

WAC 132E-122-090 Academic affairs grievance procedures. (1)

Definition of an academic grievance. If a student has evidence that they have been: Unfairly treated in matters related to grading, course policies or expectation; falsely accused of cheating; or inappropriately penalized for alleged cheating, they may be said to have an academic grievance. Students who feel that such unfair treatment has transpired should feel free to raise the question of how such a grievance may be resolved with the office of the chief academic affairs officer or designee which will provide information (without judgment) regarding the procedure for filing an academic grievance. Students should also feel free to contact any member of the campus community who they trust who may assist the student and/or refer the student to the appropriate resource. In addition to the office of the chief academic affairs officer, the offices/centers that can generally be of the most assistance in terms of advice, support, and referral regarding these matters are the office of the chief student affairs officer, the offices of the academic deans, the office of the chief human resources officer, the chief diversity and equity officer, counseling services, center for disability services, Bridges learning center, student LIFE office, and campus safety and security.

(2) **Informal procedure resolution.** Informal complaints should be made to the appropriate division dean or supervising administrator. Upon receipt of a student complaint by the division dean, the following steps may be taken:

(a) The student will be encouraged to discuss the alleged problem with the involved instructor; or if the complaint involves a program, the student will be encouraged to speak to the director/dean of the involved program.

(b) If the student is not satisfied as a result of such discussion, they should then meet with the director/dean or supervising administrator.

(c) If the complaint is not resolved at this level, the student, the instructor and the director/dean should meet with the chief academic officer or designee to attempt resolution.

(d) If the complaint is not resolved at this level, the student may institute formal grievance procedures.

(e) During any meetings that occur in (a) through (c) of this subsection, the student may invite another person or two to be with them in the meeting. The other person(s) are present to assist and advise the student although an accommodation of a spokesperson (a person who would address the college official, or assist the person in addressing the college official) may be approved if a person's disability warrants such an accommodation. Other circumstances regarding a request by the student for the use of a spokesperson would be considered by the director/dean of supervising administrator facilitating the meeting.

(3) **Formal grievance procedure.** Formal grievance procedure - To assure an atmosphere free from unfair treatment in academic matters, the following procedures are established to respond to an unresolved academic complaint registered by a student. It is understood, however, that this procedure should be employed only after efforts have been made by the student to resolve the issue through the previously described informal procedure. A student who feels an academic grievance has not been resolved through the informal resolution process may file a formal grievance with the chief academic officer or designee prior to the last day of the quarter (not including summer) following the alleged grievance. Within ten business days of the receipt of the

signed written grievance, the chief academic officer or designee will appoint a grievance committee for the purpose of reviewing that complaint and recommending a resolution.

(4) The grievance committee will be comprised of seven voting members including:

(a) An administrator who will serve as the chair but will only vote in the event of a tie vote.

(b) Three faculty members, including one from the division of the involved faculty member.

(c) Three students to be selected as provided for in the associated student constitution and bylaws.

(d) A quorum of the grievance shall be four members.

(e) All matters shall be discussed in closed meetings and shall be treated with strict confidence by the committee members.

(5) **Formal resolution.**

(a) Parties affected by the grievance will provide the grievance committee with all requested information in order to bring about full understanding and a speedy resolution to the grievance.

(b) In order to ensure due process, the aggrieved student shall have:

(i) The right to respond to the grievance, submitting appropriate evidence to support such response;

(ii) The opportunity to call as a witness any member of the college community who can provide information relevant to the allegation and interview the aggrieved student or any witness presented by the student(s) involved.

(c) The instructor against whom the grievance is filed shall have:

(i) The right to respond to the grievance, submitting appropriate evidence to support such response;

(ii) The opportunity to call as a witness any members of the college community who can provide information relevant to the allegation and interview the aggrieved student or any witness presented by the student(s) involved.

(d) Once the aggrieved student and the faculty member have had sufficient opportunity to present their points of view, the grievance committee will deliberate and reach decision by a simple majority vote. The committee will provide the chief academic officer or designee its written recommendation within ten business days of its organizational meeting. The chief academic officer or designee will notify the parties in the grievance of their decision, and the resolution within forty-eight hours of having received the committee recommendation.

(e) If the grievance committee establishes that an aggrieved student has been treated unfairly, the committee will recommend corrective steps to the chief academic officer or designee.

(f) Either party shall have the right to present a written appeal of the decision to the chief academic officer or designee to the president of the college. Within one week of having received the appeal, the president shall review the case and render a decision which will be transmitted to both parties.

(g) An accommodation of a spokesperson (a person who would address the grievance committee, or assist the person in addressing the grievance committee) may be approved if a person's disability warrants such an accommodation. Other circumstances regarding a request by the student for the use of a spokesperson would be considered by the administrator chairing the committee.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.50.140. WSR 18-01-119, § 132E-122-090, filed 12/19/17, effective 1/19/18.]