



School of Education

SOE Grievance Procedures

The purpose of the Grievance Procedures is to resolve academic problems and issues related to academic misconduct such as dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism (see Appendix IIa on Academic Honesty); academic evaluation, advising and research; or allegations of discrimination on the part of faculty toward individual students on the basis of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, or disability that results in differential treatment brought by students enrolled at the time of the event giving rise to the grievance. A grievance is a formal written complaint delivered to the chair of the committee no later than the end of the semester following the semester in which the event occurred.

The grievance (written complaint) must state clearly and completely:

1. the nature and cause of the complaint
2. the person or persons against whom the complaint is made
3. the desired resolution sought
4. a description of failed efforts made to resolve the issue through established procedures of the School and/or the University

Issues related to admission, or non-academic conduct covered by the Code of Student Conduct are not within the scope of this committee. The committee accepts complaints regarding final grades assigned to individual students if there is evidence of unfair differential treatment. The committee forwards a decision to the persons involved and to officers and authorities of the School of Education who have the authority to address the problems and issues that may have caused a grievance.

Before appealing to the Grievance Committee, the student should discuss his/her concern with the individual faculty member. If the student is dissatisfied with the response of the faculty member or feels unable to discuss the grievance with the faculty member, the student should contact the department chair and discuss the nature of the grievance. If the student is dissatisfied with the responses of the department chair, the student may file a written grievance with the committee. Formal grievance is not possible until the faculty member and/or chair of the department has been consulted.

Once a grievance has been filed the committee chair shall make sure that all possible efforts have been made to resolve the problems through established channels and shall assist the grievant through any steps not adequately pursued.

Failing the above, the committee shall meet and shall decide whether or not the grievance properly comes under its purview. If not, the committee shall recommend appropriate referral.

If appropriate, the committee chair shall schedule a hearing at the earliest possible date usually within the traditional academic year. Copies of the complaint shall be distributed to committee members and the persons involved at least one week prior to the meeting.

The hearing will be attended by the parties concerned and the committee members. If a group of students is involved, the chair of the committee will specify the number of students to be in attendance. Witnesses or other individuals whose testimony may be helpful in assessing the facts of the grievance may also be invited by the committee. The hearing will be conducted by the committee chair. Order of proceedings (including who shall sit in attendance at any one time) is the prerogative of the committee in light of the situation at hand. The substance of the proceedings should involve testimony and documentation. All parties to the grievance must be provided opportunity to hear allegations and give their responses. A record of the hearing shall be made. The committee will confer privately following the hearing and prepare a decision for resolving the grievance.

The written decision shall be distributed to appropriate department chairs or appropriate administrative officials, to committee members and to parties of the grievance as soon as practical. A copy of the materials will be kept on file in the Dean's office.

If any party to the grievance is not satisfied with the committee's decision, the party must so indicate by submitting a written request for appeal to the committee chair within fifteen (15) days after the records of the completed hearing are available. The committee chair shall forward the committee's records, findings and decision along with the request for appeal to the dean. The decision of the dean shall be final. If no written request for appeal is received, the department chair or appropriate administrative official shall take action to carry out the committee's decision. A report of grievance may be filed by a student with the Provost's Office for data collection and review, but the college/school's dean's decision is final.

Student grievances and suggestions that do not constitute a formal grievance shall follow the same process as a formal grievance. A student should discuss his/her concern or suggestions with the individual faculty member who may be involved. If the student is dissatisfied with the response of the faculty member or feels unable to discuss the grievance with the faculty member, the student should contact the department chair or Associate Dean and discuss the nature of the concern or suggestion. If the student is dissatisfied with the responses of the department chair or Associate Dean, the student may file a written grievance with the committee.