

Durham Technical Community College Academic Appeals Procedure

Grievances involving academic matters must be pursued under this Academic Appeals Procedure. Academic grievances are limited to final course grade issues and satisfactory completion of instructional program requirements.

- The Sexual Harassment Procedure must be used for sexual harassment claims.
- The Student Grievance Procedure must be used for the following:
 - Allegations involving student or employee conduct, including discrimination.
 - All other claims (e.g., claims concerning parking privileges, release of transcripts, registration, library borrowing privileges, student conduct, counseling services, admission issues, placement tests, transfer credit issues, student records, and appropriate payment of tuition and fees).

Procedure

The student may elect to seek assistance from a counselor in the Counseling and Student Development office at the beginning or during any step in the grievance process. The Counseling Office is located in the Phail Wynn, Jr. Student Services Building, room 1309. Students may call 919-536-7207 for more information. Counselors serve as advocates for students by

- providing counsel on the proper procedures in filing and resolving grievances;
- helping students identify specific issues involved in grievance complaints; and
- assisting in developing verbal and written approaches to pursue a grievance within the spirit and intent of the academic grievance procedures.

First Step

The first step of the procedure involves meeting informally with the appropriate faculty and administrative supervisors to attempt to resolve the dispute. All meetings held in an effort to informally resolve the dispute should be concluded within 10 working days after the occurrence of the alleged grievance. The specific steps are as follows:

1. The student must first attempt to resolve the matter informally by meeting with the person with whom the student has a grievance, namely the instructor. This first attempt at a resolution should be held within five working days after the occurrence of the alleged grievance.

2. If the matter is not resolved at this level, the student must meet with the appropriate discipline chair/program director.
3. If the matter is not resolved at this level, the student must meet with the appropriate department head or his/her designee.

Second Step

If the matter is not resolved informally, the second step of the procedure involves the completion of the Academic Grievance Form. The Academic Grievance Form must be filed within 20 working days after the occurrence of the alleged grievance.

1. The student may initiate a formal grievance by completing an Academic Grievance Form (available from the department head).
 - The Academic Grievance Form must be signed by the student and filed with the department head within 20 days after the occurrence of the alleged grievance.
 - The student must transmit copies to the instructor, chair/program director, and department head.
 - If the student requests an extension of the filing period, the department head may require appropriate evidence justifying the delay as a condition for continuing the grievance.
 - The department head may extend the time for filing a grievance if the parties wish to attempt a resolution of the matter through other appropriate informal means (e.g., mediation).
2. Upon receipt of a copy of the Academic Grievance Form, the instructor has 10 working days to complete, sign, and deliver a Response Form (available from the department head) to the student and all other parties.

Third Step

The third step of the procedure involves a determination of whether the dispute may be grieved, and, if so, the formation of an Academic Appeals Committee to hear the grievance.

1. Upon receipt of an Academic Grievance Form and Response Form, the department head for the department in which the course resides shall review the

alleged grievance in view of the college's mission, goals, policies, rules, and procedures as stated in the college Catalog and Student Handbook and other institutional and program documents to determine if the dispute is eligible to be grieved.

2. If, in view of these provisions, the department head determines that the matter is eligible for grievance, the department head shall provide the student and all other parties with a letter explaining this conclusion.

- A decision by the department head concerning whether the matter is eligible for grievance cannot be appealed.
- The department head may permit the grievance to proceed to a hearing and defer a decision on this question until the close of the presentation and consideration of evidence by all parties.

3. If the dispute is determined to be eligible for grievance and proceeds to the hearing phase, the Vice President and Chief Instructional and Student Services Officer shall appoint an academic appeals committee of not more than nine persons and comprised of faculty, instructional support staff, and at least one student. A separate committee shall be appointed for each grievance.

- The committee shall hear the grievance and recommend an appropriate resolution.
- The Vice President and Chief Instructional and Student Services Officer shall appoint a chair for the committee. Faculty and instructional support staff shall be selected from a pool of persons identified for this purpose. The Student Senate shall identify a list of three students available to sit on academic appeals committees.
- A department head from another department shall be appointed by the Vice President and Chief Instructional and Student Services Officer to coordinate the scheduling of the committee hearing, charge the committee, and remain present during the hearing to respond to inquiries concerning policy and procedure guidelines. Procedural guidelines for the hearing, as established by the Academic Standards, Policies, and Curriculum Committee, will be provided to all parties prior to the hearing by this department head.

Fourth Step

The fourth step of the procedure involves the recommendation of the Academic Appeals Committee and the final decision.

1. After the hearing, the committee shall retire to deliberate in executive session.
2. The committee shall make a written recommendation to the Vice President and Chief Instructional and Student Services Officer within five working days after the conclusion of the hearing.
3. The Vice President and Chief Instructional and Student Services Officer shall consider the committee's recommendation and make a decision that is fair to all parties and consistent with the mission and relevant objectives of the college and its instructional programs.
4. The Vice President and Chief Instructional and Student Services Officer shall send a letter to all parties stating and explaining the decision.

Exceptional Circumstances

If the student or instructor believes that exceptional circumstances justify reconsideration of the decision the Vice President and Chief Instructional and Student Services Officer makes, the student or instructor may request that the President review the matter

- 1) The request for review must be presented in letter form to the President within five working days after receipt of the Vice President and Chief Instructional and Student Services Officer's decision. The letter to the President must explain the nature of the exceptional circumstances.
- 2) If the President finds exceptional circumstances present, the President may review the decision of the Vice President and Chief Instructional and Student Services Officer.

(Revised September 2009)