

PROCEDURE MANUAL

 ARIZONA WESTERN COLLEGE		PROCEDURE 551.1	
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		Last Revision Date:	12-01-2020; 08-23-2018
		Effective Date:	08-01-2008
Last Review Date:	02-07-2022		
Section:	Student Services	Subject:	Student Grievance

PURPOSE

To ensure that student concerns are promptly addressed and resolutions reached in a fair and just manner, it is essential that each student be given adequate opportunity to bring complaints and problems to the attention of the College with the assurance that each will be heard and due process afforded the student. The College seeks to work with the student to understand and address concerns before resorting to formal grievance procedures.

PROCEDURE

1. Definitions
 - 1.1 A *Grievance* is a complaint by an Arizona Western College student involving an alleged misapplication or violation of any College policy or procedure that adversely impacts the student, or any other dispute within the College that directly impacts the student in an adverse manner.
 - 1.2 A *Grievance* may include, but is not limited to, complaints alleging
 - 1.2.1 mistreatment by a College employee,
 - 1.2.2 errors in the assessment of fees or other financial obligations,
 - 1.2.3 registration errors,
 - 1.2.4 loss of financial aid eligibility, and/or
 - 1.2.5 student housing issues.
 - 1.3 A *Grievance* shall not include complaints or disputes on issues described in section 2 below.
 - 1.4 A *Student* is an individual who is matriculated or otherwise enrolled to attend class full- or part-time at Arizona Western College.
2. Issues and Disputes Not Covered in this Procedure
 - 2.1 Requests to review and challenge contents of student records will be processed according to Procedure 545.1.
 - 2.2 Grievances involving harassment or discrimination will be processed according to Policy 216 and Procedure 455.2.
 - 2.3 Grievances relating to sexual harassment will be processed according to Procedure 460.1.
 - 2.4 Appeals of disciplinary actions will be processed according to Procedure 550.1.
 - 2.5 Appeals or petition regarding instructional or academic issues will be processed according to Procedure 551.2.

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2.6 Complaints that, on their face, are not subject to possible resolution in a student grievance context. (An example would be a student complaint where the student's requested relief is prohibited by state or federal law.)

3. Informal Resolution

- 3.1 Before initiating the grievance process, the student is encouraged to make every effort to resolve the problem informally with the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance.
- 3.2 Alternatively or additionally, the student may present the informal grievance in writing to the person(s) alleged to have caused the grievance. This attempt to resolve the grievance informally should be started as soon as the student first becomes aware of the act or condition that is the basis of the grievance.
- 3.3 The student may present the informal grievance to the direct supervisor of the person alleged to have caused the grievance. Students uncertain about how to identify this person or determine how to proceed may consult the Vice President for Student Services, who shall identify the appropriate person.

4. Formal Resolution

Filing a formal grievance is a serious matter and should be done thoughtfully following the process as outlined below.

- 4.1 If the student is unable to reach an informal resolution, they may present the grievance in writing to the appropriate Vice President detailing the situation being grieved. The Vice President will assign resolution of the grievance to the appropriate next level supervisor. The next level supervisor will conduct an investigation as warranted to resolve any factual disputes.
- 4.2 The supervisor shall conduct a meeting in order for the student to present any information relevant to their grievance. The student will be allowed to have an advisor of their choice present in meetings throughout the grievance process. Advisors are not permitted to present the case or otherwise participate in the discussion, but may advise the student. Both the College and the student may seek legal advice at their own expense.
- 4.3 The supervisor's disposition of the grievance shall be reported to the student and the Vice President in writing within 15 business days from the date the written grievance was received and shall inform the student of the right to appeal the decision as-described in section 5 below.

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4.4 If the disposition extends beyond the 15 business days the supervisor shall inform the student of the delay and the expected response date.

5. Grievance Appeal Procedure

5.1 In all cases, the Vice President will be responsible for addressing appeals by a student who is not satisfied with the responses after all reviews by supervisors have been completed.

5.2 To request an appeal, the student must present an appeal statement in writing, together with all supervisors' written responses to the grievance, to the Vice President within five business days of receipt of the final review and determination.

5.3 The Vice President will review all documentation. A written decision shall be made within ten business days after reviewing the case.

5.4 The Vice President's decision shall constitute final College action.