



Formal Complaints (Grievance)

PURPOSE: To provide community members with a formal process for resolving complaints.

MONITOR: CEO

AUTHORIZATION: CEO

AUTHORIZATION DATE: October 2019

REVIEWED BY: CEO, Academic Dean, Dean of Enrollment Management

REVISION DATE(S): October 2019; clarified division of responsibility for reporting grievances, May 2021; added state of Georgia Grievance procedure, March 2023; update for NC-SARA, March 2026; update for new NC-SARA complaint process

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 2019

NEXT REVIEW DATE: October 2027

POLICY APPLIES TO: All community members, including guests

INTRODUCTION

The University encourages open and honest communication between members of the community. Most conflicts and differences of opinion between members of the University community can be resolved by the individuals directly confronting issues and jointly exploring alternatives. VUIM encourages all community members to informally resolve differences when possible. Resources may be available to staff and students. If you would like to better understand the academic resources that may be available, students should contact Academic Dean, Dr. Sung

Woo at swoo@vuim.edu and staff/faculty should contact Chief Executive Officer, John Yoo at jyoo@vuim.edu. If the complaint falls under Title IX (Sexual misconduct, harassment or discrimination), it should be reported to the institutional Title IX Coordinator and Dean of Enrollment Management, Chad Egresi at cegresi@vuim.edu.

In cases where conflicts cannot be mutually resolved, the University has established formal complaint procedures, also referred to as “grievance procedures”.

POLICY

It is the policy of VUIM to provide fair and orderly procedures to resolve student grievances. Nothing in this policy prevents a student from discussing a complaint informally with any appropriate college official. This policy intends to provide all community members with a formal avenue for addressing complaints.

The University will maintain records of all submitted formal complaints in the context of the records retention policy.

PROCESS

Students:

Students who would like to submit a formal complaint should contact the Dean of Enrollment Management, cegresi@vuim.edu to initiate the process. Complaints should be submitted within fourteen (14) business days.

1. The student will complete a short form documenting the complaint
2. The complaint will be reviewed and investigated by the Dean of Enrollment Management.
3. Under most circumstances, a resolution will be provided within 10 business days

Staff/Faculty:

Staff who would like to submit a formal complaint should contact John Yoo, jyoo@vuim.edu to initiate the process. Complaints should be submitted within fourteen (14) business days.

1. The staff/faculty member will complete a short form documenting the complaint
2. The complaint will be reviewed and investigated by Human Resources
3. Under most circumstances, a resolution will be provided within 10 business days

Sanctions associated with the resolution of a formal complaint are in-line with those stated within the code of conduct policy.

Protection from Retaliation:

Federal and state laws, as well as University policies, provide members of the University community with protection from retaliation, and underscore that retaliatory conduct may have serious consequences, including disciplinary sanctions.

Retaliation against a person who, in good faith, files a complaint or participates in the reporting, investigation, or adjudication process pertaining to a complaint is a particularly serious offense. Retaliation may include, but is not limited to, threats to personal safety or security and harassment. Complaints of retaliation should be reported as possible violations of university policies.

A complaint of retaliation does not constitute proof of prohibited conduct. Therefore, such a complaint shall not be considered during evaluation or review until a determination has been made that there has been a violation of university policy.

SARA COMPLAINT PROCESS

Virginia University of Integrative Medicine participates in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), a voluntary agreement among member states that establishes comparable standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. In accordance with SARA policies (Section 4.4), VUIM provides both its institutional complaint resolution procedures (described above) and the SARA complaint resolution process (described below) to all students enrolled in courses or programs offered under SARA.

Scope

The SARA complaint process applies to complaints related to distance education courses or programs offered across state lines under SARA. Complaints regarding student grades or student conduct violations are governed entirely by VUIM's institutional policies and the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and are not subject to the SARA complaint process.

VUIM does not enforce mandatory arbitration agreements for SARA-related complaints or disputes. Any mandatory arbitration provisions that may apply to other institutional matters do not extend to complaints that fall within the scope of the SARA Policy Manual.

Filing a SARA Complaint

Students must first attempt to resolve complaints through VUIM's institutional grievance procedures described above.

If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the institutional process, the student may appeal the complaint to the SARA State Portal Entity in VUIM's home state (Virginia). The appeal must be filed within two (2) years of the incident about which the complaint is made.

Effective July 1, 2026, students may also file a SARA complaint appeal with the SARA State Portal Entity in the state where the student is located.

The SARA State Portal Entity in VUIM's home state is responsible for investigating and resolving complaints not resolved at the institutional level. The resolution by the home state SARA State Portal Entity is final.

SARA State Portal Entity – Virginia (VUIM Home State)

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)

James Monroe Building, 10th Floor

101 North Fourteenth Street

Richmond, Virginia 23219

Tel: (804) 225-2600

Fax: (804) 225-2604

Website: www.schev.edu

For more information about the SARA complaint process, visit: <https://nc-sara.org/student-complaints>.

ADDITIONAL STATE AND ACCREDITATION COMPLAINT CONTACTS

Should the reporting student, or any other affected party, remain displeased with the outcome of the matter, an appeal may always be made to the appropriate individual state and/or accreditation authority listed below:

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)

James Monroe Building, 10th Floor

101 North Fourteenth Street

Richmond, Virginia 23219

Tel: (804) 225-2600; Fax: (804) 225-2604; Website: www.schev.edu

US Department of Veterans Affairs

The Virginia State Approving Agency (SAA) is the approving authority of education and training programs for Virginia. Our office investigates complaints of GI Bill beneficiaries. While most complaints should initially follow the school grievance policy, if the situation cannot be resolved as the school, the beneficiary should contact our office via email – saa@dvs.virginia.gov

Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine (ACAHM)

500 Lake Street, Suite 204

Excelsior, Minnesota 55331

Tel: (952) 212-2434; Fax: 952/657-7068; Website: www.acahm.org

Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission (GNPEC)

In the event a student is not able to satisfactorily resolve issues with the university using VUIM's complaint and appeals channels, and the student wishes to file a complaint, the Georgia Office of Inspector General is designated as the state agency responsible for receiving such complaints.

Students may contact:

Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission

2082 East Exchange Place

Suite 220

TUCKER, GA 30084

Phone: (770) 414-3300

Fax: (770) 414-3309

<https://gnpec.georgia.gov/student-resources/complaints-against-institution>

New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE)

Office of the Secretary of Higher Education

ATTN: Complaints

P.O. Box 542 Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0542

[NJ Complaint Form](#)

If you reside in a state outside of one of our three campus locations (Virginia, New Jersey and Georgia), and have a complaint that you feel has not been resolved through the university grievance procedures, you may file a complaint with the state in which you reside. In compliance with Federal Department of Education regulations, we are providing the list of all state agencies with contact information: [Student Complaint Information by State](#), also available in the [PDF format](#).