

Mansfield University

Academic Standards: Due Process/Complaints

Complaints which may be properly considered by means of the following procedures include, but are not limited to, complaints about grades or changes in requirements for a course during the semester. Complaints about grades may, among other things, be based upon racial, sexual or religious discrimination or other forms of favoritism; arbitrary, capricious, or unreasonable methods of evaluation; lack of precautions taken by the instructor against cheating or plagiarism; or unfair penalties for legally recognized absences from class or examination.

- A. The student should first present the complaint, orally and informally, to the faculty member involved.
- B. If no agreement is reached at Step A, the student may prepare a written complaint which contains supporting evidence and indicates the desired solution. This complaint must be submitted to the departmental chairperson and the faculty member within 20 regular semester class days of the date on which the student became aware, or should have become aware, of the occurrence leading to the complaint. The faculty member, the student and the chairperson shall meet to discuss the complaint. The chairperson may conduct whatever informal investigation seems necessary and should attempt to achieve a negotiated settlement. If the complaint is directed against the departmental chairperson, the written complaint must be submitted to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs who shall select a senior member of the department to fill the chairperson's role in this procedure.
- C. If the student is still unsatisfied, he/she may have a hearing before a committee especially formed for the purpose. The request for such a hearing must be presented to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs within five regular semester class days of the meeting required in Step B. This request must be accompanied by a copy of a written complaint, which may be redrafted before it is submitted.
- D. The committee to hear the complaint shall be composed of two faculty members, one student, and the designee of the Director of Residence Life who shall be a non-voting member and shall serve as chairperson. The chairperson shall be responsible for scheduling and conducting committee meetings and for insuring that the procedures described herein are carried out. The two faculty members of the committee shall be chosen by the chairperson from a list of faculty who has agreed to serve on hearings. The student member shall be selected by the executive committee of the Student Government Association. The committee shall adopt its own rules of procedure, consistent with these guidelines.
- E. The student and the Provost's representative shall each appear before the committee at the same time. Each may be accompanied by a member of the academic community to act as an advocate.

- F. The student and the faculty member may each present to the committee such witnesses as they feel are desirable.
- G. The committee may conduct an investigation and collect evidence. The student and the faculty member must be given this evidence and each afforded an opportunity to rebut it.
- H. The faculty member shall make all pertinent materials and grading records available to the committee. The committee may, at its discretion, make available to the student those records, or portions thereof, which it judges to be relevant in light of the student's allegations.
- I. The committee shall consider the evidence and make a recommendation to the faculty member as to how the complaint shall be settled. The faculty member should be guided by, but is not bound by, this recommendation. Any other recommendations of the Board shall be sent to the Provost.
- J. If either party is still dissatisfied, he/she may appeal to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- K. The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs shall hear the evidence by each side and may collect further evidence as desirable. Both sides must be given access to such evidence and given the opportunity to rebut it.
- L. The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs shall take whatever action is felt necessary to restore equity in the situation, with the provision that a course grade may not be altered to A, B, C, or D, nor may a grade of F be altered to P, without the consent of the faculty member who assigned the grade. Any grade may be altered to W and any passing grade may be altered to P without such consent.