

400 APPEALS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

400.1 General Grievance Procedures

Any student may petition through appropriate channels for a given request at any point in the educational continuum. A student may petition the Dean in writing on any question that the student believes requires special consideration or investigation. The Dean shall appoint a committee, consisting of the student's Faculty Field Adviser and such other members of the faculty as may be deemed necessary, to investigate the grievance and to report a recommendation.

400.2 Procedures for Pursuing Concerns Regarding Race & Diversity

The procedures outlined below are to be followed for issues that arise within the School for which formal or legal redress is not being considered. They govern issues that need to be addressed as part of the ongoing community and educational life. Formal grievances or civil rights complaints go directly to the Director of the Office of Institutional Diversity. (See section on Other School and College Policies.) The procedures outline where to go first and include what forum or redress is available if the first efforts are considered insufficiently resolved by any directly involved party. The processes are suggested for what the Civil Rights policy terms "informal resolution."

Issue	Where to Go
Classroom Issues	Instructor
	Ph.D. Program Director
	Associate Dean
Community Issues/Residential Issues	Associate Dean
Clinical/Internship Issues	FFA
	Field Director
	Ph.D. Program Director
	Associate Dean
	Dean

A student, faculty member, Program Director, or Dean may also consult with the Racism Monitoring Committee, which will serve as a sounding board, and which may also offer suggestions to the parties involved. It does not have decision-making power and may not be used as a replacement for the other channels listed. The Dean may also call together the Dean's Ad Hoc Summer Advisory Committee, which consists of the Associate Dean, two faculty members, and the Marta Sotomayor Fellow. Final decision-making power resides with the Dean if the issues are not resolved at the other levels.

400.3 Formal Grievances or Civil Rights Complaints

Formal grievances or civil rights complaints go directly to the Office of Institutional Diversity in College Hall. Students may also consult with the Smith College Ombudsperson. If a determination is made that an issue in the classroom also raises questions of academic freedom, the student and faculty member will be referred to the School's Personnel Practice Committee.

400.4 Procedures for Grievance

Regarding Academic Performance A student may grieve a grade either on the basis of due process or on the basis of an evaluative judgment. A student must clarify on which basis a grievance is being pursued.

400.5 Due Process

A student who receives a grade of MP or F, who believes that due process has not been followed, may petition the Dean for review of the circumstances. If the investigation reveals that due process has been followed, the student shall be so notified. If investigation reveals that due process has clearly not been followed, the Dean, in consultation with the Ph.D. program director, will grant the student an opportunity for re-examination, submission of another paper, repetition of the specific course requirement, or the possibility of re-taking the course.

The Dean will report to the Academic and Clinical Internship Performance Standing Committee on the petition, the circumstances, and the outcome of the investigation. However, should the investigation reveal that the circumstances were ambiguous regarding due process, the Dean will then convene the Academic and Clinical Internship Performance Committee to review the case and make a determination of the issue to the Dean, including a recommendation for outcome. Other faculty involved (e.g., the instructor, or the Ph.D. program director) may be invited to attend as non-voting participants. In addition, the student may request to have an advocate of his/her choice, who is a member in good standing of the School community, as a non-voting observer.

Actual appearance before the Committee by the student, instructor, FFA, or supervisor is necessary only if any of these parties requests it. Written statements detailing the student's performance as satisfactory will warrant the presence of the FFA, supervisor, or student. Following the initial investigation, the Dean decides if the Fairness Grievance requires further investigation and asks for a Committee finding and recommendation.

400.6 Evaluative Judgment in Course Grading

Normally, responsibility for evaluating and grading a student's work rests solely with the instructor. Only in the rare event that professional responsibility has been neglected or abused beyond reasonable doubt should the judgment of another person or persons be substituted for that of the instructor. However, if a student believes she or he has evidence that an instructor has been unfair in the assignment of a course grade, s/ he may express dissatisfaction with the instructor's handling of the grade in the following manner:

- The student must first discuss the concern with the instructor to clarify the reasons for the grade, or to see if some agreement over the grade can be arrived at informally.
- If no clarification or agreement is possible, the student may then express dissatisfaction to the program director, who will discuss the matter with both student and instructor and try to achieve a resolution. If a resolution is not achieved, the director or the student may elect to take the matter to the Dean. The Dean may elect to make a decision, but if he or she believes a more thorough investigation is necessary, the Dean may activate the Academic and Clinical Internship Performance Standing Committee. Based on its findings, the Committee shall make a recommendation to the Dean for final disposition.

- Both the instructor and the student shall have the right to attend the Standing Committee's meeting. The student may bring an advocate and the director shall also be invited so as to safeguard further the rights of both the student and the instructor.
- If the issue at debate is the fairness of a course grade based on written course assignments, the Chair of the Committee shall appoint a full or part-time faculty member from the Program to read a blind copy of the materials in question (with comments eliminated), and to submit a grade to the Committee, along with any comments the reader wishes to make. The Committee may use this grade as one factor in its determination.
- If the Committee decides in favor of the student's grievance, the Dean, in consultation with the Committee, may grant the student an opportunity for re-examination, submission of another paper, repetition of the specific course assignment, or the possibility of retaking the course. If a recommendation is made that the student is to be given an opportunity to re-do an assignment, the instructor who gave the original grade shall be informed of the Committee's assignment. If the instructor declines, the Chair of the Committee shall obtain an independent evaluation of the student's work for the purpose of assigning a grade for the course.

For grievances related to grades, the student must report the decision to grieve to the Sequence Chair no later than one week after notification of the grade. Either the Dean or the Standing Committee will make its recommendations by the end of the third week in September. If an opportunity to re-do an assignment is offered, both the student and instructor grading the assignment will be expected to act in a timely fashion. A written record of the final outcome will go into the student's record only upon request from the student.