

Grievance and Complaint Procedures

Pursuant to 34 CFR § 668.43(b) (Code of Federal Regulations), an institution of higher education must “provide students . . . with contact information for filing complaints with its accreditor and with its State approval or licensing entity and any other relevant State official or agency that would appropriately handle the student’s complaint.”

Oberlin College’s mission is to provide high quality, relevant education enabling the broadest possible community of learners to achieve their goals and enrich the world. However, if a conflict does arise, students are encouraged to reach out to appropriate personnel to discuss concerns, grievances and complaints. Issues related to academic courses should be raised first with the instructor, then the instructor's department chair, and finally the instructor's dean, if necessary. More information about student conduct can be found under the Student Grievance Procedure section. Issues related to sex discrimination should be filed with the [Title IX Coordinator](#).

As a first step, students are urged to go directly to the person(s) concerned and discuss the source of their problem as openly as possible. If this confrontation of the difficulty and airing of a grievance leads to no resolution, or when it seems inappropriate, a number of formal and less formal avenues are open to students, depending upon the nature of the complaint. These are outlined below. At times, a grievance may involve a number of different areas and students may feel uncertain which procedure to follow; in this case they should seek advice from the Office of the Dean of Students, the Office of the Ombudsperson, or the deans of Residential Education and Dining Services. At any stage in the process students are welcome to seek counsel and support from members of the faculty or staff as well as the student body, and should feel free to bring an advisor to any meetings they may have as part of an adjudication process. Some suggestions are made under the following sections.

If an issue cannot be resolved by Oberlin College’s internal processes, students may choose to file a complaint with the [Ohio Department of Higher Education](#). Students who reside in other states may appeal to their state of residence. Please see the [contact information for each state agency](#) that would handle the complaint. You may also contact our accrediting agency, the [Higher Learning Commission](#).

A. GRIEVANCES RELATED TO ACADEMIC AFFAIRS OR OTHER MATTERS INVOLVING THE TEACHING FACULTY

- a. A student with a complaint should first attempt to resolve the issue through discussion with the instructor.
- b. If this fails to resolve the issue, the student may present the grievance to the director of the division, or the chair of the department or program, and request their assistance in resolving the issue.
- c. If the director of the division or the chair of the department or program is unable to resolve the matter, the student may present the complaint to the Associate Dean of the Conservatory or to an Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, as appropriate to the faculty appointment of the instructor. The dean will invite the opinions of all parties involved, will ascertain matters of fact, and will make a determination about the disposition of the matter. Final judgment rests with that dean.
- d. In matters of academic dispute, students may find it useful and appropriate to consult with their academic advisors or an Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences. Students studying applied music in the conservatory should present their grievances to the Associate Dean of the Conservatory.

B. STUDENT INFRACTIONS OF THE HONOR CODE

Any form of academic cheating should be referred to the Student Honor Committee. (Honor Code Charter) To report a suspected violation of the Honor Code, or to ask questions about how the Honor System functions, contact:

Student Honor Committee
Wilder Hall Suite 105
(440) 775-8462
ohonor@oberlin.edu
Coordinator: Alyssa Altheimer
Co-chairs: Katie Lucey, Jen Crainic
Liaison: Thom Julian

C. NONACADEMIC COMPLAINTS AGAINST STUDENTS REQUIRING ADJUDICATION AND POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Complaints may be brought before the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards by filing a complaint with the available at <https://www.oberlin.edu/dean-of-students/student-conduct>. Students are encouraged to seek the advice of the Director of Student Conduct and Community Standards at any time.

Where both parties agree to this, complaints can often be mediated rather than handled through formal adjudication.

D. GRIEVANCES UNDER SECTION 438 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT

Rights to review and inspection of educational records maintained by the college that contain information directly related to the student.

E. GRIEVANCES AGAINST OFFICERS OF STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNING BODIES

Such grievances should be taken first to the executive body of the group concerned. Students are encouraged to consult with the advisor of the organization. In some cases, complaints of this nature may appropriately be brought before the Judicial Board for final adjudication, but they are most often effectively dealt with by the internal procedures of the organization itself.

F. COMPLAINTS RELATED TO HEALTH SERVICES OR OBERLIN COUNSELING CENTER

Complaints may be taken to any faculty or student member of the Student Life Committee. Complaints concerning services provided by the Student Health Services or the Oberlin College Counseling Center may be initiated by pursuing any of the following options:

- (1) the student may discuss their complaint directly with the health care professional concerned;
- (2) the student may discuss their complaint with the providers' supervisor or department head;
- (3) the student can request that a Student Life Committee member discuss the complaint with the health care professional and inform the student of the outcome;
- (4) the student may request that a Student Life Committee member be present when they discuss the complaint with the health care professional concerned;
- (5) the student may request that the Student Life Committee assign a second health care professional to conduct an informal inquiry into the complaint and report back to the student;
- (6) the student may request that a formal inquiry of the complaint be conducted.

