

South Georgia State College Grievance Procedure

Effective Date
_____**Review Date**
_____**Applies To**
All Employees

1. Purpose & Scope

This procedure provides all employees, including faculty, staff, and administrators with a fair, timely, and consistent process for raising and resolving workplace concerns. The institution is committed to addressing grievances in a manner that promotes equity, accountability, and respectful resolution.

This procedure applies to concerns involving:

- Working conditions or application of institutional policies
- Supervisory actions, decisions, or interpersonal conflicts affecting the workplace
- Unfair or inequitable treatment

This procedure does not cover:

- Matters governed by separate formal processes i.e. Title IX, discrimination/harassment, or ADA accommodations
- Performance evaluations, promotion and tenure, hiring, or classification decisions
- Salary decisions, transfers, reassignments, or normal supervisory counseling
- Termination or layoff due to lack of work or elimination of position
- Investigations or decisions under the institution's Harassment Policy
- Matters already heard by an administrative panel at this institution

These procedures are also unavailable to any student or employee who has already sought relief through a department, school, or unit's internal process, unless that process failed to provide a fair and impartial hearing and an adequate mechanism for appeal or review.

2. Guiding Principles

Fairness	All parties will be treated equitably throughout the process.
Timeliness	Concerns will be addressed promptly within the timelines established below.
Confidentiality	Information will be shared only as necessary and on a need-to-know basis.

Non-Retaliation	Retaliation against any person who raises a concern or participates in this process is strictly prohibited and may result in discipline up to and including termination.
Good Faith	All parties, employees, supervisors, and HR are expected to engage honestly and constructively at every stage.

3. Classified Employee Eligibility

A classified employee may file a grievance only if one or more of the following conditions apply:

- The employee has been suspended
- The employee has been discharged
- The employee has been demoted, or their salary has been reduced

Even when one of the above conditions is met, a grievance may NOT be filed if:

- The discharge occurred during the six (6)-month provisional period
- The employee was adversely affected by a reorganization, program modification, or financial exigency such employees may apply to the Board of Regents for review
- The underlying issue is a discrimination charge based on race, sex, age, disability, or religion direct those complaints to the Affirmative Action/EEO Officer
- The matter has already been heard by an administrative panel at this institution

Unless there is good cause for delay, a classified employee must file within ten (10) working days of the notice of suspension or discharge. Late filings must include a written explanation; the Chief Human Resources Officer will determine whether good cause exists.

4. Resolution Process

Employees are expected to work through the stages below in good faith before requesting a formal hearing. Each stage is designed to resolve disputes at the earliest and least formal level possible.

STEP 1 INITIAL CONTACT

 Timeline: Within 5 working days of the incident

- Employees should contact their immediate supervisor to discuss the concern directly. Students should contact the academic department head or unit director.
- The supervisor or department head will arrange a meeting; all parties must engage in a good faith effort to resolve the matter.
- The HR Director is available to assist with these early resolution efforts.

STEP 2 MEDIATION

Timeline: By referral from the HR Director

- If the concern remains unresolved, the HR Director may refer the parties to the campus Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) committee.
- The HR Director serves as ADR committee chair. Mediation is voluntary and private a trained mediator facilitates structured dialogue to help the parties communicate and reach a mutually acceptable resolution.
- Mediation may proceed before or after a formal grievance is filed and does not waive any party's right to formal procedures.

STEP 3 FORMAL GRIEVANCE SUBMISSION

Timeline: Within 5 working days of the triggering event (10 working days for classified employees filing on suspension or discharge)

- If informal resolution and mediation are unsuccessful or declined, the HR Director will advise the complainant on how to initiate a formal grievance.
- All employees submit a written grievance to Human Resources. Classified employees complete the official grievance form and submit it to the Chief Human Resources Officer.
- The grievance must include: a description of the issue; relevant dates, facts, and individuals involved; steps already taken to resolve the matter; and the desired outcome.
- Upon submission, the grievant will receive a copy of this policy and all documents pertaining to grievance hearing procedures.

STEP 4 REVIEW & INVESTIGATION

Timeline: Acknowledgment within 3 business days; determination within 15–30 business days

- Human Resources will acknowledge receipt within 3 business days and conduct a prompt, impartial investigation.
- HR will interview relevant parties and review all applicable documentation and policies.
- A written determination will be issued that includes a summary of findings, applicable policy considerations, the decision and rationale, and any corrective or remedial actions.

STEP 5 APPEAL

Timeline: Appeal within 5 working days of the decision letter; final decision within 10–15 business days

- If unsatisfied with the outcome, the complainant may appeal in writing within 5 working days of the decision letter to the next level within their employment unit.
- The appeal must state its basis: new evidence, a procedural error, or misapplication of policy.
- After the unit completes its review, the complainant may submit a formal grievance petition.

- Classified employees are entitled to a hearing before a Board of Review, which may occur before or after the effective date of the personnel decision in question.
- Appeals are reviewed by a designated senior administrator or panel with no prior involvement in the matter. Their decision is final.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Employee	Raise concerns in good faith and provide accurate, complete information throughout the process.
Supervisor	Respond promptly and professionally; engage in good faith efforts to resolve concerns at the earliest stage.
HR Practitioner	Facilitate the process; ensure consistency and policy compliance; maintain all records.
Chief HR Officer	Chair the Alternative Dispute Resolution committee; assist with early resolution and mediation; advise on formal filing.
Chief HR Officer	Receive formal grievances from classified employees; rule on late-filing requests; oversee the formal grievance process.

6. Timeline Quick Reference

Action	Timeline
Initial contact with supervisor / department head	Within 5 working days of incident
Formal grievance filing (all employees)	Within 5 working days of triggering event
Classified employee filing (suspension or discharge)	Within 10 working days of notice
HR acknowledgment of formal grievance	Within 3 business days of receipt
HR investigation and written determination	Within 15–30 business days
Appeal to next employment-unit level	Within 5 working days of decision letter
Final appeal decision	Within 10–15 business days

7. General Provisions

Confidentiality

All grievance matters will be handled with discretion. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, but information will be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with institutional privacy standards.

Non-Retaliation

Retaliation against any individual who files a grievance, participates in an investigation, or otherwise engages in this process is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Recordkeeping

Human Resources will maintain complete records of all formal grievances in accordance with institutional record retention policies. Records will be stored securely and accessed only by authorized personnel.

Final Authority

The institution reserves the right to interpret and apply this procedure. Decisions rendered through this process are final unless otherwise specified. The institution may revise this procedure at any time with appropriate notice.

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Institutional Grievance Procedure. I understand that retaliation for using this procedure is prohibited, and I agree to engage with this process in good faith.

Employee Name (Print)

Signature

Date

Department / Unit

Title / Position

Employee ID