

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: Human Resources
AREA: Employee Relations

Number: 02.04.01

SUBJECT: Employee Grievances

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document describes the grievance process for addressing non-faculty staff employee grievances handled by the University's Department of Human Resources (Human Resources).

Grievances based on allegations of discrimination and/or sexual harassment are handled by the University's [Office of Equal Opportunity Services \(EOS\)](#) and not pursuant to this policy. Nondisciplinary terminations (as defined in this policy) are not covered under this policy.

Guidelines governing faculty grievances can be found in the [Faculty Handbook](#).

Intimidation, harassment, coercion or reprisal in any form against any employee for presenting the grievance or for participating or assisting another employee in the presentation of a grievance pursuant to this policy is strictly prohibited.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Human Resources Representative: The Human Resources Business Partner assigned to the college or division in which the employment action occurred or their designee.
- B. Regular Employee: A non-faculty, non-probationary staff employee who is employed for at least 20 hours per week on a regular basis, excluding students employed in positions which require student status as a condition of employment. Referred to herein as "employee."
- C. Grievant: A non-probationary staff employee who files a grievance under this policy.
- D. Grievance: An employee's formal expression of disagreement or dissatisfaction with written reprimands, final reprimands, suspensions without pay, demotions, involuntary transfers to another job classification, and terminations.

III. TWO LEVELS OF THE GRIEVANCE PROCESS

There are two levels to the grievance process. In the event the grievance is related to a termination, the grievant may choose to proceed to Level Two – Hearing Panel Review. Otherwise, the two levels to the grievance process are as follows:

- A. Level One – Meeting With Supervisor: Employees must discuss their issue(s) with their immediate supervisor or the next higher supervisory authority. This level is available for all

employees relating to written reprimands, final reprimands, suspensions without pay, demotions, involuntary transfers to another job classification, and terminations.

- B. Level Two – Hearing Panel Review: This level is available only for a regular employee. A group of three (3) staff members chosen by the Human Resources Representative who will render a recommendation as to whether the grievable employment action was consistent with University policy and/or practice. The hearing panel will consist of two (2) staff level employees from outside the grievant's department and one (1) management level employees from outside the grievant's department. The Hearing Panel Review will only address grievances related to terminations.
- C. Non-Disciplinary Terminations: Involuntary terminations for a non-disciplinary reason to include: terminations due to lack of work or funds and changes in the organizational structure. See [MAPP 02.04.06](#) (Reduction in Force).

IV. PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Level One – Meeting With Supervisor

1. The first level in the grievance process is available to all employees.
2. An employee must initiate the grievance process by requesting a meeting with their supervisor or the next higher supervisor authority to discuss the issues within two (2) working days of the action. If an employee does not wish to meet with their immediate supervisor and the next higher supervisor authority is the Vice President or President, a designee may be assigned at the discretion of Human Resources. An employee who fails to initiate the grievance process will forfeit their right to proceed with any type of grievance for the employment action.
3. The meeting requested by the employee shall take place within five (5) working days of the employee's request for a meeting. Employees and supervisors engaged in the grievance process should make reasonable efforts to resolve the issues efficiently and expeditiously. This procedure should be conducted as an interest-based, collaborative problem-solving process between the employee and supervisor with the purpose of preserving the work relationship. If the supervisor is not available during the time required for the meeting to take place or the grievant feels that they are unable to discuss the issue with their immediate supervisor, the grievant shall meet with the next higher supervisory authority or designee within the same five (5) working day period referenced in this Section IV. The supervisory authority who meets with the employee shall make a final decision at the meeting or within two (2) working days following the meeting.
4. If the employee's grievance is due to a written reprimand, final reprimand, suspension without pay, demotion, or involuntary transfer to another job classification, the first level in the grievance process is the final step.

