

Student Complaints Related To Faculty Decisions About Student Course Work Procedure Guidelines

(Approved by VPASA, 10/27/05)

The University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) is committed to maintaining a learning environment which promotes academic excellence and personal development. The following procedure guidelines assure students the opportunity to register their complaints about what they believe to be unfair treatment involving their academic work and to receive prompt resolution of matters related to the complaint.

“Unfair treatment” applies to any act which may be perceived as either prejudiced or arbitrary in the evaluation of a student’s performance, or in the imposition of sanctions without regard for due process.

Students are to complete the following steps:

Informal Meeting with the Instructor to Resolve a Complaint

The student should seek resolution of a complaint by talking to the instructor as soon as an incident of perceived unfair treatment occurs. After this step, the student may decide to initiate a Formal Conference for the record.

Formal Conference with the Instructor to Resolve a Complaint

The student is responsible for initiating a Formal Conference by completing Part I of the Conference Documentation Form obtained from the office of the dean in whose college/school the instructor resides.

- a. The student completes Part 1 of the Documentation Form and then meets with the instructor within 10 school days of the alleged unfair treatment, or in the case of a final grade, before the beginning of the semester following the alleged unfair treatment. The student explains the complaint and attempts to resolve the matter with the instructor.
- b. The instructor will sign the form acknowledging that there was discussion with the student about the complaint and indicate whether she/he is providing comments.
- c. The instructor may provide written comments as an attachment to the complaint form. The comments must be provided to the student within three days of meeting with the student.
- d. After the conference, the student completes Part 2 of the Documentation Form and signs the document.
- e. The student delivers this form, and any written comments provided by the instructor, in a sealed envelope to the dean of the college/school in which the instructor resides.

Appeal to the College/School Dean

If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student shall have the right to appeal a decision in writing to the dean or a person designated by the dean. The student completes the form called the Appeal Form for Student Complaints about Faculty Decisions and delivers it in a sealed envelope to the appropriate dean’s office within three school days of meeting with the instructor.

1. To begin the appeal process, the student completes the Appeal Form for Student Complaints about Faculty Decisions and attaches to the form a written statement a) of the complaint, b) the student’s perception of the results of the conference with the instructor, and c) reasons why the meeting did not resolve the matter of the alleged unfair treatment.

2. The dean shall meet with the instructor, and others as appropriate, to clarify the relevant facts and perceptions in the matter.
3. The dean shall meet with the student* to clarify the relevant facts and perceptions in the matter as described in the student's written statement.
4. The dean then makes a decision on the matter.

As an alternative, the dean has the option of deciding to convene a review committee.

2. a. The dean creates a committee consisting of at least two faculty, and one of these, if possible, from the same department as the faculty being complained about, and a student (the SGA school senator is one possibility), who is not in the same course as the complainant. The dean shall appoint one of the faculty to chair the meeting.
3. a. The committee will meet with the student** and the instructor.
4. a. The committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the dean who makes a decision on the matter.
5. The dean's decision shall be communicated in writing to the student and the instructor within 10 school days of receipt of the student's completed Appeal Form for Student Complaints about Faculty Decisions.
6. The dean's decision is final and there is no further appeal to another administrator or office.

If the complaint involves an individual assignment grade or a final grade, the dean may ask the instructor to change the grade only in cases involving a procedural error in the conduct of the course or due to evidence of unfair treatment.

7. Records of the dean's decision shall be kept in a file separate from the faculty permanent file in the dean's office.

*The student may choose to bring an observer to the meeting. The role of observers is to provide support but they may not actively participate in the conversation. If an observer is present, the dean may also choose an observer to be present. If the student's observer is also a lawyer, the dean shall postpone the meeting until university counsel can be present.

** The student may choose to bring an observer to the meeting. The role of observers is to provide support but they may not actively participate in the conversation. If the student's observer is also a lawyer, the faculty chair shall notify the dean and postpone the meeting until university counsel can be present and the dean will then chair the meeting.

Formal Conference Documentation Form

(For a Student Complaint about an Instructor's Decision)

Part I

The student completes this part **prior to the meeting** with the instructor.

Student Name: _____ ID #: _____

UIW email: _____ Phone/cell: (____) _____

Address: _____

Instructor's Name: _____ UIW extension #: _____

Issue (completed by the student prior to the conference):

.....
By signature I acknowledge that I have met with the above named student to discuss this issue. I am/am not (circle one) providing written comments. (Comments must be submitted to your college/school dean within three days of this meeting.)

Signature of Instructor: _____ Date: _____

.....

Part 2

The student, **after the meeting**, describes whether resolution of the complaint was reached or not:

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

Whether there is resolution or not, the student delivers this form in a sealed envelope to the dean of the college/school in which the instructor resides.

If resolution was not reached and the student wishes to appeal the instructor's decision, then the student requests from the dean's office the Appeal Form for Student Complaints about Faculty Decisions, completes it and returns to the dean's office within three days.

cc: Student
Instructor

Appeal Form For Student Complaints About Faculty Decisions

Student Contact Information*

Student's (Complainant's) Name: _____

ID #: _____ UIW Email address: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Cell: _____ Work: _____

Complaint Information

Date of the incident/complaint: _____ Time of

the incident (if applicable): _____

Place the incident occurred (if applicable): _____

Name(s) of the instructor who made a decision that directly affected you and is the subject of your complaint:

Date of last conversation with such person(s) when you tried to resolve your complaint: _____

Please **attach a letter** explaining your complaint and the reasons why a decision or action that affected you should be changed.

What happens next?

- 1) Your complaint will be investigated by the appropriate college/school dean who will seek a fair solution, and report back to you in writing within 10 school days.
- 2) The final decision may not be appealed to a higher level.
- 3) Your file will be kept in the office where the final decision was made.

***PLEASE NOTE: UIW explicitly prohibits any member of the university community from harassing or retaliating against students who file complaints and appeal decisions.**

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Appeal Received: _____ Date Response Due: _____

Dean's Name: _____

Date Response Sent to Student: _____

Comments:

Student Receipt of Complaint Procedure Guidelines and Forms

(Approved by VPASA, 11/4/05)

The University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) is committed to maintaining a learning environment which promotes academic excellence and personal development. Procedure guidelines assure students the opportunity to register their complaints about what they believe to be unfair treatment involving their academic work and to receive prompt resolution of matters related to the complaint.

Here is a summary of the Procedure Guidelines that explain the process a student must follow in registering a complaint:

Hold an Informal Meeting with the Instructor to Resolve the Complaint.

If the complaint is not resolved, the student may decide to initiate a Formal Conference for the record.

Hold a Formal Conference with the Instructor after filling out Part I of the Conference Documentation Form.

If the complaint is still not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student shall have the right to appeal a decision in writing to the dean of the college/school in which the instructor resides.

Initiate the process of appealing to the college/school dean by completing the form called the Appeal Form for Student Complaints about Faculty Decisions.

I understand the basic 3-step process for resolving a complaint related to faculty decisions about student course work and realize that for further details I must read the Procedure Guidelines and Forms I have received. I also understand that the college/school dean is the appropriate administrator for making a final decision on the appeal and that I am not entitled to appeal to another administrator or office.

Print Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____