



Title: Academic Grievance and Appeal Policy
Effective Date: July 1, 2025
Issuing Authority: Provost
Policy Contact: Vice Provost
provost@mercer.edu, 478-301-2110

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the redress of academic grievances and appeals for students within the framework of academic freedom, the integrity of the course, and the prerogative of the faculty to assign grades.

Scope

This policy applies to all students at Mercer University.

Exclusions

None

Definitions

As used in this policy, the following term(s) have the meaning specified below:

Appeal: typically, a request for review of a routine judgment or decision. Such matters may include but are not limited to failure to abide by requirements described in the course syllabus and arbitrary awarding of grades.

Grievance: typically, a complaint relating to some allegedly improper action or behavior.

Policy Statement

Students have the right to bring grievances against a faculty member or an administrator and to appeal decisions concerning academic matters.

All academic grievances and appeals must be initiated by the student with the appropriate faculty member no later than thirty (30) days from the completion of the term in which the course was offered. Grievances or appeals received after this period will not be honored.

A. Informal Resolution Procedure

Student grievance and appeal procedures encourage each student to handle complaints as close to the source as possible. If a student has a complaint against a faculty member, the student should first attempt to resolve the issue by an informal meeting with the

faculty member involved. If this is not satisfactory, or if the student believes that he or she cannot discuss the complaint with the instructor, the student may follow the Formal Resolution Procedure.

B. Formal Resolution Procedure

The following protocol should be followed:

1. The student should meet with the appropriate department chair or program director after submitting to this person a formal written account of the grievance or appeal. This narrative must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the student was formally notified of the instructor's decision.
2. If the grievance or appeal is not satisfactorily resolved by the department chair or program director, the student should meet with the associate dean after submitting to the associate dean a formal written account. This narrative must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the student was formally notified of the department chair's or program director's decision.
3. If the grievance or appeal is not satisfactorily resolved by the associate dean, the student should meet with the Provost after submitting to the Provost a formal written account of the grievance or appeal. This narrative must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the student was formally notified of the associate dean's decision.

If the student has a grievance or appeal involving a dean, he or she should schedule an appointment with that dean in an attempt to resolve the matter. If the matter is not resolved or if the student believes that he or she cannot discuss the issue with that dean, the student may address the grievance or appeal to the Provost. In all academic grievance and appeal procedures, the decision of the Provost is the final University decision.

Once the University grievance or appeal procedure has been exhausted, the student can seek a solution outside the University by filing a complaint with the Georgia Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission at <https://gnpec.georgia.gov/>.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and program accreditors can be contacted to file a complaint if a student believes accrediting standards were violated or grievance procedures were unfair and applied inappropriately and inconsistently. The student can access SACSCOC at <https://sacscoc.org/?s=complaint> and click on "Complaint Procedures Against SACSCOC or Its Accredited Institutions" for more information. A listing of all University accreditors with contact information can be found in the Mercer University catalog.

Note: The procedures associated with the accrediting agencies are not intended to be used to involve the agency in disputes between individuals and member institutions or cause the agency to interpose itself as a reviewing authority in individual matters of admission, grades, granting or transferability of credits, application of academic policies, fees or other

financial matters, disciplinary matters or other contractual rights and obligations.