



Zane State College Policy on Student Complaint Resolution (SARA)

Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures for resolving student complaints at Zane State College, a SARA (State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement) participating institution. The aim is to provide a clear, fair, and efficient process for students to address concerns or grievances related to their educational experience.

Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled at Zane State College, including those participating in online and distance education programs under SARA. This policy does not cover complaints related to academic decisions (e.g., grades, academic probation), student conduct violations, or complaints about disability accommodations, which are addressed under separate institutional policies.

Definitions

- **Complaint:** A formal expression of dissatisfaction or concern regarding a service, policy, or practice of the institution that a student believes is unfair, discriminatory, or not aligned with published standards.
- **Complainant:** A student who files a complaint.
- **Respondent:** The individual or department against whom a complaint is filed.

Complaint Resolution Procedure

Step 1: Informal Resolution

Students are encouraged to seek an informal resolution by discussing their concerns directly with the relevant individual, office, or department. If the issue is not resolved informally, the student may proceed with a formal complaint.

Step 2: Formal Complaint Submission

If the informal process does not resolve the complaint, the student must submit a formal complaint in writing within 30 days of the event or action leading to the complaint. The complaint should include:

- Student's name and contact information.
- A detailed description of the issue, including dates, locations, and names of involved parties.
- Any supporting documentation or evidence.

- The desired outcome or resolution sought.

Complaints should be submitted via email to the Registrar's Office at registrar@zanestate.edu.

Step 3: Acknowledgment and Review

Upon receipt of the formal complaint, the Registrar's Office will:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 business days.
2. Conduct a review of the complaint, which may involve meetings with the complainant, respondent, and any witnesses.
3. Request additional information or documentation if necessary.

Step 4: Resolution Decision

- A decision will be made within 30 business days of the complaint submission. The student will receive a written response detailing the findings, any actions taken, and the rationale behind the decision.
- If the complaint is substantiated, appropriate corrective actions will be taken to resolve the issue.

Appeal Process

If the student is dissatisfied with the resolution, they may appeal the decision within 10 business days by submitting an appeal letter to the Chief Academic Officer's Office. The appeal must state the basis for the appeal and include any new evidence or information not previously considered.

External Complaint Options

If a complaint cannot be resolved internally, students may file a complaint with the SARA State Portal Entity or relevant state agency. Information on filing external complaints can be found on the Zane State College's website or by contacting the Registrar's Office.

Confidentiality and Retaliation

- All complaints will be handled confidentially, to the extent possible, and in compliance with applicable laws.
- Retaliation against any student for filing a complaint is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Record-Keeping

The institution will maintain records of all complaints and their resolutions for a minimum of five years. These records will be available for review by SARA-authorized bodies upon request.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to comply with SARA requirements and best practices in complaint resolution.

Effective Date

This policy is effective immediately and applies to all current and future terms.