

## **Procedures for Reporting and Resolving Student Complaints**

These procedures establish a process for reporting and resolving student complaints that are not specifically addressed by UNT Dallas policies. These procedures apply to registered students of the University. Additionally, any individual who was a registered student but who has graduated or otherwise left the University also may avail themselves of these procedures provided that any such complaint is made within three (3) months of the individual leaving the University and the acts or omissions being complained of occurred while the individual was a registered student.

These procedures do not replace any complaint or appeal procedures found in UNT Dallas policies. See the table on the last page of this document for a listing of published student policies and corresponding complaint and appeal procedures.

### **Guiding Principles**

As a student-centered university, UNT Dallas strives to achieve high student satisfaction with its services and creating an environment where students are provided:

- Friendly customer service.
- Accurate information.
- Empowerment.

To this end, the following principles will guide these procedures:

- Wherever possible, student complaints will be resolved through an informal process and at the lowest appropriate level of management.
- Student complaints will be handled with procedural fairness. All parties to a complaint will be informed of the specific allegations being made and will be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations made.
- Student complaints will be handled in a timely and confidential manner.
- Students will be notified of the outcome of their complaint.
- The responsibility for the academic evaluation of students rests with the UNTD faculty.

### **Student Complaints**

#### **Informal Complaint Process**

Students with a complaint should initially seek an informal resolution by raising the complaint directly with the relevant staff member, faculty member, or his or her department chair/supervisor so the complaint can be resolved immediately. Advice on how to proceed with a complaint can be sought from the Associate Provost for Student Success.

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Basic steps in the informal process include the following:

- Complaints will begin as soon as possible with the staff or faculty member with whom the issue originated.
- If the issue is not resolved, the unit head or the department chair will investigate the issue and allegations.
- When an informal approach is inappropriate or ineffective, the student may follow the formal procedure detailed in the section below.

Note: While students are encouraged to talk about their complaints directly with the person concerned, this approach may not always be appropriate. In circumstances in which students believe it is not appropriate to raise the issue directly with the person(s) of concern, they may make a complaint to a supervisor/department chair or other person in authority at UNT Dallas.

### **Formally Documented Complaints**

If the informal complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, students may submit written complaints to the Associate Provost for Student Success, who will record the complaint in a log and notify the University official who is responsible for handling the complaint. The log will include all properly submitted complaints that are made formally in writing by students and will also include those complaints submitted through the various “suggestion/comments boxes” on campus.

It is expected that students making formal complaints will demonstrate that they have attempted to resolve their concerns through the informal procedures. The complaint must be submitted in writing and include:

- The name and contact information of the student filing the complaint, and a brief description of the complaint or concern;
- Any attempt(s) by the student to resolve the matter informally, including name/position of employee whom the student contacted concerning the complaint, the date(s) of such contact (may be approximate dates), and the outcome of the informal complaint; and
- The desired resolution or outcome regarding the complaint.

### **Anonymous Complaints**

Anonymous complaints typically are not handled under Student Complaint Procedures. Anonymous complaints about criminal activity, fraud, discrimination, or suspected wrongdoing should be referred to the appropriate unit or University/System official in accordance with the University’s Reporting Suspected Wrongdoing Policy (5.012). Further action may be taken if the anonymous complaint contains sufficient information to carry out an investigation.

### **Log of Student Complaints**

The Associate Provost for Student Success is responsible for maintaining a log of all written student complaints properly submitted under these Student Complaint Procedures. Designated representatives are

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responsible for compiling written student complaints, resolving such complaints in accordance with applicable University policies and procedures, and forwarding all written student complaints (and the outcome of such complaints) to the Associate Provost for Student Success on a quarterly basis (for staff) or at the end of each semester (for faculty/academic units).

The complaint log will include the following:

- The date the complaint was first formally submitted;
- The nature of the complaint;
- The steps taken by the University to resolve the complaint (in accordance with University policies and procedures, as applicable);
- The final decision regarding the complaint, including referral to outside agencies; and
- Any other external actions initiated by the student to resolve the complaint, if known to UNT Dallas (e.g. lawsuit, EEOC investigation, etc.).

UNT Dallas provides published appeal procedures for final course grades, academic misconduct, and other academic complaints. So that appropriate monitoring and evaluation of student complaints may take place, all student complaints will be included in the log, including student grade appeals.

#### **Records Retention of Student Complaint Log**

The log of student complaints maintained by the Associate Provost for Student Success will be retained in accordance with the University's Records Retention Schedule.

#### **Timeframe for Responding to Student Complaints**

Employees have a responsibility to respond to student complaints within a reasonable timeframe and complainants will be advised of the proposed timeframe for resolution. If a complaint is complex or involves allegations of misconduct or suspected wrongdoing, the University will achieve resolution of a complaint within 10 days of the complaint being lodged with the appropriate person in authority. If it is not possible to achieve resolution within this timeframe, the complainant will be advised and will be informed of the progress of the matter.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Responsibility for the management and operation of the Student Complaints Procedure resides with the Associate Provost for Student Success. The Associate Provost for Student Success will oversee the tracking of complaints for the purposes of ensuring that written student complaints are resolved in accordance with University policies and procedures and demonstrate fairness and attention to student concerns. Complaints made under this procedure, as well as any student complaint made in accordance with University policies, will be monitored and reviewed to enable the University to continually improve its processes. To this end, the Associate Provost for Student Success also will look for any pattern in the complaints that suggests problems with institutional effectiveness and/or quality of services and will report any potential problems to the appropriate Vice President.

