

# University of South Carolina Upstate

## Academic Grievance Procedures

The University of South Carolina Upstate is committed to the judicious, fair, and impartial resolution of a conflict between faculty members and students. The University is also committed to a judicious, fair, and impartial review of petitions from students who seek relief from university regulations related to academic decisions or policies.

These procedures do not extend to matters of grading student work where the substance of a complaint is simply the student's disagreement with the grade placed on work. A student shall discuss such matters with the faculty; final authority shall remain with the faculty in matters of evaluating student work.

All decisions regarding grade changes at any step in the process are in the form of recommendations only. Only the faculty member who initiated the grade in question can change grades.

The following process is designed to provide an objective review of student complaints regarding academic grievances.

### A. General guidelines for **Undergraduate Students and Graduate Students**

1. For a student who believes he or she has been treated unfairly or improperly during a fall semester, the student grievance process must be initiated prior to the following March 1. For a student who believes he or she has been treated unfairly or improperly during a spring or summer semester, the grievance process must be initiated prior to the following October 1.
2. Those concerned will make every reasonable effort to honor all deadlines and timelines. However, individuals involved in the grievance process should take into account that conditions may exist which preclude strict adherence to the suggested timelines.
3. All submissions to all levels of appeal and all responses (e.g., from faculty, a faculty committee, or a Dean) must be in writing on the Academic Grievance Form. The Academic Grievance Form for submitting an appeal is available in the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Academic Affairs, and on the [SpartanHub Student Intranet](#).
4. The grievance must follow, in sequence, the procedures outlined. If a resolution of a grievance is not forthcoming, or the time for a written response has expired, the student may wish to continue the process by forwarding the grievance to the next level. Grievance forms that have not been submitted through the proper sequence of decision-makers will not be reviewed. Students may withdraw their grievance at any time.

5. The student may be asked for additional information or may request the opportunity to appear and discuss the appeal as the grievance is reviewed at each level.
  6. Final authority shall remain with the faculty member in matters of evaluating student work and determining final course grades.
- B.** The grievance process when the grievance involves admissions, academic suspension, or financial aid:
1. If the initial grievance concerns admission to the university, the student contacts the Admissions Office. The Admissions Office advises the student of the appeal process involving the Admissions and Petitions Committee.
  2. If the initial grievance concerns admission to an academic program, the student contacts the dean of the school or college in which admission is being sought. The dean advises the student of the appeal process involving admission to a specific academic program.
  3. If the initial grievance concerns an academic suspension decision, the student contacts the Records Office. The Records Office advises the student of the appeal process involving the Admissions and Petitions Committee.
  4. If the initial grievance concerns a financial aid decision, the student contacts the Financial Aid Office. The Financial Aid Office advises the student of the appeal process involving the Student Financial Aid Committee.
- C.** The grievance process when the initial decision-maker is a faculty member or a faculty committee (e.g., grades; enrollment in a class such as an internship):
1. Grievances should not be filed when the substance of a complaint is simply the student's disagreement with the evaluation of their work. Final authority shall remain with the faculty in matters of evaluating student work.
  2. The student must first discuss the complaint with the faculty member involved for resolution. The purpose of this meeting is to attempt to reach a mutual understanding of the student's situation and the faculty member's actions and to resolve differences in an informal, cooperative manner. If the student does not feel comfortable talking with the faculty member, they will still need to submit the Academic Grievance form to the faculty for consideration and a decision.
  3. If there is no resolution, the student should complete the Academic Grievance Form and submit it to the faculty member or to the faculty committee that made the initial decision. The faculty member or the faculty committee must create a shared Academic Grievance Folder containing the Academic Grievance Form. All related documentation must be added to this folder through all levels of the grievance process.

4. If resolution is not forthcoming within 10 business days after submission of the Academic Grievance Form, the student may proceed to the next step—appeal to Department Chair or Associate Dean.
5. The student may appeal to the Department Chair of the academic area where the grieved decision originated. The appeal to the Department Chair must be submitted by the student within 5 business days after the response from the initial decision-maker.
6. If resolution is not forthcoming in 10 business days after submission of the Academic Grievance Form, the student may proceed to the next step—appeal to the College Dean. The student may appeal to the dean of the appropriate college in which the grieved decisions originated. If resolution is not forthcoming within 10 business days after submission of the Academic Grievance Form, the student may proceed to the next step—the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
7. The student may appeal to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The appeal must be submitted by the student within 5 business days of the decision by the College Dean. The Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will respond within 10 business days to the student and forward copies of that response to all individuals involved at all prior levels of appeal.

