

Academic Grievance Policy

Despite the well-meaning efforts of students and faculty alike, there may be times when students feel that they have been treated unjustly or that their work has been evaluated unfairly or inadequately by an instructor. Such occasions can be even more frustrating if students are unsure of the procedure for presenting their grievance. The following guidelines should help successfully resolve the problem.

Ideally, the student should first bring the grievance to the attention of the instructor involved, who is better acquainted with the situation than any other member of the faculty. Most instructors are anxious to work through differences with their students in a sensitive and fair-minded manner. If (a) the instructor is not available, (b) the student feels strongly that the instructor will not deal with the grievance fairly, or (c) bringing the grievance to the attention of the instructor does not resolve the problem to the student's satisfaction, the student may appeal to the chair of the instructor's academic department. The chair will consider the grievance and within thirty days will notify the student, the instructor, and the college dean of the decision. The decision can include a recommended grade change.

If the student is dissatisfied with the department chair's decision, the student may appeal in writing to the dean of the college within which the department is housed no later than thirty days after the date of the chair's notification letter. The written appeal should include the details of the grievance and an outline of the student's efforts to resolve it prior to making this appeal to the college dean.

The college dean will give the student the choice of having the grievance resolved directly by the dean or by a three member committee chaired by a full-time member of the faculty selected by the dean. Should the student choose to have the grievance appeal heard by the three-person committee, the other two committee members will be appointed by the student and the instructor, respectively. Each must either be a full-time student or a full-time faculty member.

When the grievance is heard by the dean or the committee, both the student and the instructor may call witnesses to be questioned by the other party and by the dean or committee members. The number of witnesses and the conduct of the hearing will be determined by the dean or the committee chair.

The dean's or committee's decision (its majority vote) will be final and not subject to appeal. The decision can include a grade change. The student will be notified in writing of the decision within thirty days of the hearing date.

The same appeal process is available to the instructor. In other words, if the instructor is not satisfied with the department chair's decision, the instructor may appeal to the college dean.

The student must bring the grievance to the attention of the instructor or the department chair within one calendar year from the last day of the examination period in the semester or term in which the problem originated. For example, if the grievance occurred in the course offered winter semester, the student must initiate the grievance procedure before the final day of the following year's winter semester examination period.

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