



ALBERTA BIBLE COLLEGE
EST 1932

Grievance Policy

Date Approved: 30/5/19

Status: Approved by Cabinet

ABC Department: All Departments

Scope of this Policy: This policy provides the structure for students, staff, faculty, and volunteers to exercise the right of grievance between and amongst other members of the Alberta Bible College (ABC) community. The structure may also be applied to appeal administrative policy of ABC.

Definitions:

1. Mediator: a neutral third party who facilitates negotiation between two or more parties as they come to a mutually satisfactory resolution of a conflict
2. Arbitrator: a neutral third party who makes a binding decision regarding the resolution of a conflict between two or more parties

Policy:

Alberta Bible College will comply with Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) requirements to have published procedures and records of addressing formal complaints and grievances (Standard 8, EE 8).

Specific policies are detailed below and include:

1. Four steps towards grievance resolution
 - a. Step #1: Going directly to the person(s) with whom you have a conflict
 - i. If a conflict cannot be satisfactorily resolved by going directly to the person with whom the conflict exists, mediation or arbitration may be required. In exceptional circumstances, safety and security issues may mean it is not possible or suitable to have direct conversation between the parties involved. Or, a power differential between the parties—either real or perceived—may be a barrier. In these circumstances, mediation may be the first step. See Step #2.
 - b. Step #2: Seeking amicable mediation
 - c. Step #3: Requesting decision by an appointed arbitrator
 - d. Step #4: Appeal to Association of Biblical Higher Education
2. Grievance advocate
3. Conflict of interest
4. Protection from retaliation
5. File storage



Procedures:

1. Four steps towards grievance resolution
 - a. Different procedures apply depending on whom the grievance is being filed against.
 - i. Section A applies when filing a grievance against any member of the ABC community, with the exception of the President.
 - ii. Section B applies when filing a grievance against the President or against an administrative policy of ABC.

Section A

Step #1: Direct Conversation

- a. The individual with a grievance is to go directly to the person with whom they have a conflict. With respect, they are to initiate a conversation in attempt to resolve the issue.

Step #2: Mediation by Member of President's Cabinet

- a. If Step #1 does not resolve the conflict and an individual chooses to file a grievance, or if safety and security issues mean it is not possible or suitable to have direct conversation between the parties involved, or if a power differential between the two parties—either real or perceived—is a barrier to direct conversation, the individual should submit a completed Grievance Form¹ to a member of the President's Cabinet,² who will table the concern with the Cabinet.
- b. The Cabinet will appoint one of its members (excluding the President) to serve as mediator. In the event the grievance involves one or more members of the Cabinet, those members of the Cabinet will be ineligible to serve as the mediator or to participate in any Cabinet proceedings related to the grievance.
- c. Within fifteen days of receiving a completed Grievance Form, the appointed Cabinet mediator will provide written acknowledgement to the parties involved that a Grievance Form has been received and that this form will be distributed to all affected parties.
- d. Within fifteen days of the date on the written acknowledgement, the appointed Cabinet mediator will convene a meeting between those who are in conflict for purposes of mediating understanding and, if possible, reaching resolution.

¹ Please find the Grievance Form at the end of this policy.

² The President's Cabinet consists of the President, Academic Dean, Student Development Dean, Operations Director, Communications Director, and Enrollment Officer.



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- i. If any party requires additional time, they may request an extension in writing that will be considered by the appointed Cabinet mediator.
- e. If resolution is achieved, this will be acknowledged in a dated mediation letter signed by all parties directly involved in the grievance and the appointed Cabinet mediator. Signing this letter does not prohibit any party from later exercising their right of appeal within the permitted timeline. See Step #3.a.
- f. If no written appeal is submitted within fifteen days of the date of the mediation letter, the matter will be considered resolved.

