

Fordham University
Graduate School of Education
Student Grievance Procedures

Approved by School Council
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This document is published to provide students, faculty, and staff of the Graduate School of Education information about procedures to follow in the event a student feels the need to file a grievance as a result of an action or actions that has (have) occurred as part of that students' academic experience.

Additional information about University policies regarding sexual harassment; racial, ethnic, or other forms of discrimination; substance abuse; and safety and security can be found on the University website.

Student Academic Grievance Procedures

The Graduate School of Education utilizes the following Grievance Procedures to weigh all claims made by matriculated and non-matriculated students who believe they have been treated unfairly in a variety of academic matters, such as assignment of grades, course and program requirements, etc. Because it is the policy of Fordham University to protect the rights of each student to be free from unlawful discrimination, this policy is also intended for use by students who believe they have been discriminated against with respect to participation in, access to, or benefits of any program or activity within the School of Education. Those students are requested to use the following procedures. Decisions made at each level of the informal and formal grievance procedure will be upheld until and unless they are overturned at a subsequent step.

INFORMAL PROCEDURES

Since a formal grievance procedure is a last resort, every effort to resolve the grievance through informal approaches should be attempted by the concerned parties. Speaking with the instructor of the course and the program director are recommended steps in the informal procedure for students. Although efforts made towards resolving a matter informally are strongly recommended, this step is not mandatory and a student can register a complaint immediately utilizing the formal procedures.

FORMAL PROCEDURES

Step I: Division-wide

A. A grievance must be brought in writing to the attention of the Division Chairperson within ten (10) school calendar days from the time of the incident. School calendar days are days during the academic year that the Graduate School of Education is open, beginning on the first day of classes in the fall semester and concluding on the last day of classes in the fall semester. They resume on the first day of classes in the spring semester and stop on the day before the University Commencement in the spring.

B. The Division Chairperson will consult with the parties involved concerning the grievance and may also consult with others not involved in the grievance. It is expected that this process will be completed within ten (10) school calendar days after the student(s) submit(s) a written statement to the Chairperson.

C. The Chairperson will make recommendations in writing for a solution of the grievance to all parties directly involved. [Note: If the grievance relates to a decision of a Chairperson, then the grievance review will begin at the school-wide level (Step II).]

Step II: School-wide

A. If, in Step I, the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of either party, the next step is for either party to request a meeting with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to try to resolve the grievance. This meeting must be requested within five (5) school calendar days of the conclusion of the divisional process (Step I).

B. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of either party through the meeting with the Associate Dean, the next step is for either party to request a school-wide grievance review, submitted in writing to the Dean within five (5) school calendar days of the conclusion of the meeting with the Dean. Requests should include:

1. A concise summary of the grievance
2. An explanation of why the divisional process was considered unsatisfactory.

C. A Grievance Committee, composed of two faculty members and one student from each division, will conduct the school-wide review. This committee will be constituted at the beginning of each school calendar year. In order for the Grievance Committee to render a decision, a majority of members must be present. [Note: If the grievance relates to a decision of a committee member, then that member will excuse him- or herself from consideration of that specific grievance.]

D. Within five (5) school calendar days of receiving the written request, the Dean will notify the chairperson of the Grievance Committee that a formal grievance has been filed.

E. The Dean will provide a full, written statement of the grievance and pertinent substantiating

information from both parties. All review procedures will be restricted to the Grievance Committee and parties involved.

F. The Grievance Committee will convene within six (6) school calendar days of the Dean's notification to review all materials.

G. The Grievance Committee will schedule a meeting at which time the parties will be given an opportunity to attend and to present information. The Grievance Committee will notify all parties concerned of the meeting date, time, and location, and will inform the Dean of the meeting.

H. The Grievance Committee process will normally take no longer than fifteen (15) school calendar days from the time that the committee chair has been notified until its final written decision is submitted.

I. The Grievance Committee will render a written statement of findings and its decision to the Dean within five (5) school calendar days after the last meeting with the parties.

J. Within ten (10) school calendar days, the Dean will review the statement of the Grievance Committee to decide whether proper procedures were followed. The Dean will then render a final decision, and inform the concerned parties of the decision in writing.

K. Grievances not resolved in one academic year will be resolved the following academic year.

L. The files of this proceeding will be kept in the Office of the Dean.