

## Student Academic and Grade Complaint Procedure

The student complaint procedure for resolving an academic or grade complaint:

### Step 1 (Faculty Member)

- The student must attempt to discuss the academic issue with the faculty member involved within 15 workdays after the issue has occurred or the grade within the first 15 workdays of the first regular semester (fall; spring) following the assignment of the grade.
- If the faculty member is no longer employed by the university, the student should go directly to that faculty member's department head, who will attempt to contact the former faculty member concerning the academic issue or grade assigned. If the department head is unable to facilitate communication between the former faculty member and the student, the student may proceed to step 2.
- If the faculty is employed by the university and declines to discuss the academic issue or grade with the student, the student may proceed to step 2.

### Step 2 (Department Level)

- If the student and the faculty member are unable to resolve the complaint, the student may take the complaint to the faculty member's department head. Written notification of the complaint must be given to the department head within two weeks after the meeting with the faculty member. If the faculty member is also the department head, proceed to Step 3.
- The written notification to the department head should clearly state what the student believes are the faculty member's unreasonable and/or unfair practices or procedures, and include any available documentation.
- The department head may attempt to resolve the complaint by meeting with the student and faculty member separately to mediate the issue.
- If the department head is unable to resolve the complaint in this way, a meeting will be arranged where the student, faculty member, and the department head will be present for discussion.
  - Neither the faculty member nor the student will be allowed representation at the meeting.
  - The department head shall hear both sides of the complaint and attempt to resolve the matter.
  - If the department head is unable to bring about an agreed upon resolution between the student and the faculty member, the department head will issue a recommendation.
  - The department head shall create a written record of the meeting, including his/her recommendation. A copy of this record shall be provided to the student and the faculty member at the time the department head's recommendation is issued to them.
  - If the faculty member is no longer with WKU or refuses to participate, the decision of the department head shall be followed.

### Step 3 (College Level)

- Should the student remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the academic issue or grade complaint at the departmental level, the student may continue the complaint to the college level.
- The student should notify the Dean of the College, or the Dean's designee, in writing, within two weeks following issuance of the department head's recommendation, that the complaint remains unresolved.
- The written notification to the Dean of the College should include a copy of the department head's record and recommendation, and clearly state what the student believes are the faculty member's unreasonable and/or unfair practices or procedures, and include any available documentation.
- The dean or dean's designee may attempt to resolve the complaint by meeting with the student, faculty member, and department head.
- If those meetings do not resolve the student's concern(s), the Dean or Designee shall notify the College

#### Complaint Committee:

- It is expected that a meeting will be scheduled to take place within two weeks after the submission of a written notification to the Dean of the College.
- The committee shall be composed of at least three faculty members and two student representatives and shall not include representation from the department of the faculty member mentioned in the complaint.
- If the notification is submitted at the end of a semester and convening the committee is not feasible within the stipulated two weeks period, the committee must be convened within the first two weeks of the first regular semester (fall; spring) following the Dean's receipt of the written complaint.
- Neither the faculty member nor the student will be allowed representation at the conference.
- All material presented at the meeting is considered subject to FERPA and confidential.
- The College Complaint Committee shall hear both sides of the complaint, and shall create a written record of the meeting. The student and faculty member may elect to remain in the meeting while the other presents his or her side of the complaint. The decision and its rationale shall be reduced to writing, with copies sent to the Dean of the College, the student, faculty member, and the faculty member's department head.
- If neither party has appealed the Committee's decision after two weeks, the decision will be final. The Dean's office will be responsible for taking action required by the decision, if any.

#### Step 4 (University Level)

- Should the student or the faculty member be dissatisfied with the decision of the College Complaint Committee, either may appeal the decision to the University level.
  - The appealing party should deliver a written appeal to the Office of the Provost within two weeks following issuance of the College Committee's decision.
  - The written appeal should include a copy of the College Committee's decision, and clearly state the basis for the appeal, including but not limited to, any unreasonable and/or unfair practices or procedures, and include any available documentation. Copies of the appeal should be delivered by the appellant to the party not appealing the College Committee decision.
- The Office of the Provost will coordinate and convene the University Complaint Committee.
  - The student and faculty member will be provided with a copy of the University Complaint Committee's procedural guidelines.
  - The University Complaint Committee will secure copies of the recommendations rendered by the department head and the College Complaint Committee.
  - The University Complaint Committee will schedule a conference where the faculty member and the student are present and will discuss the issue.
  - Neither the faculty member nor the student will be allowed representation at the conference.
  - All material presented at the meeting is considered subject to FERPA and confidential, and no new materials may be presented at this meeting. If new material is presented, the appeal will be referred back to the College Complaint Committee.
  - The University Complaint Committee shall hear both sides of the complaint, and shall create a written record of the meeting. The decision and its rationale shall be reduced to writing, with copies sent to the Provost, the Dean of the College, the student, faculty member, and the faculty member's department head.
  - The Office of the Provost will see that decisions of the University Complaint Committee are carried out. **The University Complaint Committee's decision is final.**

#### Out of State Distance Learners

Students enrolled in distance learning courses at WKU will follow the university complaints procedure outlined in this policy and may access additional resources through WKU Online

<https://www.wku.edu/online/srp/studentcomplaint.php> . Students may also review information in the WKU

Student Handbook. If the issue is not resolved at the institution level, distance students may file a complaint with the Kentucky Council for Postsecondary Education [http://cpe.ky.gov/campuses/consumer\\_complaint.html](http://cpe.ky.gov/campuses/consumer_complaint.html). For out-of- state distance learning students, the next level in the complaint process is with the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) <https://www.nc-sara.org/student-complaints>. Additionally, students may file a complaint with WKU's accrediting body, The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS) by downloading the SACS Complaint Procedures Form (<https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2020/01/ComplaintPolicy-1.pdf>). Student complaints related to grades or student conduct may not be appealed to Kentucky Council for Postsecondary Education.

### **Supplements**

Supplements to this procedure may be issued during the school year to keep the University community advised of newly adopted programs and policies.

### **Important Complaint Exceptions:**

- Student Disability regarding denial of accommodations, report to Student ADA Compliance Officer and follow WKU policy #6.1010
- Discrimination and Harassment concerns, see below reporting process and follow WKU policy #0.2040 and #0.2070
  - Discrimination is always reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity Employment (EEO)
  - Student-to-student harassment is reported to Office of Student Conduct or the WKU Title IX Coordinator
  - Student-to-faculty/employee harassment is reported to the Office of Equal Opportunity Employment (EEO)