

Academic Grievances

The following excerpt from the Graduate Bulletin outlines the procedures for academic grievances at the University at Albany:

Students who challenge an academic grade evaluation of their work in a course or seminar, or in research or another required educational activity or who challenge an unfavorable academic standing or status assigned to them because of inadequate grades or other evaluations of their performance may request a review of the evaluation or the academic status, or both.

Each school and college has established committees and procedures for considering such requests. Except for cases involving termination of study, students who wish to request a review of an academic grievance should submit such a request in writing to the official or committee responsible. The nature of such grievances may vary considerably. Some should be directed initially to the department concerned and others to the student's school or college. Where the school is not departmentalized, such requests should be presented directly to the school official or committee responsible.

If the issue is not resolved by the departmental and school officials or committees responsible, students may then address a petition to the Graduate Academic Council for a review of their case and of departmental and/or school decisions on it. The council refers such petitions to its Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing. The action of this committee, upon acceptance by the council, is final.

Students whose authorization to continue in study has been terminated officially by the Dean of Graduate Studies who challenge that status may address a petition to the Graduate Academic Council for a review of their standing and for reinstatement. The council refers such petitions to its Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing. The action of this committee, upon acceptance by the council, is final.

In reviewing a petition for redress of an academic grievance, the committee utilizes a variety of procedures. It may hold a formal hearing with all parties and their representatives present or it may decide to meet separately with the parties and representatives involved. The nature and number of the representatives attending in all instances are at the discretion of the committee. The procedures adopted are those which the committee believes will provide the parties involved with an opportunity to present their sides of the issues to the committee and for the committee to gather the information and evidence it deems necessary to make its decision.

Action taken on student grievances by the committee is reported to the Graduate Academic Council, and after acceptance by the council the action is final and is not subject to further formal review within the University.

Specific Procedures for Special Education

For Special Education courses - In the event of a problem or complaint about a course grade, evaluation, or other program status decision, a student may initiate a grievance at any level (Division, Department, School or University). However, it is recommended that grievances be addressed at the earliest possible point, closest to the problematic situation. There are both formal and informal procedures available within the Division of Special Education to students who perceive an injustice, when attempts to resolve it with the professor or other personnel involved have been unsuccessful or unfeasible. Informal methods include discussion with the advisor, other professors, or the division

director.

A formal grievance must be submitted in writing to the division director* whose responsibility is to convene a committee of all special education faculty members and professional staff excluding any who are named in the written grievance statement. A copy of the student grievance will be provided to any faculty member named; such faculty members will be asked to respond in writing. After reading the submissions of the student and faculty member(s), and seeking any other information they deem appropriate, the members of the committee will provide a written response to the case. Copies of the committee's response will be provided to the student, the professor(s), the division director and the department chair. Recommendations to resolve the problematic situation made by the division grievance committee will be advisory only. The student may, therefore, either accept the committee's resolution procedures or appeal to a higher level, i.e. outside of the division.

The next step outside of the division is to submit the issue in writing to the Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology Academic Standards Committee. If the issue is not resolved at the Department level, the School of Education Academic Standards Council is the next level of review, followed by the appropriate university-wide committee. For graduate students this would be the Graduate Academic Council. The procedures for filing a formal grievance are outlined in the Graduate Bulletin. Undergraduate students should address grievances that have not been resolved at the school level to the Committee on Academic Standing of the Undergraduate Academic Council, following procedures outlined in the Undergraduate Bulletin.

For special education students in Reading courses, the grievance should first be discussed with the faculty member involved, and with the Director of the Division of Special Education. If this does not resolve the dispute, the grievance should be referred to the Reading Department Chair, in writing (email is acceptable). If the dispute cannot be resolved by the Chair, it is referred to the Department faculty for a ruling, which will be communicated in writing to all affected parties.

For special education students in Educational Psychology courses, please refer to the procedures noted on the web page of the Division of Educational Psychology: