

## NORTHLAND COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

### 3240P STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

#### **Definitions:**

- Appeal:** A request for reconsideration of a grievance decision under Policy 3240, Procedure 3240, System Policy 3.8 and System Procedure 3.8.1.
- Complaint:** An oral or written claim concerning a college issue brought by a student alleging improper, unfair or arbitrary treatment.
- Grievance:** A written claim raised by a student, alleging improper, unfair, or arbitrary action by an employee involving the application of a specific provision of a college rule/regulation or a board policy or procedure. This policy does not apply to those college rules/regulations or to board policies or procedures that include an appeal or grievance process.
- Retaliation:** Retribution of any kind taken against a student for participating or not participating in a complaint, or grievance.
- Student:** An individual who is enrolled in a college, a group of such individuals or the campus student government.

#### **Notification and Publication:**

Northland Community and Technical College informs students of the established complaint and grievance policy and procedure through the Student Handbook and through its website.

#### **Informal Resolution:**

Northland encourages informal resolution of complaints by requiring that students discuss the complaint with the employee(s), and/or administrator(s). If not resolved through this informal discussion, a complaint may become a grievance if the complaint involves the application of a college rule/regulation or a board policy or procedure.

#### **Formal Resolution:**

All appeals, complaints, and grievances not resolved informally must be submitted in writing to the campus registrar. Students are encouraged to use the Appeal Form to submit formal appeals, complaints or grievances – they are located in Student Services and on the web. Appeals, complaints or grievances are reviewed by standing committees which report their findings directly to the student who has filed the appeal, complaint or grievance. Students may appeal the decision or recommendation through procedural steps listed below.

#### **Committees:**

Northland has established standing committees to review appeals, complaints and grievances: campus Academic Appeal Committees and the Student Services Appeal Committee. These groups review student appeals if an informal discussion cannot produce an acceptable remedy. A student who feels that his/her right to an education is being affected unfairly due to the presence of a college academic or non-academic policy or procedure will be directed to the appropriate review committee.

#### **Academic Appeal Committees:**

These campus committees consider the validity of all student academic appeals. Topics appropriate for review by these committees include, but are not limited to: curriculum and instruction issues, suspension, credit transfer, graduation requirements, withdrawal date deadline adjustments and unresolved academic issues. Suspension appeals are dealt with in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy 3070.

Membership consists of a Registrar's Office representative, a Student Services representative, an Academic Dean, a member of the Academic Affairs and Standards Council, faculty representatives, an ADA specialist, and may include a student representative. Faculty should comprise 50% or more of the Academic Appeals Committees.

The committee chairs will be elected by majority vote of each committee (not an administrator). Each member will hold one vote and the elected chair will only vote in the event of a tie. Committee members will refrain from voting if they have a conflict of interest with the issue being discussed. Any committee member directly involved with the appeal will not be in attendance during the review process.

#### **Student Services Appeal Committee:**

This committee's purpose will be to investigate and make recommendations to the College President's designee. Topics appropriate for review by this committee include, but are not limited to: appeals of nonacademic college policies and procedures (admissions, computer use, financial, etc). Membership consists of a business office representative, financial aid representative, student services representative, an ADA specialist, faculty representatives, and may include a student representative.

The committee chair will be elected by majority vote (not an administrator). Each member will hold one vote and the elected chair will only vote in the event of a tie. Committee members will refrain from voting if they have a conflict of interest with the issue being discussed. Any committee member directly involved with the appeal will not be in attendance during the review process.

#### **Steps for Filing**

1. The college Appeal Form (available from Student Services and on the web) should be accurately completed and returned to the campus registrar's office along with any supporting documentation.
  - Appeals concerning tuition, fees, and late withdrawals should be submitted by the end of the following term (Fall, Spring, Summer).
2. The campus registrar reviews the student appeal and assigns it to the appropriate committee or administrator.
3. If the appeal is directed to a committee, the committee appoints a member to gather information pertinent to the appeal and reports his or her findings to the committee.
4. Students have the right to present their case in person at the committee meeting. Students must notify the appropriate designee of their decision to present their case in person 24 hours prior to the date of the committee meeting. Students intending to bring another person who can provide information regarding the appeal to the meeting must notify the appropriate designee 24 hours prior to the date of the committee meeting.
5. The committee reserves the right to include other college personnel in the meeting to address issues of the appeal as needed.
6. The committees review and judge the merits of all information provided within 20 business days.
7. The Student Services Appeal committee makes recommendations to the college Dean of Student Affairs, who will inform the student of the outcome in writing within ten business days of the committee meeting.

- The student may appeal the Student Services appeal decision of the college Dean of Student Affairs to the College President within ten business days of the Dean of Student Affairs' decision.
8. The Academic Appeal committee informs the student of the outcome in writing within ten business days of the committee meeting.
- The student may appeal the Academic Appeal Committee's decision to the Senior Academic Officer (SAO) within ten business days of the committee's decision. The decision of the Senior Academic Officer is final. The decision of the Academic Appeal Committee or the SAO does not determine financial aid eligibility. Financial aid eligibility is determined through the reinstatement process as defined in Policy 3070.

Appeals to any administrator or designee must be submitted through the Registrar's Office and should include:

- Student name
- Student program
- Statement regarding why the committee decision should be reversed based on information previously considered.
- Completed Academic Improvement Plan, if necessary
- Related correspondence

**Retaliation:**

No retaliation of any kind shall be taken against a student for participating, or refusing to participate, in an appeal, complaint or grievance. Retaliation may be subject to action under appropriate student or employee policies.

**Administrative Complaint Statement and Reference to Policy:**

Appeals of federal, state, and Minnesota State policies and procedures will be directed to the College President or designee for referral to the appropriate federal or state agency. If the grievance involves a board policy, the actions of Northland's President or Senior Academic Officer, an issue of institutional or program quality such as an institution's compliance with the standards of an accrediting or licensing agency, or a claim of consumer fraud or deceptive trade practice, a student may further appeal the College decision to the Chancellor. The decision of the Chancellor is final and binding.

*Date of Implementation:*

*Date of Adoption:*

06/02/04

*Date & Subject of Revisions:*

05/09/06 AASC Reviewed

05/18/06 Executive Council Approval

02/12/08 AASC Reviewed

06/09/08 Rev. Position Titles

01/27/09 Reviewed

03/26/10 Reviewed

12/02/10 Made change to title of form; Student Appeal/Petition to Student Appeal

06/20/11 Revised

03/05/12 Revised

06/06/13 Revised due to administrative structure reorganization

04/07/14 Revised

05/22/14 Cabinet Approval

02/20/15 Reviewed

*02/23/16 Reviewed*  
*03/17/17 Reviewed*  
*04/04/18 Reviewed*  
*03/28/19 Reviewed*  
*02/27/20 Revised*  
*03/15/21 Reviewed*  
*03/16/22 Reviewed*