

# UIC JOHN MARSHALL LAW SCHOOL



## Student Complaint Policy

UIC John Marshall Law School is committed to treating its students fairly and with respect. The Law School has adopted the following policies and procedures to address student complaints.

- 1. Academic Grievances:** Law student academic grievances are governed by the [UIC Student Academic Grievance Policy](#) (Policy) and the [UIC Student Academic Grievance Procedures](#) (Procedures). The Policy and Procedures outline a process through which students may seek resolution of complaints or grievances relating to academic decisions while they are enrolled at the University. An appendix to the Procedures provides timelines for submitting complaints and [forms](#) for grievants and administrators to use when submitting and deciding grievances.

You should read Section 1 of this Policy together with the UIC Student Academic Grievance Policy and Procedures. The following provisions clarify issues relating to implementation of the Policy and Procedures at the Law School:

- a. Scope of grievance procedures:** Consistent with the Procedures, which exclude admissions decisions from their scope, the following decisions are not eligible for resolution under the Procedures:
  - grades earned in a SCALES course;
  - decisions to admit, or not admit, students from the SCALES program into the JD program; and
  - readmissions decisions.

Although student disciplinary matters are not eligible for resolution under the Procedures, decisions made at the Law School under the Honor Code or the Student Code of Professional Conduct are academic decisions that may be grieved under the Procedures.

- b. Level 1 versus Level 2 grievances:** The Policy and Procedures define two categories of grievance. Level 1 grievances concern decisions that will prevent a student from continuing progress toward a degree in good academic standing whereas Level 2 grievances concern decisions that will not prevent a student from doing so. The procedures for Level 1

grievances include a hearing whereas Level 2 grievances follow a more abbreviated procedure.

Within the Law School, the Level 1 grievance procedure is reserved for decisions such as probation and dismissal whereas the Level 2 grievance procedure will be used to resolve other grievances, including those relating to grades.

- c. **Administrative Officer and Grievance Officer:** At the beginning of each academic year, the Dean will designate the Administrative Officer and the Grievance Officer (who may be the Dean) for purposes of the Policy and Procedures. The Dean will also designate an alternate Administrative Officer or Grievance Officer in any case where the existing Administrative Officer or Grievance Officer has been directly involved in the circumstances leading to the decision that is the subject of a grievance. A person may never serve as both the Administrative Officer and the Grievance Officer in the same grievance proceeding.

Students seeking to file a formal grievance should contact the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs for information on where and how to file the grievance.

- d. **Informal resolution:** The Procedures require grievants to attempt to resolve the matter informally before filing a formal grievance, unless the grievance includes an allegation of sexual misconduct or unlawful discrimination. Informal attempts must include a good-faith effort to discuss the matter with the person who took the action that is the subject of the grievance. The student should document this informal process in writing and, if the student chooses to pursue a formal grievance, send it to the Administrative Officer.

The formal grievance process must be initiated with the Administrative Officer **within 40 calendar days** of receiving notice of the decision that is the subject of the grievance.

- e. **Deadlines:** The administrative deadlines set forth in the Procedures may be adjusted to account for the academic calendar or to allow the University Office for Access and Equity to complete any required investigation. However, deadlines applicable to grievants (including the 40-day deadline for submitting a formal grievance) may be extended only in extraordinary circumstances and with the approval of the Dean or the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs.

- 2. **Disciplinary or Other Student Conduct Referrals:** Any member of the faculty, administration, staff, or student body may make a referral of a possible violation of the Honor Code, Student Code of Professional Conduct, or UIC Student

Disciplinary Policy against a student or former student. Referrals may be made by contacting the following individuals or offices:

- Vice Dean for Academic Affairs (for suspected Honor Code violations);
- Assistant Dean for Student Life & Leadership (for suspected violations of the Student Code of Professional Conduct); or
- Office of the Dean of Students (for suspected violations of the University Student Disciplinary Policy).

The referral should identify the parties involved in the complaint and state in plain language and with reasonable particularity the date and place of the alleged violation and all known relevant facts. If possible, the student should also identify the standard of conduct that has been violated (e.g., a particular section of the Honor Code). Referrals may be made in person or sent via email or typed letter. Referrals under the University Student Disciplinary Policy may also be made [online](#).

The Honor Code and the Student Code of Professional Conduct are available on the Law School's [Institutional Policies](#) page. The University Student Disciplinary Policy is available on the [Office of the Dean of Students webpage](#).

