

# University of South Carolina Upstate

## Academic Grievance Procedures

The University of South Carolina Upstate is committed to the judicious, fair, and impartial resolution of a conflict between faculty members and students. The University is also committed to a judicious, fair, and impartial review of petitions from students who seek relief from university regulations related to academic decisions or policies.

These procedures do not extend to matters of grading student work where the substance of a complaint is simply the student's disagreement with the grade placed on work. A student shall discuss such matters with the faculty; final authority shall remain with the faculty in matters of evaluating student work.

All decisions regarding grade changes at any step in the process are in the form of recommendations only. Only the faculty member who initiated the grade in question can change grades.

The following process is designed to provide an objective review of student complaints regarding academic grievances.

### A. General guidelines for undergraduate students

1. For a student who believes he or she has been treated unfairly or improperly during a fall semester, the student grievance process must be initiated prior to the following March 1. For a student who believes he or she has been treated unfairly or improperly during a spring semester, maymester, or summer semesters, the grievance process must be initiated prior to the following October 1.
2. Those concerned will make every reasonable effort to honor all deadlines and timelines. However, individuals involved in the grievance process should take into account that conditions may exist which preclude strict adherence to the suggested timelines.
3. All submissions to all levels of appeal and all responses must be in writing on the Academic Grievance Form. An Academic Grievance Form for submitting an appeal is available in the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Academic Affairs, and in each Dean's Office.
4. The grievance must follow, in sequence, the procedures outlined. If a resolution of a grievance is not forthcoming, or the time for a written response has expired, the student may wish to continue the process by forwarding the grievance to the next level. Grievance forms that have not been submitted through the proper sequence of decision-makers will not be reviewed. Students may withdraw their grievance at any time.
5. The student may be asked for additional information or may request the opportunity to appear and discuss the appeal as the grievance is reviewed at that level.

6. Final authority shall remain with the faculty member in matters of evaluating student work
- B.** The grievance process when the grievance involves admissions, academic suspension, or financial aid
1. If the initial grievance concerns admission to the university, the student contacts the Admissions Office. The Admissions Office advises the student of the appeal process involving the Admissions and Petitions Committee.
  2. If the initial grievance concerns admission to an academic program, the student contacts the dean of the school or college in which admission is being sought. The dean advises the student of the appeal process involving admission to a specific academic program.
  3. If the initial grievance concerns an academic suspension policy, the student contacts the Records Office. The Records Office advises the student of the appeal process involving the Admissions and Petitions Committee.
  4. If the initial grievance concerns a financial aid policy, the student contacts the Financial Aid Office. The Financial Aid Office advises the student of the appeal process involving the Student Financial Aid Committee.
- C.** The grievance process when the initial decision-maker is a faculty member or a faculty committee.
1. Grievances should not be filed when the substance of a complaint is simply the student's disagreement with the evaluation of the student's work. Final authority shall remain with the faculty in matters of evaluating student work.
  2. The student must first discuss the complaint with the initial decision maker or faculty committee involved for resolution. The purpose of this meeting is to attempt to reach a mutual understanding of the student's situation and the faculty member's actions and to resolve differences in an informal, cooperative manner.
  3. If there is no resolution, the student should complete the Academic Grievance Form and submit it to the faculty member or to the faculty committee. The faculty member or the faculty committee must create an Academic Grievance Folder containing the Academic Grievance Form. All related documentation must be added to this folder through all levels of the grievance process.
  4. If resolution is not forthcoming within 10 calendar days after submission of the Academic Grievance Form, the student may proceed to the next step.
  5. The student may appeal to the Division Chair of the academic area where the grieved decision originated. The appeal to the Division Chair must be submitted by the student within 5 calendar days after the response from the initial decision-maker. If resolution is not forthcoming in 10 calendar days after submission of the Academic Grievance Form, the student may proceed to the next step.

6. The student may appeal to the dean of the appropriate school or college in which the grieved decisions originated. If resolution is not forthcoming within 10 calendar days after submission of the Academic Grievance Form, the student may proceed to the next step.
7. The student may submit to the dean a written intent to appeal to an Academic Grievance Panel. Within 5 calendar days of receipt of the written appeal, the dean shall appoint three faculty to an Academic Grievance Panel. Within 15 calendar days of appointment, the Academic Grievance Panel shall gather all relevant material, convene the panel, and make its recommendation to the dean. The Chair of the Academic Grievance Panel will notify the student, faculty member, chair and dean of the decision of the panel. If resolution is not forthcoming within 15 calendar days after appointment of Academic Grievance Panel, the student may appeal to the next step.
8. The student may appeal to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The appeal must be submitted by the student within 5 calendar days of the decision by the Academic Grievance Panel. The Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will respond within 10 calendar days to the student and forward copies of that response to all individuals' involved at all prior levels of appeal.

Further appeal may be made to the Chancellor, the President of the University of South Carolina, and the Board of Trustees in accordance with university policies, procedures, and by-laws.

**D.** The grievance process when the initial decision maker is a dean

1. The student may submit an Academic Grievance Form to the dean or the dean's designee of the appropriate school or college where the academic decision or policy dispute resides. If resolution is not forthcoming within 10 calendar days after submission of the Academic Grievance Form to the dean, the student may proceed to the next step.
2. The student may appeal to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The student must submit the appeal within 5 calendar days of the decision by the dean. The Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will respond within 10 calendar days to the student and forward copies of the response to all individuals at each level.
3. If resolution is not forthcoming within 10 calendar days, further appeal may be made to the Chancellor, the President of the University of South Carolina, and the Board of Trustees in accordance with university policies, procedures, and by-laws.

Graduate students should refer to the section in the USC Upstate Catalog "Graduate Studies." for information on procedures for academic grievances.