

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL CENTER

POLICY NUMBER: AgCenter PS-20
EFFECTIVE DATE: September 3, 1992
REVISION DATE: January 1, 2026
VERSION: 1

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Office of Human Resource Management
CATEGORY: Administrative

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a grievance procedure that supports the LSU Agricultural Center's commitment to fair and equitable employment practices, ensuring that employees have a formal process to address concerns related to race, creed, color, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, sex, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, or veteran's status.

II. DEFINITIONS

Employee – For the purposes of this policy, an employee refers to any individual who is or has been employed in any capacity by the Ag Center and who seeks to address a grievance related to their employment.

Grievance Procedure – the set of procedures which enable employees who have an employment problem or situation with which they are dissatisfied, to discuss their concerns with appropriate personnel with freedom from reprisal. It establishes a system of equitability and due process for all parties involved in grievance. It determines whether a violation of rules or policies has occurred and if so, determines the means for correcting the violation.

Grievance -- is defined as an allegation or complaint involving perceived harm or injury and consistent with the scope of the policy outlined below.

III. POLICY

It is the Ag Center's policy that its employment practices should be fair and equitable for all employees.

The Grievance Procedure provides a process whereby employees who become dissatisfied or become involved in a misunderstanding can seek resolutions to their problems. If employment practices--selection, promotion, job classification, job assignment, job Compensation, fringe benefits, leave practices, job duties, work rules, and sanctions--are felt

to be inappropriate or unfair, the grievance procedure offers a method of determining the source of dissatisfaction or misunderstanding so that fairness and efficiency can be re-established in the organization.

Because the different groups of employees are governed by a variety of regulations (e.g., Civil Service rules, regulations of the Board of Supervisors, provision), an effort has been made to develop a procedure applicable to the variety of employees covered by this policy statement.

IV. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Grievance may take a variety of forms, including a simple violation of policy or regulations, a disagreement over interpretation of policy or regulations, a dispute regarding employment practices or work rules.

The Ag Center's basic philosophy is that employee grievances should be settled at the lowest possible administrative level and as quickly as practicable while still complying with the time limits set forth for completion of the grievance procedure.

Types of employment practices covered in this procedure are hiring and promotion (including recruiting, advertisement and application procedures, selection procedures, application of nepotism policies, demotion, and layoff); compensation, job assignments (including duties, job classification, job descriptions, etc.); work rules and conditions, regulations, and fringe benefits.

Civil Service employees should note the availability of the Civil Service procedures for appeals and hearings. Examples of actions over which the Civil Service Commission assumes responsibility is removal of a permanent employee for cause, discrimination, disciplinary suspension without pay, disciplinary reduction in pay, disciplinary demotion, violations of Civil Service law or a Civil Service rule, assignment of an "unsatisfactory" evaluation rating (after the employee has exhausted their right to appeal the rating directly to the Vice President of Agriculture). There are specific time limits established for a Civil Service appeal. The filing of a grievance shall not operate to extend the time limits for filing of a Civil Service appeal. Employees who are in doubt as to whether to appeal to Civil Service or to use the Ag Center Grievance Procedure should contact the AgCenter Human Resource Management office.

V. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The decision to utilize this grievance procedure shall be voluntary on the part of the individual employee. Employees have the right to use this procedure without fear of coercion, discrimination, or reprisal of any kind.

A. ISSUES WHICH ARE NOT GRIEVABLE

The following actions are not grievable under this policy:

- Termination or non-renewal of a contract.
- Actions within the exclusive jurisdiction of the state Civil Service Commission such as

actions which impact pay, or pay issues, suspension with or without pay, reduction in pay, denial of merit increase, demotion, or position classification. Such matters shall follow any applicable Civil Service rules.

- Non-selection for a position. See PS 23 for applicable complaint procedures as it relates to Equal Employment Opportunity.

B. RETALIATION

No employee is to take reprisal action of any kind against an employee who uses the grievance procedure, and no employee is to use an official position to attempt to improperly influence any hearing officer.

The grievance procedure shall not deprive an employee of a charge of discrimination from appeal to the Civil Service Commission (for classified employees) or to appropriate federal agencies.

C. EMPLOYEE ADVISOR

All employees who file or are the subject of a grievance have the right to have an advisor of their choice present at each step in the procedure. If a hearing is conducted under this procedure, both parties have the right to testify and provide information regarding their response as well as have their advisor present to assist them.

An employee selected to represent a grievant in the processing of a grievance through this procedure shall, at such times as the supervisor may approve, be granted necessary time off during working hours to investigate the grievance and represent such other employee without loss of pay and without charge to annual or compensatory leave credits.

The decision of the Vice President of Agriculture or their designee shall be final in all cases properly subject to processing through this procedure. A copy of the grievance procedure will be made available to each employee. In instances where grievance relates to a general policy, regulation or practice considered to be beyond the scope or responsibility of a particular level in the grievance process, with the permission of the authority at that level it is permissible to take the grievance directly to the next higher level.

