STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY

Policy Statement

The right of each student to resolve grievances with the university is affirmed, and specific appeal procedures are hereby established to ensure timely and appropriate consideration of each grievance.

Reason for Policy/Purpose

This policy is required for the effective communication of university policy regarding student grievances.

Who Needs to Know This Policy

All members of The University of Southern Mississippi community

Website Address for this Policy

www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-stua-ds-002

Definitions

Policy/Procedures

Student grievances generally originate at the department level, and the resolution of the grievance is sought at the department level. The exceptions to this procedure are the grade review procedure (available at www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-acaf-pro-000-007), appeals originating in the student judicial council and the Office of the Dean of Students, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
Instructions regarding the grievance procedure will be available to students at the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Student Government Association office and the Graduate School, and they will also be published in the Student Handbook.

A student grievance originating in any of the departmental or administrative units is handled by the department chair or director responsible for the unit in which the grievance originates. The grievance should be made known in writing within 15 days of the occurrence. The decision by the department chair or director should normally be made by the filing of the grievance (Step 1).

The appeal by a student of the decision of the department chair or director must be made in writing within five working days to either the dean exercising jurisdiction over that academic department or to the administrative official having jurisdiction over the nonacademic department involved. This official will render a decision on the grievance in writing (Step 2).

Should the student desire to make further appeal, the written appeal should be directed to the Office of the Provost (for academic issues), the Graduate School (if student is a graduate student for academic issues) or to the appropriate vice president exercising jurisdiction over the matter. The associate provost or vice president, or dean of Graduate School, shall confer with the student, and if the grievance is not resolved, the associate provost or vice president, or dean of Graduate School, shall refer the matter to a standing committee or appoint a committee of three to five persons, including student representation, to hold an official hearing on the matter. The student may either represent himself or herself or request the assistance of another student. The hearing shall be held within 10 days of receipt of the grievance by the associate provost or vice president, or dean of Graduate School (Step 3).

Upon completion of the hearing, the committee will inform the associate provost or the vice president, or dean of Graduate School, of the decision, and the associate provost or the vice president will inform the student in writing. The associate provost or the vice president may utilize the decision of the committee or amend the decision as deemed appropriate (Step 4).

If the student is not satisfied with the decision indicated in step 4, he or she may appeal to the president of the university in writing. The president shall render a final decision in the case normally within 10 days of the written receipt of the appeal (Step 5).

For additional information regarding FERPA and your right to amend possible inaccuracies of your student records, contact the Registrar’s office.

**Student Grievance Process**
Step 1: Department chair or director of nonacademic area
Step 2: Dean or administrative official
Step 3: A. Undergraduate students - vice president who calls a hearing  
    B. Graduate students - Graduate Studies office calls a hearing
Step 4: Vice president makes decision based on hearing
Step 5: President
Review

The Dean of Students is responsible for the review of this policy every four years (or whenever circumstances require immediate review).

Forms/Instructions

N/A

Appendices

N/A

Related Information

Grade Review Bylaws available at www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-acaf-pro-000-007
Student Grievance Appeal Procedures available at http://www.usm.edu/institutional-effectiveness/student-grievance-appeal-procedures

History

11/01/11: Formatted for Institutional Policies website
02/05/13: Formatted for template. Minor editing throughout.
Amendments: Month, Day, Year – summary of changes
Authorization

STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY
STUA-DS-000-002

As the Responsible Officer, I have reviewed this policy and believe it represents the current policy.

[Signature]
Responsible Officer

[Signature]
Date: April 4, 13