

CLAS Academic Grievance Procedures

Non-criminal complaints by GVSU students can typically be placed into four general categories:

1. **Academic Grievance.** Academic grievances are generally defined as those involving procedures, policies, and grades in a course. This process is defined in the [university catalog](#) and the resolution of academic grievances is based on two principles: first, that the resolution of a grievance should be sought at the lowest possible level, and second, that pathways for appeal exist for both faculty members and students. Filing of a grievance is required by the end of the following regular semester after notification of grade or receipt of adverse decision. Appeals of decisions must take place within 30 days after receipt of notification. Resolution should be pursued as follows:
 - a. An appeal to the instructor. Normally, the instructor must respond to an appeal within 30 days of receipt of the appeal. If the student is unable or unwilling to appeal to the professor, the student may proceed to the next step, with an explanation of why the professor was bypassed.
 - b. If the grievance is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, a further appeal could be made to the unit head who may request that the appeal be put in writing. The unit head's decision will be communicated to both the student and the faculty member, within 30 days of receipt of the appeal.
 - c. If the disposition by the unit head is not acceptable, an appeal, **in writing**, may be made to Associate Dean Dwayne Tunstall, via Mona Silva (silvar@gvsu.edu), and must follow these specific procedures:
 - The appeal must be in writing.
 - The appeal must be descriptive and specific. This includes: the outcome the student is seeking (for example, a grade change from F to D); and the specific reason(s) why the grade should be changed in accordance with GVSU policies and the course syllabus.
 - The student should provide evidence (e.g., the syllabus) to support their grievance.
 - The appeal must contain specific documentation of the outcome of the meeting with the professor and the Unit Head, including the Unit Head's written response. The student should also clearly demonstrate errors of fact in the Unit Head's response, as the Associate Dean's review is an appeal, not an initial consideration of the case.

Once Associate Dean Tunstall receives the material and after careful review, he will contact the student via Mona Silva for a meeting if necessary. If he determines that there is some merit in the written grievance, he will either make a determination based on the information and materials provided, or he may establish a committee to review the grievance and make a recommendation within 30 days to the dean. Such

a committee may include a representative of the dean's office, a faculty representative from the college of the course under appeal, and a student representative. If a student representative is to be included in the committee, the student that is a party to the appeal must sign a FERPA release/waiver prior to the committee convening. Within 30 days of receiving the committee's recommendation in the latter procedure, the dean shall rule on the grievance. The student, unit head and faculty member will be notified in writing of the dean's decision. The dean's review and judgment in the case will be final.

2. **Unprofessional conduct.** Complaints regarding bias, discrimination, harassment or related complaints about fairness or inclusion and equality. Those complaints can flow through the unit head, the Division of Inclusion and Equity, or the Dean of Students.
3. **Instructional quality.** Complaints regarding the quality of instruction that are not directly related to unfair grading or inclusion and equity, we ask that students use the end-of-semester course evaluations. These evaluations are designed to provide this sort of feedback to both instructor and unit head. We can assure you that the Unit Head and any other faculty who are in charge of staffing courses will want to hear the feedback that you and your classmates have communicated (anonymously, of course) through those evaluations. Such feedback is valuable in identifying ways to improve future offerings of courses. Student responses are anonymous and are viewed as an entire assessment of all responding students. If you would like to submit a formal evaluation of the instructor at this time, we will certainly discuss your complaint with the unit head and/or conduct an investigation, depending on the severity of the matter. The procedure would follow the same guidelines listed in (1). For such information to be shared at this point, it would need to be a signed document or from a verified GVSU email.
4. **Academic grievance involving fulfillment of program, major, or minor degree requirements.** These appeals should be pursued as follows:
 - a. An appeal to the unit head or graduate program director.
 - b. If the grievance is not resolved to the student's satisfaction at the unit or graduate program level, an appeal can be made to the dean of the college, in the same manner as outlined in (1).

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences also offers students the opportunity to meet with Assistant Dean Betty Schaner prior to the formal appeal submission. This provides the student with an opportunity to review the appeal process, ask questions, and develop the best possible appeal case. Meetings with Assistant Dean Schaner can be made by contacting Mona Silva at 616-331-2495 or silvar@gvsu.edu.