

Fordham University
Graduate School of Education

Student Academic 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 an academic grievance as a result of an action or actions that have occurred as part of that student's academic experience.

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Fordham University
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Student Academic Grievance Procedures

The Graduate School of Education utilizes the following Academic 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. Those students are requested to use the procedures listed below. 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

In the event that the Grievance relates to a decision made by any member of the Grievance Committee, by a Division Chair person, or Associate Dean then s/he will excuse her or himself from consideration of that specific grievance. The Dean will identify an alternate from the faculty to assume this role for the specific grievance.

Step I: Division-wide

- A. A grievance must be brought **in writing** to the attention of the Division Chairperson within **fifteen (15)** school calendar days from the time of the incident within the academic year it occurred. If the grievance occurs in the summer, the student will need to file in the fall academic semester. 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 (or Alternate) 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 (or Alternate) will make recommendations **in writing** for a solution of the grievance to all parties directly involved.

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 (or Alternate) 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 (or Alternate), the next step is for either party to request in writing a school-wide grievance review, submitted in writing to the Dean within **ten (10)** school calendar days of the conclusion of the meeting with the Dean. Requests should include:
 - 1. A concise summary of the grievance and
 - 2. An explanation of why the divisional process was considered unsatisfactory.

- C. The Grievance Committee of the Graduate School of Education (the 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.
- 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. Communication between members of the Grievance Committee during the deliberation process may be done electronically (e.g., email, Skype). However, any voting must to be done in person by the Grievance Committee's members present. A Blackboard Organization Forum will be opened to file all written documents related to the case being considered. Only members of the Grievance Committee reviewing the case will have access to the Grievance Committee Organization Forum.
- F. The Grievance Committee will convene in person within **ten (10)** school calendar days of the Dean's notification to review all materials. At this time the committee will determine if there is merit for a grievance to be considered.
- G. If a grievance hearing is granted, then the Grievance Committee will schedule a meeting at which time the relevant 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 **twenty (20)** 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 **ten (10)** school calendar days after the last meeting with the parties.
- J. Within **ten (10)** school calendar days of receiving the written statement from the Grievance Committee, the Dean will review the statement 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. At the discretion of the Dean, this can be an electronic file.

The website describes a University-wide process