

Harpur College of Arts and Sciences Academic Grade Grievance Procedures

The following grievance procedure is a two-stage process to resolve alleged unfair grading procedures for students in Harpur College courses. Harpur College students taking courses in another College must follow the grievance procedures for that College. The first stage is comprised of two INFORMAL STEPS designed to reach a mutual agreement between the parties. In the second stage, FORMAL STEPS are undertaken in which the complaint is reviewed by a GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE.

I. Informal:

A. The grievant should attempt to find satisfaction first by discussing the matter with the faculty member involved if possible.

B. If no mutually agreeable resolution is reached during stage I A, the grievant may seek mediation through the Department Chair or Program Director. If the course is cross-listed, the parent department will serve as mediator. For undergraduate students, the Undergraduate Director may serve as the Chair's designee. For graduate students, the Graduate Director may serve as the Chair's designee. To avoid a conflict of interest, the respondent should not serve as the mediating agent. The Undergraduate Director or Graduate Director may serve as the mediating agent in order to avoid such a conflict. In Programs, a faculty member appointed by the associate dean may serve as the mediating agent.

II. Formal:

A. Filing a Grievance:

- If the informal procedures do not result in a resolution, the grievant may file a formal written complaint, submitted to the Department Chair (or designee.) Formal grievances can only be filed after final grades are posted.
 - Students must meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - Instructor violated the grading procedures as set forth in the syllabus
 - Instructor made an error in calculating or recording a grade
 - Instructor violated a university policy when they gave assignments, administered exams or assigned grades
 - Instructor applied an inconsistent grading standard across students
 - Instructor violated a written agreement with the student
- Students must complete the Harpur College of Arts and Sciences Formal Grade Appeal form and provide supporting documentation (unless otherwise noted):
 - Explanation of what occurred and how the criteria apply to the situation
 - Correspondence from the instructor and Department Chair indicating that the appeal has been denied at those levels
 - Course syllabus

- Timeline of events relevant to the appeal
 - Assignment or exam in question (if applicable)
 - Copy of university regulation (if applicable)
 - Correspondence with instructor (if applicable)
 - Any other documentation supporting the appeal
- A formal complaint must be filed before the final exam period of the semester following the semester during which the incident being grieved occurred. Summer and winter terms do not count as semesters.
 - Within ten working days of the receipt of the written complaint, the Chair (or designee) will forward a copy of the formal complaint to the respondent(s), and may forward a copy to the Associate Dean (or Dean's designee). The Chair also forwards copies to the members of the Grievance Committee along with a request that they convene a meeting.

B. The Grievance Committee:

- The Grievance Committee shall be a departmental/program committee composed of three faculty members and two students. Undergraduate cases require undergraduate student representation, and graduate student cases require graduate students. The committee shall determine its chair.
- The Grievance Committee Chair will schedule the hearing within 30 working days from receipt of the complaint at a time that does not preclude the attendance of either party—save that the period between the end of the spring term and the beginning of the fall term shall not be counted and the first 15 working days of any semester shall not count toward the 30 days. Should either party be away from the University and out of the area throughout this period, the hearing may be held via video conferencing.
- Parties will be provided at least five working days' notice of the hearing date. If both parties waive this notice requirement, the hearing may be scheduled earlier.

C. The Hearing:

- The grievant and the respondent have the right to challenge the impartiality of any member of the committee. The other members of the committee shall decide by secret ballot whether that member shall be disqualified for that hearing. The grievant and the respondent have the right to bring one University student, faculty or staff member (who is present in a non-participating capacity) to the hearing.
- A quorum shall consist of a majority of the members of the Grievance Committee with the provision that at least one faculty and one student be present.
- Both parties shall be present during the hearing and may participate in Parts One and Two of the hearing. If either party is not present and there is reasonable doubt as to whether the

notification of the hearing was received, the hearing should be postponed and a second notification should be made. At the beginning of the hearing, the Chair should introduce all those in attendance, ask if anyone has questions about procedures, and assure both the grievant and respondent that each may participate at the hearing and that the hearing will not conclude until they are both satisfied that they have had ample opportunity to speak; but if the hearing has been in progress for more than one hour, and one party is still not satisfied that he or she has had an ample opportunity to speak, the discussion may be ended if the Committee members unanimously agree that all parties have had an opportunity to present their cases, and that the relevant issues have been appropriately vetted.

