

# Student Academic Complaints and Grievances

## General

A complaint or grievance exists when an enrolled student is dissatisfied with a decision or an aspect of his or her academic college experience over which the student has no control and on which remedial action is desired.

## Resolving Student Academic Compliances or Grievances

Initially, the student should attempt to resolve the concern directly with the appropriate department chair, supervisor, faculty member, staff member or student. If the student is not satisfied, or is unwilling to address the issue at the individual or departmental level, the student should contact the department chair, director or academic dean with administrative responsibility for the department or individual involved. These individuals may be able to provide assistance in resolving the issue in an informal manner at the individual or department level. If informal resolution is not successful or is deemed unrealistic, the administrator will inform the student of the formal grievance process.

## Filing a Formal Academic Grievance

**Step 1.** Students wishing to file a formal academic grievance shall do so to the department chair, director or academic dean with responsibility for the department or individual involved by submitting the grievance in writing. The grievance shall be submitted within five business days of the departmental decision or determination by the administrator that informal resolution is not possible.

**Step 2.** The department chair, director, or academic dean, either alone or in consultation with appropriate faculty, staff and students, will initiate the resolution process by investigating the complaint. An alternate resolution or decision will be reached within 10 business days of receipt of the grievance and communicated to the student in writing. If there is no appeal, the decision of the department chair, director or academic administrator is final.

## Filing an Appeal of Academic Grievance Decision

If the student is not satisfied with the resolution or decision, a written appeal may be submitted to the Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs office (via email or delivered to Haverty Hall 123) within five business days of the decision. The appeal must be based on one or more of the following factors:

- the established procedures were not properly followed; or
- an adequate opportunity to present evidence was not allowed; or
- additional information exists that was not available or considered at the time of the decision; or
- the evidence was not substantial enough to justify the decision.

The Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs shall assemble a Student Academic Grievance Committee within 10 business days of receipt of the written appeal. The Student Academic Grievance Committee shall be composed of two students designated by the Student Senate, two faculty members designated by the Faculty Senate and the Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or his/her designee. A member with a conflict of interest may be removed or may voluntarily withdraw from the committee if the situation warrants such action.

The Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or his/her designee shall inform the student and Student Academic Grievance Committee of the specific time and place of the meeting. The committee shall review the written appeal provided by the student and the record made by the department chair, director or academic dean, and reach a decision based upon these documents. The committee may, in its sole discretion, receive additional testimony or other evidence and make that information part of its record. Upon reaching a decision,

the Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs or their representative shall, if possible, orally communicate the committee's decision to the student followed by a written decision within two business days. The decision of the Student Academic Grievance Committee is final.

All references to business days shall be actual days that College offices are open.

All students have the right to present grievances in accordance to the steps outlined in this policy and are assured freedom from discrimination, coercion, restraint or reprisal in presenting grievances. If a student chooses to appeal an academic grievance decision, they are allowed to register and attend classes pending a resolution of the appeal. The student is responsible for any charges (tuition, fees, housing, dining services, tools, etc.) incurred during the review process. The student must adhere to the *NDSCS Student Rights and Responsibilities: A Code of Conduct*. Students engaging in dangerous, unlawful or ongoing disruptive behavior may be denied from attending classes.