

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The following grievance procedure for dealing with student complaints was proposed by the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility of Students and approved by the University Senate on November 3, 1980 and revised by the appropriate Senate Committees between 1982 and 1989. These procedures do not apply to cases under the Honor Code or the student Conduct Code.

1. Within one month of receiving the grade or other cause of complaint, the student should make an informal attempt to resolve the grievance by approaching the teacher or other academic supervisor. (If the teacher or supervisor cannot be reached due to summer vacation or other circumstances, contact should be made as soon as possible or within two weeks of the beginning of the following semester.)
2. If the student and teacher cannot arrive at a mutually satisfactory solution within seven days, the grievance should be referred immediately by the student to the department chairperson for resolution, or to the Dean (if a division has no departments).
3. If the complaint cannot be resolved by informal mediation within seven days of its referral to the department Chairperson, the Chairperson should invite both the student and the teacher to submit written statements of their opinions concerning the grievance to a departmental academic grievance committee. (Each department will set up a grievance committee together with guidelines for its procedures and authority. A copy of the guidelines will be sent to the Senate committee to be kept on file.) The committee should render a decision in the matter within ten days of receiving the written statements. The committee records should contain not only the decision but also an explanation of the grounds upon which the decision was reached.
4. One copy of the committee report should be sent to the Dean of the school (of the student involved). If either the student or the teacher involved is dissatisfied with the committee decision, he or she may appeal to the Dean within three days of receiving the decision. The Dean may uphold, reverse, or return for further consideration, the committee's finding. The Dean's decision should be made within five days and communicated in writing to all principals in the case. In the event that the Dean return the case to the department for reconsideration, all procedures and appellate avenues described in sections 3 and 4 of this document are again operative. The Dean ultimately must uphold or reverse a departmental decision based on reconsideration of its earlier finding.
5. If the student is dissatisfied with the Dean's ruling, the student may file a written appeal with the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility of Students within five days of receiving the Dean's decision. Based on the petition and the reports from the departmental grievance committee and the Dean, the Senate committee will decide whether or not to hear the appeal. If the committee decides that there are not sufficient grounds for a review of the grievance committee's and Dean's decisions, the Chair of the committee will notify the student by letter, with copies to the principals involved in the case and to the Provost. If the committee decides that there are sufficient grounds for a review of the grievance committee's and Dean's decisions, it will interview both the student and teacher. A quorum of three committee members, at least one of whom must be a representative of the administration, one of whom must be a faculty member, and one of whom must be a student, is necessary for all committee hearings.
6. If the committee interviews both the student and the teacher (or other principals involved) at a hearing, then the Chair will send the results of the committee's findings in the form of a letter of recommendation to the President of the University, with copies to the student and other principals involved, and to the Provost.
7. If, in accordance with faculty rights as specified in the Faculty Handbook and in the Constitution and Bylaws of the University Senate and the various divisions, the teacher believes that his or her academic freedom or academic responsibilities have been affected by the Dean's ruling, the teacher may appeal to the appropriate committee of peers at the divisional level (ordinarily the faculty grievance committee of the college or division). The teacher's appeal must be made within ten days of the action provoking the appeal. If the teacher is dissatisfied with the committee of peers' decision regarding his or her academic freedom or responsibilities, the teacher may appeal to the Senate Committee on Faculty Tenure, Freedom, and Responsibility. That appeal also must be made within ten days of the action provoking it. No grade may be changed until the teacher's appeal process has been completed.
8. If the student is dissatisfied with any decision made in the appellate process described in item 7, the student may appeal to the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility of Students. All procedures described in items 5 and 6 above apply to the student's appeal in this instance.
9. In cases of conflict regarding the decisions of the divisional peer committee and the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility of Students, the matter shall be referred to the Senate Committee on Faculty Tenure, Freedom, and Responsibility. In cases of conflict regarding the decisions of the Senate Committee on Faculty Tenure, Freedom, and Responsibility and either of the other committees stemming from the deliberations described in item #7 above or this item, the committees at odds shall meet jointly to discuss the issue. The ultimate findings of the two committees shall be forwarded to the president of the University within ten days.

