

Effective Date: **June 1, 2015**

POLICY

EMPLOYMENT

Employee Handbook – Section 206

Employee Grievance Process

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE

Human Resources

206 Employee Grievance Process

The employee grievance process is available to all employees who are subject to the provisions of this Handbook. However, this grievance process does not apply to and should not be used for complaints alleging unlawful discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment. Boston University prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, or veteran status. Any employee who believes that he or she has been subjected to unlawful discrimination or harassment should refer to [Complaint Procedures in Cases of Alleged Unlawful Discrimination or Harassment, section 101.4.](#)

Boston University is a large and complex institution whose most important asset is its employees. As such, Boston University supports essential lines of communication between employees and supervisors. It promotes prompt consideration of employee problems, misunderstandings, and complaints while providing sufficient time for fact-finding clarification. Through its employee grievance process, Boston University strives to ensure consistently fair

and equal treatment of employee grievances.

206.1 Communications Between Supervisor and Employee (Step 1)

Boston University urges all employees to discuss openly and frankly their employment concerns, problems, or questions with their immediate supervisor. Supervisors are expected to foster and establish effective two-way communication with the employees they supervise. Effective communication between employees and their supervisors serves the best interests of both the employee and the University.

Most employment-related problems of an employee can be resolved through discussions between the supervisor and the employee. Therefore, supervisors are expected to provide employees with opportunities to fully and fairly discuss their problems. In resolving these problems, supervisors have to consider a variety of needs, including those of the University as a whole, the individual department, and the supervisor's own organizational area of responsibility. Under these considerations, there will be occasions when a supervisor cannot resolve a problem to the satisfaction of the employee. In such cases, the employee may appeal the matter to his or her Department Head. This would constitute the first of three (3) successively higher levels of administrative appeal that are available to employees under the following provisions.

206.2 Appeal to an Employee's Department Head (Step 2)

If an employee feels that the discussions with his or her supervisor have been inadequate or resulted in an unsatisfactory solution to the problem, the employee may initiate an appeal to his or her Department Head.

The employee begins the process by preparing a written statement that describes the problem, the supervisor's response to the problem, and the reason(s) for the employee's dissatisfaction with the supervisor's response. The written statement is sent by the employee to his or her Department Head with a copy to the supervisor and the appropriate Human Resources Consultant or the Director of Human Resources on the Boston University Medical Campus.

The employee's Department Head will promptly review the written statement and arrange a meeting with the employee to determine what action, if any, is advisable or required. Under

normal conditions, the Department Head will make a decision and communicate that decision in writing to the employee within five (5) working days of the meeting.

Information regarding the appeal of the Step 2 decision may be obtained from the Human Resources Consultant in Human Resources.

206.3 Appeal to Academic Dean or Vice President (Step 3)

If the Department Head's decision does not resolve the problem to the satisfaction of the employee, the employee may appeal the matter to a higher level administrator within his or her organizational hierarchy. Employees in academic departments would appeal to the Dean of the college, while employees in administrative departments would appeal to an administrator (usually a Vice President) who is responsible for the unit in which their department is organizationally located.

This step in the University's grievance process requires the employee to prepare a written statement that describes the reason(s) for his or her dissatisfaction with the Department Head's decision. The statement is to include (as attachments) a copy of both the written statement that the employee previously sent to the Department Head and the Department Head's written response. The employee sends this material to the appropriate Dean or Vice President, with a copy to the Human Resources Consultant.

The Dean or Vice President to whom the appeal is sent will promptly review the written statement, investigate the issue, and arrange a meeting with the employee to determine what action, if any, is advisable or required. An employee may bring to this meeting a person of his or her choice to assist the employee in presenting his or her position. Under normal conditions, the Dean or Vice President will render a written decision to the employee within ten (10) working days of the meeting.

Information regarding the appeal of the Step 3 decision may be obtained from the Human Resources Consultant in Human Resources or the Director of Human Resources on the Boston University Medical Campus.

206.4 Appeal to a Review Board (Step 4)

If the decision of the Dean or Vice President does not resolve the problem to the satisfaction

of the employee, the employee may choose to appeal the matter to a Review Board. The Review Board will consist of three (3) members of the University's administration, selected by the Provost or Executive Vice President.

In addition, the Chief Human Resources Officer and, when appropriate, the Director of Equal Opportunity are ex-officio members of the Review Board.

An employee initiates this step with a written request to the Chief Human Resources Officer. The request should specify the reason(s) for the employee's dissatisfaction with the decision of the Dean or Vice President. It should include (as attachments) a copy of both the written statement that was previously sent to the Dean or Vice President and the written decision of the Dean or Vice President.

The Review Board will be established promptly, and arrangements will be made for the employee to meet with the board. The employee may bring to this meeting a person of his or her choice to assist the employee in expressing his or her position. The findings and recommendations of the Board will be subject to review by the President of the University. Under normal conditions, the written decision of the Board will be transmitted to the employee within ten (10) working days of the meeting.

The decision of the Review Board is final.

206.5 Related Provisions

The provisions of this policy are applicable to disputes involving the interpretation or application of Boston University personnel policies. The substantive provisions of the University's personnel policies are not subject to grievance under this grievance process policy.

Employees are paid at their base rate of pay for time spent actually participating in the grievance process proceedings held during their regularly scheduled work period.

All supervisory and non-supervisory employees are encouraged to contact their Human Resources Consultant if assistance is needed in resolving personnel problems. Human Resources will provide employees with information regarding the University's employee grievance process.

THIS POLICY STATEMENT IS PART OF THE [EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK](#), AND SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL OF THE POLICIES THAT COMPRISE THE HANDBOOK. THE PROVISIONS OF THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT AND DO NOT ALTER THE AT-WILL STATUS OF AN EMPLOYEE.

END OF POLICY TEXT

Additional Resources Regarding This Policy

Related Policies and Procedures

- [Employee Handbook Policies Manual](#) (staff)
- [Faculty Handbook](#) (faculty)

Related BU Websites

- [Equal Opportunity Office](#)
- [Human Resources](#)
 - [HR Policies](#)
 - [Manager Resources](#) - HR Website