

STUDENT GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINT POLICY

Grievance includes any complaints from any student. VaYU has outlined the Student Grievance and Complaint policy to help address student's concerns in a constructive and fair manner. The policy has defined processes and guidelines for filing a formal complaint regarding a workplace, job, and/or co-worker dispute or issue.

VaYU encourages the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken before relationships become irreparably strained.

1. GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

This Committee focuses on academic and non-academic issues.

- i. Any Student can file a grievance if actions¹ by the members of the University (Staff, Faculty, Administration, or another Student) that are not authorized, not ethical, not just, not following campus policies, or, unequal application of policies that are arbitrary or capricious.
- ii. Actions, on harassment, discrimination, retaliation by a University member, falls under the preview, be it online or in person.
- iii. The Committee determines the parties involved, reviews evidence, consult experts, summon the Complainant and the respondent (as appropriate), together or separately, ask questions, and record the proceedings.
- iv. Resubmission of a previously resolved complaint by the Committee will not be entertained.
- v. The Complainant can designate only one person to be present if called for a hearing. That designee can be the Complainant. No legal counsel can be present.

2. COMMITTEE COMPOSITION FRAMEWORK

- i. The Provost upon consultation with the President appoints the Committee that generally has one or more Faculty, staff, and a student representative.
- ii. The Registrar, Provost and the President are ex-officio members and can participate in the deliberations, but have no vote.
- iii. The committee is convened only during Spring and Fall Semesters.
- iv. A Faculty is the Chair of the committee. The Chair could be assigned by the Provost in the Committee if the Committee has multiple faculty members.
- v. The Staff Member assists in the Committee proceedings by convening meetings, taking minutes, sharing minutes, providing necessary information from the Student, Faculty and Administration to

¹ Adapted from "Student Grievance Policy." California State University, Monterey Bay, <https://csumb.edu/policy/student-grievance-policy/>. Accessed November, 19, 2021.

the Committee. The Staff Member is also a voting member of the committee, unless expressly noted.

- vi. The Grievance Committee may be convened on an ‘as needed’ basis. Convening should be done within 2 weeks of a Student Complaint or identification of an issue.
- vii. If there is a conflict of interest, the Member either recuse themselves and not participate in deliberations on the complaint. Any recusal will mean an automatic replacement of the Member for that issue as appropriate.
- viii. While the names of the Faculty and Staff in the Committee is public knowledge, the Student Committee Member names will only be released with Student’s express written permission. Selection of the Student Member is based on talent, experience, and availability for the committee work.
- ix. The Committee does not deal with issues specific to Course Assessment or that of an individual Student. These should be resolved between the Student and the Instructor using the ‘InBox’ Email feature of Canvas LMS. VaYU Administration does not second guess the Instructor’s decision per the *Academic Freedom* policies. The arbitrator of such a complaint is the Registrar who can be reached at registrar@vayuusa.org.

Table 1: Grievance Committee Composition

Sl. #	VaYU Designation	Status
1	Staff	Secretary & Member
2	Student @ VaYU (Name to be released with permission only)	Member (Student representative)
3	VaYU faculty	Chair

3. CHARGES OF THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

- i. Address all academic and non-academic grievances including academic, accounting, scholarships, sexual harassment or other issues.
- ii. The Committee can raise issues independently that are not specific to a complaint and can suggest policy changes to the Upper Administration.
- iii. Committee resolves and delivers a written report within 15 business days after the official filing of each complaint as determined by the **Binder Number**.

4. COMMITTEE ACCESS

- i. Student access to all the Committees is via the Registrar (registrar@vayuusa.org): Petitions, Complaints (academic, LMS, accounting, or otherwise), Suggestions, Compliance, Ethics & Plagiarism Violations, Transcript issues, etc.
- ii. Students contacting the Committee members directly is **expressly prohibited**.

- a. Violators will be sanctioned and the reply to the enquiries will be delayed with unknown timeline.
- iii. A Student filing the Complaint is defined as a **Complainant**. A Complainant can file a complaint only if they are associated with the University in any period over the last six months.
- iv. The Complainant should have a locus standi with regards to the complaint.
- v. The **Subject** line of the **Complaint Email** should be in the format below:
Grievance Committee: <short title of Complaint>
e.g.: **Grievance Committee:** *Violation by a fellow student*

5. COMPLAINT RECORDING PROCEDURE

- i. The Registrar's Office upon receipt of the complaint will assign a unique **Binder Number** to the Complainant's **Docket** where all the Complainant's documents will be stored. The Complainant will be informed of the Binder Number within 24 hours of the complaint and follows the format: Grievance Committee - <<Date in yyyy-mm-dd format>> - <<two digit serial number>>.
- ii. The Registrar may ask the Complainant for additional material and/or clarification before forwarding the **Docket with the Binder Number** to the relevant Committee. Turnaround time will be two (2) business days for the Complainant's response after they receive the Registrar's email to ensure timely processing.
 - a. If longer time is needed, the Complainant has to appeal to the Registrar. In any case, this will not exceed five (5) business days.
- iii. If no information is received from the Complainant by the deadline, the Registrar will label the Docket as 'Incomplete & Cancelled.' In this case the Complainant will start the process all over again when ready, and with all the previous questions answered.
- iv. The Registrar's Office dismisses frivolous complaints, complaints without merit, or complaints with incomplete information assigning reason for every **Binder Number**. The Student then can then appeal to the Provost's Office at appeal@vayuusa.org with the **Binder Number** using the same format as mentioned above.
- v. The decision of the Provost's Office is final.

6. COMMITTEE MEETING PROCEDURE

- i. On receipt of all the requested information from the Complainant, the Registrar's Office will forward the **Docket with a Binder Number** to the Committee for further action
- ii. The Committee only deal with complaints that have a **Docket with a Binder Number** that the Registrar assigns.
- iii. The Committee can ask for clarification from the Complainant, and/or, can be summoned for a hearing via a Zoom interview by the Committee at its discretion within a 'reasonable' advance notice of five (5) business days via the Registrar's Office.

- a. If the Complainant needs additional time to prepare, then the Complainant should appeal within two (2) business days of the Committee contacting the Complainant for an extension via the Registrar's Office.
 - b. The maximum extension granted will be an additional 5 business days at the Committee's discretion after the 'reasonable' advance notice.
- iv. The Committee will deliberate on **Docket with the Binder Number** submitted by the Registrar, and will come up with a decision that the Committee Chair will convey to the Registrar, and to the Provost's office.
 - v. Staff member on the Committee will be responsible to prepare the agenda in consultation with the Registrar and the Committee Chair, and assist in scheduling the meeting.
 - vi. The Registrar will get the Committee decision back to the Complainant.
 - vii. The Provost's Office takes the recommendations of the Committee under advisement, and make a decision on how to proceed further if the Complainant does not Appeal.
 - viii. The decision of the Provost's Office is final.

7. APPEAL AFTER GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE DECISION

- i. Once a Committee has rendered its verdict, the Complainant can appeal to the Provost's Office at appeal@vayuusa.org, in case the Complainant disagree with the Committee decision. This process can take up to 15 business days.
 - a. Clear reasoning should be provided on why the Provost's Office should consider the Appeal: new evidence, etc.
- ii. The **Subject** line of the **Appeal Email** should be in the format below:
APPEAL- Grievance Committee - <BINDER NUMBER> <short title of Complaint>
- iii. The Provost's Office deals with all Appeals **ONLY** after the Committee determination.
- iv. The resolution by the Provost's Office is final.