

### iii. **ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES | AA-10** *(Formal Student Complaint)*

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#### **Policy**

The School of Health Professions Academic Standing Committee reviews and addresses grievances of arbitrary, bias, capricious, discriminatory, malicious, or otherwise improper actions related to any academic matters by students.

The Committee considers improper academic practices but will not intervene in disagreements regarding matters involving academic freedom or faculty's intellectual judgment. A grievance related to a grade must include evidence of improper action.

Ideally, academic grievances should be resolved informally via the pre-grievance procedure outlined below and students must attempt such resolution prior to filing a grievance. However, in those matters that cannot be resolved through that procedure, the student may communicate ("file") the grievance to the Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs who will then refer the grievance to the Academic Standing Committee Chair. The filing of a grievance must be within 10 days of the completion of the pre-grievance procedure, as outlined below.

The Chair of the Academic Standing Committee or designee will then contact the student and a meeting of the committee will be convened as soon as practical but not more than 10 business days following the filing of the grievance with the Assistant Dean for Academic & Student Affairs. The student is advised that they may opt to present the grievance to the committee in person or alternatively, may opt to submit a written summary of the grievance.

#### **Procedure for Handling Academic Grievances**

##### **a. Pre-Grievance Procedures**

1. The student discusses the concern(s) with faculty, preceptor, or clinical instructor of record. If the student's concern(s) are not resolved, then,
2. Meet with advisor (if applicable), if not resolved then,
3. Meet with Program Director (if applicable), if not resolved then,
4. Meet with the Chair of the Department, if not resolved,
5. Department committee process begins (if applicable), if not resolved, then may opt to file a grievance.

At any time, the student may request a meeting with the Assistant Dean for Academic & Student Affairs for guidance on procedure.

##### **b. Procedure for Filing of a Grievance**

The student will make an appointment to meet with the Assistant Dean for Academic & Student Affairs, who will then refer the matter to the Academic Standing Committee.

1. Grievances submitted to the Academic Standing Committee must be communicated and must contain:
  - a. name of the complainant
  - b. name of the person(s) against whom the grievance is being filed.
  - c. the course concerned, if applicable
  - d. the specifics of the grievance (s), including relevant dates
  - e. supporting evidence (course syllabi, assignment/exam and rubric, program policies/handbook)
  - f. a statement of remedies already sought (i.e., conversation with advisor, faculty, Program Director, Department Chair, etc.)
2. The Committee will inform all parties concerned of the grievance.
3. The Committee will then convene a meeting to hear the grievance.

### c. Committee Meeting for Grievance

The student may be present and bring witnesses and/or an advisor. If such is the intent, the student must inform the Chair of the ASC in writing no later than five (5) business days before the hearing, identifying the witnesses and advisor by name and title.

1. The Chair of the ASC will create a hearing board. Hearing boards are made up of individuals on the ASC. A hearing board shall consist of a minimum of five (5) voting members of the ASC and a hearing officer. Normally the chair of the ASC serves as the hearing officer, except under unusual circumstances (e.g., illness, conflict of interest). In such a case, the Chair of the ASC will notify the alternate hearing officer. In all hearings, there will be at least one student. Neither the course instructor nor any faculty member of the department/program from which the student originated shall be impaneled on the hearing board. When a quorum is not available, hearing boards may be staffed by past members of the committee. In instances where it is impossible to reach a quorum with current or past committee members, *ad hoc* appointees will be determined by the Dean.
2. The ASC Chair will ask the Program Chair/Director to prepare a statement concerning the student's grievance and to produce to the hearing board all pertinent documentation and list witnesses, if any. The student has the right to request all documentation related to the hearing.
3. The SHP Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs or his or her designee, shall be available to explain policy and procedures to the student.
4. The Associate Dean for the SHP or his/ her designee shall be available to explain policy and procedures to any faculty involved in a hearing.

The hearing officer will set a time for the hearing as soon as possible to allow all concerned parties adequate time for preparation. Unless there are unusual circumstances, the hearing will be scheduled no sooner than five (5) business days, and no later than ten (10) business days after receipt of the student's written grievance.

5. The hearing officer will open the hearing by presenting the student's grievance. The role of the hearing officer shall be to: (1) oversee the hearing process, (2) ensure that the policies and procedures of the SHP governing the process are followed and (3) ensure that the hearing moves in an orderly manner. As a member of the ASC, the hearing officer may ask questions of principals and witnesses. The hearing officer will participate in the proceedings but cast no vote, except in the



case of a tie.

6. The Program Chair/Director and the student may call witnesses to the grievance hearing if the testimony proves relevant to the final decision.
7. The advisor may counsel the student during the hearing but does not have the privilege of the floor.
8. At the conclusion of the meeting the Committee may recommend to:
  - dismiss the case, or
  - engage or work with appropriate departments and resources to resolve the issue.
9. The final recommendations will be sent to the student via formal notice from the committee within five (5) business days of the meeting.
10. The hearing board's written recommendation to the student and department/program will become part of the official record. Audio recordings made during board hearing will also become part of the official record.
11. Complete records of the hearing shall be kept in the strictest confidence by the ASC Chair. Indeed, all hearing-specific activities, correspondence and communication related to the hearing shall always be held in strict confidence by all members of the board both during and after the hearing. Confidential records\* are made available, upon request, to University Officials or boards hearing further appeals and to the student(s) requesting appeals. If the student wishes a transcript of the hearing, they are responsible for the cost of transcription. The school shall also get a copy of the transcript.

*\* Confidential records are defined as records pertaining to the student who is submitting the grievance. This does not include records of other students.*

## 12. Appeal of Committee Recommendation

If the student wishes to appeal against the outcome of a grievance meeting the student must direct a letter stating the reason(s) for the appeal to the Dean. The student's written statement will explain the grounds of appeal and include any documentation supporting the reason for the appeal.

1. If the student chooses to appeal an outcome of a grievance meeting, they must inform the Dean in writing of the intent, and reason(s) for the appeal, within ten (10) business days of receipt of the Committee's formal recommendations.
2. The Dean of the School of Health Professions may or may not accept the recommendation of the Committee and shall inform the student of the final decision in writing within ten (10) business days of receipt of the appeal.
3. Deliberation at the Dean's Office level of appeal is limited to ensuring that students are provided due process at all stages of appeal, as outlined in the relevant course syllabus/and student handbooks.