

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
College of Education

Academic Grievance Procedure

Revised Policy — College-Level Implementing Procedure for USF Policy 10-002

APPLIES TO	Students enrolled in the College of Education who are receiving academic credit for a course
RELATED POLICY	Academic Grievance Procedure for Students, USF Policy 10-002
QUESTIONS	College of Education Office of Undergraduate Studies or Office of Graduate Studies, as applicable

POLICY STATEMENT

An "academic grievance" is a claim by an enrolled student receiving academic credit for a course that a specific academic decision or action affecting the student’s academic record or status — such as the assignment of a final grade, academic dismissal, or other academic action — has violated published policies or procedures, or has been applied to the grievant in a manner different from that used for other students. This College procedure implements the College-level process and does not replace or supersede USF Policy 10-002.

The process is intended to provide an objective review of relevant facts in a collegial, non-adversarial manner and to provide the student and other parties an opportunity to participate.

WHAT IS (AND IS NOT) AN ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE?

- Academic grievances do not address general student complaints.
- An academic grievance must identify either (1) a specific USF policy, regulation, procedure, or official published academic requirement that the student alleges was violated, or (2) an academic decision that was applied to the student in a substantially different manner from that applied to other similarly situated students.
- Disagreement with an individual test grade, response to an exam question, assignment, or an instructor’s academic discretion or professional judgment is not, by itself, grounds for an academic grievance, except when the matter affects the final grade or otherwise falls within the scope of USF Policy 10-002.

- Concerns about individual assignments that do not affect the final grade should ordinarily be addressed with the instructor and, if unresolved, through the appropriate supervisory or complaint process.
- Dismissals or other academic actions that occur automatically under established University protocols, such as failure to maintain a required GPA or academic probation, are not grievable unless otherwise provided by applicable University policy.
- Only matters within the scope of USF Policy 10-002 and this College procedure may proceed through the academic grievance process. Questions outside that scope may be referred to another appropriate University process or office.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The process should be timely, fair, collegial, and non-adversarial.
- Students and faculty should have a reasonable opportunity to present relevant information and respond to material allegations.
- Individuals with an actual or apparent conflict of interest shall not participate in the review or decision.
- The College will protect the confidentiality of grievance materials to the extent permitted by law and University policy.
- This procedure shall be interpreted consistently with USF Policy 10-002 and other applicable University policies and regulations.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

Please Note: The timelines and procedural requirements of USF Policy 10-002 control. Each stage is generally afforded three (3) weeks as a standard time period unless an extension is permitted or appropriate under University policy.

1

Informal Resolution with the Instructor

The student must first make a reasonable effort to resolve the concern directly with the course instructor — identifying the academic decision at issue, explaining the basis for the concern, and providing relevant information or documentation. If a meeting with the instructor is not feasible, the student may explain why and proceed to the written grievance stage consistent with USF Policy 10-002.

2

Written Notification of Academic Grievance

If unresolved, the student must submit a concise written grievance to the appropriate Department Chair/Director and the applicable College Dean or designee, including: (a) the specific policy, procedure, catalog provision, syllabus requirement, or academic practice allegedly violated; (b) the academic decision or action at issue; (c) an explanation of unequal treatment, if alleged; (d) the remedy requested; (e) supporting documentation; and (f) a description of the effort made to resolve the concern with the instructor.

3**Initial Determination: Grievance or General Complaint**

The Department Chair/Director (or an appropriate alternate, if a conflict exists) reviews the written submission to determine whether it falls within the scope of the academic grievance process. If not, the matter may be handled as a general complaint or referred elsewhere. The student and relevant faculty member are informed of the determination in writing.

4**Faculty Response and Informal Resolution**

If the matter is determined to be an academic grievance, the student's written statement is provided to the instructor or other respondent, who may submit a written response and supporting documentation. The Chair/Director provides an opportunity for informal resolution, when appropriate, without prejudicing the student's right to continue the grievance process.

5**College Academic Grievance Committee Review**

If unresolved, the grievance is referred to a College-level Academic Grievance Committee (or designated committee-level body) composed of qualified individuals free of conflicts of interest. The respondent may participate but not vote when their own decision is under review; a student representative may participate only when appropriate. The committee reviews the record, allows response to material information, and issues a written recommendation to the Associate Dean.

6**College-Level Decision**

The Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies or Graduate Studies, as applicable, reviews the record and committee recommendation and issues the College-level decision — accepting, rejecting, or modifying the recommendation consistent with University policy. The decision is communicated in writing to the student and respondent and identifies any remedy or corrective action.

7**Formal Grievance Appeal**

If the student remains dissatisfied with the College-level decision, the student retains the right to seek further review through the Formal Grievance Appeal process established by USF Policy 10-002. The College provides the student with information regarding the applicable University appeal process and deadlines.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND SUBSTITUTION

Any administrator, faculty member, staff member, committee member, or student representative who has a conflict of interest, is the subject of the grievance, participated in the challenged decision in a manner that

creates a conflict, or otherwise cannot reasonably provide an impartial review shall not participate in the applicable review or decision. The College Dean or designee shall appoint an appropriate alternate.

RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION

The College shall maintain the grievance record in accordance with applicable University records-retention, privacy, and public-records requirements. Parties should submit only information relevant to the grievance. Grievance communications should remain professional, factual, and focused on the alleged policy violation, unequal application, academic decision, and requested remedy.

TIPS FOR SUBMITTING AN ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE

- Address the situation promptly and observe the deadlines established by USF Policy 10-002.
- Clearly identify the specific policy, procedure, catalog provision, syllabus requirement, or academic practice at issue.
- Explain the facts supporting the allegation and identify the remedy being requested.
- Provide relevant supporting documentation and identify the effort made to resolve the concern with the instructor.
- Keep written communications factual, professional, and focused on the grievance. Avoid unrelated or disparaging information.
- A concern that does not identify a matter within the scope of USF Policy 10-002 may be more appropriately handled through a general complaint or another University process.

IMPORTANT

This College procedure is subordinate to USF Policy 10-002 and other applicable University policies and regulations. If a conflict exists between this procedure and a University policy or regulation, the University policy or regulation controls. The College may update this procedure when University policy, organizational responsibilities, or applicable law changes.