

Academic Affairs Student Grievance Procedure

It is the goal of the Student Academic Grievance Policy and Procedure to provide a simple and expeditious process, allowing both informal and formal resolution of conflicts. Resolutions may include student reinstatement or other corrective action for the benefit of the student, but may not award monetary compensation or take disciplinary action against any employee of the University.

Departmental or school procedures, where they exist, must be followed before the University grievance procedure can be initiated; where such procedures exist, the informal procedures as outlined below may be precluded.

A. General Conditions

1. Violation of Policy

This policy addresses academic grievances only. Academic grievances are complaints brought by students regarding the University's provision of education and academic services affecting their role as students. Academic grievances must be based on a claimed violation of a University rule, policy, or established practice. This policy does not limit the University's right to change the rules, policies, or practices.

2. Not Applicable

This policy does not apply to conflicts connected with student employment or actions taken under the Board of Trustees policy on student conduct. Complaints concerning judgments of academic performance are not grievances under this policy. Any complaint alleging discrimination in the University/student relationship, including sexual harassment, may be filed with the Office of Affirmative Action.

3. Qualified Students

Student must have been enrolled at the time of the alleged incident or action that resulted in the grievance. In order to file an academic grievance under this policy, grievances must be filed in a timely manner, as outlined in Section E.

B. Informal Resolution

1. The First Step

The first step of any resolution should be at the lowest unit level between the student and the faculty member involved or the appropriate administrator. If no informal resolution results at this level, informal resolution may be sought at the departmental level. If the issue cannot be resolved informally, then the complaint may move to the formal level.

2. Judgments on Academic Performance

Grievances involving an instructor's judgment in assigning a grade based on academic performance must be resolved through the informal resolution procedure.

C. Formal Resolution

1. Student Academic Grievance Committee

The student Academic Grievance Committee, a composite pool of ten members (five faculty and five students), will be elected in the spring to two-year terms, with graduate faculty and all undergraduate faculty and student members being elected for staggered terms and graduate students elected to one-year terms. The five faculty members will include at least two members of the graduate faculty and three members of the undergraduate faculty. The student members will include three undergraduate students and two graduate students.

a. Committee Selections

The Student Government Association will elect two undergraduate student members and one undergraduate faculty member. The Faculty Senate will elect one undergraduate student and two undergraduate faculty members. The Graduate Council will elect two graduate faculty members. The Graduate Student Advisory Committee will select two graduate students.

Members of the undergraduate faculty and undergraduate students will be elected in odd-numbered years to two-year terms; members of the graduate faculty will be elected in even-numbered years to two-year terms; graduate student members will be selected for one-year terms.

In the event of a resignation, the replacement will be selected by the same representative body as the person resigning.

b. Length of Term

Terms will be for two years, beginning in the fall and ending at the conclusion of the summer III term following the second year of service. Graduate student terms will begin in the fall and end at the conclusion of the summer III term.

c. Eligibility to Serve in the Composite Pool

Faculty must be tenured to be eligible to serve. Undergraduate student members shall have earned at least 45 semester hours at the University, have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 and be in good standing.

Graduate students must be admitted to a graduate program, be enrolled in graduate program classes during the spring term of the pool selection, have earned at least six graduate hours, have a cumulative 3.0 GPA at the graduate level, and be in good standing.

Faculty members must have been at the University full time for at least three years.

d. Meeting Time

The pool shall be convened at the beginning of each fall semester by the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs or his designated representative. At that meeting, members of the pool shall choose the chair and vice-chair and participate in orientation and training.

Only faculty members are eligible to serve as chair and vice-chair. Once chosen, the chair serves in that position for twelve months. The chair serves in a non-voting position, except in case of a tie, with full discussion rights. For each grievance, the chair has the responsibility for selecting hearing panel members and administering the work of the hearing panel.

2. Filing a Complaint

A complaint must be submitted in writing to the dean of the college in which the alleged incident occurred. The complaint should identify the student grievant; the respondent faculty member or administrator; any other person involved; the incident, the rule, policy or established practice claimed to have been violated, and a brief statement of the remedy sought.

3. Preliminary Resolution Procedure

The dean of the college in which the alleged incident occurred will meet with the student and the faculty or administrator involved to determine whether satisfactory resolution can be reached. If this cannot be achieved, the dean shall obtain a written answer from the responding faculty member or

administrator and refer the matter to a hearing before a panel of the Student Academic Grievance Committee.

4. Hearing Panel

Hearing panels will be chaired by a faculty member and will be composed as follows: three faculty members (one of whom is the chair) and two student members. If the grievance concerns an undergraduate student, the hearing panel will include at least one undergraduate student. The faculty will include at least two undergraduate faculty.

If the grievance concerns a graduate student, the hearing panel will include at least one graduate student and two graduate faculty.

If the chair of the grievance committee is unable to select a hearing panel member from members of the pool, an alternate member will be appointed to serve on that hearing panel by the chair of the appropriate selection body (Faculty Senate, Graduate Student Advisory Committee or the Student Government Association.)

5. Hearing Panel Responsibilities

The hearing panel will review the evidence and hold hearings as necessary. The hearing will be an informal non-adversarial, fact-finding meeting concerning the allegations. Both the student and the faculty or administrator may be present throughout the fact-finding meeting and may present any relevant evidence. The meeting will not be open to the public.

Deference shall be given to the determination of the lower body; the hearing panel will base its recommendation solely on whether a rule, policy, or established practice was violated. The panel will prepare a written report recommending a resolution to the matter and will send the report to the parties and to the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs for review and action. If the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs does not accept the recommendation, the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs will provide a written explanation of any non-concurrence to the parties involved.

D. Deliberation

The hearing panel shall deliberate privately at the close of the fact-finding meeting. If a majority of the panel finds the allegations are supported by “a preponderance of the evidence,” the panel shall take any action which it feel would bring about substantial justice. The committee is not authorized to award a letter grade or to reprimand or otherwise take disciplinary action against any faculty member.

The provost and vice president for Academic Affairs shall be responsible for implementing the final decision.

E. Timeliness

All complaints must be filed within 45 class days after the incident being grieved occurred. “Class days” are defined as days when the University is open for classes or examinations. A response to the complaint must be filed within fifteen class days thereafter. These time lines may be adjusted if there are compelling reasons for delay offered by any of the parties. However, the grievance must still be initiated within the stated time frame of 45 class days after the alleged incident in order for the grievance to warrant review.

F. Complaints Filed with ICHE

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education, as the federally-designated agency under the State Post-secondary Review Program, records formed complaints registered against institutions. The Commission, for the purposes of this program, only records such complaints when they have been

reviewed fully under existing institutional complaint procedures without a satisfactory conclusion. The student should contact:

Indiana Commission for Higher Education
101 West Ohio Street
Suite 550
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
Tel: (317) 464-4400
FAX: (317) 464-4410

(Excerpted from the University Handbook, Section III, Faculty and Academic Policies, 7/2/06)