



## **Signum University Employee Complaint Policy**

Signum University places significant confidence in employees' ability to work things out among themselves, but recognizes that difficult situations and problems may arise. Signum encourages employees, whenever they feel it possible, to address issues of disagreement or personality conflict directly with the person involved, and discourages gossip. In keeping with the University's high regard for respect, talking about an individual's behavior to someone who is not in a position to aid its resolution is discouraged. Such conversations can make it difficult to determine objective facts should the need arise later on, can have detrimental effects on morale and reputation, and do not lead to any official resolution of the issue. However, Signum recognizes that it may seem impossible or undesirable to address some problems directly, and has provided designated procedures for complaints.

### **Informal Complaints**

The Employment Team can serve as a resource for someone uncertain or not wishing to file a formal complaint, but desiring assistance in defining or working through a problem. Such issues might include seeking a role change, assistance with determining Signum policy, or other types of informal problem solving or peacemaking. While normally only the action requested will be taken, Signum University reserves the right to turn such informal requests into formal complaints if it is determined that there is sufficient cause. Requesting such assistance in no way prevents an employee from submitting a formal complaint at any time.

### **Formal Complaints**

Signum University takes seriously the welfare of members of its community, so it prioritizes addressing complaints made by Signum University employees. To help members of the Signum community, when a formal complaint is submitted to the Employment Team...

Signum University will courteously treat any person who invokes this complaint procedure, and the company will handle all complaints swiftly and confidentially to the extent possible in light of the need to take appropriate corrective action. Lodging a complaint will in no way be used against the employee or have an adverse impact on the individual's employment status, and retaliation against an employee who files a complaint in good faith will not be permitted.

## How to File a Complaint

The expressed wishes of the complaining person for confidentiality will be considered in the context of the University's legal obligation to act on the charge and the right of the charged party to obtain information. In most cases, however, confidentiality will be strictly maintained by the University and those involved in the investigation. In addition, any notes or documents written by or received by the person(s) conducting the investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible and according to any existing state or federal law.

All complaints submitted through this complaint procedure will receive acknowledgment and a preliminary investigation. This investigation may include requests for further information and/or interviews with involved parties or witnesses. Complaints against Signum University policy will be referred to the Strategy Team for review. For a complaint against an individual, the individual will be notified of the complaint, and it will be determined whether there is preliminary evidence that misconduct, defined as a breach or violation of University policy or standards, has occurred.

If it is determined that there is preliminary evidence of misconduct, an investigation of misconduct will occur. This investigation may also include requests for further information, interviews, and other ways of finding facts, and the subject of the complaint will be given an opportunity to review the facts/findings and make a statement. The investigation should normally take no longer than 15 days, although investigation time may be extended as circumstances require.

Signum values the welfare of all employees, including individuals who are the subject of a complaint. Signum is committed to safeguarding the interests and reputation of such an individual as much as possible while an investigation is ongoing, and to regarding disciplinary measures as a learning opportunity when possible. Although in certain cases it may be necessary or prudent to place the subject of a complaint on leave or take other action while the complaint is investigated, Signum does not intend this to constitute an assumption of guilt. Based on the investigation, Signum University investigator(s) will determine whether the allegations were founded, unfounded or inconclusive. This determination will be documented in writing and made part of the investigative report. The determinations are as follows:

- **Violation found.** Where a violation of Signum University policies, workplace rules or law is found to have occurred, the accused will be notified of the finding and of the specific or corrective actions to be taken. The accused employee's supervisor will also be notified if appropriate. No details about the nature or extent of disciplinary or corrective actions will be disclosed to

- the complainant(s) or witness(es) unless there is a compelling reason to do so (e.g., personal safety).
- **No violation found.** In this situation, the complainant and the accused will be notified that Signum University investigated the allegation(s) and found that the evidence did not support the claim.

If it is determined that misconduct has occurred, the University will respond with appropriate action based on the circumstances. Final warnings, demotion, or disciplinary termination of an employee will not be undertaken except by approval of the Strategy Team. The Strategy Team will recommend appropriate disciplinary action. The appropriate action will depend on the following factors: a) the severity, frequency and pervasiveness of the conduct; b) prior complaints made by the complainant; c) prior complaints made against the respondent; and d) the quality of the evidence (e.g., first-hand knowledge, credible corroboration).

If a warning is issued, the respondent has the right to make a written response, which will be placed with the warning in their file.

The Signum University Board of Directors is the final court of appeals for any decisions made by the Strategy Team, and an employee who feels that complaint procedure was improperly followed or that there is further evidence not taken into account may request an appeal within two weeks of the decision, which the Board shall then review.

While violation of Signum policy may make disciplinary action necessary, Signum University does not view discipline as a form of conflict resolution, and recognizes that further effort or assistance may be necessary to resolve underlying problems. In such cases, and in cases of complaints not involving misconduct, the Employment Team or other personnel will take appropriate steps to provide mediation, coaching, or other assistance. Such action will not be looked upon as disciplinary, but as an opportunity for enhancing valuable skills. While each individual's perspectives and concerns will be taken into account when possible, it is understood that an outcome equally satisfactory to all is not always possible, and that the goal will sometimes be to ensure uninterrupted University operations through a workable compromise.