



Grievance Policy

The Grievance Policy applies to all students of the College. The purpose of the Grievance Policy is to resolve issues in the most effective manner. It provides a framework within which to deal with complaints, and allows for complaints to be resolved informally where possible, or through a formal grievance procedure where necessary.

Definition

The grievance occurs when a person is dissatisfied with any aspect of the College's services and activities, including both academic and non-academic matters, such as:

- the enrolment, induction/orientation process
- the quality of education
- academic issues, including student progress, evaluation, curriculum and awards
- access to personal records and/or handling of personal information
- particular way of treatment towards someone

This grievance procedure illustrates the actions to be taken by students, or persons seeking to enroll in a course of study with the College, to submit a grievance of an academic or non-academic nature.

Matters for Which a Grievance Can Be Submitted:

These include cases which are related to decisions and actions involving administrative or academic services, including: financial matters, application procedures, fines and payments, exclusion from events and facilities, interactions with Atlantis College staff and breaches of privacy of personal information (e.g. student fees, student loan, etc.).

Terms to be used:

- 1) Complaint: A formal complaint takes place if a grievance cannot be resolved informally (for example, the affected parties discussing the matter) and is written down for official processing.
- 2) Complainant: This refers to the person who wishes and/or submits the complaint.
- 3) Respondent: This refers to the person to whom the grievance is filed.
- 4) Appeal: If a person is not satisfied with a decision made by the College, he/she has 20 (twenty) working days from the date stated within the written notification in which to lodge an appeal to have the case reviewed. This involves decisions in relation to complaints outcomes and evaluation appeals, as well as notifications of unsatisfactory continuous course assessment, unsatisfactory attendance, misbehaviour, refusals of transfer applications, and/or pending cancellation of enrolment.

During all stages of this procedure the College will take all steps to ensure that:

- The complainant and the respondent will not be victimized or discriminated against.
- The complainant has an opportunity to formally present his/her case and each party to the grievance may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings.
- A full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the complainant or the respondent.
- Where the internal grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, the College will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome.
- There is no cost to the complainant for utilizing this grievance and appeals process.

Grievance Committee

The Grievance committee consists of the following:

- The Executive Director (Chair)
- The Academic Director or other appointed representative
- The Director of Student Affairs or other appointed representative
- One (1) faculty member
- One (1) student elected representative

The committee must be renewed every two (2) years. Any relevant documents should be kept by the committee members for a minimum period of five (5) years after the resolution. These

members should not be in any case related to the individuals involved in the complaint to avoid any biased result and/or decision. If a committee member is related to a case, he/she must be replaced by another individual.

Students (either individually or as a group) can utilize the grievance procedure on the following grounds:

- Ground 1: Physical and/or learning disabilities e.g. the student may claim that no remedies or further rights according to his/her case of physical and/or learning disability, were appropriately provided either during his/her continuous course assessment or final exam despite his/her submission of the documents proving his/her impairment.
- Ground 2: Gender identity, sexual orientation (e.g. the student may claim being gender-discriminated or sexually abused by a peer, faculty or administrative member).
- Ground 3: Religion / national and ethnic origin / colour (e.g. the student may claim being religiously or nationally-discriminated by a peer, faculty or administrative member).
- Ground 4: Political / personal beliefs (e.g. the student may believe that his/her Stages of Grievance

Following the grievance could be settled either formally or informally as explained in the sections below.

Stage 1 – Informal Grievance Procedure

Where an individual finds it too difficult or embarrassing to approach the person harassing or bullying, or where such an approach has been unsuccessful, he/she should discuss the matter on an informal basis.

In the Case of a Student

Normally the student grievant should discuss the matter directly with the faculty member teaching him/her. Both parties should make considerable efforts to resolve the issue in an informally. If no resolution is reached within three (3) working days, either party may request consultation and mediation by the Programme Coordinator to help resolve potential grievances.

The Programme Coordinator should:

- a) Counsel the student as to the steps involved in pursuing a grievance, giving particular emphasis on informal resolution, and

- b) Gives the student a copy of the grievance procedure section of the College's academic regulations and immediately notifies the faculty member involved.

