

## ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE

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To ensure an atmosphere of free expression and fair treatment, the following procedures are set forth as an appeal process when students feel they have received unfair treatment in an academic matter. It is our hope that every member of the Trinity community will approach personal disagreements in a spirit of Christian love and support for one another.

Academic grievances are defined as disputes between student and faculty regarding some aspect of academic interaction. Grievances address the violation, misinterpretation, or inequitable administration of academic policies, stated grading practices, and related issues.

Exceptions:

1. Academic integrity issues, such as cheating and plagiarism: see *College Catalog Academic Policies: Academic Integrity*.
2. Discrimination, harassment, abuse, and bullying: see *Student Handbook Student Life Policies: Discrimination, Harassment, Abuse, Hazing, Initiation, and Bullying*.
3. Discrimination on the basis of sex: see *Student Handbook Student Life Policies: Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures*.

### Appeal Process

It is our hope that every member of the Trinity community will approach grievance in a spirit of Christian love and support for one another. The student should make every attempt to resolve the disagreement by personal conference with the faculty member involved. Faculty members are pledged to honest reconsideration of their decisions when appeals are brought in a spirit of honest questioning.

If a student feels the dispute cannot be resolved after a personal conference with the faculty member, the following steps shall be the required course of appeal:

1. **Within 10 days of the submission of the final grade for a course**, the student appeals the faculty member's decision by communicating in writing or in person to the Area Chair, Program Chair, or Program Director who oversees the class. Should this chair be directly involved in the grievance, the initial contact can be made with a current Academic Dean at the college. The Area Chair, Program Chair, Program Director, or Dean will do an initial review to help discern whether a policy has been violated and the student has plausible grounds for an academic grievance. **The Chair, Director, or Dean has 10 days from the receipt of the appeal to offer the response.** Students with financial holds preventing viewing of course grades online may request to view submitted grades at the Registrar's Office.
2. **Within 10 days of the response offered by the appropriate Chair, Director, or Dean**, the student submits a written statement of the grievance to the Provost via mail or email. The written statement of grievance must include the grounds for the grievance and any evidence relevant to the situation. The Provost, or a designated member of Academic Council, will read the appeal and discuss it with the faculty member **within 10 days** of receiving the appeal. The purpose of this discussion is to clarify issues and suggest a resolution to the student and faculty member(s) involved in the situation. Should the student not accept the suggested resolution, the **student has 10 days** to inform the provost (or designated member of Academic Council) to request the submission of the written grievance to an advisory committee.
3. The Provost (or designated member of Academic Council) will refer the written statement to an advisory committee comprised of the relevant Department or Area Chair, the Curriculum Committee chair, one faculty member chosen by the student, and a student selected by the Vice President for Student Life or Dean of Students. Variation in advisory committee composition may occur due to conflicts of interest. Mutual agreement among the Provost (or designated member of Academic Council), the student making the complaint, and the faculty member involved is required for variation in composition.
4. The advisory committee will hold meetings within 10 days of appointment for the purpose of gathering information and formulating an advisory recommendation for the Provost. The student will have ample opportunity to present the substance of the grievance to the committee. Although meetings are closed, the student may also request to have a support person present; however, this person may not actively participate in the proceedings. The faculty member will be given the same opportunity to present information and to have a support person present.
5. The advisory committee will deliver its recommendation to the Provost upon the conclusion of the relevant interviews. Its recommendation will be advisory to the Provost, who will determine an outcome and communicate the outcome to the student and faculty member within 10 days of receiving the committee's findings.
6. Either party may appeal the decision of the Provost to the President of the College within 10 days of the Provost's decision. Grounds for appeal must consist of one or more of the following:
  - a. A deviation from the process that may have affected the outcome
  - b. New, relevant information previously unavailable at the time of the meetings that may have affected the outcome
  - c. Inappropriate or disproportionate interventions or sanctions

The President will review decisions at each level in the process and render an outcome within 10 days. This outcome will be final.