

**ADDENDUM TO STUDENT AFFAIRS**  
Student Grievance Procedure and Resolution Process

## Student Grievance Procedure and Resolution Process

It is the practice of North Georgia Technical College to maintain a grievance process available to all students that provides an open and meaningful forum for their grievances and the resolution of these grievances. The college seeks to resolve student grievances, complaints and concerns in a time responsive and fair manner.

This procedure does not address grievances related to unlawful harassment, discrimination and/or retaliation for reporting harassment/ discrimination against students. Those complaints are handled in accordance to TCSG's Unlawful Harassment and Discrimination of Students Policy and Procedure.

Special Note: The Student Grievance Procedure and Form is NOT to be used for Grade Appeals, Academic Misconduct, and Harassment or Discrimination complaints. Please refer to the college's Catalog and Student Handbook for details on these respective procedures.

Students with a concern or grievance should begin the process at the institution (college) level. To submit a student concern/grievance at the local college level, please follow North Georgia Technical College's Student Grievance Procedure.

### Student Grievance Procedure

The Student Grievance Procedure is established to resolve difficulties or problems encountered in college-related activities. A grievance is taken seriously and therefore must be of a compelling, substantive, and verifiable nature. A grievance about a decision made by a member of the faculty or staff may only be filed by students who have been directly, adversely, and/or substantially affected by the decision. Repeated filings of the same grievance, filings of a frivolous nature, or a capricious grievance made against school personnel and policies will be considered an abuse of the student grievance process and will be dismissed.

The Student Grievance Procedure applies to matters that may include classroom learning environment, course content, access to classes, student advisement, and quality of services to students. The policy also applies to matters concerning services provided by all departments within the college.

### Definitions

**Grievable issues:** Issues arising from the application of a policy/procedure to the student's specific case is always grievable. Specifically, grievable are issues related to student advisement, improper disclosure of grades, unfair testing procedures and poor treatment of students; this is a representative list and is not meant to be exhaustive.

**Non-grievable issues:** Issues which have a separate process for resolution (i.e. disciplinary sanctions, FERPA, financial aid, academic grades, discrimination, harassment etc.) are not grievable and a student must take advantage of the process in place.

**Business days:** Weekdays that the college administrative offices are open.

**Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA):** The staff member in charge of the student services division at the college.

**Retaliation:** Unfavorable action taken, condition created, or other action taken by a student/employee for the purpose of intimidation directed toward a student because the student initiated a grievance or participated in an investigation of a grievance.

**Grievant:** the student who is making the complaint.

### **Procedure for Filing a Grievance**

The following section details the process for resolving students' grievances. Grievances that do not follow the process described below will not be considered by the college.

A. For all timelines established herein, if a student will need additional time, an extension may be granted at the Vice President for Student Affairs' discretion.

B. **Informal Grievance Procedure:** Students with grievable issues should resolve those issues, if possible, on an informal basis without the filing of a formal grievance.

- 1) A student has ten (10) business days from the date of the incident being grieved to resolve the matter informally by approaching his/her instructor, department chair or any other staff or faculty member directly involved in the grieved incident.
- 2) If this process does not result in a resolution of the grievable issue, the student may proceed to the formal grievance procedure below.

C. **Formal Grievance Procedure:** If a student cannot resolve their grievance informally, he or she may use this formal grievance procedure.

- 1) Within fifteen (15) business days of the incident being grieved, the student must file a formal grievance in the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) or the President's designee with the following information:
  - a. Name
  - b. Date
  - c. Brief description of incident being grieved
  - d. Remedy requested
  - e. Signature
  - f. Informal remedy attempted by student and outcome
- 2) If the grievance is against the VPSA, the student shall file the grievance with the President's Office.
- 3) The VPSA, or the President's designee, will investigate the matter and supply a written response to the student within fifteen (15) business days.
- 4) If the grieved incident involves possible unlawful harassment, discrimination, or retaliation for reporting unlawful harassment/discrimination, the investigation will be handled pursuant to the Procedure: Unlawful Harassment and Discrimination of Students.
- 5) If the grieved incident is closely related to an incident being processed through the harassment/discrimination or disciplinary procedures, the proceedings under the Unlawful Harassment and Discrimination of Student's procedure will take precedence, then the disciplinary procedure, and then the student's grievance will be addressed. The grievance will not be processed until after the other procedures have run their course.

- 6) The VPSA, or the President's designee, shall be granted an additional fifteen (15) business days to investigate the grievance upon notice to the grieving student.

D: **Appeal:** The student may appeal the decision rendered by the VPSA or the President's designee to the President. Only the student has the right to appeal.

- 1) A student shall file a written appeal to the President within five (5) business days of receiving the response of the investigation of the formal grievance.
- 2) The appeal will be decided based entirely on documents provided by the student and the administration; therefore, the student must ensure that he or she has provided all relevant documents with his or her appeal.
- 3) At the sole discretion of the President, grievance appeals at the institution may be held in one of the following two ways:
  - a) The President may review the information provided by the student and administration and make the final decision; or
  - b) The President may appoint a cross-functional committee to make the final decision.
  - c) The decision of either the President or the cross-functional committee shall be made within ten (10) business days of receipt of the appeal.
- 4) Whichever process is chosen by the President the decision of the grievance appeal is final.

**Record Retention:** Documents relating to formal grievances including investigations, dispositions and the grievance itself shall be held for five (5) years after the graduation of the student or the date of the student's last attendance.