Step #3: Arbitration by President of College

- a. Any party directly involved in the grievance who is not satisfied with the results of the mediation by the Cabinet mediator may appeal in writing within fifteen days to the President (president@abccampus.ca). However, all parties must agree to arbitration by signing an Arbitration Agreement.³ If all parties do not sign this agreement, the arbitration process may not proceed. However, any party seeking further recourse may proceed to Step #4.
- b. The President will consult with the members of the Cabinet (excluding any Cabinet members directly involved in the grievance), and with the parties directly involved in the grievance, and will respond in writing to all parties within fifteen days of the date on the appeal letter.
- c. If a decision by the President is not made within fifteen days of the date on the appeal letter, any party can take the decision to the next step of the process, or all parties can agree in writing to extend the deadline.
- d. If no written appeal is submitted within fifteen days of the date of the arbitration letter from the President, the matter will be considered resolved.

Step #4: Appeal to Association of Biblical Higher Education

- a. Any party directly involved in the grievance who is not satisfied with the President's arbitration decision may appeal to the Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE). Visit www.abhe.org/contact-us/ or call (407)-207-0808.

Section B

Step #1: Direct Conversation

- a. The individual with a grievance is to go directly to the President. With respect, they are to initiate a conversation in attempt to resolve the issue.

Step #2: Mediation by Chairperson of Board of Trustees

- a. If Step #1 does not resolve the conflict and an individual chooses to file a grievance, or if safety and security issues mean it is not possible or suitable to have direct conversation between the parties involved, or if a power differential

³ Please find the Arbitration Agreement at the end of this policy.



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between the parties—either real or perceived—is a barrier to direct conversation, the individual should submit a completed Grievance Form⁴ to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees,⁵ who will serve as mediator.

- b. Within fifteen days of receiving a completed Grievance Form, the Chairperson of the Board will provide written acknowledgement to the parties involved that a Grievance Form has been received and that this form will be distributed to all affected parties.
- c. Within fifteen days of the date on the written acknowledgement, the Chairperson of the Board will convene a meeting between the President and the party filing the grievance for purposes of mediating understanding and, if possible, reaching resolution.
 - i. If any party requires additional time, they may request an extension in writing that will be considered by the Chairperson of the Board.
- d. If resolution is achieved, this will be acknowledged in a dated mediation letter signed by all parties directly involved in the grievance and the Chairperson of the Board. Signing this letter does not prohibit any party from later exercising their right of appeal within the permitted timeline. See Step #3.a.
- e. If no written appeal is submitted within fifteen days of the date of the mediation letter, the matter will be considered resolved.

Step #3: Arbitration by External Arbitrator

- a. Any party directly involved in the grievance who is not satisfied with the results of the mediation by the Chairperson of the Board may appeal in writing within fifteen days to the President's Cabinet⁶ requesting that an independent and objective arbitrator external to the ABC community arbitrate the conflict. The external arbitrator will be selected by members of the President's Cabinet (excluding the President and any Cabinet members directly involved in the grievance). Any costs associated with the external arbitrator will be shared evenly between ABC and the party seeking external arbitration. However, all parties must agree to arbitration by signing an Arbitration Agreement.⁷ If all parties do not sign this agreement, the arbitration process may not proceed. However, any party seeking further recourse may proceed to Step #4.

⁴ Please find the Grievance Form at the end of this policy.

⁵ Contact information for the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees is available from the Grievance Advocate (advocacy@abccampus.ca).

⁶ The President's Cabinet consists of the President, Academic Dean, Student Development Dean, Operations Director, Communications Director, and Enrollment Officer.

⁷ Please find the Arbitration Agreement at the end of this policy.



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- b. The external arbitrator will consult with the Chairperson of the Board, the President, and with the other party directly involved in the grievance, and will respond in writing to all parties within fifteen days of the date on the appeal letter.
- c. If a decision by the external arbitrator is not made within fifteen days of the date on the appeal letter, any party can take the decision to the next step of the process, or all parties can agree in writing to extend the deadline.
- d. If no written appeal is submitted within fifteen days of the date of the arbitration letter from the external arbitrator, the matter will be considered resolved.

