

Student Academic Grievance Procedure

Purpose of the Procedures:

The purpose of the Student Academic Grievance Procedure is to encourage the informal resolution of academic issues that might surface between students and faculty in a manner that is timely and upholds standards of academic integrity. In the event that students and faculty are unable to resolve an academic issue, the formal stage provides additional fair and equitable procedures for students. Students should understand that each stage of the process is an important one; therefore, it is not possible to move through the process unless previous stages have been followed. The procedure must be utilized by all students regardless of the location at which the grievance has arisen or the mode of delivery for the course.

Procedures:

A student having a concern of an academic nature with a faculty member arising from participation in a credit class should follow the procedure outlined below. Such concerns could include the belief that his/her grade(s) is not consistent with the grade criteria designated by the course instructor/syllabus. Should the grievance reach the formal stage the student has the right to seek the assistance of an unbiased third party, which includes the student's academic advisor or an individual from a pool of trained volunteers. The role of this third party is to help the student prepare for and navigate the formal process. It is not the role of this third party to represent the student during this process.

1. Informal Stage:

- a. The student must first discuss the matter with the course instructor. This discussion should commence as soon as possible but (1) no later than 30 calendar days after the start of the following spring semester if the concern arose during the fall semester or (2) no later than 30 calendar days after the start of the following fall semester if the concern arose during the spring semester or summer session. Faculty must document the date of meeting with the student.
- b. If the student and the instructor cannot resolve the matter in this discussion, the student will have five business days after meeting with the instructor to contact the appropriate department chair to discuss the matter informally with him/her. The chair must consult with the instructor and may include the instructor in the mediation. The student and the instructor should provide copies of all relevant material. The chair will make a decision within five business days and communicate the rationale for the decision to the instructor and the student.
- c. The student will have five business days from the date of the Chair's decision to contact the appropriate Associate Vice President to discuss the matter informally with him/her. If the academic grievance requires the issuance of a grade change, at the objection of the instructor, the student must enter the formal stage of the grievance process.

2. Formal Stage:

- a. If the matter has not been resolved informally, the student will have five business days after discussion in 1(c) to file a formal, written Academic Grievance Notice with the appropriate Associate Vice President. The Academic Grievance Notice form (see attached) will be available through academic departments and should include a clear statement of the student's specific complaint, a clear statement of how the student would like to see the matter resolved, and relevant documentation that supports the student's claim(s).
- b. The Associate Vice President will inform the course instructor and the department chair of the formal grievance and will have ten business days to meet with all parties involved, make a thorough evaluation, and notify the student, course instructor, and department chair in writing of his/her findings, decision, and the rationale for his/her decision.

3. Appeal:

- a. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Associate Vice President, he/she will have five business days to file a formal, written appeal with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. This written appeal should include a copy of the Academic Grievance Notice submitted to the Associate Vice President and any additional documentation or explanation that is appropriate.
- b. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will inform the course instructor, the department chair, and the Associate Vice President of the formal appeal and will have ten business days to meet with all parties involved, make a thorough evaluation, and notify the student, course instructor, department chair, and Associate Vice President in writing of his/her findings, decision, and the rationale for his/her decision.

4. Final Appeal:

- a. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the student will have five business days to file a formal, written grievance with the President of the College. This written appeal should include a copy of the Academic Grievance Notice submitted previously and any additional documentation or explanation that is appropriate. Only those grievances heard and decided during previous stages of this process can be considered by the President. The President will issue a formal decision to all parties, in writing, within ten business days. The President's decision is final.

NOTE: The authority to assign grades rests with the faculty member who is instructor of record; however, under extraordinary circumstances, if the academic grievance requires the issuance of a grade change, at the objection of the instructor, only the Associate Vice President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, or the President may authorize such in the formal or appeal stages. Students are required to utilize the informal stage to attempt to resolve all academic grievances, including those pertaining to grades.