B. Level Two – Hearing Panel Review

1. The second level in the grievance process is available only to regular employees.
2. If a grievance is not resolved through the first level of the grievance process and the grievance is due to a termination, a regular employee may, but is not required to, proceed with a Hearing Panel Review.
3. In order to proceed with a Hearing Panel Review, the employee must complete a written, signed, Hearing Panel Review Form that may be obtained from the Human Resources Department. The Hearing Panel Review Form must be submitted by the employee to Human Resources within five (5) working days following the conclusion of the first level of the grievance process. The information supplied by the grievant on the Hearing Panel Review Form must include, in detail, the reasons the employee believes the actions of the supervisor or person responsible for the employment action were inconsistent with University policy and/or practice, as well as the names of any witnesses who have first-hand knowledge of the employment action and/or any relevant documentation. Within two (2) working days of receipt of the employee's Hearing Panel Review Form, the Human Resources Representative will notify the employee's supervisor and provide the supervisor a copy of the employee's Hearing Panel Review Form.
3. Hearing Panel Review Procedures

- a. The hearing will be conducted within a reasonable period after receipt of the grievant's written appeal. The designated Human Resources Representative will send a notice confirming the date, time, and place of the hearing to the grievant, respondent, and members of the hearing panel no later than ten (10) working days prior to the hearing.

No later than five (5) working days prior to the hearing, the parties shall submit the following information to the designated Human Resources Representative; a summary of the party's position, a list of witnesses to be called during the hearing, and any documentation to be presented to the hearing panel. There will be a simultaneous exchange of this information between the parties, which will be facilitated by the designated Human Resources Representative. Neither party is allowed to provide any documentation, or present any witnesses that were not provided to the designated Human Resources Representative by the deadlines referenced in this section.

- b. Both the grievant and the respondent shall have the right to an advisor or counsel of their choice who may provide advice and attend the hearing, but may not speak on behalf of the grievant, question witnesses or the hearing panel, or provide an opening or closing statement. The parties must provide the designated Human Resources Representative with the names of any counsel that will be present at the hearing no later than five (5) working days prior to the hearing.
- c. The purpose of the hearing panel review is to ensure that the action of the supervisor or other person responsible for taking the employment action was consistent with University policy and practice.

- d. During the hearing, all parties shall be afforded reasonable opportunity for oral opening and closing arguments and for presentation of relevant witnesses, cross-examination of witnesses, and presentation of relevant documentary evidence.
- e. The hearing panel shall have the right to question any and all witnesses, and to examine documentary evidence presented. Witnesses shall not be present during the testimony of any party or other witness.
- f. The date of the hearing must be adhered to except for unusual or extraordinary circumstances, which must be presented in writing as soon as possible to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources or designee.
- g. At the conclusion of the hearing, the hearing panel members will convene to deliberate their findings and arrive at a majority recommendation as to whether to uphold or overturn the employment action. The recommendation, which must include a summary of their findings, shall be communicated to the Human Resources Representative on the day of the hearing or within two (2) working days of the hearing. The Human Resources Representative will have two (2) working days after receipt of the hearing panel's decision to submit the panel's decision to the Vice President of that employee's division.

4. Vice President Action

- a. When an employee files a grievance against a Vice President or President, the Associate Vice President for Human Resources may assign the final decision to another Vice President from outside the employee's division and/or may advance the grievance process to Hearing Panel Review.
- b. Within five (5) working days from the receipt of the panel's decision, the Vice President will take action on the recommendation. They may accept the recommendation of the panel, enter a decision different from that of the panel, or return the case to the panel with instructions to rehear the case, conduct further deliberations, or answer specific questions.
- c. If the case requires further deliberation or rehearing, the designated Human Resources Representative will establish new time schedules and communicate them to all members of the panel.
- d. Otherwise, the Vice President will make a decision and forward it to the Human Resources Representative, who will notify the employee in writing.
- e. The Vice President's decision is final and not appealable.

V. POLICY TIMELINES

The Associate Vice President for Human Resources may extend any deadlines contained in this policy based on extenuating circumstances.

VI. NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The policy of the University of Houston System and its universities is to ensure equal opportunity in all its educational programs and activities, and all terms and conditions of employment without regard to age, race, color, disability, religion, national origin, ethnicity, military status, genetic information, sex (including gender and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity or status, or gender expression, except where such a distinction is required by law. For the UH System's Official Non-Discrimination Statement, see [SAM.01.D.05 – Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Statement](#).

VII. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Associate Vice President, Human Resources

Review: Every five years

VIII. APPROVAL

/Raymond Bartlett/

Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance

/Renu Khator/

President

Date of President's Approval: April 26, 2025

IX. REFERENCES

[UH System Administrative Memorandum \(SAM\) 02.A.05 - Employee Relations, Grievance and Appeal](#)