

## Procedures for Academic Grievances and Appeals

During their enrollment at the University of Denver, active students may appeal academic and student status related decisions and/or seek resolution of complaints or grievances through the Academic Grievance and Appeal Procedures.

As stated in its [Non-Discrimination Statement](#), the University of Denver prohibits discrimination based on protected characteristics, including discrimination against students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations to fully access these grievance and appeal procedures should promptly contact [Student Disability Services](#) to submit a request for such accommodations.

Graduate units may have additional requirements specific to their accreditation or professional standards. The student must determine whether the graduate unit has any such specific requirements. The unit must address those requirements prior to advancing the grievance to the Office of the Provost. In the event of a conflict between any grievance process published in unit or program handbooks or websites, this formal grievance process will govern.

### Eligible and Ineligible Concerns

#### Eligible Concerns

These procedures apply only to the following concerns:

- A grievance or appeal regarding a student's academic standing during their enrollment at the University of Denver.
- An academic decision made by a faculty or staff member, administrator or committee of the University of Denver that directly and adversely affects the student—e.g., program termination, dismissal from a program, academic suspension, removal from a course, termination of GTA or GRA appointment.
- The grievance or appeal must be based on procedural irregularity, concerns of conflict of interest or bias on the part of the decision-maker(s), retaliation, or other impropriety that affected the outcome of the decision or action.
- Eligible concerns for which the student submits the grievance or appeal within forty-five (45) Business Days of the decision or action that the student is appealing.

Under these procedures, Business Day refers to any weekday Monday through Friday in which the University is in operation, including days when the University is in operation, but classes are not in session. For example, University holidays are not Business Days.

If the student's concerns involve allegations of discrimination or harassment, consistent with the University's [Reporting by University Employees of Disclosures Relating to the University's Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#), any University employee who has knowledge of the allegations must [report the allegations to the Office of Equal Opportunity & Title IX \(EOIX\)](#), unless the employee qualifies as a Confidential Employee pursuant to the reporting policy. The student may also report the concerns about discrimination or harassment directly to EOIX. EOIX will review and address concerns about discrimination or harassment consistent with its established procedures, and such concerns are not subject to review under these procedures.

## **Ineligible Concerns**

These procedures do not apply to the following concerns:

- Differences in judgment or opinion regarding academic performance
- Matters addressed by the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities
- Grade appeals
- Admission decisions
- Appeals or grievances submitted after the deadline(s) set forth in these procedures

## **Formal Grievance and Appeal Process**

At any level of this process in which the student must submit a written appeal/grievance, the student must submit the document on their own behalf; a third party may not submit any document on behalf of the student.

### **First Level: Informal Resolution**

Students are expected to attempt to resolve concerns informally with the faculty or staff member, administrator or committee responsible for the academic decision through a discussion of the concerns with the involved party or parties. If the student's efforts at informal resolution fail, the student may file a formal grievance or appeal.

### **Second Level: Submission of the Formal Grievance or Appeal to Program Director/Chair**

If a student elects to file a formal grievance or appeal, the student must file the grievance or appeal within forty-five (45) Business Days after the contested decision or action. The student must submit the written grievance/appeal with any supporting documentation by the deadline. The student must address the following in their written submission:

- a clear description of the decision/action being grieved or appealed,
- the basis or bases for challenging the decision/action,
- the identity of the party or parties who made the decision or took the action,
- the specific remedy or remedies requested, and
- a description of all informal resolution attempted.

The program director or department chair must issue a decision in writing within thirty (30) Business Days of receiving the grievance/appeal and must include all of the following with the written decision:

- a copy of the student's formal grievance/appeal,
- relevant findings of fact,
- the decision and the reasons for the decision reached, and
- any remedy granted and/or any alternative remedies provided.

### **Third Level: Submission of the Formal Grievance or Appeal to Dean**

The party who finds the resolution at the second level unsatisfactory may appeal the decision in writing to the dean of the academic unit within five (5) Business Days of the date that the program director or department chair's written decision is sent.

The dean may render a decision on the matter or may refer the grievance or appeal to a standing grievance/appeal committee or establish an ad hoc committee to hear the matter. If the dean decides to establish an ad hoc committee, the student who submitted the grievance/appeal will be informed that they may designate one of the faculty members to serve on the ad hoc committee. The student must designate an appointed faculty member, including tenured or tenure-track professors, teaching professors, clinical professors, professor of practice, research professors at the University of Denver, but excluding adjunct professors and visiting professors. Members of the unit involved in the grievance/appeal may not serve on the ad hoc committee and must recuse themselves if they are members of the standing committee.

The committee may, in its sole discretion, gather from the student, faculty, staff members or other individuals any additional relevant information that the committee deems necessary in its consideration of the grievance or appeal.

The appeals committee will begin deliberations as soon as possible and provide the dean a written recommendation no later than thirty (30) Business Days after the date that the dean's office received the written appeal at this level. The dean will issue a written decision to all affected parties within five (5) Business Days after receiving the committee's recommendation.

## **Fourth Level: Submission of the Formal Grievance or Appeal to Provost**

The party who finds the resolution at the third level unsatisfactory may appeal the decision to the Provost within five Business Days of the date that the dean's decision is sent. Within five (5) Business Days after receiving the appeal, the Provost may refer grievances or appeals to appropriate bodies or personnel. If the Provost refers the grievance or appeal to the Graduate Council, the chair of the Graduate Council will appoint three members of the Council as a Grievance Committee to consider the matter and shall designate one of the committee members to serve as chair.

The individual or entity designated by the Provost shall submit a written recommendation to the Provost within thirty (30) Business Days of receiving the case. The Provost will issue a written decision regarding the matter to all involved parties within thirty (30) Business Days of receiving a recommendation from the designee. The decision of the Provost is final and is not subject to further appeal.

### **Scope of Review**

Any University official or committee charged with reviewing a formal grievance or appeal may gather additional relevant information and/or meet with involved parties as deemed necessary by the University official/committee considering the appeal/grievance. The University official/committee will base their decision on the information submitted with the grievance/appeal or gathered as set forth in these procedures.

### **Deviation from Procedures**

These procedures provide steps for resolving appeals and grievances. The steps may vary based upon the structure of the academic unit or the particularities of the situation. The Provost or the Provost's designee may choose to approve or may direct a deviation from these procedures, for example,

postponement or extension of a deadline or the elimination or addition of a step in the process, in order to promote an effective and timely resolution of a matter.

### **Grievance or Appeal Record**

Documentation in support of a grievance or appeal will be held by the University official responsible for considering the grievance or appeal at that level and provided to the University official responsible for the next level, if any. If a University official or committee meets with the student, any faculty, staff members or other individuals to gather additional information as provided in these Procedures, the University official or committee will keep a record of such meetings as part of the grievance or appeal record. The complete grievance or appeal record will consist of the original grievance or appeal, all additional information gathered as provided in these procedures, and all written decisions issued at each level of the process.

### **Failure to Meet Deadlines**

If after a formal grievance or appeal is filed, the University official charged with review of the grievance or appeal fails to meet any deadline at any stage of the process, the grievant/appellant may proceed directly to appeal to the next higher University official in the manner prescribed by these procedures, subject to the relevant time limitation calculated from the date of the missed deadline. The failure of any University official to meet any of the deadlines imposed by these procedures shall not be grounds for appeal, entitle the grievant/appellant to any relief requested, nor result in a decision in the grievant/appellant's favor. Any grievant/appellant who fails to meet the deadlines imposed by these Procedures will be bound by the decision issued by the applicable University official.