

Additional Information and Procedures for University Policy 3016

OPTIONS INTERNAL TO MASON FOR FILING STUDENT COMPLAINTS

A. Informal Complaints

Students can always elect to reach out directly to an individual or unit to seek resolution of an issue. This is the recommended first step for any complaint not falling under item B.1 below. When approached in this manner, complaints are not considered official written student complaints.

B. Formal Written Complaints

1. Complaints regarding protected class discrimination, sexual- or gender-based harassment and misconduct, and reasonable accommodation for disabilities are addressed in three separate University policies. Procedures for filing such complaints are contained within those policies. Visit the Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics (CDE) website at <https://diversity.gmu.edu/> for additional information or to file complaints of this nature.
 - [University Policy 1201 – Non-Discrimination Policy](#)
 - [University Policy 1202 – Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct and other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#)
 - [University Policy 1203 – Non-Discrimination and Reasonable Accommodation on the Basis of Disability](#)
2. Written academic complaints and appeals (i.e., academic appeals and grade appeals) must be filed pursuant to the appropriate policies and procedures.

[Graduate Education Appeals](#)

[Undergraduate Education Appeals](#)

[Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution](#)

[College of Education and Human Development](#)

[College of Health and Human Services](#)

[College of Humanities and Social Sciences](#)

[College of Science](#)

[College of Visual and Performing Arts](#)

[Schar School of Policy and Government](#)

[School of Business](#)

[College of Engineering and Computing/Volgenau School of Engineering](#)

[Honors College](#) (for appealing termination from Honors College or a grade appeal of a HNRS or HNRT course only)

[Exploratory, Undeclared, Non-Degree](#)

[Continuing and Professional Education \(CPE\)](#)

3. Formal written complaints concerning any other subject matter must be filed through the University's Student Complaints System (accessible via <https://complaints.gmu.edu>). Anonymous complaints within this system are permissible, but students who wish to file anonymously acknowledge that they will not be contacted regarding the complaint; they will not receive – nor do they have a right to receive – any information regarding the resolution of such a complaint.

OPTIONS EXTERNAL TO MASON FOR FILING STUDENT COMPLAINTS

Federal Regulation 34 CFR 668.43(b) requires that institutions make available to enrolled and prospective students certain information “for filing complaints with its accreditor and with its State approval or licensing entity.” As these complaints are not filed with Mason directly, they do not meet the University's definition of an official written student complaint.

Filing Complaints with Mason's Accreditor

George Mason University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Questions about the accreditation of George Mason University may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on the SACSCOC website (www.sacscoc.org).

Filing Complaints with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)

If an issue cannot be resolved by the university's internal processes, a complaint may be brought to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). Per SCHEV's Student Complaints website (<https://www.schev.edu/index/students-and-parents/resources/student-complaints>):

“If a student has exhausted the avenues provided by the institution and the complaint has not been resolved internally, the student can submit a “Student Complaint Form” to SCHEV. Upon receiving a completed form, SCHEV will open an investigation if the matter being disputed falls within its authority. If preliminary findings indicate a violation of SCHEV regulations by the institution, SCHEV shall attempt to resolve the complaint through mediation. All parties will be notified in writing of the outcome of the investigation.

Please note that SCHEV has no authority or role regarding issues of employment law, claims of discrimination, or instances of suspected consumer fraud. Such complaints should be directed to the appropriate state or federal agency.”

Student complaints to SCHEV can be filed per the instructions on SCHEV's website: <http://www.schev.edu/index/students-and-parents/resources/student-complaints>

SARA and Non-SARA State Complaint Processes

George Mason University is a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA or SARA). Mason students who reside outside of Virginia but in another SARA state while taking courses at Mason may file complaints with the Virginia SARA portal entity, SCHEV. See “Filing Complaints with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)” above or visit <https://masononline.gmu.edu/student-resources/student-concerns/>

Non-SARA state complaints may be filed with the state portal entity in the state where the student is located. For more information, visit <https://masononline.gmu.edu/student-resources/student-concerns/>.

For information on State Authorization at Mason, visit <https://provost.gmu.edu/administration/academic-affairs/state-authorization>.

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