

Student Protections

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University Policy on Academic Complaints

Graduate students have the right to seek redress of any grievance related to their academic affairs. Every effort should be made to resolve grievance informally between the student and the faculty member most directly involved or, such efforts failing, by the Graduate Adviser, the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee, and/or the Department Chair.

University Policies Protecting Students

The University has numerous policies protecting the rights of students, all covered in the [General Information Catalog](#).

Relevant policy statements include:

- Equal educational opportunity
- Prohibition of sexual harassment of students
- Prohibition of racial harassment of students
- Prohibition of sexual assault
- Policy on AIDS and HIV infection
- Residency regulations
- Scholastic dishonesty (under Institutional Rules)

Student Grievance Procedure for Non-academic Complaints

Complaints related to non-academic issues (such as sexual or racial harassment or sexual assault) are handled by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#).

Student Employee Grievances

Student employees (TAs, AIs, etc.) who have grievances should refer to the policies in the [Handbook of Operating Procedures](#).

Student Ombuds Services

The [Student Ombuds Services](#) office serves as a neutral third party providing assistance to students who have University-related complaints of a non-legal nature. The office is authorized to investigate grievances involving both academic and nonacademic concerns and *recommend* corrective measures. Any case considered inappropriate may be declined by the Ombudsperson. All assistance provided is confidential and available by phone or in person. Seeking assistance from the Student Ombuds Services office is most appropriate if remedies within the student's area/program, Department office, and Graduate School have been unsatisfactory.

Accommodations for Disabilities

The University, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, states that no otherwise qualified student shall be excluded solely on the basis of the disability from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any academic program or activity. A student with a disability may be protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and be eligible for a reasonable accommodation that will provide an equal opportunity to meet the academic criteria related to professional behavior and scholastic performance.

Any otherwise qualified student with a protected disability who wishes to request a reasonable accommodation must notify the [Services for Students with Disabilities](#) office and provide documentation as needed. Services for Students with Disabilities makes recommendations for accommodations and sends official verifications to appropriate parties so special accommodations can be made.

Areas and programs in Educational Psychology will review academic performance criteria in light of individual student circumstances to explore issues of appropriateness and accommodation. An initial assessment, subsequent plan, use of outside experts (including the Office of Students with Disabilities), and periodic checks between the area/program faculty and the student are appropriate courses of action in making accommodations.

Adjudicating Grievances of Graduate Students

A graduate student has the right to seek redress of any grievance related to his or her academic affairs.

Every effort should be made to resolve grievances informally between the student and the faculty member most directly involved or, such efforts failing, by the Graduate Adviser, the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), and/or the Chair of the Department.

When serious issues cannot be resolved informally, the graduate student will have recourse to a [formal grievance procedure](#) conducted as outlined below. It should be noted that the precise procedure to be followed in adjudicating a given grievance will depend on the particular circumstances surrounding the case. Each graduate student may express a grievance through the following procedures with the assurance of timely and thorough consideration. Grievants are assured freedom from reprisals for the filing of their grievances. Each student must initiate his or her complaint within six months of the acquisition of knowledge of the grievance. All complaints must be submitted in writing.

First Level of Adjudication (if attempts described above do not bring resolution): **Graduate Studies Committee**

- The first level of consideration is the appropriate GSC. If the GSC Chair cannot resolve the matter himself or herself, he or she will seek the advice of the GSC, or an executive sub-committee of the GSC.
- If the issue cannot be resolved by the GSC or sub-committee, the GSC Chair will convene an ad hoc panel consisting of members of the GSC to review the complaint. The student will be granted the right to exclude one person from the panel.
- Findings of the panel will be reported to the student and faculty member in writing. A copy of the findings will be retained in the files of the GSC Chair.

Second Level of Adjudication: Office of the Vice President and Dean of Graduate Studies

- If the issues cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties concerned at the level of the GSC, the grievance will be forwarded to the Vice President and Dean of Graduate Studies who may convene an ad hoc committee to review the case.
- The Vice President and Dean of Graduate Studies will review expeditiously the facts of the case, including any recommendations received from an ad hoc committee, and render a ruling which will be sent to the student, the GSC Chair, and the chair of the ad hoc committee.

Third Level of Adjudication: Office of the President

- The decision of the Vice President and Dean of Graduate Studies may be appealed in writing to the President for final decision.

In addition, complaints alleging **sexual or racial harassment or sexual assault** should be addressed in accordance with the policies and procedures published in the [General Information Catalog](#).