

GRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE POLICY

Despite the well-meaning efforts of students and faculty, there may be occasions when a graduate student feels her/his work has been unfairly or inadequately evaluated. Usually such differences can be amicably resolved on an informal basis between the student and faculty member involved. The following procedures will assist graduate students and faculty in the resolution of such grievances. They are designed to encourage satisfactory resolution of academic grievances with a minimum of formal procedure.

The grievance must be initiated by the graduate student no later than one year from the last day of the examination period of the semester in which the alleged unfair or inadequate evaluation occurred.

The graduate student should initially address the grievance to the faculty member involved for review and resolution. If, for any reason, the faculty member is unavailable or the student believes the matter will not be fairly dealt with or will create the possibility of retribution, the student may direct the grievance to the department chair. If there is no department chair, the grievance shall be directed to the graduate coordinator or other person designated by the dean of the college to consider such matters (any such person is hereinafter referred to as the Department Chair). The faculty member or Department Chair shall have the right to consult others regarding the matter as reasonably necessary and with due regard for the graduate student's right to privacy under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

If the grievance is originated with the faculty member, and it is not resolved satisfactorily, the student may submit a written request for review to the Department Chair. Decisions of the Department Chair, including matters originated with the Department Chair, shall be given in writing to both the student and the faculty member within 45 days of the student's written request for review. If no further request for review is taken as described in the following paragraph, the decision of the Department Chair will be implemented.

If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction by the Department Chair, the student may submit a written request for review to the Dean of the College or School. The written request for review should contain an outline of the grievance and its disposition and set forth facts supporting the student's request. The request for review must be made within 45 days of the date of the written disposition by the Department Chair. The College Dean will conduct a review and will communicate his/her decision in writing to the student and to the department chair within 30 days of the receipt of the graduate student's request for review.

If the matter is not resolved to the graduate student's satisfaction by the College Dean, and it involves terminating the graduate student from the graduate program, the student may submit a written request for review to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The written request for review should contain an outline of the grievance and its disposition and set forth facts supporting the student's request for review. The request for review must be made within 45 days of the date of the written disposition by the College Dean.

The Dean of Graduate Studies will convene a formal administrative review of matters that have not been resolved at the department or college level and involve terminating a graduate student from his/her graduate program. Following the proceeding, which takes place under "FORMAT" below, the review panel will deliberate in a closed session and make a formal recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate Studies. The decision of the Dean of Graduate Studies is final and is not appealable. A member of the Graduate Council, who may ask questions, chairs the administrative review but is not a voting member of the three-person review panel. Review panel members will consist of two graduate faculty members and one graduate student from departments not that of the graduate student requesting the review. Review panel members will be appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

I. FORMAT

- A. Chair's introduction, summary of issues, and process overview
- B. Graduate student's presentation of issues (15 minutes maximum)
- C. Departmental representative's presentation of issues (15 minutes maximum)
- D. Optional: Presentation by witnesses (limited to three per side and a maximum of 15 minutes per side)
- E. Graduate student's (grievant's) rebuttal (limited to 10 minutes)
- F. Questions by panel members
- G. The Department representative and grievant will be given an opportunity to make a final statement (limited to 5 minutes). The grievant will follow the Department representative in making this statement.
- H. All presenters and witnesses are excused
- I. Deliberation by panel members
- J. Written recommendations to the Dean of Graduate Studies (within 30 calendar days, unless extended by the panel by written notification to the Dean of Graduate Studies and to the parties (grievant and department)
- K. Written decision by Dean of Graduate Studies (within 30 days of receipt of the written recommendation of the panel, unless extended by the Dean of Graduate Studies, with written notice of the extension given to all parties)

II. PREPARATION

All materials, a list of witnesses with a short summary of the content of their presentations, and a short statement not to exceed 2 pages of the issues and facts to be considered by the review panel must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies at least two weeks (14 days) in advance of the administrative review, at which time such materials will be distributed to the grievant(s), to the chair of the department against which the grievance has been filed, and to the members of the review panel. Thereafter,

if any of the parties wishes to have additional materials or witnesses considered by members of the review panel, such materials must be received by the Office of Graduate Studies no later than one week (7 days) in advance of the administrative review, at which time all materials will be distributed to the parties as well as to the members of the review panel.

The Office of Graduate Studies will pay for reasonable reproduction costs, but the cost of reproducing voluminous packets (in excess of 50 pages) will be charged to the submitting party (graduate student or department). No audio/visual equipment will be available at the administrative review unless a request for same is received in writing by the Office of Graduate Studies as least one week (7 days) before the scheduled date of the administrative review. It is the responsibility of the requesting party to provide any requested audio/visual equipment.

The chair of the review panel may, at his or her discretion, convene a planning meeting with the Department representative and the grievant to discuss the material and witnesses submitted for the purpose of expediting the review by eliminating redundant and irrelevant information and by defining the precise issues that will be considered by the panel.

Presentation of the issues should be concise and relevant. The chair of the review panel shall be responsible to conduct the administrative review and make decisions regarding applicable procedures. The points of dispute may be summarized or illustrated by anecdote. Experience suggests that the best approach is to carefully tailor the formal presentation to the pertinent issues and to allow the panel members time for questions.

III. ATTENDANCE AT THE REVIEW

Attorneys are not allowed to attend at any point in the review process. The grievant, however, may bring one or two additional persons to the administrative review for support and counsel. The grievant will be solely responsible to make his or her presentation. The review panel described in this document operates as part of an academic administrative review, not a judicial proceeding. The graduate student must notify the Office of Graduate Studies, in writing, at least two weeks (14 days) before the scheduled date of the administrative review if he/she wishes to have one or two persons present at the administrative review. The presence of additional person(s) invited by the grievant to the administrative review does not change the proceeding. These invited persons will not be able to examine witnesses, ask questions, advocate or otherwise take part in the proceedings.