

**U N I V E R S I T Y of H O U S T O N**

**TO: Undergraduate Council**

**FROM: Dr. Brian McKinney  
Dr. Marilu McGregor**



*Replaced by  
UC 9277 07S  
4/18/07*

**RE: SACS Accreditation**

**DATE: March 1, 2007**

The SACS accreditation requirement below concerns a procedure for addressing written student complaints:

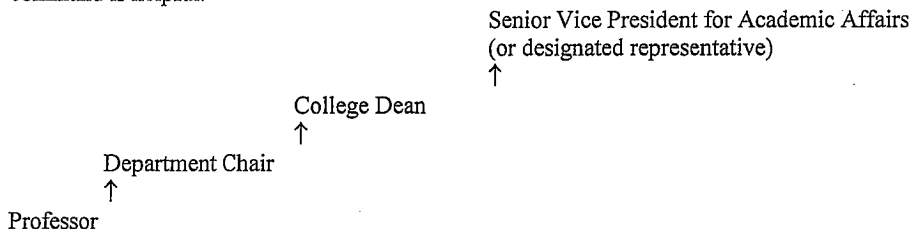
Federal Requirement 4.5 Procedures for Written Complaints. The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints.

UH has several policies on student complaints. The Graduate, Professional and Post-Baccalaureate Students' Grievance Policy and Procedures appears at [http://www.uh.edu/grad\\_catalog/garr/grievance\\_pol.html](http://www.uh.edu/grad_catalog/garr/grievance_pol.html)

The policy followed by undergraduates for general academic grievances is in the Student Handbook, page 14. While this policy clearly designates the offices students may contact, it does not require petitions or responses to be written, as does the SACS policy.

**ACADEMIC PROBLEMS**

Students have the right to redress their grievances. Students also have the right to examine student evaluations for every class offered. The evaluations are on file in the M.D. Anderson Library. Problems regarding grades, course requirements and classroom procedures can occur. The first and best source for resolving the problem is with the professor. Most problems are resolved in this manner. Individual colleges may follow specific academic grievance policies. Copies of these policies are available in the college Dean's office. If this is insufficient, the following chain of command is helpful.



(Contact the Academic Program Management office at 713-743-0919 for additional information.)

The policy for grade appeals appears in the Undergraduate Catalog, page 64, under Final Grade Reports. This policy describes a written process, but the timeline somewhat confusingly mentions both 90 days and the end of the semester following the posting of the grade:

Students are encouraged to contact the instructor of record or submit written requests to the department chair whenever questions arise concerning a grade received in a course. Students have 90 days after the posting of a grade to appeal.

To appeal a grade, students must submit a completed **General Petition Form** or written request to the department where the course is offered no later than the close of the semester/summer session following the posting of the grade. Faculty are required to retain all evaluated student material for a six month period after the end of the last class of the semester evaluated.

At least five colleges (and some departments) also have undergraduate grievance policies. Some of these policies explicitly prohibit appeals of grade assignments under the policy unless another university policy has also been violated. A chart summarizing these policies is below:

College	Issues covered by policy	Requires written complaint after informal process?	Deadline
Education	Academic and other	Yes	30 class days
Engineering	Academic and instructional	Yes	Notice of intention within 30 days of determination that informal resolution not possible. Formal grievance within 60 days of filing intent to grieve.
CLASS	Academic	Yes	As soon as informal proceedings have ended
NSM	Academic	Yes	No time specified for appeal to dean. If deans' decision is not acceptable, student may appeal to NSM Academic Grievance Subcommittee within 15 calendar days
Technology	Academic	Yes	None specified

To conform more closely to the SACS requirement, it may be necessary to edit our current policies. At the same time, it may be helpful to students to differentiate the various types of appeal and petition available. Below is a draft of a policy that might be considered:

## DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR UNDERGRADUATE GRIEVANCES:

Issues of grievance regarding grades, course requirements and classroom procedures can occur. The first and best source for resolving the problem is with the professor. The university expects most issues to be resolved amicably and informally with the professor. In the event that an informal resolution is not possible, students may file a written grievance on a General Petition form, available in departmental and college offices, and at Registration and Academic Records, 128 Welcome Center. General Petition forms submitted for grade appeals must be filed with the professor within 90 days of the posting of the grade(s) in question. Grade appeals may be considered at the following levels, as necessary: Professor, Departmental Chair, College Dean (or designated representatives at all levels). Faculty are required to retain all evaluated student material for a six month period after the end of the last class of the semester evaluated.

General Petition forms submitted for grievances other than grade appeals must be filed with the professor by the end of the semester/summer session following the semester of the problem. Grievances other than grade appeals may be considered at the following levels, as necessary: Professor, Departmental Chair, College Dean, Senior Vice President (or designated representatives at all levels).

Please note that appeals for decisions in the following areas are guided by separate appeal or grievance policies and procedures: Affirmative Action, Academic Honesty, Student Life, Financial Responsibility, etc.