


# Academic Grievances - Policy Statement, 3364-71-05

President, Office of

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<p><b>Name of Policy:</b> Academic grievance</p> <p><b>Policy Number:</b> 3364-71-05</p> <p><b>Approving Officer:</b> President</p> <p><b>Responsible Agent:</b> Provost &amp; Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chancellor &amp; Executive Vice President for Biosciences &amp; Health Affairs/Dean of the College of Medicine</p> <p><b>Scope:</b> All undergraduate students</p>	 <p><b>Effective date:</b> May 1, 2011</p>								
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(A) Policy statement

The university recognizes a student's right to due process. This policy addresses academic grievances only. Academic grievances are complaints brought by students regarding the university's provision of education and academic services affecting their roles as students. Academic grievances must be based on a university rule, policy, or established practice claimed to be violated.

(B) Purpose of policy

The purpose of the policy is to recognize the student's right to due process.

(C) Scope

This policy applies to all undergraduate students. Each college may publish detailed implementation strategies specific to that college.

(D) Procedure

(1) To initiate resolution of an academic grievance, the student shall discuss the problem with the faculty member whom the student believes has taken improper action. If resolution is not achieved, the student shall discuss the problem with the chair of the faculty member's department. If resolution is still not achieved, the student may, if the student wishes, seek informal counsel from the president of student government and shall then discuss the problem with the dean of the college or the college representative responsible for dealing with student academic grievances. If resolution is not achieved at the college level, the student shall file a grievance petition with the chair of the student grievance council [see (7)].

(a) The student should discuss the student's grievance with the faculty member promptly, unless the student is enrolled in the faculty member's course and

believes it prudent to approach the faculty member only after receiving a course grade. In any case, if the occasion for grievance occurs during the fall semester, a grievance petition must be filed with the chair of the student grievance council no later than the last day of classes in the next semester; if the occasion for grievance occurs during the spring semester, a grievance petition must be filed no later than the last day of classes in the final summer session; if the occasion for grievance occurs during a summer session, a grievance petition must be filed no later than the last day of classes in the fall semester.

- (b) If the student or the faculty member is a nonresident at the university during the semester in which a grievance petition must be filed and initial discussion between them is thus impossible, the student shall transmit a written statement of the grievance to the faculty member, either directly or through the chair of the faculty member's department. Such written statement shall have the same form as the grievance petition described in section B and be subject to the same deadlines.
  - (c) To protect the faculty member and the student, it is crucial that tests, papers, and other such material (which were evaluated and were considered in arriving at the final grade but have not been returned to the student) be available for inspection by the student and by other persons (i.e., the departmental chair, the college dean or representative, and members of the student grievance council) involved in the grievance procedure. These materials should remain available for inspection until the last day of classes of the semester following the one in which the alleged grievance has occurred. Exceptions should be made for spring and summer semesters as provided for above.
  - (d) All written materials submitted by the student in the course should be graded and made available to the student for inspection within a reasonable amount of time following their submission.
  - (e) Since student evaluation includes the process by which a final grade is determined as well as the grades assigned to individual projects, a procedure similar to the one that applies to written materials submitted by the student should apply to calculations that enter into the determination of a final grade. Presumably the grade book, or its equivalent, is a permanent record kept by the faculty member and filed in the departmental office when the faculty member leaves the university. This permanent record, however, does not necessarily make clear the nature of the process by which the final grade is determined. It is therefore necessary for the faculty member to be able to explain this process, should the process by which a grade was assigned be the subject of the grievance.
- (2) An aggrieved student shall prepare, alone or with assistance from the president of