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## Grade Appeals (UNTD Policy 7.007)

**Faculty Responsible for Assignment of Grades**. The responsibility for the evaluation of students rests with the UNTD faculty. The University presumes that the judgment of the faculty member in a course is authoritative, and that all assigned grades are correct.

**Student Informal Consultation with Faculty Member**. A student who wishes to complain about a final course grade must first discuss the matter with the faculty member of record. The discussion with the faculty member must occur as soon as possible after assignment of the grade, and under no circumstances will a faculty member entertain a student's complaint any later than one week after the start of the academic term following the assignment of the grade.

The faculty member must inform a student of a decision within three (3) days of meeting with the student.

**Formal Petition for Grade Appeal**. If a student's concern remains unresolved after the informal consultation with the faculty member, the student may submit a written petition for appeal to the chair of the faculty member's department within three (3) days of learning the result of the informal conversation with the faculty member.

A student's formal petition for grade appeal to the department chair must include:

- The stated grounds for the final course grade appeal and specifically the basis for the claim that a final course grade was assigned arbitrarily, prejudicially or was in error.
- Any additional supporting information.

Within five (5) business days of receiving a student petition, the department chair will meet with the student to review the petition. The chair will consult with the faculty member to consider an amicable solution. The chair will communicate the decision of the faculty member to the student. Notice must be provided to the student no later than two (2) business days after the most recent meeting between the chair and the faculty member resulting in a decision on the grade appeal.

**Appeal to Faculty Committee**. If a student's concern remains unresolved after review by the department chair, the student may submit a written request for appeal to the dean of the division that offers the course taught by the faculty member. The written request must be delivered no more than three (3) days after the decision from the department chair is communicated to the student and must include:

- The stated grounds for the final course grade appeal and specifically the basis for the claim that a final course grade was assigned arbitrarily, prejudicially or was in error.
- Any additional supporting information.

The dean may either:

- Review the appeal on their own; or,
- Appoint a committee of three (3) faculty members from the faculty member's department or in a closely allied field to review the grade appeal.
- If the dean, with feedback from the faculty committee, determines that compelling reasons exist for changing the grade, the dean will ask that the instructor change the grade and provide the faculty member with a written explanation for the request.

- The dean, after consulting with the faculty committee and the faculty member will allow the original grade to stand, or change the grade and notify the student and the faculty member of the action.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be respected wherever possible within the constraints of the need to fully investigate the complaint, and matters pertaining to the complaint will not be discussed beyond the parties to the complaint, their chosen representatives, where applicable, and staff or faculty members involved in resolving the complaint.

### **Published Student Policies and Procedures**

The University has established formal mechanisms for addressing many student complaints through its University policies and procedures. These policies and procedures may be found in the University Policy Manual (<http://dallas.unt.edu/hr/policies>) and supersede these Student Complaint Procedures. Any type of complaint received by the University will be handled in accordance with the applicable University policy. These policies include but are not limited to the following:

<b>Type of Complaint</b>	<b>University Policies that Include Formal Procedures for Filing Student Complaints</b>	<b>Designated Representative</b>			
Complaints regarding discrimination or harassment of any type (including sexual harassment) made against a UNTD student, faculty member, staff member, or other member of the University community.	Refer to <a href="#">UNTD Policy 5.001, Prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment</a>  Also see corresponding procedures: <a href="#">5.001a, Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Procedures</a>	Equal Opportunity Coordinator UNT System (972) 338-1413			
Complaints regarding a grade or grade-related penalty	Refer to the <a href="#">UNTD Policy 7.007, Grade Appeal</a>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1287 1203 1503 1304">Liberal Arts &amp; Life Sciences (972) 338-1501</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1287 1304 1503 1444">Education &amp; Human Services (972) 338-1345</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1287 1444 1503 1577">Urban &amp; Professional Studies (972) 780-3668</td> </tr> </table>	Liberal Arts & Life Sciences (972) 338-1501	Education & Human Services (972) 338-1345	Urban & Professional Studies (972) 780-3668
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Complaints regarding the outcome of student conduct hearings	Refer to appeal procedures in <a href="#">UNTD Policy 7.001, Code of Student's Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct</a>	Office of the Associate Provost for Student Success (972) 780-3059			
Complaints regarding the outcome of an investigation and review of academic dishonesty	Refer to appeal procedures in <a href="#">UNTD Policy 7.002, Code of Academic Integrity</a>	Office of the Associate Provost for			

		Student Success (972) 780-3059
Complaints regarding the release of student information or accuracy of student education record	Refer to <a href="#">UNTD Policy 7.003 Student Records</a>	Office of the Registrar (972) 780-3045
Complaints regarding a decision on the modification of academic requirements or other disability accommodation for students	Refer to <a href="#">UNTD Policy 7.004, Disability Accommodation for Students</a>	Student Wellness Coordinator (972) 338-1779
Complaints regarding a decision by the Behavioral Intervention Team concerning an involuntary medical withdrawal	Refer to appeal procedures <a href="#">UNTD Policy 7.008, Involuntary and Voluntary Student Medical Withdrawal</a>	Office of the Associate Provost for Student Success (972) 780-3059
Complaints regarding decision to deny a request to use University facilities or any related charges for facility use	Refer to <a href="#">UNTD Policy 11.006, Facilities Use</a>	General Services Director (972) 338-1470
Complaints regarding decision to deny a request for use of campus grounds for expressive activity	Refer to <a href="#">UNTD Policy 7.009, Free Speech and Public Assembly</a>	Office of Student Life (972) 338-1779

Questions concerning these Student Complaint Procedures should be directed to the Associate Provost for Student Success at (972) 780-3032.