

COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE

Approved by the COLS Faculty Committee April 4, 1990.

Preamble

The evaluation or assessment of student performance leading to the assignment of the final course grade involves the exercise of independent and professional judgment by individual college faculty and academic staff. The joint statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students (AAUP, October 1967) provides: "Students should have protection through an orderly process against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled." (AAUP Policy Documents and Reports, 1984 Edition, page 142.)

Policy

All students enrolled in the College of Letters and Science shall be afforded an opportunity to seek redress of perceived grievances concerning the assessment of student performance by faculty and academic staff. Recognizing that the evaluation of student performance is based upon the professional judgment of instructors, grievances will not be considered unless based upon one or more of the following factors: a) an error was made in grade computation; b) the grade was based on factors contrary to those stated in the course syllabus or a reasonable interpretation of it; c) the grade reflected in whole or part some penalty for actions involving the freedom of written or spoken classroom expression; d) the grade involved some breach of federal or state constitutional protections, federal laws, state statutes, Regent's rules, or UW Oshkosh policies.

Student Grievance Procedures

I. Preliminary Procedures

- A. The student must attempt an informal resolution of the problem with the instructor no later than the tenth day of the next regular semester.
- B. If the informal process with the instructor does not resolve the problem, the student should communicate with the department chair within five working days. The chair may either attempt informal resolution of the problem within five working days or inform the student in writing of formal grievance policies within that same time limit.

II. Formal Procedures

A. Preliminary: Chair's Procedures

1. The student's request for a formal review of the matter by the department's grievance committee must be received by the chair within five working days of the notification of the failure of the attempt at mediation. If the chair decides that an attempt at informal resolution is inappropriate or should that attempt be unsuccessful, the student may request a formal review of the matter by the department's grievance committee. This request must be received by the chair within five working days of the notification of the failure of the attempt at mediation. The student's request shall be in writing and shall include the nature of the grievance, the attempt at informal resolution, the desired outcome that the student wishes, and all supporting evidence. The chair will, within five working days, inform the department's grievance committee that a grievance is to be reviewed, or, if there is no standing grievance committee, arrange for the formation of an ad hoc grievance committee.
2. At the same time the chair will acknowledge the student's request and inform the instructor of it. If the instructor, upon seeing the petition, wishes to respond, this must be done within five working days.
3. Upon receipt of the responses from the student and the instructor, the chair will convene the grievance committee within five working days and deliver to it all written documents concerning the case, including a written account of the chair's attempt at mediation, if any.

B. Department Grievance Committee

1. The committee, with the chair as an observer, will review the materials presented. It may, on its own initiative, call for oral presentations to gather or clarify information, and it may make written inquiries of either or both the student and the instructor for the same purpose. Should further evidence be presented to the committee, each person will be given the opportunity to respond.
2. Following its review of the evidence, the committee will, on the basis of this evidence, render a formal recommendation and communicate that recommendation to the chair within ten working days of the first meeting. The report will include the committee's findings of fact, its recommendation and its rationale for the recommendation.
3. The chair will render a decision within five working days of receipt of the committee's recommendation and inform those involved.
4. Should the student reject the chair's decision or the instructor's refusal of a grade change at the departmental level, the student may continue the grievance with the dean's office of the College of Letters and Science within five working days after the notification.

C. College of Letters and Science Action

1. A member of the Dean's office shall collect all relevant department-level material, and within five working days of the receipt of the material, inform the College of Letters and Science's Student Academic Committee of the grievance.

2. The Dean's office shall forward to the Student Academic Committee all the documents in the case. The Dean's office shall inform the student and the instructor of the action.
3. The Student Academic Committee will make an independent review of all the documents in the case and, within ten working days render a written recommendation with a copy being sent to the student, the instructor, and the Dean. The report will include the committee's rationale for its decision.
4. The Dean will review the documents in the case, and in particular the findings, recommendations and the rationale for these at each level of review, and will render a decision to the student and the instructor, indicating the reasons for it. Copies will be sent to the Student Academic Committee and the department chair. The Dean's decision will be considered final, with no appeal possible.

III. Definitions, Time Deadlines, and Grievance Committee Procedures

A. Definitions

1. At all levels of review, the burden of proof shall be upon the student.
2. The term "working days" shall refer to those days when classes are normally scheduled.
3. All grievance petitions must be individually filed.

B. Time Deadlines

These procedures are designed to give all persons involved in a grievance the opportunity to be heard fully and fairly and within a reasonable length of time.

1. At the discretion of the person or committee administering a time deadline, an extension may be given under extenuating circumstance; such extensions will be announced to all persons involved.
2. Should the student fail to meet a deadline, or a reasonable extension of it, the case will be considered closed.
3. Should the instructor fail to meet a deadline, or a reasonable extension of it, the grievance may proceed to the next step without the statement or evidence the instructor might have provided.
4. Should the instructor be out of residence, or otherwise unavailable, a reasonable attempt will be made, and time provided for this, to give notice of the grievance and receive such response as the instructor might wish to make. If, in the judgment of the person or committee charged with making the attempt, the instructor's failure or inability to respond within a reasonable time will unreasonably delay the grievance procedure, the grievance process may continue without such response.

C. Grievance Committee Procedures

Unless determined otherwise in this document, the committee will adopt its own internal procedure. Such procedures are circumscribed by federal or state constitutional protections, federal laws, state statutes, Regent's rules, and UW Oshkosh policies.

Notes

1. Should the chair be involved in the grievance, the grievance petition will be filed with the Dean of the college, who will act in the role of chair.
2. An instructor involved in a grievance may not participate in any of the procedures of the department's grievance committee concerning the case.
3. Should any member(s) of the Student Academic Committee be associated with the academic department from which the grievance originates, that (those) member(s) will be excused from any COLS-level proceedings.