Further appeal may be made to the Chancellor of USC Upstate, the President of the University of South Carolina, and the Board of Trustees in accordance with university policies, procedures, and by-laws.

**D. The grievance process when the initial decision maker is a dean:**

1. The student may submit an Academic Grievance Form to the dean or the dean's designee of the college where the academic decision or policy dispute resides. If resolution is not forthcoming within 10 business days after submission of the Academic Grievance Form to the dean, the student may proceed to the next step—appeal to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
2. The student may appeal to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The student must submit the appeal within 5 business days of the decision by the dean. The Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will respond within 10 business days to the student and forward copies of the response to all individuals at each level.
3. If resolution is not forthcoming within 10 business days, further appeal may be made to the Chancellor of USC Upstate, the President of the University of South Carolina, and the Board of Trustees in accordance with university policies, procedures, and by-laws.

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## Academic Grievance Processes – Tables Format

### Procedure for Undergraduate and Graduate Students

**When decision-maker is faculty or a faculty committee:**

Step 1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student discusses complaint with initial decision-maker—Faculty or a Faculty Committee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If student is not satisfied with the resolution, student may proceed to Step 2.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Step 2:	Student completes the Academic Grievance Form and submits it to the initial decision-maker—faculty or a faculty committee.
Step 3:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faculty/Faculty Committee responds to grievance.</li> <li>Faculty/Faculty Committee forwards Academic Grievance Form to student with decision indicated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If no response within 10 business days, student may proceed to Step 4.</li> <li>If student is not satisfied with resolution, student may proceed to Step 4.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Step 4:	Within 5 business days of the response by the Faculty/Faculty Committee, student appeals decision of Faculty/Faculty Committee by forwarding Academic Grievance Form to Department Chair where the decision originated.
Step 5:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department Chair responds to grievance.</li> <li>Department Chair forwards Academic Grievance Form to student with decision indicated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If no response within 10 business days, student may proceed to Step 6.</li> <li>If student is not satisfied with Department Chair decision, student may proceed to Step 6.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Step 6:	Within 5 business days of the response by the Department Chair, student appeals decision of Department Chair by forwarding Academic Grievance Form to the Dean of the College where the decision originated.
Step 7:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College Dean responds to grievance.</li> <li>College Dean forwards Academic Grievance Form to student with decision indicated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If no response within 10 business days, student may proceed to Step 8.</li> <li>If student is not satisfied with College Dean decision, student may proceed to Step 8.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Step 8:	Within 5 business days of the response by the College Dean, student appeals decision by forwarding Academic Grievance Form to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
Step 9:	Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs responds to grievance and forwards copies of final decision to all parties within 10 business days of receipt of grievance form.
	Further appeal may be made to the Chancellor of USC Upstate, the President of the University of South Carolina, and the Board of Trustees in accordance with university policies, procedures, and by-laws.

**When decision-maker is a Dean:**

Step 1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student submits Academic Grievance Form to initial decision-maker—a College Dean.</li> <li>• If no response within 10 business days after submission of Academic Grievance Form to Dean, student may proceed to Step 2.</li> <li>• If student is not satisfied with the resolution, student may proceed to Step 2.</li> </ul>
Step 2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College Dean responds to grievance.</li> <li>• College Dean forwards Academic Grievance Form to student with decision indicated.</li> <li>• If no response within 10 business days, student may proceed to Step 3.</li> <li>• If student is not satisfied with College Dean decision, student may proceed to Step 3.</li> </ul>
Step 3:	Within 5 business days of the response by the Dean, student appeals decision by forwarding Academic Grievance Form to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
Step 11:	<p>Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs responds to grievance and forwards copies of final decision to all parties within 10 business days of receipt of grievance form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If no response within 10 business days, student may further appeal to the Chancellor of USC Upstate, the President of the University of South Carolina, and the Board of Trustees in accordance with university policies, procedures, and by-laws.</li> </ul>

**Grievances regarding Admissions, Academic Suspension, Financial Aid**

<b>Grievance is about:</b>	<b>Student Contacts:</b>	<b>Action:</b>
Admission to Upstate	Admissions Office	Admissions Office refers student to Student Services Committee or Academic Affairs
Admission to an Academic Program	Dean of College	Dean advises student of appeal process regarding admission to specific academic programs
Academic Suspension	Records Office	Records Office advises student of appeal process through Student Services Committee or Academic Affairs
Financial Aid	Financial Aid Office	Financial Aid Office advises student of appeal process involving the Student Financial Aid Committee