

California Western School of Law

STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

This Student Grievance Procedure provides guidance for a student who has a grievance with another member of the Law School community. A grievance is a complaint arising out of any allegedly unauthorized or unjustified act or decision by an employee of the Law School that adversely affects the status, rights or privileges of a student. (The Honor Code procedure is generally the appropriate forum for complaints between students and this grievance procedure may not be used to contest or otherwise re-litigate the results of an Honor Code Violation Proceeding or the application of an Academic Policy.) This grievance procedure may also be used to bring to the attention of the Law School a significant problem that directly implicates the Law School's program of legal education and its compliance with the ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools or the laws of the State of California.

Several policies in the Student Handbook contain federally mandated grievance procedures. Please refer to individual policies for information on redressing grievances involving those policies. Situations not covered elsewhere in the Student Handbook will be addressed as follows.

Discussion between persons directly involved in a grievance is encouraged, both in the early stages and throughout a dispute. If a problem remains after discussion, the student should promptly deliver a complaint to the Assistant Dean for Student & Diversity Services. (If the complaint is against the Assistant Dean for Student & Diversity Services, it should be delivered to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs or Vice President of Student Life.) The complaint must be in writing and include sufficient detail about the grievance, including, but not limited to, the nature of the grievance, the identity of others involved, and any other information the student believes would aid a fact finder in making a reasonable decision.

Upon receipt of a properly submitted student complaint, the Assistant Dean for Student & Diversity Services will notify the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs or the Vice President of Student Life of receipt of the complaint. The Vice Dean or Vice President of Student Life will review the complaint to determine whether it can be resolved administratively and with the approval of the student who filed the complaint. If the Vice Dean or Vice President of Student Life determines administrative action cannot resolve the complaint, the Vice Dean or Vice President of Student Life shall refer the complaint to the Grievance Hearing Panel (the Panel). This referral shall occur within 10 business days from receipt of the initial complaint unless the Vice Dean or Vice President of Student Life determines that additional time is needed, in which case the Vice Dean or Vice President of Student Life will inform the participants.

The Panel will consist of three individuals appointed by the Vice Dean or Vice President of Student Life. After reviewing the complaint, the Panel will provide a written decision, including an explanation of the basis for its decision, to the student, the Assistant Dean for Student & Diversity Services, the Vice Dean, Vice President of Student Life and the Dean. The Panel decision will be issued within 30 business days from receipt of the complaint unless the Panel determines that additional time is needed, in which case it will inform the participants.

If the student is dissatisfied with the Panel's decision, the student may promptly submit a written appeal to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs or Vice President of Student Life (unless the complaint is against the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs or Vice President of Student Life). This appeal must be submitted within 10 business days from receipt of the Panel's decision. The Vice Dean for Academic Affairs or Vice President of Student Life will review the Panel's decision and provide a written decision to all affected parties. The decision will be issued within 30 business days from receipt of the appeal unless the Vice Dean or Vice President of Student Life determines that additional time is needed, in which case he or she will inform the student. This decision shall be the school's final decision.

If the student is dissatisfied with the Panel's decision and the complaint is against the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs or Vice President of Student Life, the student may promptly submit a written appeal to the Dean. This appeal must be submitted within 10 business days from receipt of the Panel's decision. The Dean will review the Panel's decision and provide a written decision to all affected parties. The decision will be issued within 30 business days from receipt of the appeal unless the Dean determines that additional time is needed, in which case he or she will inform the student. This decision shall be the school's final decision.

If a student's complaint is about the Law School's compliance with academic program quality and accreditation standards as required by the American Bar Association (ABA) and the student has exhausted all steps described in Grievance Procedures, the student may contact the ABA:

http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/accreditation/complaint_proceedures.html

Students who have a complaint about their educational experience at the Law School, which is not resolved through the above outlined internal procedures or through the ABA, may contact the following California State agency for assistance. An individual may contact the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education ("Bureau") for review of a complaint. The Bureau may be contacted at:

Address: 2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95833
Telephone: (916) 431-6924
Fax: (916) 263-1897
Website: <http://www.bppe.ca.gov>

All members of the Law School community are prohibited from retaliating against an individual who files a grievance. Any form of retaliation is a violation of this Student Grievance Procedure and must be reported immediately to the Assistant Dean for Student & Diversity Services, the Vice Dean, Vice President of Student Life, or the Dean, as appropriate. Any person found to have retaliated against another individual for filing a grievance will be subject to disciplinary action.

Maintenance of Records of Complaint

Except as otherwise provided under school policy, the Law School shall maintain a complete written record of each formal complaint and how it was investigated and resolved. These records shall be maintained in a confidential manner in the office of the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs for five years from the date of the resolution, unless new circumstances dictate that the file should be kept for a longer period of time.

Effective Date: The California Western School of Law Student Grievance Procedure is effective as of August 15, 1994, and updated as of Spring 2016.