

Grievance Policies and Procedures (Complaints and Conflict Resolution)

Fort Hays Tech | Northwest aims to provide clear information regarding its procedures for receiving complaints and grievances from students and other constituencies responds to them in a timely manner and analyzes them to improve its processes. Fort Hays Tech | Northwest personnel shall maintain records of formal written student complaints, which will be filed with the Assistant to the President. These records will include information about the disposition of the complaints. These records will be kept on file, for possible review, for a minimum of two years past the disposition date of the case(s). Fort Hays Tech | Northwest has established this process to address student issues, problems, and concerns relating to college facilities, services and academic functions.

A. Student Complaint/Grievance Procedure In the event that a student may feel the need to voice a complaint or concern regarding a college employee, or an educational activity associated with the college, the student is directed to use the procedure outlined below. (An exception to this procedure would involve complaints of sexual assault/harassment or one of a discrimination nature. Those complaints should be directed either according to the procedure below or to the Vice President of Student and Academic Advancement and/or another Fort Hays Tech | Northwest mandatory reporter as indicated in Fort Hays Tech | Northwest's sexual assault/harassment/anti-discrimination policy.

1. Direct Discussion With Employee. The first step normally should be to discuss the concern/complaint directly with the employee. Students are encouraged to talk to the employee as soon as possible. Many situations can be satisfactorily addressed, or misunderstandings clarified, at this level. When this occurs, no further action is called for.
2. (If Step 1 does not resolve complaint/grievance): Division Chair Review. In the event that a concern/complaint cannot be adequately addressed through direct discussion with the employee, the student may take another step by contacting the Division Chair. To do so, the student should submit a written statement.
 - a. Written Statement. The written statement should identify the student, employee, course or activity, a factual description of the problem, and any other relevant information such as past
 - b. Employee Response. Normally, the Division Chair will ask the employee to review the written statement of complaint and to file a written response. The Division Chair may also meet with the employee to discuss the situation and to review any related materials that may be relevant. This must be completed or moved up the process within three (3) business days. Division Chair. Following his or her review, the Division Chair is authorized to undertake whatever action and/or discussion may be called for per relevant College policies and procedures. That action may involve denying the complaint, working out a solution with the employee, referring the matter to

another office, or other appropriate action. The Division Chair action will be communicated in writing to the student and the employee. A copy of this response will also be submitted to the Vice President of Student and Academic Advancement office.

3. Vice President of Student and Academic Advancement Review. In the event that the student or the employee is dissatisfied with the resolution at the division level, he or she may appeal the decision to the VPSAA. A student wishing to pursue this level of appeal should submit a written statement to the VPSAA accompanied by a formal complaint form, which may be found on the college website. The VPSAA will review the complaint and the record of review at the division level and will adjudicate the case within ten (10) business days and supply a copy of the adjudication to the Office of the President. Any appeal made in writing to this point or beyond is to be considered a formal complaint/grievance.

4. Presidential Appeal. Should the student deem it necessary he or she may appeal in writing the decision of the Vice President to the Office of the President. This must also be done in writing and filed within ten (10) business days. The President shall respond within ten (10) days and may do so by meeting with parties involved or by the written response.

5. Area Advisory Board Student Welfare Committee Review. Should the student desire to appeal the review of the President's decision, the student may submit a signed written statement of appeal within ten (10) business days to the Board Clerk. The Clerk will then notify the Chairperson of the Student Welfare Committee. The Student Welfare Committee Chairperson will then arrange to hear the grievance prior to the next regularly scheduled board meeting. The Board Clerk will notify all parties concerned of the decision of the Student Welfare Committee within ten (10) business days from the hearing.

6. Area Advisory Board. Should the student desire to appeal the decision of the Student Welfare Committee to the Area Advisory Board, the student may submit a signed written statement of appeal within ten (10) business days to the Board Clerk. The Clerk will then notify the Chairperson of the Area Advisory Board. The Board Chairperson will then arrange to hear the grievance at the next regularly scheduled board meeting. The Board Clerk will notify all parties concerned of the decision of the Area Advisory Board within ten (10) business days from the hearing.

Student Consumer Complaint Process

Fort Hays Tech | Northwest is committed to the Student Consumer Complaint Process Program Integrity Rule issued by the U.S. Department of Education to improve the integrity of programs authorized under Title IV to the Higher Education Act (HEA), as amended (the "Program Integrity Rule"). Fort Hays Tech | Northwest was created as authorized by and in accordance with state law, designated by name by the action of the Kansas legislature, and is a political subdivision of the state of Kansas. By state statute, Fort Hays Tech | Northwest

has an independent board that governs the college and that handles any/all student complaints that cannot be resolved at the college.

In addition to the state-created process of utilizing these statutorily created political subdivisions of the state, the following is offered:

- Consumer protection and/or fraud complaints may be filed with the Kansas Attorney General's office.
- Discrimination complaints may be filed with the Kansas Human Rights Commission.
- Fort Hays Tech | Northwest is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Complaints regarding the college's ongoing ability to meet the Criteria of Accreditation may be filed by following the guidelines at:
<https://www.hlcommission.org/HLC- Institutions/complaints.html>

Fort Hays Tech | Northwest is committed to resolving all student concerns in a timely and effective manner. To that end, Fort Hays Tech | Northwest is available to current and prospective students for the resolving of complaints. Resources and complaint processes are listed on the college website. Students are encouraged to work through internal college processes for the resolution of complaints. If a student believes that the college's procedures have not adequately addressed concerns identified under the Program Integrity Rule, the governing board of the college and/or the agencies listed above may be contacted. Complaints alleging violation of laws that another state agency is charged with enforcing may be directed to that other state agency.

Formal Complaint Form

A formal complaint is defined by FHNW as "An issue, problem or concern relating to college services, facilities or academic functions of the college that are presented in writing." The Vice President of Student and Academic Advancement will respond to student complaints. This form is also utilized for sexual harassment and assault report forms.

<https://www.fhnw.edu/formal-complaint-form>