- The hearing shall consist of at least two parts:
 1. The initial presentation of the grievance by the grievant followed by discussion focused on the grievance.
 2. The presentation of the respondent's response to the grievance followed by discussion focused on clarifying the response.
- A record of the hearing will be made with sufficient particularity to allow for review by the Associate Dean, but a verbatim record is not required. This record will be released to the student and instructor involved in the case.

D. Deliberations and Recommendation of the Grievance Committee:

- The deliberations of the Committee will take place after the hearing and shall be put in the form of a written recommendation to the Chair (or the Chair's designee if appropriate) of the department. The decision regarding the recommendation will be based on an open vote by all members of the Committee in attendance. The recommendation shall be based on a vote of the majority of the members present. Those members of the Committee who do not concur with the majority decision have the right to append a minority report to the recommendations.
- In order to ensure a free and fair discussion, deliberations of the committee will occur *in camera*. No one other than committee members shall be present during deliberations, and no new evidence may be introduced at that time.
- Within five working days of the hearing, the Committee Chair will send a written report of the committee's recommendation to the Chair of the department. The Department Chair will make his/her decision within 10 working days after receipt of the Committee's recommendation, shall notify all parties, including the Associate Dean. This written decision will include a description of the appeal process.
- Instructors and departments have the right to judge the quality of academic work for their courses as they see fit. Consequently, the Associate Dean will not consider any appeal that is made on the basis of a disagreement with an instructor over the content of an exam answer, paper, or other assignment.

- Within twenty working days of notification of an action at the department/program level either party may appeal to the Associate Dean (or Dean's designee). The Associate Dean may establish an ad hoc committee to hear the appeal. For undergraduate students, the Associate Dean (or Associate Dean's designee) shall serve as the final level of appeal. For graduate students, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School (or Associate Dean's designee) shall serve as the final level of appeal.

Harpur College of Arts and Sciences
Formal Final Grade Appeal Form

Name: _____ B#: _____
Course Name: _____ Course Number: _____
Instructor: _____ Semester/Year Taken: _____
Grade Received: _____ Grade Requested: _____

Instructors have the right to judge the quality of academic work for their courses as they see fit. Consequently, the committee will not consider any grievance that is made on the basis of a disagreement with an instructor over the content of an exam answer, paper, or other assignment. Grievances are only considered in the formal process when they meet one or more of the following criteria. Please indicate which of the following criteria are being used as the basis of the grievance. Check all that apply:

- Instructor violated the grading procedures as set forth in the syllabus
- Instructor made an error in calculating or recording a grade
- Instructor violated a university policy when they gave assignments, administered exams or assigned grades
- Instructor applied an inconsistent grading standard across students
- Instructor violated a written agreement with the student

To file a grievance, the Harpur College Grade Grievance Form and supporting documentation should be emailed to the chair or chair's designee as outlined in the Harpur College Academic Grade Grievance Procedures. All documentation below is required unless otherwise noted:

- Explanation of what occurred and how the criteria checked above apply to the situation
- Course syllabus
- Timeline of events relevant to the grievance
- Assignment or exam in question (if applicable)
- Copy of university regulation (if applicable)
- Correspondence with instructor (if applicable)
- Any other documentation supporting the grievance

I declare that the information on this form and all supporting documentation is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I also understand that purposeful misrepresentation of my situation constitutes academic dishonesty and may be considered a violation of the Student Academic Honesty Code.

Student Signature Date