When the grievance committee provided for in Step Four is used, members will be appointed by the Vice President, and the committee will be composed of an odd number of three (3) or more members. The chair of the committee will be designated by election from within its membership.

D. FORM

The attached official Grievance Form is to be used by employees wishing to file a grievance. A complaint will not be considered an official grievance unless it is made on the official Grievance Form. This does not imply that administrators should not discuss problems and complaints brought to them informally by employees. Additional sheets may be attached to the Grievance Form if space is not adequate for a complete description of the grievance or a full response by the appropriate administrator.

E. SUMMARY DISPOSITION OF GRIEVANCE

At any time after the filing of a grievance in writing, the Vice President or their designee may summarily dispose of the grievance on any of the following grounds:

- that the AgCenter lacks jurisdiction over the subject matter or over the person against whom relief is sought,
- that the aggrieved employee has no legal right to grievance consideration,
- that the grievance has not been made in the required manner or within the prescribed period,
- that a decision on the grievance would be ineffective,
- that the aggrieved employee has failed to appear at the time and place affixed for hearing the grievance, or
- that the aggrieved employee has withdrawn/abandoned the request for grievance consideration.

When the Vice President of Agriculture or their designee summarily disposes of a written grievance, he/she shall notify all parties in writing.

VI. STEPS IN GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Step 1: The employee shall present the grievance in writing and sign on the prescribed form to their immediate supervisor within five (5) working days after the incident which caused the employee to be aggrieved. The employee has the right to have an advisor present when the grievance is filed. If this is not practical, the supervisor will set up a meeting to discuss grievance at a time mutually convenient. The supervisor must give a written answer to the grievance within five (5) working days after it is filed. The five (5) working days shall begin with the first working day after the supervisor receives the written grievance signed by the employee.

Step 2: If the employee is not satisfied with the decision of their immediate supervisor, he/she may, within five (5) working days of the receipt of the decision, beginning with the first working day after receiving the decision, submit their grievance to their unit head (next-in-line supervisor). The employee accomplishes this by signing the statement appearing on the grievance form requesting that the grievance be referred to Step Two and returning the signed grievance form to their unit head. The administrator should at this point forward a copy of the grievance to the AgCenter Human Resource Management Office. The administrator to whom the grievance is addressed will arrange for a meeting at a time mutually acceptable to discuss the grievance with the employee and the employee's advisor no later than seven (7) working days after receipt of the appeal to schedule a hearing of the grievance.

The HRM representative will notify the grievant and the grievant's department head of the decision within five (5) working days following the date of the hearing.

Step 3: If the employee is not satisfied with the decision in Step Two, he/she shall, within five (5) working days beginning the first working day after receiving the decision, submit their grievance to the appropriate Executive Associate Vice President/Director. The employee accomplishes this by signing the statement appearing on the grievance form requesting that the

grievance be referred to Step Three and returning the signed grievance form to the appropriate Associate Vice President/Director. The administrator to whom the grievance is addressed will then discuss the grievance with the employee and the employee's advisor no later than five (5) working days and render their decision in writing within five (5) working days thereafter, beginning with the first working day after the grievance is presented to that administrator. A copy of the grievance will be forwarded to the AgCenter Human Resource Management Office.

Step 4: If the employee is not satisfied with the decision in Step Three, the employee may, within five (5) working days, submit their written grievance to the Office of the Vice President for a decision. The employee accomplishes this by signing the statement appearing on the grievance form requesting that the grievance be referred to Step Four and returning the signed grievance form to the Vice President's Office. The Vice President or their designee shall meet with the employee and the employee's advisor within five (5) working days of receipt of the written grievance, beginning with the first working day after the grievance is presented, at a time mutually agreed upon, and shall render a written decision within ten (10) working days after the meeting. If, by mutual agreement, the Vice President or their designee and the employee decides that the employee's grievance can best be handled after a study and a recommendation from a committee appointed by the Vice President, procedures in Step Four shall be modified to allow the Vice President to delay their written decision for fifteen (15) working days following the date of the meeting with the employee, to allow consideration of the grievance by a committee appointed by the Vice President. The employee and their representative will be allowed to attend the meeting of the committee and present their case to this committee.

This special committee will make recommendations to the Vice President within twelve (12) working days. The Vice President will render a final written decision within five (5) working days after receiving a recommendation from the committee. A copy of the final written decision by the Vice President will be forwarded to the AgCenter Human Resource Management Office.

VII. EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions may be granted in advance with the approval of the Vice President for Agriculture or their designee.

VIII. REFERENCES

- PS-23 Equal Opportunity in Employment and Programs
- PS-23A Americans with Disabilities Act
- PM-55 Equal Opportunity Policy

IX. APPENDIX

LSU AgCenter Grievance Form (rev. November 2025)