern conditions that disadvantage a student unnecessarily, including an instructor's abuse of authority, discrimination, or improper behavior, wrongful assessing of fees, and records errors. Grievances result in a conference between parties affected within five days of the incident, and may proceed from there, as appropriate, to the EVCAA or the Vice-Chancellor for Student Development (or the Chancellor if either of these is the subject of the grievance). If necessary, the grievance may be referred to the USCB Judicial Board, which renders the final decision. The non-academic grievance process is overseen by the Vice Chancellor for Student Development who is also responsible for updating the [grievance tracking form](#), and storing records of the grievance and its disposition, and documentation of the review process in the [Non-Academic Grievance Log](#).

Complaints to the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE)

The SCCHE has [Procedures for Handling Complaints](#) including a Student Complaint Form that USCB makes available to students and the public via the website, electronically, or hardcopy.

Complaints to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)

Although no complaints involving SACSCOC have been received to date, they would be routed through the Academic Affairs office. For student complaints regarding USCB accreditation, the SACSCOC contact information is published in the [University Bulletin](#), in the [Student Handbook](#), and on the [University Website](#)

Distance Education, Correspondence Education, and Dual Enrollment

There have been no grievances regarding distance education or dual enrollment. If they occurred they would be addressed in the same manner as other grievances. USCB does not offer correspondence courses.

Table 1: USCB Student Grievance Processes

Type of Complaint	Examples	Responsible Entity	Order of Responses*	Record Location	Elements of Record	Document Retention
Academic Grievance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violation of teaching responsibilities, • Violation of policy on Protection of Freedom of Expression • Violation of policy on Protection Against Improper Disclosure 	Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructor 2. Department/ Program Head 3. EVCAA 4. USCB Honor Court 	Academic Affairs Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail of complaint • Documentation of attempted resolution discussions/ meetings • Documentation of process • Disposition notification 	5 years
Non-Academic Grievance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improper conduct by faculty or staff • Discrimination • Wrongful assessment of fees • Abuse of authority 	Vice Chancellor for Student Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructor/Staff member 2. EVCAA (if regarding Academic Affairs employees) or VC Student Development (all other employees and issues) 3. Chancellor (if EVCAA or VC Student Development is a party) 4. USCB Judicial Board 	Office of Student Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Grievance Tracking Form • Detail of complaint • Documentation of attempted resolution discussions/ meetings • Documentation of process • Disposition notification 	5 years

**Grievances and complaints are only carried to the level necessary to reach agreement/satisfaction between the involved parties.*

Supporting Documents

1. [Student Grievance Process 2014-2015 Student Handbook](#)
2. [Student Grievance Process 2014-2015 University Bulletin](#)
3. [Academic Grievance Example](#)
4. [Academic Grievance Log](#)
5. [Non-Academic Grievance Example](#)
6. [Non-Academic Grievance Tracking Form](#)
7. [Non-Academic Grievance Log](#)
8. [SCCHE Procedures for Handling Complaints and Form](#)
9. [SACSCOC Contact Information University Bulletin](#)
10. [SACSCOC Contact Information Student Handbook](#)
11. [SACSCOC Contact Information Website](#)