

## **STUDENT GRIEVANCES (updated 8.19.21)**

Mount Madonna Institute “student” refers to any individual whose application has been accepted and is officially enrolled in any program offered by the College of Ayurveda, and/or the Schools of Yoga and Community Studies. This includes: Foundations of Ayurveda, Ayurvedic Health Counselor Program, Certificate - Ayurvedic Practitioner Program, Master of Arts – Ayurveda Program, Ashtanga Yoga Teacher Training (YTT) Programs at the 200 Hr, 300 Hr, the Prenatal and/or Children’s YTT, Ayurveda Yoga Therapy Program, and Community Studies – Part One and Part Two.

The Institute Student Grievance Policy and Procedure provides MMI students with a method for addressing concerns that may arise regarding MMI’s academic or administrative policies that pertain to students. The procedure provides a thorough review of a student complaint and affords due process rights with the intent of arriving at a mutual agreement among all parties.

A “grievance” is generally defined as an allegation by a student, or a group of students, of a breach, misinterpretation, or misapplication of MMI’s policy or procedure as set forth in the Catalog. The grievance may be against the process used and/or against the outcome.

Mount Madonna Institute (MMI) values harmony and collegial fellowship among students, faculty, staff, the administration, and with our extended communities. Our intention is to resolve grievances and rectify any situation that may have led to an injustice or a misunderstanding quickly and fairly.

In order to maintain or restore harmony and collegial fellowship, MMI encourages and supports a student(s) who wish to address any concern with the person(s) who is (are) directly involved in the concern, in an effort to come to a satisfactory, informal resolution. MMI can provide support for a student through mediated conversations upon a request by the student. The student may choose an advocate to participate with her/him. A student may also discuss the matter with his/her Program Coordinator, or a faculty member or supervisor in whom the student places confidence. Informal meetings may also be held both with the student and with the faculty or staff members involved in the concern to help re-store a working relationship based in fairness, and to resolve the particulars of the concern. In most cases, such concerns can be resolved at that level.

If these informal direct discussions are not successful, the student may pursue a formal avenue through the Student Grievance Policy and Procedure. Procedures are available for both Academic Grievances and Administrative Grievances.

A formal grievance is initiated by a student completing and filing a Student Complaint and Grievance Notification Form - available on the Institute website ([www.mountmadonnainstitute.org/students](http://www.mountmadonnainstitute.org/students)) and in the student orientation documents. A student may also request the Student Complaint and Grievance Notification Form by calling 408-846-4060.

### **Formal Procedure for Resolving Academic Grievances**

A formal grievance involving an academic issue(s) must be submitted to the Academic Chair, in writing on the Student Complaint and Grievance Notification Form, and should state the nature and time of the offending action(s) and the person(s) involved in the action or a failure to act. It should also include attempts made to resolve the grievance informally, and the remedies sought.

If the grievance involves the Academic Chair, the grievance must be addressed to the Provost.

If the matter involves the Provost, the grievance must be brought to the attention of the President.

The person receiving the formal written grievance (outlined above) will review it and within 30 days gather information from the grievance parties, keeping a record and/or summary of this information. He or she will recommend a solution to the grievance based on mutual agreement. If a mutual agreement cannot be reached, a resolution will be determined and the grievant will be notified of the resolution in writing. Copies of all records will remain confidential and be sent to and maintained by the Office of the Provost.

### **Formal Procedure for Resolving Administrative Grievances**

A formal grievance involving a non-academic matter(s) must be addressed to the President, and/or the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). It must be submitted in writing on the Student Complaint and Grievance Notification Form, available on the Institute website ([www.mountmadonnainstitute.org/students](http://www.mountmadonnainstitute.org/students)) and in the student orientation documents. This Form may also be obtained by calling 408-846-4060.

The President and/or CFO will review the grievance and investigate the complaint within 30 days. The President and/or the CFO will gather information from the parties to the grievance and keep a record and/or summary of this information. After review, the President and/or the CFO will recommend a solution arrived at by mutual agreement. If mutual agreement cannot be reached, a resolution will be determined and the grievant will be notified of the resolution in writing. Copies of all records will remain confidential, and be sent to and maintained by the Office of the President.

If the matter involves the CFO, it must be addressed to the President.

If the matter involves the President, it must be addressed to the Chair of the Mount Madonna Institute Board of Directors.

### **Appeal Process**

For both academic and administrative grievances, if the parties accept the resolution, the grievance is considered to be settled. If the resolution is not acceptable, then the grievant(s) may appeal the resolution in writing within 15 days of the date the resolution is mailed (email or snail mail acceptable) to the grievant(s). If the appeal is not submitted within the prescribed time limit, the entire process terminates.

If the grievant(s) elects to appeal, academic and/or administrative appeals are submitted to the President, along with the written record from the previous steps.

Within 30 days of appeal to either party, the President will convene a temporary "Special Hearing" committee to further investigate the grievance. The committee may include any of the following members, depending upon the circumstances: faculty members, Provost, CFO, President, or others. This committee will make recommendations as described below within 45 days after being convened.

The committee will recommend steps to the parties to provide an amicable and mutually acceptable solution. If the parties cannot agree on a solution, the committee will declare a resolution in writing. Grievant(s) who do not accept the decision of the committee must file a written appeal to the President, within 15 days of the date the committee's resolution is mailed to the grievant(s). The President will accept, reject, or revise the committee's decision and communicate the final resolution to the grievant(s). This decision will be based on the record and the President will not reopen the matter for

additional evidence or argument. The action of the President will be final.

If the President is the object of the grievance, the grievance will be referred to the Chair of the MMI Board of Directors. In this case, the Chair of the Board will convene a temporary “Special Hearing” committee to further investigate the grievance. The committee may include any of the following members, depending upon the circumstances: faculty members, Provost, CFO, or others. The committee will make recommendations as described below within 45 days after being convened.

The committee will recommend steps to the parties to provide an amicable and mutually acceptable solution. If the parties cannot agree on a solution, the committee will declare a resolution in writing. Grievant(s) who do not accept the decision of the committee must file a written appeal to the Chair of the Board, within 15 days of the date the committee’s resolution is mailed to the grievant(s). The Chair of the Board will accept, reject, or revise the committee’s decision and communicate it to the grievant(s). This decision will be based on the record and the Board will not reopen the matter for additional evidence or argument. The action of the Chair of the Board will be final.

Students may also address their grievances to the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education at 1747 N. Market Blvd, Ste 225, Sacramento, CA 95834 or PO Box 980818, West Sacramento, CA 95798-0818

[www.bppe.ca.gov](http://www.bppe.ca.gov) or toll-free telephone numbers: (888) 370-7589 or (916)574-8900 or by Fax (916) 263-1897

### **Effect of Complaints**

No student’s right or remedies will be limited or waived as a result of his or her participation in a complaint procedure or as a result of the decision regarding the complaint.

Any member who serves on a Special Hearing Committee convened by the President or the Chairman of the Board of Directors shall not be terminated in his/her volunteer services as a result of involvement in or decisions made regarding any complaint case.