University of Southern Indiana
Grievance and Complaints Procedures

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a. Academic Affairs Student Grievance Procedures

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)

b. Administrative Appeals
The purpose of the Administrative Appeals Committee is to determine if there is fault on the part of the University in regards to administrative issues. Administrative issues include, but are not limited to, fee refunds or assessments, calendar deadlines, and other relevant student-administrative issues. Appeals must be submitted within two years from the end of the term that is in question. (For example, if a student wishes to appeal an issue from spring 2013, the student has until the end of spring 2015 to submit an appeal for review.)

If you are asking for an exception to a policy, the student must write a detailed narrative describing why they feel an exception to a University policy should be made. Explain specifically what you are asking for and why you believe your situation should be considered by the committee. To file an appeal, the student must fill out the Administrative Appeal Request form; the form should be typed to ensure legibility. All appeals must be signed by the student. Appeals written by anyone other than the student will NOT be accepted.

The committee is comprised of University representatives who sincerely want to consider your appeal. Appeals should be regarded as a professional communication between the student and the committee.

Instructions:
Use the Administrative Appeal Request Form (PDF) to prepare your appeal. Open the appeal form or save it to your computer. Type directly onto the form, being sure to fill in all required information. Refer to the Administrative Appeal Request Example (PDF) for an illustration of a properly completed form. Print the completed form, then sign and date it, and attach any supporting documentation. Mail, fax, or hand carry the appeal request to the Office of Student Affairs (Wright Administration Building, room 104).
Please send any questions regarding the Administrative Appeals process to the Appeal Committee.

c. **Disability Grievance Procedures**
   If you have concerns about any disability related action taken or decision made by a department or faculty member or staff member, you are strongly encouraged to first take your concerns to the faculty or staff member responsible for the decision or action, followed by contact with that individual’s supervisors if needed. In most cases, this process will provide the quickest, acceptable resolution to your concerns.

   If this informal process is unsuccessful or if you are uncomfortable approaching the faculty or staff person, you may contact the Disability Resources Coordinator at 812-464-1961.

   If the problem is still not resolved or if your problem is with Disability Resources, you should contact the USI ADA Coordinator, Doug Goeppner at 812-465-7101 as soon as possible or you may visit that office in person in room FA166.

d. **Non-Academic Student Complaint Procedures**
   It is the policy of the University of Southern Indiana to comply with all federal and state equal opportunity laws, orders, and regulations relating to race, sex, religion, disability, age, national origin, sexual orientation, veteran status, disabled veteran status and other protected classification.

   If you wish to register a non-academic complaint, you should contact the Dean of Students at 812-464-1862 or visit the office in person in the University Center East, room 1232.

   Questions or concerns can also be directed to the Director of Human Resources and Title IX Officer, at 812-465-7115 or you may visit that office in person in room FA166.