

# GRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

## Introduction

This procedure is designed to provide fair means of dealing with student complaints regarding a specific action or decision made by the faculty or a faculty member.

*Students who believe they have been treated unfairly, discriminated against, or have had their rights abridged may initiate a grievance.*  
(The Redbook (<http://louisville.edu/provost/redbook/>), Section 6.8.1)

## Preliminary Steps

To pursue a grievance concerning academic matters within the academic unit, the following steps of the grievance procedure should be observed:

1. The student should first discuss the matter with the person involved and attempt to resolve the grievance through informal discussion.
2. If there is no resolution, the student should discuss the matter with that person's supervisor or the person to whom such person reports, who should attempt to mediate a resolution.
3. If the student has not been able to obtain a resolution, he or she may request the Student Grievance Officer (<https://louisville.edu/dos/students/studentpoliciesandprocedures/student-grievance/>) (S.G.O.) to attempt informal mediation of the problem.
4. If the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved through the informal process, the student shall submit a written statement of the grievance to the Unit Academic Grievance Committee through the Office of the Dean. The statement shall contain:
  - a. A brief narrative of the condition giving rise to the grievance;
  - b. Designation of the parties involved; and
  - c. Statement of the remedy requested.

## Committee Action

Upon receipt of the written statement, the Unit Academic Grievance Committee, or its representatives, shall:

1. Contact the student and the Student Grievance Officer to obtain assurance that all steps of the above informal process were completed and that those issues in the statement were discussed at all levels.
2. Notify the parties named in the statement of the grievance naming them; and send a copy of the statement to the named parties and to all committee members.
3. Notify the grievant and the respondent of the right to challenge committee members for cause, and request early notification of challenge(s) to expedite the grievance procedure. Included in this notification will be a list of the names of all current, regular committee members.
4. Meet within twenty working days after receiving the written statement of any grievance and recommend to the dean of the unit whether sufficient grounds exist to accept a case for hearing. The committee shall hear the case when the dean concurs. The committee shall notify, in writing, all persons directly involved as to the reasons for its recommendation.

5. The action of the grievance committee as to whether to grant a hearing when accepted by the dean of the unit shall be final and binding on all parties except when subject to the condition of appeal.
6. If a hearing will be held, notify in writing all the parties involved, including any witnesses, of the date, time and place of the hearing at least ten days prior to the hearing date (which shall be within 30 working days of receipt of the written grievance).
7. Request in writing from all parties involved any pertinent material deemed necessary for review by the committee prior to the hearing. These materials, and any additional materials either party chooses to submit, must be submitted to the committee not later than four days prior to the hearing. Any person named in a grievance may submit a written statement to the committee outlining issues from that person's perspective.
8. Maintain confidentiality throughout the entire grievance process. All communications among the committee, the grievant(s), and the person(s) named in the statement of grievance will be confidential.

## Hearing Process

All hearings conducted by the Unit Academic Grievance Committee shall be conducted confidentially in the following manner:

1. The grievant(s) and the respondent(s) must be present during the information-gathering portion of the hearing. Witnesses will be available and will be called when needed. The committee reserves the right to allow the presence of a secretary or a technical assistant.
2. All statements during the information-exchange phase of the hearing will be tape-recorded. This record will be preserved in the University Archives for a minimum of five years and shall be confidential.
3. Any committee member may question any of the participants at the hearing.
4. The grievant will present his or her statements and/or witnesses to the committee.
5. The respondent will have the opportunity to question the grievant(s) and the witnesses about their statements.
6. The respondent will present his or her statements and/or witnesses to the committee.
7. The grievant will have the opportunity to question the respondent(s) about their statements.
8. After all information is exchanged, all persons except the committee members and the recording secretary will leave the committee room. The grievant(s), the respondent(s), and the witnesses will continue to be available to the committee should further information be needed.
9. The committee will meet in closed session to decide upon its recommendation(s) to the dean.
10. The committee shall submit its report with recommendation(s) and reasons for the recommendation(s), to the grievant(s), the respondent(s), and the dean. If the grievance directly involves the dean, the report and recommendation(s) of the Unit Academic Grievance Committee shall be referred for decision to the appropriate academic vice president (now referred to as the University Provost).
11. The student's grievance will not be included as part of the student's record, unless it results in a change in student status or the student voluntarily inserts the information.
12. Until the grievance is resolved, the student may continue the natural academic progression through the academic unit, subject to the requirements of Article 6.6, "Academic Review, Advancement, Probation, and Dismissal of Students," and Article 6.7, "Nonacademic Disciplinary Procedures," of *The Redbook*.

## **Decision**

The dean shall approve or reject the committee's recommendation(s) within twenty-eight days after receiving it (them). If the decision of the dean is not in accord with the committee's recommendation(s), the dean shall state the reasons for that decision, in writing, to all persons directly involved in the grievance and to the committee. The dean shall then take appropriate action to implement his or her decision after the time for appeal has elapsed.

## **Rehearing**

A grievance committee, within twenty-one days after delivery of its report, may be petitioned to reconsider its decision upon the basis of evidence of misrepresentation of materials, facts, or upon the basis of newly discovered evidence clearly not available at the original hearing.

## **Appeal**

Any party to the grievance may appeal to the University Student Grievance Committee within twenty-one days from the date of the final decision of the dean if the dean's decision does not concur with the recommendation of the grievance committee.