**3. Discrimination and Harassment Complaints:** Any student, employee, or faculty member may submit a complaint or report of alleged discrimination or harassment by:

- Calling Ethics Line, the University's confidential reporting line, at 866.758.2146;
- Contacting the University's [Ethics and Compliance Office](#) in writing or in person;
- Contacting one of the resources listed on the University's [Office for Access and Equity website](#);
- Completing the online [Harassment/Bias Incident Reporting form](#) or [Title IX Complaint form](#); or
- Contacting any dean or faculty member.

Any faculty member, administrator, or manager who knows or has reason to believe that discrimination or harassment has occurred has an obligation to report the matter, whether or not the victim has complained.

The University's policies against discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct are available on the [Office for Access and Equity policies page](#).

**4. Complaints to the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association:** The Law School is accredited by the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to

the Bar of the American Bar Association, 321 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois 60654.

Any student with complaints, questions, or concerns that directly implicate the Law School's compliance with the ABA's Accreditation Standards can file a complaint using the [Student Complaints – Compliance with ABA Accreditation Standards Form](#). Your complaint must identify the specific ABA Accreditation Standard at issue. The ABA standards can be reviewed online on the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar section of the ABA website. Your complaint should describe in detail the behavior, program, process, or other matter that is the subject of your complaint.

- 5. Complaints to The Higher Learning Commission:** The University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission. The Higher Learning Commission has established a clear distinction between individual grievances and complaints that appear to involve broad institutional practices. Where a complaint to the HLC raises issues regarding an institution's ongoing ability to meet the Criteria for Accreditation, the Commission forwards the complaint to the institution and requests a formal response. The Higher Learning's mailing address is:

The Higher Learning Commission  
230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500  
Chicago, Illinois 60604-1411

- 6. Complaint Procedure for Online Students:** Illinois is a member of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), an agreement that establishes standards for postsecondary distance education among member states. Each SARA state designates a state agency to serve as the state's portal agency, the point of contact for SARA questions, complaints and other communications. The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) acts as the SARA portal agency for Illinois.

As a participant in SARA, the University follows the SARA Student Complaint Resolution Process in addressing the complaints of distance education students from [SARA member states](#). If unsatisfied with the outcome of the Law School's internal complaint process, a student may appeal to the IBHE through its online complaint system. Disputes regarding grades and student conduct violations fall outside the SARA complaint process and are governed entirely by Law School and University policy and Illinois law.

Distance education students from states that are not members of SARA are encouraged to seek resolution of complaints through the Law School's internal complaint processes. For unresolved complaints, a student should contact the student's home state's agency:

California

California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education  
PO Box 980818  
W. Sacramento, CA 95798-0818  
bppe@dca.ca.gov  
www.bppe.ca.gov/enforcement/complaint.shtml  
www.bppe.ca.gov/forms\_pubs/complaint.pdf

## 7. Other Student Complaints

- a. Resolving the complaint:** When a formal written complaint has been made that is not covered by another complaint process or procedure, the Assistant Dean for Student Life & Leadership will investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint as soon as possible. Absent extraordinary circumstances, the Assistant Dean for Student Life & Leadership will respond no later than 30 days after receiving the written complaint. Upon completing the investigation of the complaint, the Law School will communicate its findings and, if appropriate, its intended actions with respect to the complaint.
  - b. Appeal process:** If a complainant is dissatisfied with the response or outcome, that individual has the right to appeal the decision. The complainant should submit a written appeal to the Dean no later than 7 days from the date of the original response. Absent exigent or extraordinary circumstances, the Dean will respond no later than 30 days after receiving the written appeal. The Dean's decision shall be final.
  - c. Maintaining a written record of the complaint:** The Law School will maintain a copy of all complaints and a summary of their resolution in the Office of Student Life & Leadership for up to eight years from the date of final resolution of the complaint.
- 8. Protection Against Retaliation:** The Law School will not retaliate against an individual who makes a complaint under this Policy or tolerate retaliation by any faculty member, administrator, employee, or student.
- 9. Other Complaints:** This Policy does not alter other complaint procedures that the Law School or University provide for in other policy statements and procedures. You may access Law School policies and procedures on the [Institutional Policies](#) page.

*Administrative policy adopted November 22, 2011; revised September [9], 2019.*

**Cross references:** UIC Student Academic Grievance Policy; UIC Student Academic Grievance Procedures; UIC Sexual Misconduct Policy; University of Illinois Nondiscrimination Statement; University of Illinois Statement on Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct; University Ethics and Compliance Office Ethics Line.