- student government, a written grievance petition with the student's name and rocket number, specifying the action that the student believes to have been improper, the instructor, the course number, the section, and semester, and any other information needed to explain the circumstances. The petition shall be dated and signed by the student and sent, directly or through the president of student government, to the chair of the student grievance council. The petition may be supplemented by other documents and/or personal testimony.
- (3) The chair of the student grievance council shall supply copies of the grievance petition to members of the council, the faculty member whose action the student has questioned, the chair of the faculty member's department, and the dean of the college. Any member of the council who has a conflict of interest in a particular case shall be disqualified from council deliberations and action on that case. The faculty senate has provided for the selection of an alternate faculty member and an alternate student member to serve in the absence of regular members.
  - (4) The council shall request the faculty member to reply to the council within a 10-school-day period with a written statement concerning the action referred to in the grievance petition. The statement may be supplemented by other documents and/or personal testimony. If the grievance refers to a course grade, the instructor should explain the components of the evaluation and their relative weight, supplying evidence such as papers and examinations if possible.
  - (5) After an initial meeting to review the information presented, members of the student grievance council may ask the faculty member and/or the student to meet with the council for a confidential hearing. The council members may request testimony of other faculty and students. The chair of the student grievance council shall make a formal recommendation, copies of which shall be sent to the student who filed the grievance, the faculty member, the chair of the faculty member's department, and the dean of the college.
  - (6) If the council members' recommendation includes a request for action by the faculty member, the faculty member shall, within a 10-school-day period, inform the student grievance council in writing of his or her response to that request. The chair of the council shall forward copies of the faculty member's response to each of the persons listed in section E above. If the faculty member does not implement the recommendations of the student grievance council, the chair shall direct the executive vice president for academic affairs to do so.
  - (7) The student grievance council.
    - (a) The student grievance council, a university committee appointed by the president or the president's designee, is charged with protecting students' rights of freedom of expression and other rights in the classroom and against improper academic evaluation and improper disclosure. It does this by investigating and seeking to resolve academic grievances of

individual students and by reporting to the Faculty Senate if any problem appears to require more than case-by-case action.

- (b) **Composition:** The council is composed of five faculty members and four student members, all voting members. Council members may be from the colleges with undergraduate programs and the University Libraries. Care should be taken when forming the council that a diversity of colleges is represented among its members.
- (c) **Appointments:**
  - (i) Appointments shall be for two year terms; all appointments are renewable.
  - (ii) Two faculty members and two student members will be appointed in even numbered years, three faculty members and two student members will be appointed in odd numbered years.
  - (iii) No member may serve more than two consecutive full terms on the Council.
  - (iv) If any member has a conflict of interest in a particular grievance case, the member shall be recused and an alternate faculty or student member shall be immediately selected by the appointing body to serve in his or her absence for that particular case.
- (d) **Annual selection:** Appointments will be made at the beginning of the fall term except for appointments to fill vacancies. All vacancies will be filled as soon as possible by the appointing body.
- (e) **Initial meeting:** The initial meeting of the Council shall address the following items:
  - (i) Election of a Student Grievance Council Chairperson from among the faculty members of the council.
  - (ii) Selection of two faculty and two student members to serve on the Athletic Review Panel.
  - (iii) Review of any grievances received by the previous Council chair since the Council met last.
- (f) Following the meeting, notification of the new chairperson of the Student Grievance Council shall be communicated to the Deans of each College with undergraduate programs, the President of Student Senate, and the Office of Student Customer Service

<p>Approved by:</p> <p><u>/s/ laj</u> <i>Lloyd A. Jacobs, M.D.</i> <i>President</i></p> <p><u>August 19, 2011</u> <i>Date</i></p> <p><i>Review/Revision Completed by:</i></p> <p>Provost &amp; Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chancellor &amp; Executive Vice President for Biosciences &amp; Health Affairs/Dean of the College of Medicine</p> <p><i>February 7, 2011</i></p>	<p><b>Policies Superseded by This Policy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>3360-30-05 Student Grievance Council, previous Main Campus policy, former effective date August 1, 2003</i></li><li>• <i>IV-8 Academic Grievance Procedure, previous Main Campus policy, former effective date February 10, 1999</i></li></ul> <p>Initial effective date: May 1, 2011 Review/Revision Date: Next review date: May 1, 2014</p> <p>Policy originally published in 2006-2008 Undergraduate Catalogue and transferred to UT policy website.</p>
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