
Policy Number: 100

Subject/Title: Student Academic Grievance Process

Effective Date: October 27, 2005

Policy Statement:

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth Houston) School of Public Health expects its students to put forth their best effort and assume the primary responsibility for meeting their academic and professional goals. Together with their faculty advisor and the Academic Council, students are expected to participate actively in the planning and completion of their academic program.

The UTHealth Houston School of Public Health recognizes that there may be instances when students raise academic grievances, e.g., concerns about a grade, concerns about the reliability of a faculty advisor, or concerns about the procedures related to the thesis or preliminary examination.

*Students should **first** attempt to resolve their academic grievances using common-sense, day-to-day problem-solving methods such as meeting with the faculty member, their faculty advisor, other members of their advisory committee, and/or the department chair. At any time, students may discuss their academic grievances with the Assistant Dean for Students. Most academic grievances are resolved satisfactorily using these informal methods.*

The UTHealth Houston School of Public Health also recognizes that there may be instances when students believe that their academic grievances have not been resolved satisfactorily using these informal methods. For such instances, the School of Public Health has developed a formal process to help students resolve academic grievances. If students choose to do so, they may use this formal process to request a review and recommendation from the Academic Grievance Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Council, through its Academic Grievance Resolution Process. There will be no recriminations against students for using the Academic Grievance Resolution Process.

Reason for Policy: The faculty members of UTHealth Houston School of Public Health seek to treat students as adult learners and to create a supportive learning environment through flexible academic programming, individual guidance, fair student evaluation, and attention to the quality of their own work.

Definitions: N/A

Scope and Audience: All UTHealth Houston School of Public Health students

Responsibilities and Procedures: The following steps constitute the formal Academic Grievance Resolution Process.

Step 1. Request for Intervention by the Academic Grievance Committee and Initial Assessment

- (a) The Assistant Dean for Students will make an initial assessment to determine if the student has tried to resolve grievance on his/her own.
- (b) If the grievance remains unresolved, the Assistant Dean for Students will advise the student to complete a Grievance Resolution Form (GRF), which is available through the Office of Academic Affairs and Student Services. The signed and dated GRF must be submitted to the Academic

Grievance Committee via the Assistant Dean for Students and the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs and Student Services. Students must submit their GRF by no more than 60 days from the date grades are due for the term in which the grievance occurred. For grievances related to preliminary exams, the student's GRF must be submitted within 60 days from the date the student was notified of their preliminary exam outcome. When completing the GRF, the student should be aware that a copy of it will be forwarded to the Academic Grievance Committee and any faculty member(s) who is involved, the Department Chair, and Campus Dean (if applicable).

The GRF includes:

- a concise statement of the fact(s) and/or incident(s) that form the basis of the grievance, including date(s);
- a description of the steps that have been taken by the student before initiating the Academic Grievance Resolution Process;
- a description of the student's issues of concern; and
- a clear statement of the result(s) desired by the student.

Step 2. Preliminary Recipient Response(s)

- (a) The Assistant Dean for Students will notify the Academic Grievance Committee Chair.
- (b) The Academic Grievance Committee Chair will share the GRF with the Academic Grievance Committee.
- (c) The Academic Grievance Committee Chair will forward the GRF to, and request a response from, the appropriate faculty member(s), Department Chair, Campus Dean (if applicable), and any other relevant individuals, within 5 working days from receipt of GRF from the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs and Student Services.
- (d) The faculty member(s) will provide a written response to the Academic Grievance Committee within 10 working days of receipt of the GRF.
- (e) The Academic Grievance Committee Chair will immediately forward the response to the student, Department Chair, and Campus Dean (if applicable) upon its receipt.
- (f) Within 14 working days, the student must reply to the Academic Grievance Committee Chair to indicate whether he/she is satisfied with the response. If the student is satisfied, the Academic Grievance Committee will consider the grievance resolved and will notify the faculty member(s), Department Chair, and Campus Dean (if applicable) within 5 working days. If the student is unsatisfied, he/she must provide a written explanation of the unresolved concerns. If the student does not reply to the Academic Grievance Committee Chair within 14 working days, the grievance will be considered resolved.
- (g) Records pertaining to the process and resolution outcome of student academic grievances will be placed in the student's academic file.

Step 3. Conflict Resolution Intervention by the Academic Grievance Committee

- (a) For unresolved grievances, the Academic Grievance Committee will convene and consider all information. The Academic Grievance Committee Chair will communicate with the student, named faculty member(s), and any other necessary parties for additional information or clarification.
- (b) Within 30 working days of the student response in Step 2(f), the Academic Grievance Committee will submit its recommendation(s) in writing to the Sr. Associate Dean of Academic and Research Affairs.
- (c) Within 10 working days of receipt of recommendation(s) in Step 3(b), the Sr. Associate Dean of Academic and Research Affairs will review the committee's decision in accordance with policies and procedures, and will determine the final recommendation and send it to the student, the faculty member(s), Department Chair, and Campus Dean (if applicable). During this time period, the Sr. Associate Dean of Academic and Research Affairs will review all records and communications of the student and Academic Grievance Committee and other relevant information. Any concerns with the recommendation(s) will be discussed with the Academic Grievance Committee, faculty member(s), Department Chair, and Campus Dean (if applicable). If there is disagreement among parties involved, the Dean may arbitrate this discussion.

Step 4. Final Appeal to the Dean

A party who wishes to appeal the decision of the Sr. Associate Dean of Academic and Research Affairs may file an appeal to the Dean. The appeal must be made in writing and submitted within 30 working days of the date of the decision by the Sr. Associate Dean of Academic and Research Affairs. The Dean may request and review all records and communications of the student and Academic Grievance Committee and other relevant information. The decision of the Dean will be communicated to all parties involved, including the Department Chair and Campus Dean (if applicable), within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal statement.

*The decision of the Dean is **final**.*

Related Policies, Forms and Information:

- [Student Academic Grievance Form](#)

History:

- Approved by Academic Council: October 13, 2005
- Endorsed by Executive Council: October 27, 2005
- Revised: May 2012, October 2016, September 2017

Responsible Office/Contact Information:

Office of Academic Affairs and Student Services
Office Phone: 713-500-9032
E-mail: sphstudentservices@uth.tmc.edu