Step #4: Appeal to Association of Biblical Higher Education

- a. Any party directly involved in the grievance who is not satisfied with the external arbitrator's decision may appeal to the Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE). Visit www.abhe.org/contact-us/ or call (407)-207-0808.
2. Grievance advocate
- a. If an individual filing a grievance desires support from an advocate during the grievance process, they can access support from a designated advocate, who is a neutral party not employed by ABC. This service can be accessed by contacting advocacy@abccampus.ca. The advocate can then guide and accompany the individual filing the grievance throughout the process. As a neutral party, the advocate's role is one of logistical, technical, and emotional support, not representation.
3. Conflict of interest
- a. In any step of the grievance process, if a grievance advocate, mediator, arbitrator, or member of the President's Cabinet realizes they have a potential of bias or conflict of interest, they must recuse themselves from the proceedings by writing a letter addressed to the President (president@abccampus.ca). If the President needs to recuse themselves due to conflict of interest, they will write a letter addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
4. Protection from retaliation
- a. Regardless of the outcome of a grievance or appeal made in good faith, the individual lodging the grievance or appeal, as well as anyone providing information, will be protected from any form of retaliation by either students, staff, faculty, board members, or volunteers. This includes dismissal, demotion, unwanted transfer, and/or denial of opportunities within the college as a result of their having filed a grievance or appeal or having provided evidence regarding the grievance or appeal.
5. File Storage
- a. Hardcopy documentation accumulated during the grievance process will be stored permanently in the file of the individual(s) against whom the grievance is filed. That is:



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- i. Grievance documentation against a student will be stored in that student's file.
 - ii. Grievance documentation against a staff member will be stored in that staff member's file.
 - iii. Grievance documentation against a faculty member will be stored in that faculty member's file.
 - iv. Grievance documentation against a volunteer will be stored in that volunteer's file.
 - v. Grievance documentation against an administrative policy of ABC will be stored in the President's file.
- b. Documentation accumulated during the grievance process will also be stored permanently in a secure, centralized location on the ABC server.

Related Information:

1. ABC Privacy Policy
2. For issues concerning change of grade policy and procedures, please see the Academic Calendar.
3. For issues concerning harassment and/or abuse, please see ABC's Harassment Policy in the Community Life Guide.

Sources and Resources:

1. **Association of Biblical Higher Education Commission on Accreditation Manual**
 - <https://www.abhe.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2022-COA-Manual-2022-03-15.pdf>
2. **ADR Institute of Canada**
 - <https://adric.ca/uFAQs/what-is-the-difference-between-mediation-and-arbitration/>

Policy History:

Date	Revisor's Name	Key Changes	Approved By
May 30, 2019	Cory Pytlarz	Major revision	President's Cabinet
June 15, 2022	Cory Pytlarz	• Reformat existing policy to ABC's policy template • Add definitions of "mediator" and "arbitrator" • Add Arbitration Agreement • Further define role of Grievance Advocate	President's Cabinet



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		• Update positions comprising President's Cabinet • Refine steps, procedures, and timing of grievance process • Add conflict of interest procedure • Add file storage procedures	
June 28, 2023	Cory Pytlarz	• Grammatical improvements • Adjustment of language to account for scenarios where more than two parties, or multiple Cabinet members, involved in grievance proceedings • Clarification that grievance decision appeals need to be written • Update positions comprising President's Cabinet • Add digital file storage procedures	
Nov. 1, 2023	Cory Pytlarz	• Update positions comprising President's Cabinet	President's Cabinet

Revised 11/1/2023

Policy due for review on: One year from last revised date

Note: Remember to click the revised date above and update it.



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Grievance Form

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Brief explanation of grievance (including parties or policies against whom/which the grievance is being filed):

Brief account of your attempt at Step #1: Direct Conversation (or why this step is not possible):

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understand ABC's Grievance Policy and wish to file a grievance in accordance with this policy.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Received By: _____

Date: _____



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Arbitration Agreement

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understand ABC's Grievance Policy. I also confirm that, as part of this policy and its procedures, I agree to enter an Arbitration Agreement in effort to seek resolution to the conflict described in the Grievance Form. I understand that the arbitrator's decision is binding (though I may still choose to appeal to the Association of Biblical Higher Education). If I am the party requesting an external arbitrator, I agree to pay fifty percent of any costs associated with the external arbitrator.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Received By: _____

Date: _____