If the process of consultation is not resolved and the informal resolution fails and provided that the case counts as substantially important, the case is forwarded to the Grievance Preliminary Screening Committee (GPSC) for stage 2 of the procedure.

Stage 2 – Grievance Preliminary Screening Committee

If there is no resolution after the informal procedure, then the Grievance Preliminary Screening Committee (GPSC) takes action. The afore mentioned committee is comprised by the following members:

- The Executive Director (Chair)
- The Academic Director or other appointed representative
- One (1) faculty representative (other than the one belonging to the Disciplinary Committee)

Both individuals/groups are informed prior to the hearing in written form by which they get acknowledged with the time, the date and place of the hearing. In case that GPSC fails to reach a resolution, the grievance is moving to Stage 3 – the Formal Grievance Procedure .

Stage 3 – Formal Grievance Procedure

If the unwelcome conduct continues following the GPSC, or if the individual concludes it is not appropriate to resolve the problem informally, the matter should be raised through the formal Grievance Procedure. The Formal Grievance Committee is comprised by the Grievance Preliminary Screening Committee (GPSC) with the addition of a member from the Student Affairs Office and one (1) student representative. The committee is chaired by the Executive Director.

Documents

The formal grievance procedure includes three (3) documents; therefore, formalizing the procedure. The documents are listed below:

- Formal Grievance Document (mandatory document)
- Permission of the Witness to Conceal their Identity
- Grievance Resolution Document

The Formal Grievance Document is the main document that needs to be completed in order to initiate the procedure. This form includes a permission of the employee or student to reveal details of the complaint. This is submitted simultaneously to the Grievance Committee and the faculty/administrative member affected within three (3) working days. The Grievance Committee is comprised by the members of GPSC with the addition, as indicated above, of a member from the Student Affairs Office and a student representative. None of the members should relate to the grievance whatsoever. The complaint should be submitted in written form indicating apart from the complaint itself, any supporting documents that should be attached, full detail regarding the nature of the complaint, as well as the dates on which attempts that GPSC place. Both the GPSC and the formal grievance procedure take place in close doors. Confidentiality should be kept at all times, and upon the fulfilment of the procedure all the paperwork related should be filed by the Academic Affairs Officer.

The Permission of the Witness to conceal their Identity is required in order to reveal the identity of witnesses which is important to solve the dispute.

In serious/adverse circumstances the college may need to suspend employees such as the person filing the complaint or the persons under investigation until the dispute is solved. Additionally, the college will need to take whatever action is necessary, including disciplinary action.

Both the grievant and the respondent may be assisted throughout the procedure by an advisor, all of whom should be informed about the meeting date, time and location of the hearing.

The following sections outline the steps one must follow under the College's Grievance Policy with the relevant accompanying documents.

Grievance of a Student

Step 1:

After the informal grievance procedure, the student decides that he/she is not satisfied with the resolution. Hence, he/she decides to follow a formal grievance procedure.

The student requests a grievance form from the Reception or or the Academic Affairs Office. After the form is filled in it is returned to the Academic Affairs Office.

Step 2:

The Academic Affairs Office decides that the matter is of significant importance and needs to be forwarded to the Grievance Committee. This procedure must be completed within three (3) working days.

Step 3:

The Grievance Committee has ten (10) working days available to examine the matter and proceed to a hearing. All parties must be informed in writing of the time and place of the hearing. Any additional documents needed should be copied to all individuals involved.

Any witnesses needed, will be invited to the hearing, and if required the Permission for the Witness to conceal their Identity Form should be utilized.

If any individual involved does not attend the hearing the committee has the right to dismiss the case, or proceed to decisions in their absence.

Step 4:

Immediately after the hearing the grievance committee reviews in detail the complaint and all supporting documentation and decides the remedy sought. The Grievance Resolution Document should be filled in and sent to all parties involved.

Step 5 (If applicable):

The person that has submitted the grievance has the right to only one (1) appeal. In that case he/she should use the appeals process.