



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

[Interim] Academic Grievance Policy

Policy Number [X-XX]

Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania

Approved by University Senate, [Date of Approval]

Revised [Date of Revision]

Responsible Office: [Insert Division or Office]

Previous Policy: [Insert Previous Policy Number or Name]

1. Purpose

To provide students with a system by which to grieve complaints of alleged academic injustice(s) relating to grades and/or professional responsibilities as related to academic policies. This process is not a disciplinary proceeding for any of the involved parties, although the findings may lead to disciplinary investigation or action under a different university policy.

2. Scope

Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania students, faculty and staff

3. Definitions, Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. Definitions

- 3.1.1. **Student:** Any student enrolled at Commonwealth University, including undergraduate and graduate students.
- 3.1.2. **Grievant:** Student who brings a complaint of academic injustice.
- 3.1.3. **Respondent:** Person being grieved.
- 3.1.4. **Instructor of Record:** Faculty member responsible for assigning a final grade for students in a course. In cases of a grade appeal or academic integrity violations, the instructor of record is the respondent.
- 3.1.5. **Academic Grievance Board:** A hearing board convened to hear cases of potential academic injustice(s) and make a recommendation as to responsibility for the charges and may suggest sanctions to the Provost (or designee).
- 3.1.6. **Regular Semester:** Indicative of either a Fall or Spring term.

Commented [A(1): Will we need language for winter and summer session?



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3.2. **Roles and Responsibilities**

- 3.2.1. Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Education
- 3.2.2. Office of the Dean of Graduate Education
- 3.2.3. Director of the Office of Student Conduct

4. **Policy**

- 4.1. Resolution through the grievance process should begin only after a student has gone through the informal procedures specified in the relevant policies and files a formal request for a grievance hearing.
- 4.2. Petitions for an Academic Grievance Board hearing shall be made no later than 10 days after the receipt of a decision made through the formal resolution process for the Academic Integrity Policy (01-02), Grade Appeal Policy (xx-xx), Classroom Disruptive Behavior Policy (XX-XX), or Final Examination Policy (XX-XX).
- 4.3. Academic Grievance Board Composition
 - 4.2.1 An Academic Grievance Board shall be composed of four faculty members, and two students with one faculty member designated as moderator.
 - 4.2.1.1 At least one faculty member and one student shall be from the home campus of the grievant.
 - 4.2.1.2 In cases of grade appeals or academic integrity violations, no faculty member may serve from the same department as the instructor of record.
 - 4.3 Grievance Hearing
 - 4.3.1 The moderator shall be a neutral party and does not have voting privileges, nor should their opinions be part of the hearing.
 - 4.3.2 Faculty and students appointed for a specific grievance hearing have the right and obligation to disqualify herself/himself from a case in which a personal interest, association, affiliation, or attitude might cause bias or jeopardize the objectivity of the board.
 - 4.3.3 The Moderator shall make a report of an Academic Grievance Board outcome no later than 10 days following the hearing.

Commented [A(2): which policies are these? This isn't super clear to me

Commented [HE2R2]: All of these policies have a final clause that allow a student to petition for an academic grievance hearing should the student believe an academic injustice has been committed.

Like SCOTUS, the Grievance Board hears cases where the petitioner feels there has been some violation of procedures ("academic injustice").

For example, if the faculty member did not follow the grading procedures established on the syllabus for the course. Or perhaps professor did not make reasonable accommodations for testing. Or if the faculty member did not produce sufficient evidence of plagiarism. etc.

5. **Procedures, Standards, and Guidelines**



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- 1.1. Staffing the Academic Grievance Boards
 - 1.1.1. The Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Education shall create and maintain pools of potential Grievance Board members for faculty and students respectively.
 - 1.1.1.1. The Dean of Students and the Dean of Graduate Education may assist in identifying students to serve on Academic Grievance Boards
 - 1.1.1.2. The individuals appointed to grievance boards must have a reputation for fairness and objectivity.
 - 1.1.1.3. Each list shall be updated at the beginning of each academic year.
- 1.2. Academic Grievance Board hearings are organized by the office of the Dean of Undergraduate Education.
 - 1.2.1. Notice of the time, place, or modality of the hearing shall be provided in writing at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.
 - 1.2.2. The grievant and the respondent shall receive written notice of the complaint.
 - 1.2.3. A moderator shall be appointed from the pool of faculty eligible to serve on Academic Grievance Boards
- 1.3. Both the grievant and respondent have the following rights: (1) to be accompanied by an advisor of his or her choice, other than a non-faculty attorney; (2) to present witnesses and other evidence; and (3) to question witnesses.
 - 1.3.1. Attorneys, although they may be consulted, may not be present at the academic grievance hearing.
- 1.4. A recording may be made at each hearing with the consent of the grievant and the individual being grieved. Said tape will be kept as a confidential file by the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for a period of one (1) year.
- 1.5. The Grievance Board moderator shall report on the outcome of the hearing, including any recommendations the board may make.

5 Compliance and Enforcement

- 5.1 Every University policy will undergo a regular review on a five-year cycle, with approximately 20% of the total policies inventory being reviewed each year.
- 5.2 All policy reviews will be conducted by the responsible Senate Committee to assure that the policy remains relevant and aligns with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, PASSHE Board of Governors policies, and other University policies, procedures, standards, or guidelines.



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7. Additional Information

5.3 Supporting Documents

- 5.3.1 [Petition to convene an Academic Grievance Board hearing.] [Link](#)

5.4 History

- 5.4.1 Supersedes PRP 3592: Academic Grievance Procedure in part, separating the grade appeal procedure from the policy describing the structure, composition, and functioning of the academic grievance boards.
- 5.4.2 Effective Date – [Date Approved by the University Senate or Issued by the Office of the President as an Interim Policy]
- 5.4.3 Revised - [Date of Revision]
- 5.4.4 Next Review Date - [Date of Revision]

5.5 Related Policies -

- 5.5.1 Academic Integrity Policy (CU 01-02)
- 5.5.2 Grade Appeal Policy (CU XX-XX)
- 5.5.3 Final Examination Policy (CU XX-XX)
- 5.5.4 Classroom Behavior Policy (CU XX-XX)

5.6 Contacts for Additional Information and Reporting

[Name of Office/Division, Commonwealth University, Attn: [Name of person to serve as contact, email address of contact hyperlinked, office phone of contact in format of XXX.XXX.XXXX]