

University of Baltimore

I-8.3 Academic Grievances Other than Grading Challenges

Reviewed: October 2016; spring 2019; March 2020

Approved by UFS, Provost March 2020

- I. If a student believes that a faculty member treated the student unfairly in some respect other than in grading, the student may file a grievance. When such a grievance is academic, the processes below are used for the filing and addressing of such a grievance. It is expected that faculty will be responsive when presented with a request for consultation or a grievance and not take any longer in the process than is absolutely necessary. The policy sets time limits, but these are maximums that are not to be exceeded.

- II. Definitions:
 1. Working day – a non-weekend day during which the University is not closed for any reason. When a timeline is measured in working days, the days are counted beginning with the day after a meeting occurs or after a grade is available. The final working day (of 20, for example) is the due date for an action.

- III. **Informal Process:** A student who believes that a faculty member treated the student unfairly in some respect other than in grading will initially consult with the faculty member informally to discuss the concern. The student should request this meeting in writing (written communications by e-mail are acceptable for this purpose) and should keep a copy of the request. All requests must be made within 20 working days of the incident that raised the student's concern.
 - A. Within 20 working days after receiving such a request, the faculty member will set up a time to consult with the student informally and discuss the student's concerns. Although this consultation will ideally be held in person, it may also take place by telephone conference or through an e-mail conversation if necessary to accommodate both participants.

 - B. If the student and faculty member are able to reach an agreement about how to address the student's concern during or as a result of the informal consultation, the matter will be considered resolved. The faculty member will send a brief email summarizing the resolution to the student within 20 working days of the meeting, and both parties will retain a copy of this message until at least 100 working days from when the final grades from the course are posted.

- C. If a student requests a meeting but the faculty member does not respond to the request within 20 working days, or if the faculty member is unavailable to consult in person, by phone, or by e-mail within that period, the student may proceed with the formal appeals process described below.

IV. Formal Process:

A. If the student's concern has not been resolved through informal consultation with the faculty member, the student has 20 working days after receipt of the professor's response about that consultation in which to present the matter in writing to the division or department chair for the academic program in which the course was taught, who serves as the decision-maker for the complaint. If the division or department chair has a conflict of interest with regard to the grievance, the dean of the relevant school will designate an unbiased decision-maker.

The student's written submission will:

- state that the consultation requirements of the informal process have been met
 - state clearly the reasons or grounds for challenging his or her treatment as unfair
 - contain a concise statement of the facts relevant to the challenge, and
 - contain the resolution sought
- B. B. Within 20 working days after receiving a written submission from a student, the decision-maker will meet jointly with the student, the faculty member, and any other person who can be helpful to a determination. It is preferable that this meeting be conducted in person; it may also be conducted by conference call, however, upon the agreement of all those involved or if meeting in person within the time frame provided is impossible. At the meeting, the decision-maker will confirm the student's reasons for raising the complaint and will request that the faculty member explain the situation as he or she sees it. While it is preferable for the decision-maker to meet with the student and instructor at the same time, if the decision-maker believes the situation warrants separate conversations, or if the student refuses to participate in a joint meeting with the instructor, then the decision-maker may confer separately with the student and with the instructor.
- D. Within 20 working days after meeting with the student, the faculty member, and any other appropriate person(s), the decision-maker will render a written decision on the student's complaint and provide that decision to each of the parties. If the parties did not meet together at the same time, the decision-maker has 20 working days from the time of the last meeting related to the case to convey the decision to the student. If this timeline is longer than 20 working days after meeting with the student, the decision-maker must provide notice to the student so the student

knows when the response will be due.

- V. **Appeal of Other Academic Grievances:** Either the student or the faculty member may appeal the decision on an academic grievance, in writing, within 20 working days of the written decision. The appeal will be submitted to the dean of the school in which the course was taught or that dean's designee. If appealing to the dean or the dean's designee will create a conflict of interest, the provost will designate an unbiased person to hear the appeal.

The person considering the appeal will:

- provide a notice of the appeal to the parties involved
- request a response from the party who did not appeal
- review all materials related to the appeal, and
- make a final and binding decision on the merits of the appeal or, if he or she is unable to make a decision, request that a hearing board be convened to hear the appeal and make a recommendation to him or her. In either case, a written notice of the decision made on the appeal shall be provided to each of the parties within 20 working days following the submission of the written response.