

Graduate and Professional Student Grievance Procedures for Academic Progress and Other Complaints

The graduate student grievance process may involve several steps depending on the nature of the grievance. There are many avenues available to Washington State University graduate and professional students to resolve differences that may arise during the pursuit of an advanced degree. In general, the operational principal that should be followed is to maintain open communication at the most immediate point of access and to work upwards from there when appropriate. This means that the student should work with their major professor or advisor to resolve matters if possible. The next level would be the Department Chair or School Director. There are cases, of course, where this is difficult. In these cases, graduate and professional students should make an appointment with one of the Associate Deans of the Graduate School for further advice. An important role of the Graduate School is to serve as an impartial arbitrator in these matters and to provide advice to both students and faculty that will result in the student continuing in good academic standing.

Preliminary Grievance Procedures

- 3.1 Students are encouraged to first consult with their faculty advisor.
- 3.2 If the advisor is unable to resolve the problem the student is encouraged to discuss the problem with the department/program chair, director, and/or faculty liaison.
- 3.3 If the grievance cannot be resolved at the department or program level, the student should contact one of the Associate Deans of the Graduate School, or any person of the Graduate School designated by the Dean to hear student grievances (the Dean's designee).
- 3.4 The Associate Dean or Dean's designee will review the grievance and, at his or her discretion, will recommend possible actions for resolution to the student as well as to the department/program chair, director, and/or faculty liaison. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution, he/she may file a formal grievance.

Formal Grievance Procedures

In some instances such as those related to academic and employment issues (e.g. failed examinations, termination of assistantship, etc.), the student may wish to appeal a specific academic decision made by the departmental or program faculty.

- 3.5 The student must make a formal grievance request to the Dean of the Graduate School in writing, with signature (email is not sufficient). Formal appeals must be filed within 15 (fifteen) calendar days following a notice of decision or within 15 calendar days after completing the Preliminary Grievance Procedures. The original decision will be held in abeyance while under appeal.
- 3.6 The Dean will assign these formal appeals to one of the Associate Deans for full consideration and recommendation.
- 3.7 If the Associate Dean deems it appropriate, the matter will be referred to an independent Committee on Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (CGSRR) for consideration and formulating recommendations of action to the Dean of the Graduate School. The CGSRR will operate with due respect to the rights of graduate students, faculty, and administrators including the conduct of interviews,

the right of all parties to review and address allegations, and the right to a fair hearing. The CGSRR will deliberate and render a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School or the Dean's designee within 60 days of being formed.

- 3.8 Recommendations for resolution of formal grievances will be acted upon by the Dean or the Dean's designee. A final decision will be made by the Dean of the Graduate School. The decision made by the Dean on academic matters is final.

Appeals

The graduate or professional student may appeal the final decision of the Dean of the Graduate School to the Provost if the appeal is based on procedural irregularities. The Provost will not reopen cases for the purpose of re-investigating the grievance.

The student can seek judicial review within 30 days from the date of the final decision pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, RCW 34.05.010 *et. seq.*

Professional Student Grievances

Professional students within the College of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Pharmacy will follow College policies and procedures for the review of academic issues. Appeal of College level decisions can be made to the Graduate School.

College of Veterinary Medicine Policies

<http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/academic/studentsCurrent.aspx>

College of Pharmacy Policies

<http://www.pharmacy.wsu.edu/administration/AcademicPoliciesandProceduresfinal.5.10.06.pdf>

Other programs also may have their own grievance procedures that should be followed before utilizing the Graduate School's grievance procedures.