



## Student Complaint Process

As learners within a college community, students, faculty and staff are encouraged to model appropriate, effective, and respectful interpersonal communication. If issues warranting a complaint arise, the parties involved should make a genuine effort to resolve them. When efforts to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution are unsuccessful, students are advised to proceed as promptly as possible to initiate a complaint. Similarly, staff, faculty, and administrators are advised to acknowledge receipt of a complaint promptly and to respond in an expeditious manner. Generally speaking, receipt of a complaint should be acknowledged within five (5) business days.

The following sections outline the academic complaint procedures and the general complaint procedures that are followed by all offices and departments at St. Thomas Aquinas College. If a student wishes to appeal the outcome of a policy/procedure or to question the manner in which the policy/procedure was administered, a complaint can be initiated at the most appropriate step within the Academic or General Complaint Procedures below. The final section of this document provides links to some of the more common categories of College policies and procedures.

***This process should not be used for matters involving Gender Based Sexual Misconduct. Any questions or concerns about such matters should be addressed to:***

***Maria Coupe, Director of Human Resources and Title IX Coordinator, Borelli Hall, (845) 398-4044***

### **Academic Complaint Procedures**

Students who wish to file a complaint about an academic concern should follow the appropriate procedure as outlined below:

#### *Grade Appeals*

1. In the case of a grade appeal, the student should first attempt a resolution of concerns by interacting directly with the faculty member involved.
2. If resolution is not achieved through direct interaction, the student must inform the relevant Academic Dean of his or her desire to appeal the grade. The Dean will acknowledge receipt of the appeal notice, and direct the student to the grade appeal

protocol form, giving the student a timeline for submission of the formal appeal. The Dean will review and investigate the case and notify the student in writing whether the appeal is granted or denied.

3. If the appeal is granted, the Dean will notify the faculty member who assigned the grade and contact the Registrar's Office with a change of grade form.
4. If the appeal is denied, Dean will notify the faculty member who assigned the grade and will convey to the student that he or she has the right to continue the appeal by setting up a meeting with the Provost.

#### *Academic Complaints, not regarding grades*

Students who wish to file a complaint about an academic concern unrelated to grades – complaints about faculty or classroom issues of any kind – should follow the procedure outlined below:

1. The student should attempt a resolution of concerns by interacting informally with the individual(s) involved and then, if necessary, with the first-line supervisor of the individual, department, or office.
2. If resolution is not achieved through informal interaction, the student may direct the complaint—verbally or in writing—to the Dean or Assistant Dean of the relevant School, who will attempt to facilitate resolution between the parties.
3. If resolution is not achieved through the initial intervention of the Dean or Assistant Dean, the matter can be directed as follows:
  - i. The student must present a formal written complaint using the student complaint form.
  - ii. Complaints should be submitted using the following guide for complaints initiated with an academic discipline:
    - Dean of the college/school for academic complaints.
    - Complaints not resolved at the Dean level can then be directed to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (or designee).

#### **General Complaint Procedures**

Students who wish to file a complaint about a non-academic concern should follow the procedure outlined below:

1. The student should attempt an informal resolution of concerns by interacting directly with the individual(s) involved or with the supervisor of the individual, department or office.
2. If resolution is not achieved through informal interaction, the student may direct the complaint – verbally or in writing – to the Director of the department or office. The Director will attempt to facilitate resolution between the parties.
3. If resolution is not achieved through the initial intervention of the Director, the matter can be directed as follows:
  - A. The student must present a formal written complaint using the student complaint form.
  - B. Complaints should be submitted using the following guide:
    - The appropriate Director responsible for the unit.
    - Complaints not resolved at the Director level can then be directed to the appropriate Vice President of the College.

All formal written complaints received using the complaint form must be recorded in the student complaint log Google document.

4. Unless otherwise specified, the Vice President (or designee) responsible for the unit will constitute the final decision-making authority for the College. Students have the right to appeal decisions to the President of the College within 10 business days of the Vice President's (or designee) decision. The results of complaints appealed at this level are final and may not be appealed further. *All appeals will be recorded in the student complaint log.*

Logs of all formal written complaints will be entered by the person receiving the complaint and will be stored in an access-limited Google document. The logs will be monitored by the area Vice Presidents or their designees.

#### Customer Service Complaint

- Follow the General Complaint Procedures above
- [Listing of Offices and Departments](#) (includes contact information for all of the individuals listed below)

#### Common College Policy/Procedure Categories

- Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeal
  - Contact Mr. Vin Crapanzano
- Grade Appeal
  - Contact Dr. Robert Murray
- Academic Dishonesty

- Contact Dr. Robert Murray
- Graduation Appeal
  - Contact Dr. Robert Murray
- Extenuating Circumstances Withdrawal
  - Contact Dr. Robert Murray
- Readmission Appeal
  - Contact Dr. Robert Murray
- Student Community Standards/Student Conduct Process
  - Contact Dr. Kirk Manning

Grievance (on the basis of personal status)

- Unfair Treatment/Discriminatory Practices
  - Contact Mr. Joe Donini
- ADA Grievance Procedures
  - Contact Mr. Joe Donini
- Sexual Harassment
  - Contact Mr. Joe Donini

**Procedure for Filing a Formal Written Complaint**

Students who wish to file a complaint should follow the procedures outlined in the General Student Complaint Policy above.

If you have already attempted informal resolution with the party involved via phone, email or in person, then you may file a Formal Written Complaint to the appropriate School Dean or Vice President using the form below. All Formal Written Complaints will be logged and available for viewing by area Vice Presidents. Complaints must be filed within 30 days of the alleged issue or the last recorded date of attendance.

The Formal Written Complaint Form is available on the College's website:

[www.stac.edu/student-life/student-development-policies/student-complaint-process](http://www.stac.edu/student-life/student-development-policies/student-complaint-process)