

PROCEDURE FOR UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENT GRIEVANCES

This grievance procedure provides a process for constructively resolving serious academic, supervisory or administrative grievances that undergraduate and graduate students may have with faculty, preceptors, staff or administrators. Its purpose is to resolve in a fair manner any grievances arising from grading, other evaluation or supervisory practices, and appeals that students may want to initiate if they are dissatisfied with decisions made by the committees that direct their degree program or the Academic Standards Committee of the Connell School. To that end, all concerned should display a cooperative manner. Resolutions should be attempted between the parties involved and mediated rather than directed. Outcomes should be sought at the lowest possible administrative level. Confidentiality of the student(s) and faculty members(s) involved should be maintained at all times. In the event that the student's Chairperson, advisor, preceptor, Dean or Associate Dean is a party to the grievance that person should recuse him/herself from considering the matter, and the appropriate administrator at the next highest administrative level will replace that person.

If a student believes that he or she has been evaluated unfairly or has another serious grievance, the student should discuss the matter with the faculty member or preceptor (and course teacher of record if applicable) involved as soon as possible after the evaluation has been received or the grievance arises. This discussion should provide an opportunity for further dialogue and clarification between faculty and student about how the matter was determined, what criteria were used, and any related issues. If such a discussion results in a mutually acceptable resolution, the matter will be considered closed. If either party wishes to have a written statement of the outcome, the parties will put the resolution in writing, sign it, and each retain a copy. This written statement must be completed no later than two weeks after the mutually acceptable resolution has been reached.

If, however, a mutually acceptable disposition cannot be achieved, the student may present the matter in writing to the Chairperson of the department. The student's written statement to the Chair must be submitted no later than two weeks from the date of the final meeting with the faculty member or preceptor and clearly specify the nature of the complaint and the remedy requested.

The Chairperson will review the matter by meeting individually with each individual involved and reviewing any written materials related to the grievance. The Chairperson will meet again with the individuals involved, either separately or jointly or both, in an attempt to resolve the matter. The Chairperson will provide a written response within two weeks of this meeting. If a settlement is reached, it is to be put in writing and signed by the Chairperson and each of the parties, with each to retain a copy. If no resolution is reached, the Chairperson will prepare a written summary of events relevant to the grievance and provide a copy of it to the student and the faculty member or other individuals involved.

In the event that the grievance concerns treatment or evaluation in a practicum, the student should follow this same procedure, discussing the matter first with his or her preceptor and/or clinical instructor. If this discussion does not lead to resolution, the matter should be brought to the CSON Chair who will follow the guidelines described above.

Formal Appeal Procedures

If an undergraduate or graduate student is dissatisfied by the outcome of the discussions and process at the Chairperson level, the student may initiate a formal appeal. The student must initiate the appeal as early as possible, but not later than thirty (30) days after receiving the Chair's resolution. A formal appeal consists of a written explanation of the grievance sent to the relevant Associate Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Program, which should include the reasons the student believes the faculty member's or preceptor's evaluation was arbitrary, unethical, or based on extrinsic error, and the reasons why previous discussions were not satisfactory. The Associate Dean may request that the faculty member, the Chair and any other individual involved provide the Associate Dean with a written evaluation of the merit of the appeal and a summary of the attempts to resolve the grievance.

The Associate Dean will then convene an ad hoc committee composed of three members of the elected Grievance Committee. The ad hoc committee will conduct an independent review of the grievance, which will include discussing the grievance with the student, the Chair and other individuals involved. Within thirty (30) days of receiving the formal appeal, the ad hoc committee will provide a statement of the committee's resolution of the matter to the student, the Department Chair involved in the earlier level of the process, the person(s) against whom the grievance was brought, and the Associate Dean.

If the student is dissatisfied with the conclusions of the ad hoc committee, the student may submit a written appeal to the Dean. The appeal must be submitted as soon as possible but no later than thirty (30) days after the student has received the conclusions of the ad hoc committee. A formal appeal to the Dean consists of a written explanation of the appeal which should include the reasons the student believes the faculty member's or preceptor's evaluation was arbitrary, unethical, or based on extrinsic error, and the reasons why previous discussions were not satisfactory. Copies of decisions made by the Department Chair and the ad hoc committee will be forwarded to the Dean for the Dean's consideration in this review of the student's appeal. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the student's appeal, the Dean will render a decision. The decision of the Dean is final, and will be communicated to the student in writing, with copies to the person(s) against whom the grievance was brought, and the relevant Department Chair and Associate Dean.

If a student's grievance relates to the student's legal rights under any law or regulation, the grievance will be addressed in accordance with the applicable legal requirements. In such cases, the faculty member or administrator responding to the grievance should consult with the Associate Dean of Finance and Administration who will facilitate communication with the Office of the General Counsel.¹