



## **POLICY: Student Academic Grievance Procedures**

**DATE: November 24, 2021**

### **I. POLICY**

Student Academic Grievances at the university are governed by [University Policy STAF 6.30 Academic Grievance Policy](#). The following College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) policy outlines the process and procedures for academic grievances made by undergraduate students taking courses in CAS departments and programs.

This college policy is subordinate to related policies outlined in the [University Policies and Procedures Manual](#) and the [University of South Carolina Faculty Manual](#). In cases of inconsistencies between this policy and the university, state, or federal policies, the university, state, or federal policy rules are the final authority.

#### **A. Definitions**

- 1. Student Academic Grievances:** A student may only make an academic grievance complaint if he or she believes that an instructor has violated one or more of the [Teaching Responsibility](#) policies contained in the USC Faculty Manual or the [University Policy STAF 6.28 Academic Freedom](#).
  
- 2. Grading Disputes:** These procedures do not extend to matters of grading student work where the substance of a complaint is simply the student's disagreement with the mark or grade placed on his work. Such matters are to be discussed by a student and his or her instructor; the final authority for assigning a grade rests with the instructor, as specified in [University Policy STAF 6.30 Academic Grievance Policy](#).

The Office of the Dean will refer a grading dispute to the course instructor for consultation. Final authority for resolving such a complaint shall remain with the course instructor.

#### **B. College of Arts and Sciences Academic Grievance Committee**

The College of Arts and Sciences Academic Grievance Committee is appointed by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies when a formal complaint is filed.

The committee shall consist of three (3) full-time FTE faculty members (tenured, tenure-track or professional) from departments or programs within the College of Arts and Sciences, one graduate teaching assistant in the college, and two undergraduate student members who are declared majors in the college.

#### **C. Student Academic Grievance Process**

The process below should be followed when a student wishes to make an academic grievance complaint based on the definition in Section I.A.1.

Email is considered a valid, formal written response in the procedures below.

Appropriate confidentiality of written materials shall be maintained by all parties at each step in the student academic grievance process.

1. The student must first discuss the complaint with the course instructor involved and attempt a satisfactory resolution with the course instructor.
2. If a student initiates a complaint in the Office of the Dean, the Office of the Dean must refer the student to the course instructor. If the student elects not to speak with the course instructor or is unable to communicate with the course instructor, the Office of the Dean should refer the student to the unit undergraduate director or unit designee.
3. If no satisfactory resolution can be reached by the student and the course instructor or the unit undergraduate director or designee, the student must report the grievance in writing to the department chair or program director. In some units, the chair/director will then refer the grievance to a unit committee established to handle grievances or other designee.

The unit shall record the grievance in writing, investigate as necessary, and attempt a satisfactory resolution by conferring with all parties. If an acceptable resolution is reached, the matter is considered closed, and the unit should keep any written record for its use as appropriate.

4. If no satisfactory resolution is possible at the unit level, the chair/director shall advise the student that the student may appeal in writing to the Office of the Dean, which will refer the matter to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies.
5. Upon receiving the written appeal from the student, the Office of the Dean shall notify the course instructor and the chair/director. The chair/director shall provide to the Office of the Dean a written report of the investigative process used by the unit and the steps that the department has taken to resolve the grievance.
6. The Office of the Dean shall attempt to resolve the grievance by additional conferences with the chair/director, the course instructor, and the student. If no resolution is possible at the dean level, the student may request in writing that the grievance be referred to the CAS Academic Grievance Committee.
7. The Office of the Dean shall schedule a hearing of the committee and shall forward to the committee all written materials specifying the basis for the grievance and the attempts to resolve it.
8. The Office of the Dean shall notify all parties as to the date, time, and location of the hearing. The rights of all parties to submit documents and call witnesses shall be extended as far as practical and appropriate.

9. The hearing shall be closed and will include only those persons immediately concerned with the case. Witnesses shall be present only during the time in which they are testifying.
10. All portions of the hearing except deliberation shall be voice-recorded by the committee. No other recordings are allowed except by permission of the committee chair. Deliberations are not recorded. For purposes of deliberation, the chair shall dismiss all persons who are not members of the CAS Student Academic Grievance Committee.
11. The CAS Student Academic Grievance Committee shall make recommendations for action to resolve the grievance and these recommendations shall be recorded in writing and forwarded to the student, the course instructor, the unit chair/director, and the dean. The Office of the Dean shall forward a copy of the recommendations to the Office of the Provost.

#### **D. Faculty Grievance Rights**

A faculty member who believes that he or she has been injured by an action of the CAS Student Academic Grievance Committee has the right to present his or her case before the University Faculty Grievance Committee.

## **II. RELATED POLICIES**

[University Policy STAF 6.28 Academic Freedom.](#)

[University Policy STAF 6.30 Academic Grievance Policy.](#)

[University of South Carolina Faculty Manual](#)

[Faculty Manual, Section 2. Regulations and Policies, Teaching Responsibilities](#)