

Academic Grievance Procedure Concerning a Grade

The following concerns itself only with a departmental process for student grievances over grades. It is not intended to address the issue of grade disputes unless the student files a formal grievance through the department chair.

Students should be aware that with very rare exception, the final decision on all grades rests with the professor. Insofar as grievances are concerned the Seton Hall University Student Handbook states that a student may file a grievance through the department only if the student believes the grade attained is capricious and arbitrary. Mere disagreement with the grade given does not constitute a basis for grievance. Moreover, it is unlikely that a grade of B or better would be considered arbitrary and capricious.

Departmental Procedure

1. The student's first step in the event of a grade dispute is to confer directly with the professor in question.
2. If the student believes he or she has a grievance, that student must seek out the department chairperson who will initiate the departmental grievance procedures.
3. The matter will then be referred to the departmental grievance committee. The student will submit in writing to the committee the rationale for the grievance explaining in detail why the grade is arbitrary and capricious. The student will submit any supporting evidence to the claim being made within one year of the grade being given.
4. The departmental committee will review carefully the argument and data provided by the student and will proceed with any or all of the following steps:
 - a. Based on the material submitted by the student, the committee may conclude there is insufficient evidence that an arbitrary and capricious evaluation has taken place. In this case, the student will be so notified by the committee chairperson in writing.
 - b. The committee may confer with the professor in writing or verbally to attain that individual's views on the matter and an interpretation of the basis for the grade.
 - c. The committee may also select to meet with the student directly and afford the student an opportunity to present his or her case in the matter.
5. Ultimate departmental committee outcomes:
 - a. In the event the committee concludes that there is no compelling evidence to support a claim of arbitrary and capricious grading it will so inform the student. This action might occur at any point in the process at the committee level.
 - b. In the event the committee believes there is some evidence but not particularly compelling, it will request that the professor in question re-evaluate the student's work and ultimate grade. In this situation, the decision on the grade will rest entirely with the professor.
 - c. In the event the committee concludes that compelling evidence does exist that a grade was arbitrary and capricious, it will request that the professor adjust the grade accordingly.

It is the department's position that a professor cannot be forced at the departmental level to change a grade. The strongest action that could be taken at the departmental level is a recommendation to a professor that a grade be changed.

Should the student be dissatisfied with the departmental actions and the professor's ultimate decision, the aggrieved party must then present a written complaint to the Dean of the

College of Education and Human Services who then will initiate subsequent grievance procedures as specified in the most recent edition of the Seton Hall University Student Handbook.

It is strongly recommended that any student who is considering filing a grievance attain a current copy of the Seton Hall University Student Handbook and follow steps as prescribed for the grievance process. The handbook may be obtained through the Division of Student Affairs located in the Student Center.

Academic Grievance Procedure for Other Than Grades

The procedure for resolving academic conflicts can be found in the most recent edition of the Seton Hall University Student Handbook, which is available from the Division of Student Affairs located in the Student Center. What follows extends the Academic Grievance Procedure Statement to the Program level. This modification is not intended to limit a student's ability or right to pursue resolution of an academic conflict.

Program process. Any individual student in the Program who feels that he/she has cause for a grievance against another member of the Program must confer directly with that individual in an attempt to resolve the dispute to the satisfaction of both parties. Should this action fail to resolve the dispute, the aggrieved student is advised to consult with his or her student and/or faculty mentor in order to generate and evaluate additional approaches to resolving the dispute. If, after conferring with the student and/or faculty mentor, the student is still unable to bring the dispute to resolution, the aggrieved student should consult with the Director of Training. If the dispute involves the Director of Training, the Director of Training will refer the student to the Department Chair. At this point in the process, the Academic Grievance Procedure Statement in the Seton Hall University Student Handbook should be followed.