



# Academic Standards: Due Process Complaints Policy

NAME: **Academic Standards: Due Process Complaints Policy**  
ISSUING DEPARTMENT: **Academic Affairs**  
ISSUED DATE:  
REVIEWED DATE: **October 15, 2019**  
APPROVING AUTHORITY: **President's Cabinet**  
DATE REVISED: **January 10, 2017**

## **PURPOSE**

To establish a fair and equitable process for the resolution of student complaints that pertain to academic coursework. 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.

## **SCOPE**

This policy is pertinent to all students enrolled at Mansfield University and is therefore relevant for all academic departments.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

The Academic Affairs division is responsible for implementing and periodically reviewing this policy.

## **PROCEDURE**

- A. The student must first present the complaint to the faculty member involved. If concerns are based on racial, sexual, or religious discrimination, the student may alternately contact the University's Social Equity Officer.
  
- 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 department chairperson and the faculty member within five 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. If the complaint is directed against the department chairperson, the written complaint may be submitted to the appropriate academic dean. The faculty member, the student, and the chairperson shall meet to discuss the complaint. The chairperson may conduct whatever investigation seems necessary and will attempt to achieve a negotiated settlement.
  
- C. If the student is still unsatisfied, he/she may submit a written complaint to the appropriate academic dean within five regular semester class days of the date on which the faculty member, student, and chairperson met to discuss the complaint in Step B. The dean may conduct whatever investigation seems necessary and will attempt to achieve a negotiated settlement.
  
- D. If the student is still unsatisfied, he/she may request a hearing before a committee especially formed for the purpose. The request for such a hearing must be presented to the Dean of Students within five regular

semester class days after conclusion of Step C. This request must be accompanied by a copy of a written complaint, which may be redrafted before it is submitted.

E. The committee to hear the complaint shall be composed of two faculty members, one student, and the Dean of Students or his/her designee 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 from a list of students who have agreed to serve in this capacity. The student member will not be from the same college as the student complainant. The committee shall adopt its own rules of procedure, consistent with these guidelines.

F. The student and faculty member shall each appear separately before the committee, unless both agree to appear jointly before the committee. Each may be accompanied by a member of the academic community to act as an advocate. The student is encouraged to contact the Office of the Deans for questions regarding selection of an advocate.

G. The student and the faculty member may each present to the committee such witnesses as they feel are desirable.

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. In no instance will FERPA protections be violated.

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/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

J. If the student feels the process as outlined herein is not followed, he/she may appeal to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. Disagreeing with the committee does not constitute grounds for appeal to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

K. The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs shall review the evidence by each side and may collect further evidence as desirable. Both sides will 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 letter grade (such as A, B, C, or D). A grade of F may not 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.

M. The decision of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs is final.

### **Distribution**

This policy will be posted to the Policies and Procedures web page and will be included in the Policies section of the current undergraduate catalog.