

Academic Affairs Policy #9
Academic Affairs Response to Written Complaints

Date of Current Version: January 9, 2013

Responsible Office: Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

1. PURPOSE

This policy provides the Division of Academic Affairs procedures for collecting and recording written student complaints in compliance with University Policy 3110, as well as complaints received from the public regarding academic issues.

2. AUTHORITY

The Board of Visitors is given the authority to establish policies for the university. This power is delegated to the President in areas in which the Board has not established policy. The establishment of policies and procedures concerning the Division of Academic Affairs has been delegated by the President to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost).

3. DEFINITIONS

Public Complaint

A written, signed complaint regarding academically-related concerns submitted to the Office of the Provost by a non-student.

Complaint Log

A written record of collected student complaints maintained within the appropriate office. The log must contain the following elements: Date of complaint, name of complainant, description of the complaint and response.

Student Complaint

A written, signed complaint regarding academically-related concerns and grievances filed under this policy. "Student" refers to a currently enrolled student at the university, including part-time, full-time, for credit, not for credit, undergraduate, graduate or continuing education. Written complaints from students include emails sent from a university account that include the sender's name and contact information.

4. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all written complaints accepted by areas within the Division of Academic Affairs that are not covered by other university procedures for filing complaints.

5. POLICY

- 5.1 University Policy 3110 (<http://www.jmu.edu/JMUpolicy/3110.shtml>) provides a standard for recording and collecting student complaints that are not covered by other university procedures for filing complaints, but which concern the student's role as a student. The university has established procedures for responding to discrimination or harassment complaints, and these complaints are excluded from the logging requirements of this policy. The policy is applicable across the divisions of the university.
- 5.2 A complaint must be written and signed, including emails that include the date of the complaint, sender's name and contact information.
- 5.3 The Academic Affairs Division logs complaints from students and from the public.

6. PROCEDURES

- 6.1 According to the university policy, each division of the university is responsible for accepting written complaints and for determining appropriate procedures for logging and for regularly reviewing them. The Provost, with approval of the Academic Council, has determined that the complaints to be logged by the academic division will include only those about faculty or the instructional process. The complaints must come through established procedures for grievance or grade appeal/review.
- 6.2 The procedures to be followed in registering these concerns are found in the university catalogs:
Undergraduate: <http://www.jmu.edu/catalog/12/general/policies.html#review> – Grade Review Process; Grievance Procedure for Students
Graduate: <http://www.jmu.edu/gradcatalog/12/general/regulations.html> - Grade Review Process; Grievance Procedure for Students
- 6.3 Logs recording disposition of grievance procedures will be maintained by the deans and reviewed annually by the dean and Provost as part of the annual report process.
- 6.4 Logs recording the disposition of grade reviews will be kept by the University Registrar and reviewed annually by the Registrar and the Vice Provost for Academic Programs.
- 6.5 Academically-related concerns and complaints from students made or referred to the Office of the Provost and public complaints regarding academic affairs will be referred to the Vice Provost for Academic Programs or the Director of Academic Student Services and reviewed annually by the director and the vice provost.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

Dean

The dean is responsible for the annual review of complaint logs regarding grievances for the appropriate college.

Vice Provost for Academic Programs

The Vice Provost for Academic Programs is responsible for the annual review of complaint logs regarding grade reviews and academically-related concerns and complaints referred from the Office of the Provost.

Provost

The Provost is responsible for the annual review of complaint logs regarding grievances for all colleges within the Division of Academic Affairs.

8. SANCTIONS

Employees who fail to follow this policy are subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

9. EXCLUSIONS

The Provost may grant exceptions to this policy in the best interests of the institution.

10. INTERPRETATION

The authority to interpret this policy rests with the Provost.

Approved: January 9, 2013

A. Jerry Benson
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs