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Grievance Policy - Academic - Graduate

POLICY STATEMENT

Formal student grievances regarding the actions of an instructor shall proceed according to the policy as follows:

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, a **working day** is defined as an academic day (Monday through Friday) when school is in session.

For the purpose of this policy, a **regular semester** is defined as the Fall or Spring semester.

Appeals File: a file that contains originals or copies of all materials generated throughout the appeals process.

PROCEDURES and RESPONSIBILITIES

At any stage in the appeals process, should a decision necessitate a change in the official record (e.g. a grade change), the responsible party at that stage shall make the required change and record such action in the appeals file.

The student will discuss the grievance with the instructor and seek a solution. This discussion must take place no later than the last working day of the next regular term after the course in question.

1. [a] If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student in conference with the instructor, the student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing (with documentation) to the department/division chair within fifteen working days of the date of the conference. Upon receiving a student appeal, the department/division chair submits, within fifteen working days, [b] a written request for a response in writing (with documentation) from the instructor. The instructor replies to the chair's request within fifteen working days. The department/division chair notifies the student and instructor in writing of his/her decision, within fifteen working days from the date the response is received from the instructor. [c] All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon sending the response to the student and instructor, the chair will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Academic Affairs.
2. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing (with documentation) within fifteen working days of the date of the department/division chair's written response, to the college/school dean with administrative responsibility for the department in which the appeal originated. The college/school dean obtains the appeals folder from the Office of Academic Affairs and reviews the student appeal and the corresponding written responses from the instructor and chair. The college/school dean notifies the student and instructor in writing of his/her decision with a copy to the division/department chair, within fifteen working days from the date the appeal is received. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon sending the response to the student, instructor, and chair, the dean will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Academic Affairs.
3. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student is entitled to submit a written request for a hearing with the Graduate Academic Appeals Committee within fifteen working days of the date of the dean's response. (Committee contact information available through the [Graduate and Continuing Studies Office](#), 239 Kent Wyatt Hall,

662.846.4700). The Graduate Academic Appeals Committee chair schedules a hearing date, within fifteen working days from the date the request for hearing is received, and notifies the student, instructor, and chair, and the chair obtains the appeals file from the Office of Academic Affairs. All parties may submit their cases in person to the committee. The Appeals Committee notifies the student, instructor, and chair in writing of its decision with a copy to the appropriate dean, within five working days from the date of the hearing. All proceedings of the Graduate Academic Appeals Committee are confidential. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon the Committee's sending the response to the student, instructor, chair, and dean, the Graduate Academic Appeals Committee chair will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Academic Affairs.

4. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing to the Vice President for Academic Affairs within fifteen working days of the date of the Committee's notification. The Vice President for Academic Affairs reviews the appeals file. Within fifteen working days after receiving the appeal, the Vice President for Academic Affairs notifies the student, instructor, and chair in writing of his/her decision, which is final, with a copy to the appropriate dean and the chair of the Graduate Academic Appeals Committee. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; the Vice President for Academic Affairs will retain the appeals file in the Office of Academic Affairs.

Grievances shall not encompass the quality of instruction, the difficulty of testing, the rigor of grading, or the appropriateness of the course requirements. The judgment of what standards are appropriate resides with the instructor, unless there is compelling evidence that those standards are arbitrary or capricious.

At every step, the correspondences from the chair, the dean, and the Committee shall designate the date by which the next action, if indicated, shall be initiated by the student or respondent.

Responsible Office and/or Policy Owner: Office of Academic Affairs

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 02-14-2012 (Academic Council)
- Graduate Academic Grievance Report
- SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation 12.4 (Student Complaints)

STATUS

Active

DATES(S)

Last Change/Approval Date:

01-11-2021 (Revised)

02-14-2012 (Revised, Academic Council)

12-13-2011 (Revised, Academic Council)

02-24-2009 (Revised, Academic Council)

01-20-2004 (Approved, Academic Council)



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Grievance Policy - Academic - Undergraduate

POLICY STATEMENT

Formal student grievances regarding the actions of an instructor shall proceed according to the policy as follows:

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, a **working day** is defined as an academic day (Monday through Friday) when school is in session.

For the purpose of this policy, a **regular semester** is defined as the Fall or Spring semester.

Appeals File: a file that contains originals or copies of all materials generated throughout the appeals process.

PROCEDURES and RESPONSIBILITIES

At any stage in the appeals process, should a decision necessitate a change in the official record (e.g. a grade change), the responsible party at that stage shall make the required change and shall note it in the appeals file.

The student will discuss the grievance with the instructor and seek a solution. This discussion must take place no later than the last working day of the next regular term after the course in question.

1. [a] If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student in conference with the instructor, the student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing (with documentation) to the department/division chair within fifteen working days of the date of the conference. Upon receiving a student appeal, the department/division chair submits, within fifteen working days, [b] a written request for a response in writing (with documentation) from the instructor. The instructor replies to the chair's request within fifteen working days. The department/division chair notifies the student and instructor in writing of his/her decision, within fifteen working days from the date the response is received from the instructor. [c] All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon sending the response to the student and instructor, the chair will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Academic Affairs.
2. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing (with documentation) within fifteen working days of the date of the department/division chair's written response, to the college/school dean with administrative responsibility for the department in which the appeal originated. The college/school dean obtains the appeals folder from the Office of Academic Affairs and reviews the student appeal and the corresponding responses from the instructor and chair. The college/school dean notifies the student and instructor in writing of his/her decision with a copy to the division/department chair, within fifteen working days from the date the appeal is received. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon sending the response to the student, instructor, and chair, the dean will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Academic Affairs.
3. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student is entitled to submit a written request for a hearing with the Undergraduate Attendance and Grievance Appeals Committee within fifteen working days of the date of

the dean's response. (Committee contact information available through the [Office of Academic Affairs](#), 228 Kent Wyatt Hall, 662.846.4010). The Undergraduate Attendance and Grievance Appeals Committee chair schedules a hearing date, within fifteen working days from the date the request for hearing is received, and notifies the student, instructor, and chair, and the chair obtains the appeals file from the Office of Academic Affairs. Both parties may submit their cases in person to the committee. The Undergraduate Attendance and Grievance Appeals Committee notifies the student, instructor, and chair in writing of its decision with a copy to the appropriate dean, within five working days from the date of the hearing. All proceedings of the Undergraduate Attendance and Grievance Appeals Committee are confidential. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon the Committee's sending the response to the student, instructor, chair, and dean, the Undergraduate Attendance and Grievance Appeals Committee chair will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Academic Affairs.

4. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing to the Vice President for Academic Affairs within fifteen working days of the date of the Committee's notification. The Vice President for Academic Affairs reviews the appeals file. Within fifteen working days after receiving the appeal, the Vice President for Academic Affairs notifies the student, instructor, and chair in writing of his/her decision which is final, with a copy to the appropriate dean and the chair of the Undergraduate Attendance and Grievance Appeals Committee. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; the Vice President for Academic Affairs will retain the appeals file in the Office of Academic Affairs.

Grievances shall not encompass the quality of instruction, the difficulty of testing, the rigor of grading, or the appropriateness of the course requirements. The judgment of what standards are appropriate resides with the instructor, unless there is compelling evidence that those standards are arbitrary or capricious.

At every step, the correspondences from the chair, the dean, and the Committee shall designate the date by which the next action, if indicated, shall be initiated by the student or respondent.

Responsible Office and/or Policy Owner: Office of Academic Affairs

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 02-14-2012 (Academic Council)
- Undergraduate Academic Grievance Report
- SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation 12.4 (Student complaints)

STATUS

Active

DATES(S)

Last Change/Approval Date:

01-11-2021 (Revised)
 02-14-2012 (Revised, Academic Council)
 12-13-11 (Revised, Academic Council)
 02-24-09 (Revised, Academic Council)
 01-20-04 (Approved, Academic Council)

Grievance Policy – Non Academic Issues

POLICY STATEMENT

The right to each student to resolve grievances with the University is affirmed and specific appeal procedures are herewith established to assure timely and appropriate consideration of each grievance. Student grievances generally originate at the department level and the resolution of the grievance is first sought at the department level.

DEFINITIONS

None

PROCEDURES and RESPONSIBILITIES

NON-ACADEMIC ISSUES ONLY

For grievances on non-FERPA issues, the student will follow the steps listed in Section I:

STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS for Non-FERPA Issues. If the grievance is regarding a FERPA issue, the student should follow the steps listed in Section II below: STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS for FERPA Issues. If the grievance is regarding a Sexual Harassment issue, the student should follow the steps listed in Section III below: STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS for Sexual Harassment Issues.

The President of the University is the final arbitrator of all grievances. It is the desire of the University to settle all grievances as expeditiously as possible. In rendering a decision during the grievance procedure, it is the responsibility of the University to provide the student with written notification. The relevant Non-Academic Student Grievance Report form will be initiated by the first person receiving the student's grievance in each of the three processes outlined below. All non-academic student complaints will be archived by the Office of Student Affairs. Grievance files must be retained for a minimum of five years.

I. STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS for Non-FERPA Issues

1. [a] The student should present to the staff member a signed, dated, written statement of grievance within fifteen working days of the cause of complaint. The staff member involved will render a decision within fifteen working days of receipt of the grievance, [b] initiating the Non-Academic Student Grievance Report (Non-FERPA). [c] All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon sending the response to the student, the staff member will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Student Affairs.
2. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing (with documentation) to the immediate supervisor or department head within fifteen working days. After reviewing the appeals file retrieved from the Office of Student Affairs, the

supervisor/department head involved will render a decision within fifteen working days of receipt of the grievance. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon sending the response to the student and the staff member, the supervisor/department head will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Student Affairs.

3. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing (with documentation) to the Vice President for Student Affairs within fifteen working days. The Vice President for Student Affairs will render a decision within fifteen working days. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon sending the response to the student, the staff member, and the supervisor, the Vice President for Student Affairs will ensure that the complete appeals file is retained by the Office of Student Affairs.
4. The student may appeal the decision of the Vice President for Student Affairs by requesting in writing, within fifteen working days, a hearing before the Appellate Committee. The Appellate Committee comprises seven members appointed by the President of the University: four faculty members and three student representatives. During this official hearing, a student may either represent himself or be advised by legal counsel of his or her choice. Legal counsel may speak only at the discretion of the chair of the committee. After reviewing the appeals file retrieved from the Office of Student Affairs, the Appellate Committee notifies the student in writing of its decision within fifteen working days from the date of the hearing, with a copy to the staff member and unit supervisor. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; the committee chair will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Student Affairs.
5. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing to the President of the University within fifteen working days of the date of the Committee's notification. After reviewing the appeals file retrieved from the Office of Student Affairs, the University President notifies the student, staff member, and unit supervisor in writing of his/her decision, which is final, within fifteen working days of receipt of the appeal, with a copy to the chair of the Appellate Committee. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; the University President will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Student Affairs.

Step 1: Staff Member

Step 2: Immediate supervisor and/or head of department Step 3: Vice President for Student Affairs

Step 4: Appellate Committee

Step 5: President of the University

II. STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS for FERPA Issues

The rights of each student to privacy of educational records, as outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), are affirmed by the University.

1. To initiate a grievance of a matter covered by FERPA, the student should present a signed, dated, written statement of grievance to the University Registrar. The Registrar will render a decision within fifteen working days of receipt of the grievance, initiating the Non-Academic Student Grievance Report (FERPA). All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon sending the response to the student, the Registrar will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Student Affairs.
2. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing (with documentation) within fifteen working days to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs will render a decision within fifteen working days of receipt of the grievance. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon sending the response to the student and to the Registrar, the Vice President for Student Affairs will ensure that the complete appeals file is retained in the Office of Student Affairs.
3. The student may appeal the decision of the Vice President for Student Affairs by requesting in writing, within fifteen working days, a hearing before the Appellate Committee. The Appellate Committee comprises seven members appointed by the President of the University: four faculty/staff members and three student representatives. During this official hearing, a student may either represent himself or be

advised by legal counsel of his or her choice. Legal counsel may speak only at the discretion of the chair of the committee. After reviewing the appeals file retrieved from the Office of Student Affairs, the Appellate Committee notifies the student and University Registrar in writing of its decision within fifteen working days from the date of the hearing. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon the Committee's sending the response to the student and University Registrar, the committee chair will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Student Affairs.

4. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing to the President of the University within fifteen working days of the date of the Committee's notification. After reviewing the appeals file retrieved from the Office of Student Affairs, the University President notifies the student and the University Registrar in writing of his/her decision, which is final, within fifteen working days of receipt of the appeal, with a copy to the chair of the Appellate Committee. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; the University President will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Student Affairs.

Step 1: University Registrar

Step 2: Vice President for Student Affairs

Step 3: Appellate Committee

Step 4: President of the University

III. STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS for Sexual Harassment Issues

Sexual harassment is illegal under both state and federal law. It is the policy of Delta State University to ensure that the University community remains free from sexual harassment. Any student (or employee) who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action. Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- I. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's education,
- II. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that individual,
- III. such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education or living environment. Deans, division/department chairmen, and department heads must take appropriate steps to disseminate this policy statement and to inform students of procedures for lodging
 - a. To initiate a grievance regarding sexual harassment, the student should present a signed, dated, written statement of grievance 1) to the Director of Human Resources if the grievance is against a faculty/staff member; or 2) to the Vice President for Student Affairs if the grievance is against a student. The Director of Human Resources or the Vice President for Student Affairs will render a decision within fifteen working days of receipt of the grievance, initiating the Non-Academic Student Grievance Report (Sexual Harassment). All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon sending the response to the student, the complete appeals file will be delivered to the Office of Student Affairs.
 - b. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student by the Director of Human Resources or the Vice President for Student Affairs, the student is entitled to request in writing, within fifteen working days, a hearing before the Appellate Committee. The Appellate Committee comprises seven members appointed by the President of the University: four faculty/staff members and three student representatives. During this official hearing, a student may either represent himself or be advised by legal counsel of his or her choice. Legal counsel may speak only at the discretion of the chair of the committee. After reviewing the appeals file retrieved from the Office of Student Affairs, the Appellate Committee notifies the student and the appropriate parties (HR/VPSA/VPAA) in writing of its decision within fifteen working days from the date of the hearing. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; upon the Committee's sending the response to the student and the appropriate

parties, the committee chair will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Student Affairs.

- c. If the problem is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing to the President of the University within fifteen working days of the date of the Committee's notification. After reviewing the appeals file retrieved from the Office of Student Affairs, the University President notifies the student and Director of Human Resources or Vice President for Student Affairs in writing of his/her decision, which is final, within fifteen days of receipt of the appeal, with a copy to the chair of the Appellate Committee. All documents must be retained for a minimum of five years; the University President will ensure that the complete appeals file is delivered to the Office of Student Affairs.

Step 1: Director of Human Resources or Vice President for Student Affairs

Step 2: Appellate Committee

Step 3: President of the University

Grievances shall not encompass the quality of instruction, the difficulty of testing, the rigor of grading, or the appropriateness of the course requirements. The judgment of what standards are appropriate resides with the instructor, unless there is compelling evidence that those standards are arbitrary or capricious.

At every step, the correspondences from the chair, the dean, and the Committee shall designate the date by which the next action, if indicated, shall be initiated by the student or respondent.

Responsible Office and/or Policy Owner: Office of Student Affairs

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Non-Academic Student Grievance Report (non-FERPA)

Non-Academic Student Grievance Report (FERPA)

Non-Academic Student Grievance Report (Sexual Harassment)

STATUS

Active

DATES(S)

Last Change/Approval Date:

Academic Council: 4/25/2019

Cabinet: 5/22/2019, 3/8/2021