

**WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY
GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISORS
REGARDING
STAFF EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCESS**

1. Reference

[Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual, Section XII-2, Staff Employee Grievance and Appeal Process](#)

2. Employees Granted Reasonable Time Off to Participate in Process.

Reasonable time off from regular duties as may be necessary for the presentation and processing of grievances and appeals, or for participation as a witness in another employee grievance process, should be granted to employees without loss of pay, vacation, or other time credits. Employees must notify their supervisors in advance and receive prior approval of their absence from work for participation in the grievance process. The amount of time reasonable and necessary for such participation will be as determined by the supervisor after giving due consideration to the circumstances or nature of the employee involvement in the process (e.g., whether the employee is the grievant or a witness; the complexity or straightforward nature of the complaint, etc.).

3. Employees Involved in Process Not Subject to Retaliation or Reprisal.

Any employee who participates as a grievant or witness in the University grievance process shall participate in such process free from interference, threat of retaliation, coercion, restraint, discrimination, or reprisal. Supervisors and other employees involved in the process should also accord the party against whom the grievance has been brought due consideration for that party contentions and position. The goal of the process is to arrive at a fair resolution of the legitimate employee complaint in an atmosphere free of rancor and based upon mutual respect for the parties and their positions.

4. Tips for Informal Resolution of Grievances.

The informal resolution of grievances by discussion between the employee and his or her immediate supervisor (Step I in the process) is the preferred method of resolving an employee complaint. While the process calls for the employee verbal communication of his or her complaint to the supervisor in an informal discussion format, it is good practice for the supervisor to document the employee complaint as it was related to the supervisor, and to document the supervisor proposed resolution, even if only presented to the employee verbally in the course of the meeting. If the supervisor feels that assistance in discussion or resolution of the grievance is needed, and/or that impartial assistance would be welcome, the Employee Relations Manager can be contacted for assistance and advice.

In such instances, the Employee Relations Manager may serve as an intermediary to arrange to bring the parties together informally for resolution. In addition, the Employee

Relations Manager is available to counsel with the staff employees and/or supervisors in an effort to resolve problems or misunderstandings before they become formal grievances, and to advise staff employees and supervisors of their recourse under the grievance process.

5. Step II – Higher Level Supervisor Review. When the grievance has not been resolved at the informal level by discussion between complaining employee and immediate supervisor, the employee can seek review by submitting the grievance in writing to the Employee Relations Manager, who will in turn forward the grievance to a higher-level supervisor in the grieving employee department (one not previously involved in an attempted resolution of the grievance). The reviewing supervisor shall review the written grievance and all appropriate documentation related to the grievance, and should usually meet with the grievant, the immediate supervisor, a representative from the Department of Human Resources and/or any other individuals the reviewing supervisor determines will assist in the investigation and resolution of the grievance.
6. Timely Resolution of Grievances.

Supervisors should attempt to handle all employee grievances expeditiously, to ensure that minor or first-occurrence complaints do not develop into more serious or chronic problems. Every effort should be made to accomplish the resolution of the grievance within the general time frames called for in the process; however, consideration will be given to circumstances which reasonably prevented resolution within a given time frame (e.g., inability to properly or fully investigate a situation due to employee/witness work or vacation schedules, intervening or time-sensitive departmental work which merited priority over the resolution of the employee's grievance). In such instances, the supervisor might assure the employee that consideration of the grievance is not being unduly delayed and that work on a resolution is progressing. Time limits stated in the grievance process refer to normal working days.