G. GRIEVANCES RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF HOUSING AND DINING POLICIES

a. Students who have requested exception to the Housing and Dining policy and have had this request denied by the Assistant Director for Housing Administration may appeal the decision to the Appeal Board of the Housing and Dining Committee. All appeals must be submitted in writing to the board in care of the Office of Residential Education and Dining Services. Students may request that their name remain confidential from members of the Appeal Board. The Appeal

board will hear a case within 30 days of receipt of the appeal or, if the appeal is received after December 1 or May 1, within 30 days after the beginning of the next semester.

b. The Appeal Board will be furnished the student's original request for exception and the assistant director's letter of denial. Members of the Appeal Board will gather at the appointed place and time and conduct the business of the Appeal Board. The chair of the Appeal Board will indicate whether additional information is needed from the student, ask the Office of Residential Education and Dining Services for information related to the case, including the relevant policy, and will then call the board into session. A student has the option of attending the appeal meeting to make an oral request to supplement the written request or respond to questions.

c. The function of the Appeal Board is to hear and act on grievances related to the administration of housing and dining policies, not to change policy. If the Board decides that the student has been dealt with unfairly with regard to process, it may overrule the judgment made by the Director of Residential Education and Dining Services or the Assistant Director for Housing Administration.

d. The action of the board will become effective when the board or its chair reports the judgment of the board in writing to the Director of Residential Education and Dining Services or the Assistant Director for Housing Administration within 48 hours.

e. The director or assistant director may request a meeting with the Appeal Board to reconsider a case to clarify the distinction between policy and process. The judgment of the board, however, will be final in all cases and will be sent to students in written form within 48 hours of a final decision.

H. GRIEVANCES RELATED TO PROCEDURES OR BILLINGS OF THE OBERLIN STUDENT COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

a. A student with such a problem should first bring it to the treasurer of their individual coop, or to the OSCA treasurer for resolution.

b. If this does not result in resolution, the student may appeal to the OSCA financial manager.

c. The student may make a final appeal to the OSCA Board.

I. SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

a. The Ombudsperson can listen, offer information about Oberlin's policies and procedures, accept suggestions from people who seek confidential channels for raising responsible concerns, and work for orderly and responsible change in systems.

b. The Ombudsperson is a good source of support for those who may want to examine their options for dealing with a particular concern or who may wish to learn how to resolve problems on their own.

c. The office provides feedback on trends, issues, policies, and practices equitable to all parties without breaching confidentiality.

d. The Ombudsperson does not act as an advocate for either side in dispute, but strives to consider and fairly present all sides of a situation.

J. GRIEVANCES RELATED TO DISCRIMINATION AND HARRASSMENT

Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment carried out by employees, students, and or third parties that are based upon disability, race, color, religion, creed, national origin, age, military or veteran status, and family relationship to an employee of Oberlin College may be filed with a designated administrator.

Before filing a complaint, any student or employee of the college may elect to consult with the special assistant for equity concerns or any other administrator named in the policy to seek additional information about the policy and the grievance procedures. Such consultation is not a prerequisite for filing a complaint.

For general assistance and guidance during the 2018-2019 academic year, you may contact:

The Office of Equity Concerns at (440) 775-8555

Overall equity concerns regarding allegations of harassment and or discrimination

Athletics Equity Coordinator:

Natalie Winkelfoos, (440) 775-6463

Allegations of discrimination or harassment in athletics based on sex and or gender

Section 504/ADA Coordinator:

Rebecca Mosely, (440) 775-8555

Allegations of discrimination or harassment based on disability

Equity and Diversity Committee:

Meredith Raimondo, Chair (440) 775-8555

Allegations of discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, national origin, age, military or veteran status, and family relationship to an employee of Oberlin College.

K. CONCERNS REGARDING OBERLIN EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

Oberlin College and Conservatory requires its employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As representatives of the College, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws, regulations and policies.

The **Campus Conduct Hotline** is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns internally so that Oberlin College can correct inappropriate conduct and actions. It is the responsibility of all employees to report concerns about violations of the College's policies, state and federal laws, or regulations that govern the College's operations. We believe our employees should be able to voice their concerns about tough workplace issues. If you need guidance or are concerned about a specific activity, decision, or action which may violate the Standards of Conduct, call our hotline, 24 hours a day, 7-days a week.

All calls are totally anonymous. If you have questions, make the call. **1-866-943-5787**.

It is contrary to the values of Oberlin College and Conservatory for anyone to retaliate against anyone who in good faith reports a conduct violation, or a suspected violation of law, such as a complaint of discrimination, or suspected fraud, or suspected violation of any regulation governing the operations of the College.