

Student Grievance Policy

THE STUDENT ACADEMIC COMPLAINT POLICY

A student, who wishes to question an assignment grade, or other academic issue, should follow the procedure below:

- Whenever possible, the student will first go to the faculty member who has assigned the disputed grade. Complaints regarding grades should be made within seven (7) days of receipt of the disputed grade and, if possible, will be decided by the faculty member within seven (7) days of receipt. If the disputed grade is the final grade for the course, "receipt" is defined by when the final grade is posted online by the registrar. (Please refer to the next section for appealing a final grade.)
- Unless there are extenuating circumstances, the student may, within seven (7) days request in writing a review of such decision by the Chair of the division in which the grade was assigned. Upon receipt of such request, that Chair will direct the faculty member and the student to each submit, within seven (7) days, if possible, a written account of the incident, providing specific information as to the nature of the dispute.
- Upon receipt of these written accounts, the Chair will meet, if possible, within seven (7) days with the faculty member and the student in an effort to resolve the dispute and will render his or her decision in writing.
- If either the student or the faculty member desires to appeal the decision of the Division Chair, the student or faculty member may, within seven (7) days by written request to the chair, ask that the matter be reviewed by a Grade Appeals Panel convened by the Academic Affairs Office.
- If the disputed grade is assigned at the end of a fall or spring semester and the student and faculty member cannot meet to resolve the issue, the student should contact the faculty member by e-mail within seven (7) days of receipt of the disputed grade. If the issue cannot be resolved by e-mail within the time limit, steps 2, 3 and 4 of the appeal may extend into the beginning of the semester immediately following receipt of the disputed grade by following the timeline above.

A student who wishes to question a final grade should follow the procedure below:

- Confer with the faculty member who assigned the disputed grade
- If the disputed grade cannot be resolved, a written request for a grade appeal must be submitted to the Academic Affairs Office before the first day of the semester following the one in which the grade was issued. The written request must include the specific basis for the appeal.
- The Academic Affairs Office will convene a Grade Appeals Panel, comprised of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Associate Academic Dean, and the chair of the academic unit which houses the course for which the grade is appealed. If one of the members is the faculty member who issued the grade, an alternate will be appointed. The student and the faculty member may appear separately before the panel to explain their positions. The hearing is non-adversarial. Neither the faculty member nor the student may be accompanied by other individuals to the meeting of the Grade Appeals Panel. The Grade Appeals Panel will notify the student of its decision, if possible, within seven (7) days of the meeting.

NON-ACADEMIC STUDENT GRIEVANCES

A student may file an official grievance against a member of the faculty, staff or administration if they allege some form of discrimination or failure by an employee to follow a policy or procedure of the College. The formal grievance process is provided to ensure an impartial review to protect the rights of the student and the employee.

1. Any non-academic grievance must be made in writing and filed with the office of Human Resources.
2. Human Resources will assign the grievance to the appropriate administrative department.
3. Reasonable action will be taken by the assigned designee to gather information from all parties.
4. The intention of the institution is to meet with all parties and resolve the issue through mediation. If the issue cannot be resolved by amiable means, the follow process will be used.

Step One: The Human Resources department will arrange a hearing to occur within the next seven working days. The hearing panel will consist of three individuals chosen from a list of three employees and two students provided by the Human Resources Office. From the list of employees and students, the employee grievant will pick one. The person being grieved against will pick the second member and the Human Resource officer will pick the third.

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Step Two: A hearing process wherein either side may bring witnesses will be held. No attorneys will be permitted to attend or represent either side of the grievance, nor will the proceedings be recorded.

Step Three: The three-member panel will make a recommendation to the Vice President for Student Services within five working days. In the event the employee is in the area of the Vice President for Student Services, the Vice President for Administration and Finance will hear the panel's recommendation.

Step Four: The designated Vice President will meet with the aggrieved student to deliver the outcome of the hearing within five working days.

Step Five: A decision of the grievance hearing panel may be appealed to the President of the college within 72 hours. Any appeal request must be written and signed indicating the reasons for requesting an appeal. Written appeal request will be considered under the following circumstances:

1. The grievance process has been violated.
2. New evidence needs to be presented.
3. The grievance panel's decision seems unfair.

If the appeal is granted, the President has three distinct courses of action:

1. To affirm the ruling
2. To allow the ruling to stand, but apply different sanctions.
3. To overturn the ruling.

Once the student has exhausted the appeals process the decision is considered final and the imposed sanctions must be fulfilled.

1. It is the responsibility of the College to ensure that no retaliatory action is taken regarding the grievance during and after the conclusion of the grievance process.
2. The process will be conducted to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties involved.
3. A record of the filed grievance will be kept in the Office of Student Services.
4. Documentation collected as part of the grievance process will be kept in student records in the office of Student Services.

Students may contact the state agency listed below as a last resort if their complaint has not been resolved at the institutional level to their satisfaction. Students will not be subject to unfair actions as a result of initiating a complaint proceeding.