

Student Academic Grievance Procedure

Our Lady of the Lake University provides a uniform method by which students can pursue grievable academic issues.

Note:

- Sex and Gender discrimination should follow the Title IX Policy and Procedures at www.ollusa.edu/titleix.
- Concerns regarding discrimination other than sex or gender should follow Student [Discrimination Complaint Procedures](#).
- Concerns regarding ADA accommodations should follow the [ADA Accommodations Grievance Procedures](#)
- Sex and Gender discrimination should follow the Title IX Policy and Procedures at www.ollusa.edu/titleix.
- If the complaint is against another student, the student should consult with the Assistant Vice President for Student Life or the Director of Residence Life.
- If the complaint is against a student employee's supervisor, the procedures in the Student Employment Handbook should be followed.
- To appeal a determination of financial aid ineligibility contact the financial aid office or submit the [Academic Progress Appeals](#) form.

Definition. An academic grievance is an allegation that something has occurred that violates existing University academic policy or established practices, or is intrinsically wrong. Grievable academic issues include but are not limited to complaints about alleged violations of the institution's academic policies (e.g., application of grading policies), unfairness in the application of policies (e.g., accusation of plagiarism or cheating), or other academic matters.

Evaluation of a student's academic performance in a course or program of the University, when conducted by a faculty member, is presumed to be valid unless there is proof that the evaluation was significantly and adversely affected by prejudice (bias against the student as an individual or as a member of a group or class) and/or capriciousness (unjustifiable deviation from generally acceptable academic standards or procedures, or from explicit understandings established for the course or through the course syllabus, which is the de facto contract for course objectives, requirements and expectations).

Procedures

Step 1--Informal Resolution

First, the student must talk with the faculty member about his/her complaint within 30 business days¹ of the end of the term. The faculty member is required by University policy to confer with a student who requests redress within 10 business days. Adhering to the University's core values, the intent during this step is to maintain open communication

between the student and the faculty member. The student may choose to have a support person accompany her/him but the support person is not allowed to speak on the student's behalf.

If the faculty member does not respond within 10 business days, the student may proceed to Step 2.

Step 2—Formal Resolution

If the student and the faculty member are unable to resolve the matter in good faith, through reexamination of the issues and negotiation, the student must then talk with the faculty member's department chair or designee appointed by the dean, who will attempt to collaboratively resolve the complaint between the parties. In preparation for and prior to this meeting, the student must submit the academic grievance in writing to the department chair within 10 business days of the meeting in Step 1. The grievance must include all of the following:

1. The name the respondent parties (the person(s) against whom the grievance was filed).How the decision or action is unfair and harmful to the grievant.
2. A list of the University policies or state or federal laws that have been violated, if known.
3. A statement as to how the respondents are responsible for the action or decision.
4. Evidence in support of the complaint.
5. A statement of the requested remedy.

The department head is empowered to hear both sides of the matter, to examine all relevant documents and evidence held by either the student or the faculty member, to bring the student and the faculty member together (in person or through electronic communication tools) for further clarification, discussion and negotiation, and to suggest possible compromises or other remediation of the issue. The student may choose to have a support person accompany her/him but the support person is not allowed to speak on the student's behalf.

If the academic grievance concerns the department chairperson or other officials of the department, the student has a right to bypass Step 2 and proceed directly to the College/School Level.

If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved through Steps 1 and 2, a student may proceed to Step 3, Mediation.

Step 3--Mediation

When an academic grievance is not resolved at the level of the department chair, the issue goes to the dean of the school or college to mediate. Similar to the department head, the dean is empowered to hear both sides of the matter, to examine all relevant documents and evidence held by either the student or the faculty member, to bring the student and the faculty member together for further clarification, discussion and negotiation, and to suggest possible

compromises or other remediation of the issue. The student may choose to have a support person accompany her/him but the support person is not allowed to speak on the student's behalf.

The dean, the faculty member, and the student will collaborate to try to resolve the matter within 10 business days of the dean's receiving the mediation request.

Step 4 – Appeal and Final Resolution

If the mediating efforts in Step 3 do not satisfactorily resolve the matter at the level of the dean, the student is required to submit a letter of appeal to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) requesting a review of the matter by the CAO or an Academic Affairs delegate within 10 days of the Dean's decision. The letter of appeal must include all information presented at Steps 1 and 2 and any additional relevant information. The CAO or delegate will review the materials within 15 business days of receipt of the appeal. This may or may not include a meeting with relevant parties to substantiate or clarify presented information. The student may choose to have a support person accompany her/him to any meetings but the support person is not allowed to speak on the student's behalf.

Once the CAO's decision is made, all parties will be notified in writing of the decision and any actions related to this petition. Communication of the decision ends institutional due process on the grievance, and no further appeal is possible.

¹ Business day is defined as a day in which the university is in full operation, excluding Saturday and Sunday.