

Printed : December 17, 1999

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972 requires that each college or university establish due process for the resolution of academic grievances. **The purpose of an academic grievance procedure is primarily to provide protection for students against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation.** But the procedures in this document do not prevent departmental or collegial grievance committees from considering other academic grievances that a student might have.

All undergraduate students enrolled in a College of Science and Technology (hereafter "CST") course shall have the right to appeal any academic matter in which they feel that they have been treated unfairly. A student's grievance may be rescinded at any point by the student, thereby halting the grievance process.

Once the formal process begins at stage I, it shall be the duty of the designated Student Advisor/ Ombudsperson (hereafter "SA/O") to keep records of the proceedings and to act as intermediary. The SA/O is an advocate of good procedure only, and not of the claims of substance made by the complaining student. In the event that the particular department concerned does not have an SA/O, the coordinator of SA/O's will either assume the responsibility or appoint the SA/O from another department to serve in this capacity. The commencement of a formal grievance is most serious in nature, and should take place only after all informal methods of adjudication have taken place- such as discussion between the student, the faculty member, the SA/O and/or the chairperson of the department. A student must initiate Stage I of the grievance procedure no later than thirty days from the start of the following fall or spring semester following the completion of the course in which the grievance occurred.

Grievances must be handled as promptly as possible at every stage. The SA/O and Chairperson will oversee the due and expeditious process of a grievance, and will report problems to the College of Science and Technology Undergraduate Grievance Committee (hereafter "CST-UGC").

All documents accumulated in the grievance procedure shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality by those who have responsibility for or access to them.

STAGE I

The formal grievance procedure begins with the student's preparation of a written statement of the grievance, including supporting particulars and remedies sought. The student will present this statement to the SA/O, who will present it to the faculty member with a copy to the chairperson of the department. The SA/O will arrange a meeting of the student, faculty member, and the SA/O. The SA/O will prepare a written record of this meeting, at which every effort will be made to resolve the problem, and will provide all the parties with a copy of this record. This information will also be noted in the SA/O's monthly report to the Dean, with copies to the Department Chair and SA/O Coordinator.

The student and faculty member may also prepare and submit to all the parties a written record of this meeting. When a grievance reaches Stage I, copies of all written statements shall be sent by the SA/O to the SA/O Coordinator.

STAGE II

If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, that student may appeal to the department chairperson for a decision. The chairperson or representative, together with the SA/O, will attempt to resolve the problem in accordance with the written procedures established by the department and approved by the CST-UGC. These procedures will guarantee:

1. the speedy disposition of the grievance;
2. the right of the faculty member to reply in writing to the grievance;
3. the hearing of all parties to the grievance, and their opportunity to provide supporting material;
4. review of disputed material by qualified faculty members where appropriate;
5. involvement of other students wherever appropriate;
6. the preparation by the chairperson (or representative) and by the SA/O, of written records of all proceedings , these records to be held – along with any written material provided by the student and faculty member - by both the SA/O and the chairperson;
7. and prompt written notification of the chairperson’s decision (with rationale) sent to the student , the faculty member and the SA/O.

It is strongly urged that each department establish a grievance committee, or designate an appropriate standing committee to hear grievances. It is further urged that this committee include students, and that a majority of its members be faculty members (except that on questions arising over evaluation of performance on examinations and assigned projects, the department may choose to involve faculty members only).

STAGE III

All methods for settlement at the departmental level having been exhausted, the student may appeal the department’s decision to the CST-UGC. A letter from the student requesting a review of the grievance should be addressed to the CST-UGC care of the Associate Dean of the Undergraduate Division in CST. A copy of the original grievance should accompany this letter, and a copy of the letter should be sent to the department chairperson. The SA/O will forward to the CST-UGC copies of all written documents collected at Stage II. The CST-UGC will review all documentation to determine whether further information is needed. If not, a decision on the grievance will be made on the basis of the material in hand. If it is felt that more information is needed, it may be requested in writing, or a hearing of all parties to the grievance (including the department chairperson and the representative, if any, referred to Stage II) may be scheduled, after which a decision will be made.

The CST-UGC shall consist of three student members from the pool of Student Advisor/Ombudspersons in the College chosen by the CST-UGC, three faculty members selected by the Executive Committee, and a representative of the Dean’s office. In no case shall a member of the CST-UGC come from the department from which the grievance originated.

It shall be the duty of the CST-UGC to receive information from all parties involved in a grievance. The Dean's representative shall chair the CST-UGC, and the majority of its seven members must approve the final decision on the grievance issued by the CST-UGC. The CST-UGC shall transmit its decision and rationale in writing to the student, the faculty member, the SA/O, the chairperson, and to the Dean for implementation if called for. This decision shall be the final recourse available within the College for the arbitration of a student grievance. It can be appealed to the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies and his/her designate for final review on procedural grounds only.

* * * * *

All faculty members are urged to cooperate fully at every stage of any grievance in which they are involved in any way.

1. A Grievance Committee shall consist of three student members chosen by the CST-UGC from a pool of ombudspersons, three faculty members selected by the Executive Committee, and a representative of the Dean's Office. In no case shall a member of the CST-UGC come from the department from which the grievance originated.
2. Students who wish to file a grievance have thirty days from the beginning of the semester following the semester in which the course was taken to do so. (For semesters that end in December, students will have thirty days from the beginning of the Spring semester to file a grievance. For semesters ending in May, students will have thirty days from the beginning of the Fall semester to file a grievance. For Summer sessions, students will have thirty days from the beginning of the Fall semester to file a grievance.)
3. No grievance will be accepted if the aforementioned deadlines are not adhered to.