

March 2008

University College
School of Letters and Sciences

Student Academic Grievance Procedures

Students who are enrolled in a University College or School of Letters and Sciences course and believe they have been unfairly or improperly graded may be assured of just treatment and fair consideration through the processes described in this document. Any such grievance must be started within the regular semester immediately following the course at issue, whether the student is enrolled in the university or not.

The grievance procedures do not deal with matters that properly belong in personnel proceedings.

Primary Procedures

1. Initially, the aggrieved student should schedule an appointment with the faculty member concerned and discuss the problem openly.
2. If this discussion does not result in a satisfactory resolution, the student may appeal to the faculty director or professor in charge of the instructor's area who will employ the area's procedures to resolve the grievance.

If the grievance has not been successfully cleared at this time, the student may request that the grievance be referred to the Office of the Dean, who will forward the case to an Academic and Student Affairs Committee. The Committee will convene for the specific purpose of hearing a student academic grievance as needed.

Secondary Procedures

1. The student must file a written statement of the grievance with the Dean. The grievance must include a description of the specific events, actions, course and grade (if applicable), relating to the grievance and the resolution the student is seeking.
2. The Dean will forward the grievance to the committee chair who will:
 - a. appoint three members of the committee to act as a hearing panel to process the grievance;
 - b. designate one of the faculty members on the panel to chair the panel for the grievance;
 - c. provide the student with the name, college address and college telephone number of the chair of the panel who will conduct the grievance and notify the student that all further communication related to the grievance should be made with the chair of the panel;

- d. forward a copy of the grievance to the faculty member against whom the grievance is filed and request the instructor to file three copies of a written response with the panel chair within 7 days after receiving a copy of the grievance;
 - e. forward a copy of the student grievance and faculty response to the faculty director of the unit offering the course and ask that administrator to provide an opinion on the case at hand to the committee within 7 days after receiving a copy of the two documents.
3. The panel chair will:
 - a. forward copies of the grievance, the instructor's response to the student and the response from the faculty director to the other members of the panel;
 - b. schedule a hearing, which may consist of one or more meetings with the student and the instructor, to hear the positions of the student and instructor respectively, related to the grievance. The first meeting will be scheduled no later than 30 days after the panel chair received the grievance.
4. If the student or instructor believes a member of the panel should not participate, based on perceived or actual bias or conflict of interest, the student or instructor may request, in writing, that the panel member be excused and the chair of the Committee will appoint another member of the Committee to serve on the panel to hear the grievance. If a designated Committee panel member believes he or she has a bias or conflict of interest which would negatively impact on the ability to decide the grievance fairly, the panel member will excuse himself or herself, notify the chair of the Committee, and the chair will appoint a new panel member.
5. The student and instructor may provide documents to the panel for review and consideration, if three (3) copies of the documents are provided to the panel chair at least 10 days before the first scheduled date of the hearing. However, the chair of the panel will advise the student and the instructor that the panel will only consider documents that specifically relate to the grievance and response. The panel chair will retain one set of documents and forward the other two sets to the other two panel members at least 7 days before the hearing.
6. In keeping with the Family Education and Privacy Rights Act, if the grievance involves the grievant's grade, other matters or information contained in the grievant's academic or educational records maintained by ASU, it is presumed that the student has consented to the review of such information by the filing of the grievance. In the event any information will be reviewed or provided to the panel related to grades or information contained in the educational records or academic files of students other than the grievant, such information is considered confidential under the Family Education and Privacy Rights Act and the panel shall proceed as follows:
 - a. The panel will obtain the written consent of the students involved (other than the grievant) to review grades or information from their educational records, OR

- b. The chair of the panel will excise the names, social security numbers, addresses and any other identifying information from the education records of the students involved (other than the grievant).
7. The hearing shall be conducted by the panel chair and shall be closed. Participants may be accompanied by an advisor of their choice. Advisors may make an oral statement on behalf of, and confer with, their advisee. Advisors may not directly address the committee or other participants. Arrangements for the order of appearance, for submission of materials, testimony, and related matters should be made through and by the panel chair.
8. At the hearing, the grievant will present his or her position first and try to do so within thirty minutes, including presentation of witness testimony and documentation. The chair may extend the time if necessary. The members of the panel may question the grievant during the presentations of their testimony. The instructor may question the student at the end of the presentation but questioning should be limited to approximately 10 minutes or less. The chair may require the instructor to direct questions to the grievant through the chair.
9. The same process will be followed with the presentation of the instructor's case.
10. All questions should be related to the specific allegations of the grievance or statements in the response and the chair has final authority to judge relevancy.
11. The hearing will be digitally recorded by the chair of the panel and the digital file will be maintained by the University College for two years after the decision on the grievance is made. The student and/or instructor may record the meeting at their own expense and with their own equipment.
12. After the presentations of the grievant and instructor have concluded, each will be excused while the panel deliberates.
13. The chair of the panel shall prepare a written report with the recommendations of the majority of the panel for the Dean. If there is disagreement among the panel, a minority report and recommendation may be submitted by the dissenting panel member to the Dean. The report shall include:
 - a. Identity of student grievant and instructor involved in the grievance;
 - b. Date grievance and response were filed with the Committee;
 - c. Identity of the panel members who heard the grievance;
 - d. Dates the panel met to conduct the grievance;
 - e. Summary of the positions of the student and instructor;
 - f. Summary of the testimony and documents presented;
 - g. Conclusions of the panel;
 - h. Recommendations of the panel.
14. Final action in each case will be taken by the Dean after full consideration of the committee's recommendation. Grade changes, if any are recommended, may be made by the Dean. The Dean shall inform the student, the instructor, the appropriate faculty director, the registrar, and the grievance committee of any action taken.