



Policies and Procedures

3.15 / Internal Dispute Resolution Process

PURPOSE:

Situations may occur where an employee believes that the fair and consistent application of a Wichita State University (“University) policy affecting the employee has not been followed. In most cases, the University expects that the employee will be able to satisfactorily address such concerns within the work area through an informal process. If the situation cannot be resolved through an informal process, the University wishes to provide employees an alternative internal process. All decisions made regarding the Internal Dispute Resolution Process should be unbiased, non-retaliatory, and non-discriminatory.

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POLICY STATEMENT:

The University provides a formal process to address employment situations that arise which are not able to be resolved in the course of routine communication. Employees are encouraged to attempt resolution of work-related concerns directly with Leadership prior to use of the formal Internal Dispute Resolution Process. The processes for incidents involving sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or discrimination are addressed in separate University policies. The Internal Dispute Resolution Process is not to be used to prevent, limit or delay appropriate corrective action and is not available to employees who have separated employment.

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DEFINITIONS:

Dispute: A claim that the University has applied a policy or process to an employee unfairly or inconsistently. Examples of situations excluded from this process are complaints concerning wages, performance evaluations, and separations of employment.

Dispute Resolution Request: A timely and written formal document filed by an employee to request to resolve a Dispute.

Leadership: For purposes of this policy, Leadership includes individuals at the University who have employees reporting to them, or Department Chairs/Directors.

Senior Leadership: For purposes of this policy, Senior Leadership includes individuals at the University who have employees reporting to them, are in a position at the Director/Department Chair level or above who are not in the chain of command of the

employee initiating the Dispute Resolution, and are involved in the Internal Dispute Resolution Process.

PROCEDURE:

The University’s Internal Dispute Resolution Process consists of two steps:

- Step I: Review*
- Step II: Appeal*

The process is structured to minimize any potential bias. It will result in participation of individuals who may be in a different chain of command than the employee. It will also result in participation by Human Resources (HR) or Equal Opportunity (EO), dependent upon the situation.

Time limits in the process set forth below must be followed to ensure enough time is provided to review information and respond to the Dispute Resolution Request in a timely manner:

- *Step I: Review* – The Form must be dated and filed within ten (10) University business days from the latest documented attempt at resolution, not to exceed twenty (20) University business days from the date of the original event leading up to the Dispute Resolution Request.
- *Step II: Appeal* – The Appeal must be dated and filed within ten (10) University business days of the date of the written response of *Step I: Review*.
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Step I: Review

1. The employee notifies HR of the Dispute and requests to utilize the Internal Dispute Resolution Process. HR discusses the request with the employee. HR determines if the situation meets the criteria of a Dispute, or advises the employee of an alternative course of action, such as informal conflict resolution.
2. If it is determined that the Internal Dispute Resolution Process will be utilized, the employee completes Attachment A – Internal Dispute Resolution Request Form (“Form”) and submits it to HR. The Form must be dated and filed within ten (10) University business days from the latest documented attempt at resolution, not to exceed twenty (20) University business days from the date of the original event leading up to the Dispute Resolution Request.
3. Upon receipt of the Form, HR or EO will inform Leadership of the Dispute Resolution Request.
4. Senior Leadership will review the submitted documentation, and may schedule a meeting with the employee.

5. Senior Leadership will provide a decision via written response to the employee, HR or EO, and Leadership, not to exceed twenty (20) University calendar days of the date of the Dispute Resolution Request.

Step II: Appeal

1. If the employee is unsatisfied with the response from *Step I: Review*, the employee can proceed to *Step II: Appeal* by submitting a Dispute Resolution Request to HR or EO as the President's designee, whichever was not involved in Step I, above. The Form must be filed within ten (10) University business days from the date of the decision from *Step I: Review*.
2. HR or EO will review the submitted documentation, and may schedule a meeting with the employee.
3. HR or EO will provide a decision via written response to the employee, Senior Leadership, and Leadership, not to exceed twenty (20) University business days of the date of the Dispute Resolution Request in *Step II: Appeal*.
4. The decision of HR or EO shall be final and is not subject to further administrative review by any officer or committee of the university or by the Board of Regents.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Internal Dispute Resolution Request Form

Revision Date:

June 17, 1999
February 12, 2004
April 4, 2017

