



## STUDENT ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE POLICY

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Effective:	[Leave this date blank.]
Prior Versions:	Not known
Responsible Office:	The Office of the Provost administers this policy working with the deans, department chairs, and faculty.
Review By:	[Date will be assigned by Executive Policy Committee]

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### **I. PURPOSE**

To enable a process for students to seek resolution of disputes and grievances that may not fall within the scope of one of the other grievance processes.

### **II. POLICY**

Any Auburn University at Montgomery student who believes that he or she has been subjected to an improper decision on an academic matter is entitled to file a grievance to obtain an independent review of the allegedly improper decision, followed by corrective action if appropriate. Grade appeals, Title IX complaints, and academic honesty charges fall under separate appeal policies.

### **III. APPLICABILITY**

This policy is applicable to all faculty, staff, students, and administrators regardless of course modality.

### **IV. RESPONSIBILITY**

The Office of the Provost administers this policy working with the deans, department chairs, and faculty.

### **V. DEFINITIONS**

Academic grievance – a claim that a specific academic decision or action that affects a student's academic record or status has violated policies and procedures or has been applied to the complainant in a manner different from that used for other students. Grade appeals, Title IX complaints, and issues related to violations of academic integrity fall under separate policies.

University-level Academic Grievance Hearing Committee – The committee will be composed of a faculty member selected by the student, a faculty member selected by the faculty member, a faculty representative selected from a pool of faculty submitted by the Faculty Senate, a student appointed by the Office of the Dean of Students, and the Associate Provost. The Associate Provost will serve as the chair of the hearing committee.

If any member of the hearing committee feels that his or her relationship with either the case or the individuals involved would affect his or her ability to render an impartial judgment, the committee member shall disqualify him or herself. In this situation, it may become necessary to supplement the membership of the hearing committee.

The university's 504 compliance officer will also be present during the hearing in an advisory capacity and will participate in the hearing to clarify issues. The university's 504 Compliance Office will not participate in the deliberations of the hearing committee.

## **VI. PROCEDURES**

### **College-level Grievance Process**

- A. A student may initiate a complaint regarding an academic grievance by requesting a meeting with the faculty member. This initial meeting can determine whether the student's grievance is the result of judgment, clerical, technical, or technological error. If the faculty member no longer works for AUM, the student can go directly to the Department Chair.
- B. If the grievance remains unresolved after the initial meeting, the student may submit a request to meet with the department chair to discuss the grievance within ten (10) business days after meeting with the faculty member. The request should include a written description of the issues of concern. The department chair must arrange a meeting between the student and the faculty member to discuss the grievance and attempt to resolve the issue.
- C. If the grievance is not resolved at this level, the student may, within five (5) business days following the meeting with the department chair, request a meeting with the appropriate administrator as defined by the applicable college (Assistant/Associate Dean, if applicable, or the Dean) to resolve the issue. The Dean (or designee) will meet with all parties involved (student, Chair, faculty member) in an attempt to resolve the issue. This meeting should take place within five (5) business days after receipt of the request. Within five (5) business days of the meeting, the Dean's (or designee's) decision will be communicated to all parties involved. If after this meeting the issue remains unresolved, the student may move forward on filing a formal grievance at the University level.

### **University-level Grievance Process**

- A. If a student is seeking to move beyond the college and file a formal grievance, the grievance must be filed within one week (10 business days) of receiving the Dean's response. The letter and any documentary evidence should be submitted to the appropriate Associate Provost.

- B. Once the grievance is received, the Associate Provost will form a hearing committee and schedule a time for the committee to hear the grievance. Any additional documentary evidence to be considered during the hearing must be received by the Associate Provost within one week (10 business days) of receipt of the initial written grievance to this office.
- C. All parties involved shall be informed in writing of the time and place of the hearing and shall receive all related documentation provided by the complainant. It will be the responsibility of each party to contact and bring desired material witnesses to the hearing. The hearing committee also reserves the right to call witnesses.
- D. At the hearing, the student, faculty member, and any material witnesses may testify. All may be questioned by the committee members. If the student is accompanied by a support person, that support person may only act in an advisory capacity to the student and may not participate in the process. A record of the hearing, tape recorded or otherwise preserved, shall be maintained for reference and review until the case has been finally resolved. However, committee deliberations will not be subject to this requirement.
- E. The following procedure will be followed during the hearing:
  - i. All material witnesses will be asked to wait outside of the hearing room until called for testimony.
  - ii. The student will begin by stating the grievance and explaining any supporting documentation previously submitted. Testimony may be questioned by the professor and committee members.
  - iii. Any material witnesses the student wishes to introduce to give verbal testimony may be presented. Testimony may be questioned by the student, the faculty member and committee members.
  - iv. The faculty member will state his or her response to the charges and introduce as evidence any supporting documentation. Testimony may be questioned by the student and committee members.
  - v. Any material witnesses the faculty member wishes to introduce to give verbal testimony may be presented. Testimony may be questioned by the student, the faculty member and committee members.
  - vi. The student and faculty member may make final comments, which may be questioned by the student, faculty member and committee members.
  - vii. Once all testimony is complete and there are no further questions by the committee members, all parties except the committee members will be dismissed.
  - viii. Committee members shall arrive at a judgment regarding the grievance among themselves after the parties are dismissed. A majority vote shall constitute a judgment. The committee has the responsibility to evaluate the case carefully and make a specific recommendation to the Provost on an appropriate course of action related to the grievance.
- F. The Provost will be notified of the committee's recommendation and make a final decision on the course of action related to the grievance.

- G. The Provost will transmit the final decision to the student, the faculty member, Department Chair, and Dean.
- H. The decision reached by the Provost shall take precedence over decisions reached at the College.
- I. All materials related to the hearing will be returned to the Provost's office for proper disposal.

**VII. EXCLUSIONS**

This policy does not apply to Title IX complaints, grade appeals or appeals of charges for violation of the academic honesty code.

**VIII. INTERPRETATION**

The Office of the Provost, working with Deans, and the Office of the Dean of Students will interpret this policy.