



## **Complaint Resolution Policy**

UMT is committed to providing high-quality educational programs and student support services. To promote fairness, accountability, and continuous improvement, the University maintains a formal complaint resolution process for addressing academic, administrative, and institutional concerns.

For purposes of this policy, a complaint is defined as a written expression of dissatisfaction related to academic or administrative services, faculty or staff conduct, institutional practices, or alleged noncompliance with accreditation standards, where the complainant seeks a formal resolution. Complaints may be filed by students, faculty, administrators, or any party with good reason to believe the University is not in compliance with applicable accreditation standards or regulatory requirements.

The complaint process consists of two levels: informal resolution and formal resolution.

### **Informal Resolution**

An attempt will be made to resolve the complaint informally and amicably through the following steps:

Step 1. The complainant communicates the concern to Student Services, either verbally or in writing. Student Services serves as the central intake point for all informal complaints.

Step 2. Student Services may attempt informal resolution or refer the matter to the appropriate academic or administrative official, who serves as an impartial facilitator to assist the involved parties in reaching an amicable resolution.

### **Formal Resolution**

If the complaint is not resolved informally, the following formal process applies:

Step 1. The complainant submits a written complaint to the Office of Academic Affairs.

Step 2. The VP of Academic Affairs or designee investigates and gathers relevant information from both the complainant and respondent.

Step 3. The VP or designee, in consultation with the President and/or Provost as needed, deliberates and issues a final institutional decision regarding the resolution of the complaint.

UMT acknowledges receipt of all formal complaints within ten (10) business days and seeks to resolve complaints within thirty (30) calendar days. If additional time is needed, the complainant will be notified in writing of the reason for delay and the anticipated resolution timeframe.

### **External Complaint Resolution Options**

#### **Students Residing in NC-SARA States**

After exhausting UMT's internal complaint resolution process, students residing in a state that participates in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) may submit a complaint to the applicable State Portal Entity (SPE) in the state where the institution is located. For UMT, the SARA State Portal Entity is **State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)**. Student may seek resolution through

<https://www.schev.edu/students/resources/student-complaints>

NC-SARA-related complaints are limited to distance education activities offered across state lines under SARA authorization and do not include matters governed by separate institutional or legal processes.

Additional information regarding SARA complaint resolution policies is available on the NC-SARA website: <https://nc-sara.org/sara-policy-manual>



#### **Students Residing in Non-NC-SARA States**

Students residing in states that do not participate in NC-SARA may file a complaint with the appropriate higher education authority in their state of residence. Information regarding state complaint processes is available through the NC-SARA State Authorization Guide: <https://nc-sara.org/guide/state-authorization-guide/>

#### **Veterans and GI Bill® Beneficiaries**

Veteran students using VA education benefits who are unable to resolve a complaint through UMT's internal process may file a complaint with the Virginia State Approving Agency (SAA) at email address [saa@dvs.virginia.gov](mailto:saa@dvs.virginia.gov) or through the VA GI Bill® Feedback System

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/Feedback.asp>. Filing a complaint with the VA GI Bill® Feedback System does not limit a student's right to pursue relief through other federal, state, or institutional processes. GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by the VA is available at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.

#### **Distance Education Accrediting Commission**

Students may choose to file a complaint with UMT's accrediting body, Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC), through <https://www.deac.org/student-center/complaint-process>.

#### **Non-Retaliation Policy**

UMT strictly prohibits retaliation against any student who files a complaint in good faith.

- Allegations of retaliation by **faculty** should be reported to the **Office of Academic Affairs** and will be addressed in accordance with the Faculty Handbook.
- Allegations involving **administrators or staff** will be addressed pursuant to the Employee Handbook and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- Allegations involving **other students** will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with UMT student conduct policies.

#### **Recordkeeping**

UMT maintains complete records of all complaints and their resolutions in accordance with institutional record retention requirements, for a minimum of five (5) years.

**This policy is available to students via the UMT website and current catalog**