

Grievance Policy

In the normal conduct of education at the University of Houston, grievances may arise with respect to the alleged violation of university, college, or department academic policies or procedures. The Department of Political Science is committed to resolving these grievances in a fair, orderly, and expeditious manner. To that end, the department has established procedures for settling academic grievances involving graduate students.

An academic grievance is an official complaint students make against a faculty member, a part-time instructor, a teaching assistant, or an administrator, who allegedly either violates a university, college, or department academic policy or procedure or prejudicially treats the student on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, handicap, veteran status, or any other non-academic status not covered under the university policy with respect to sexual harassment or other relevant university policies.

Because assigning a grade or evaluating a student's work performance involves the faculty's professional judgment and is an integral part of the faculty's teaching responsibilities, disagreement with an instructor concerning a grade or evaluation is not a justifiable grievance to be considered under this policy unless factors such as those mentioned above can be shown to have affected that grade or evaluation.

The following is the procedure for graduate students to follow in initiating an academic grievance:

- As a first step, the student and the faculty member(s) should make efforts to settle their differences amicably and informally to redress the grievance. The student must request, in writing, a meeting with the faculty member(s) involved **within 30 days** of the point in time when the grievant has knowledge or should have had knowledge of the problem being grieved. This meeting should take place **within 10 working days** from the reception of the student's letter. At the request of the student and/or the faculty member(s), the director of graduate studies can act as a disinterested mediator (assuming the grievance is not brought against the director of graduate studies, in which case a member of the Executive Committee can serve as mediator).

- In the case that no solution is derived from the meeting between the student and the faculty member(s) involved, the student may request, in writing and **within 10 working days** after the meeting, to discuss the problem with the chair of the department. (If the chair of the department is involved in the grievance, a member of the Executive Committee can stand in for the chair.) In requesting this meeting, the grievant must state (a) when he/she discovered the issue being grieved, (b) what issue is being grieved and provide evidence to support the grievance, and (c) what is the desired resolution. The conversation between the chair and the student will take place **within 10 working days** after the reception of the student's letter. The chair also should solicit a response in writing from the party against whom the grievance was brought with respect to issues raised in the meeting between the chair and the student.
- The chair of the department will respond in writing to the student within **10 working days** after their meeting. A copy of this letter will be also sent to the faculty member(s) involved.
- If either the student or the faculty member(s) involved is dissatisfied with the outcome of the department-level process, that party may petition the dean of the College of Liberal and Social Sciences, in writing and **within 10 working days** after the reception of the chair's letter, by filing a formal written complaint (See College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Graduate/Professional Grievance Policy and Procedure at <http://www.uh.edu/graduate-catalog/policies/grievance-policy/index.php>).